

**CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
MINUTES OF THE CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION**

April 26, 2016

Manhattan Beach City Council Chambers
1400 Highland Avenue
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Ramezani called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Dunn, Gill, May, Samuels, Chairperson Ramezani

Absent: None

Staff Present: Martin Betz, Cultural Arts Manager, Eilen Stewart, Ceramics Supervisor and Rosemary Lackow, Recording Secretary.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES –February 9 and March 8, 2016

A motion was made and seconded (Samuels/Gill) to approve both meeting minutes as submitted, however it was noted that Commissioner Dunn was not present at both meetings, therefore Commissioner Samuels withdrew the motion.

It was subsequently moved and seconded (Samuels/May) to approve the minutes of February 9, 2016 as submitted.

Ayes: May, Samuels, Chairperson Ramezani

Nays: none

Abstain: Dunn, Gill

Absent: None

It was moved and seconded (Samuels/ Gill) to approve the minutes of March 8, 2016 as submitted.

Ayes: Dunn, Gill, May, Samuels

Nays: none

Abstain: Chairperson Ramezani

Absent: None

D. CEREMONIAL.

It was noted that at the next meeting there will be a ceremonial item commemorating the end of year reorganization as Commissioner Samuels will be ending six years on the Commission Commissioner Ramezani will be stepping down as Chair.

E. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (3-Minute Limit) - None

F. STAFF ITEMS

Cultural Arts Director Martin Betz updated the Commission on the following items:

Budget update

Mr. Betz called attention to the latest print out of the Cultural Arts Fund and explained that there are no changes from the last report – that the Fund is still at \$423,198 a sizable amount. Commissioner Samuels recommended that the Commission look for good use of those funds and perhaps acquiring another permanent piece of art in the City collection. Mr. Betz stated that currently staff is working on a Work Plan for the Commission and he is maintaining a running list of suggestions made by the Cultural Arts Commission to track what is being done.

Mr. Betz gave a brief summary of the staff retreat held at the Getty Villa and noted Commissioner May was in attendance. The afternoon discussion focused on how best to tailor art programs for Manhattan Beach and what is working. Mr. Betz noted that there is a real interest for art in the community, but staff believes that citizens do not want a typical class oriented program, rather more substantial for example, that would expose students to art at a professional level. After further discussion, Mr. Betz noted that he will be putting together a package focusing on visual arts programs at Mira Costa and bringing it back to the Commission.

Commissioner Dunn stated she believes strongly that a rebranding of the arts center is needed and there is so much potential especially in some fresh signage and landscaping. Mr. Betz stated he agreed but believes that the proposals for physical improvements and programs should be contained in a single package. Chair Ramezani suggested perhaps a grand re-opening could be held. Commissioner Dunn also suggested the name of the Art Center could be changed to “Manhattan Beach Institute for the Arts” and Mr. Betz stated that for now the name will stay as is, but this is worth discussing in the future after more programs get going. Commissioner Samuels asked if staff could see if the Council would support researching the cost of a new sign and some landscaping in concept. Mr. Betz advised the Commission to not formally make this request at this time, as there are some other concepts being considered at the Arts Center that have been funded already by the City Council. He pointed to the “Wishing Tree” program and patio improvements that have been implemented.

Sculpture Garden Installation Update

Mr. Betz gave an update on the piece from Asher Kelman. The art piece is still being fabricated and Mr. Betz believes that Mr. Kelman is working very hard to have the piece installed at a Civic Center Plaza location by September, before the end of his one-year agreement with the City.

Chair Ramezani asked if there is any new discussion about the general Sculpture Garden program, and Mr. Getz stated that there hasn't been any change, however, he suggested that the Kelman installation can be extended such that all the pieces would be able to be on the same schedule. Mr. Betz stated that he will prepare a staff report on the general program for the next meeting.

Update on Cultural Arts Division

Eilen Stewart, Ceramics Supervisor gave a slide presentation on proposed projects. The first project she discussed was an exhibit of John Van Hamersveld a very prominent graphic artist who is from the South Bay and early on in his career became well known for the “Endless Summer” movie poster and went on to design many album covers for the Beatles, Rolling Stones, etc. and iconic branding designs.

The City will be sponsoring an exhibit of his graphic art works this August at the Art Center. In advance of the exhibit, the artist has proposed to design a graphic on a vinyl strip, which he proposes to attach to the façade of the Art Center building just below the roofline, creating a 2-foot tall decorative frieze. The vinyl strip can be detached at any time, but can last up to ten years. Cultural Arts Manager Betz added that the staff is also planning to have the street address “1560” painted in large format on the building front wall.

The Commission provided their input regarding the proposed frieze concept.

Commissioner Dunn stated that she would be interested in exploring something with more color that she thinks would speak more of Manhattan Beach. In general she thinks generally this is a great idea but she would really like to see this as part of a comprehensive approach for rebranding the center. Mr. Betz emphasized that this is considered just a start - the city is not yet ready for a full rebranding.

Commissioner Samuels inquired as to the process in deciding on the frieze graphic and whether this is something that the Commission and/or community should be more engaged in. Cultural Arts Manager Betz explained that staff considered the frieze to be a part of the Van Hamersveld exhibit itself as opposed to a distinct art installation. Commissioner Samuels stated he supports the process going forward but would like to see the final design be more reflective of the Manhattan Beach community.

Commissioner Ramezani suggested that the design on the frieze could be changed periodically and be more like an exhibit itself.

Commissioner May was enthusiastic about the concept and inquired if the center name could be included in the vinyl graphic design. Mr. Betz responded that this had been considered but agreed it didn't look good and also clarified that 10 years is the maximum guaranteed life of the vinyl material.

Commissioner Gill stated his concern that the proper review process is being followed. He believes that small elements such as adding large address numbers do not need Commission review, but, he would expect the Cultural Arts Commission to be engaged in decisions that were about a comprehensive plan or program for the Arts Center. He noted that in general there are different way to handle temporary vs. permanent exhibitions and this frieze project feels like a hybrid. Mr. Betz acknowledged this point but noted also that he expects the installation of the frieze will be positive in getting people noticing and talking about the Center.

Chair Ramezani concluded the discussion, stating that the reality is that it takes a long time to come up with a comprehensive program and she believes that staff should be credited for coming up with a creative idea in the meantime that may start discussion about art. This is a temporary installation and there are processes in place to replace or change the proposed frieze.

Chair Ramezani invited public input.

Thomas Tomikawa, student at Mira Costa stated that he likes the idea of the frieze being treated as an ongoing exhibit itself and perhaps it could be changed annually.

Ceramics Supervisor Eilen Stewart next provided a slide presentation on upcoming exhibits at the Art Center for 2016-2017. Upcoming exhibits include:

- Words into Images: an intergenerational exhibition between MB Middle School students and MB older adults.
- May 26 (reception) - July 2: Family Plot: work of nationally prominent artist Ed Moses, son Andy Moses and Kelly Berg.
- July 8 – July 13 StART Project: These are Mira Costa students – the program started with 26 students and there are now 9, although recently 3 new students have signed on. July 21 – Aug 6, 2016 Older Adults Program Exhibition (a judged exhibit).
- August 25 – October 16: John Van Hamersveld: Contemporary Post Future: Dichotomy of Design & Art.
- October 26- December 31: Selected works from the collection of Cheech Marin. This is a collaboration with the USC school of Music, as Mr. Marin’s wife, Natasha, a world renowned harpsichordist will perform as a part of the exhibit.
- January 19, 2017 – March 2017: Very Cinematic Narrative and Exhibition of Artworks by Cynda Valle and William Sandell.
- March 24 – April 9, 2017 Mira Costa Annual Exhibit
- April 20 – June 18 2017: A.C. Conner. The City owns 9 paintings of A.C. Conner who was one of four founders of the City of Manhattan Beach (City Treasurer) and was also one of the founders of the Los Angeles Painters’ Club in the early 1900’s.
- June 29 – July 16, 2017 Older Adults exhibit.

The Commissioners thanked staff for the presentation noting there is a very exciting lineup. At Commissioner Dunn’s request, Mr. Betz stated that he would send the Commission all known reception dates and times. The Chair also reminded Mr. Betz that once the Van Hamersveld exhibit leaves, a temporary plaque should be placed to acknowledge the frieze as an art work. There was some discussion about getting the word out about the calendar of exhibits and events. Commissioner Gill suggested adding a notice on the city-wide water bills. In response to comments and inquiries from the Commission, Cultural Arts Manager Betz stated that he believes that word of mouth has worked better than social media; staff is looking into setting up an electronic newsletter focusing on the cultural arts programs; staff coordinates notices of events with the public library and staff is also looking into targeting art programs for the broad category of “adults”. Chair Ramezani concluded the discussion by stating that part of the arts program should involve promoting local artists and Mr. Betz agreed stating that staff is also looking into alternative spaces for local artists to showcase their work.

Chair Ramezani invited any further public comment.

Kim Friedman, resident, has taken oil painting classes for ten years at the Art Center and strongly supports the center. She loves the idea of the Van Hamersveld frieze installation and also supports outreach to local businesses (noting Johnny Rockets has done this in the past) to host exhibits of local students or artists work in their commercial space. Ms. Friedman also mentioned the Young at Art program and suggested it could be a potential partner with the City.

Mr. Betz noted that staff is working with Johnny Rockets currently about starting up such a program.

Elise Friedman, Mira Costa High School student, strongly supports the Young at Art program and she believes that having a strong art education program is important for many reasons including helping to relieve stress of students as they commonly compete academically at high levels. She believes especially at the elementary levels, such programs also allow the students to “be a kid”.

Thomas Tomikawa, Mira Costa High school student with an emphasis in music, echoed Ms. Friedman's comments about incorporating art into students curriculum and that for him personally the art programs helped him understand that he can be creative.

Cultural Arts Manager Betz provided the Commission with sponsorship packets for the summer day long 75th anniversary festival on July 24th and noted the summer program is available now on the website.

G. COMMISSION ITEMS

Commissioner Gill inquired as to whether an installation schedule has been determined for art inside the Library, to which Mr. Betz responded that he is not clear on the status, with staff turnover at the Library but will look into this matter and report back.

Commissioner May noted two items: 1) the local artists group has a promotional flyer and will have a booth at the April 30 Earth Day Festival, and 2) she would like to invite the two Mira Costa students present at the meeting to address the Commission about incorporating music into the cultural arts program.

Chair Ramezani invited the students to address the Commission.

Elise Friedman, resident and Mira Costa student, gave a slide presentation, making the following main points about music education:

- Reasons why music in education is important: music has been shown to have health benefits, students who have music in their curriculum score higher on standardized tests such as the SAT, and overall, they excel in academics.
- What does this mean? With these benefits, students have more skills and are better prepared for life.
- What is the request? To encourage community involvement and garner attention to music programs, she would like to see student music incorporated at all levels into Cultural Arts programs. Potential student music groups are: the Mira Costa Jazz Band and Marching Band (school contact: Joel Carlson) and Mira Costa Chamber Orchestra (school contact: Denise Haslop). She suggested that ensembles can be created by combining/pairing groups at various levels of education (including elementary level). She closed by noting that Mira Costa will be going to Carnegie Hall.

Cultural Arts Manager Betz commented that he would make contact with the school with assistance from the students.

Commissioners Dunn and Chair Ramezani thanked the students for their input and their passion and enthusiasm. Commissioner Dunn noted that she has been suggesting some type of program be set up to partner with Metlox and this would be an opportunity for student musicians. Mr. Betz suggested that the students contact the performing arts director at the City.

Chairperson Ramezani suggested that in the future if this subject were to be officially placed on the Commission agenda, then this would encourage formal discussion which would assist in execution of ideas that were raised. It was agreed that Mr. Betz place this topic on a future agenda as a staff item. Commissioner Dunn noted that she has vigorously supported that STEM be STEAM and this is an opportunity to take this message to the schools to integrate into the curriculum.

H. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded (Gill/Dunn) to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 PM to 6:00 PM on May 10, 2016 in the Council Chambers.

Ayes: Dunn, Gill, May, Samuels, Chairperson Ramezani.
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None