

CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
MINUTES OF THE CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION

November 8, 2016

Manhattan Beach City Hall, City Manager Conference Room
1400 Highland Avenue
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

A. CALL TO ORDER

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

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Dunn, Gill, Manna, Prigozhin, Chairperson May.

Absent: None

Others present: Martin Betz, Cultural Arts Manager, Eilen Stewart, Ceramics Supervisor, Rosemary Lackow, Recording Secretary

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – **October 11, 2016**

A motion was made and seconded (Gill/Manna) to approve subject to correcting typos as follows: Pg. 2, Cultural Arts Division Update, 2nd paragraph from bottom; 3rd line, correct spelling of “Discussion”; Pg. 3: 2nd paragraph from bottom - correct spelling of “Proghozin”; Pg 4: public input: change “McAuley” to “McAulay” and correct spelling of “Pregozhin”; Pg. 5: under Action, 2nd paragraph, after “Chair May stated.....”, change “he” to “she”.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Gill, Manna, Prigozhin, Chairperson May

Noes: None

Abstain: Dunn

Absent: None

D. CEREMONIAL

Recognition of Homeira Goldstein.

Chair May called Homeira Goldstein up to present her with a certificate of appreciation. Ms. Goldstein thanked the Commission and recounted the long history of her involvement in the Manhattan Beach art community, highlighting formation of the Cultural Arts Commission from a committee in the early 1990’s and the transition of the former Manhattan Heights Library to the current Art Center. She complimented and expressed appreciation for Cultural Arts Manager Martin Betz whom she credited with steering the program in a whole new and positive direction. Ms. Goldstein stated that she is fueled on passion for art – her model is “Live Artfully” and believes that art not only should be encouraged as part of daily life but can work towards making real changes in society, including creating jobs. Our country needs creative people and this is why art classes are so important from a young age.

Chair May thanked Ms. Goldstein and noted that the City Council will be doing community recognitions on December 20th. The meeting paused five minutes for group photos.

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

F. STAFF ITEMS

Commission Work Plan Discussion

Manager Betz noted that this item will be covered in the General Business portion of the agenda.

Cultural Arts Division Update

Mr. Betz noted that the month of October was busy and eventful. The Cheech Marin exhibit had the largest attendance (350). Major art luminaries were present and there was much interest by artists in the Center as an exhibit space, the atmosphere was lively, entertainment was great including a guitarist and harpsichordist. Much credit is to be given to Homeira Goldstein and her assistant, Simon.

Mr. Betz noted that his strategy is to bring the exhibition program “center stage” and then build on that.

The plans for the Center include a cultural themed Thursday night event (launch in 6 months) for both younger/older folks. Other events held include: USC Director of antique instruments presentation, Chuck Johnson jazz recital at Joslyn Center with an art show (organized by Chair May); very interesting and staff learned a lot (e.g. order of events=art should follow music). This came through with funding from retiring Supervisor Knabe which will be recognized. Other events held include the Pumpkin Race and a baroque concert.

Staff has noticed that Center attendance has increased, starting with the Van Hammersveld show. There was a brief discussion regarding popup shows. Mr. Betz indicated that a big event is now being planned for March, 2017; a press release will be distributed.

On November 2nd there was a Library opening with attendance of 80 people and Commissioner Gill reported that the art was extraordinary. Commissioner Prigozhin suggested synching these events through Outlook calendar. Mr. Betz then summarized all remaining near term events.

G. COMMISSION ITEMS

Commissioner Dunn noted happenings in the greater LA area: at the Skirball, a Roy Lichtenstein exhibit through March; at LA Comedy Show, November 10 through the 20th there will be several screenings, all in Hollywood with live comedy, film, short films and a screen play competition. At the Pasadena Convention Center, a “Designer Con” with 150 vendors, with a focus on pop art and plush animals, somewhat edgy. At the Union Station terminal, December 2nd there will be a kick off of a film noir series – the first film will be “Union Station”.

Commissioner Gill noted the framed photo in the council chambers, of the City’s Centennial gathering on the pier needs repair. He asked and was informed by staff that the sailboat sculpture was almost complete and the artist most likely will host a reception when 100% done.

Commissioner Dunn reminded that the Lightgate plaque should be moved closer to the actual art work. Mr. Betz will investigate.

Cultural Arts Manager Betz noted that the current MOCA show is great and is considering organizing a field trip and will advise the Commission.

Commissioner Prigozhin gave a brief powerpoint presentation about a 3D holographic projection type of sculpture and explained three ways this is done: a 3D projection, a holographic projection and a 3D hologram. He has been researching this type of art through a number of companies. A “con” is that it can be viewed only at night, but a “pro” is that this is relatively inexpensive. Commissioner Dunn suggested contacting the City of Montreal.

Discussion followed. Manager Betz noted that there is another similar technology and suggested that staff look into collaborating with Otis. Commissioner Prigozhin cautioned that this is complex and it is important that the software does not fail, and be generally well thought out; perhaps the IT staff may assist. Commissioner Gill reminded that there is almost \$500,000 in the trust fund.

Chair May inquired as to the status of the solar power project; Mr. Betz reported he and Commissioner Prigozhin met with the architect and perhaps the next step is a more detailed presentation before the Cultural Arts Commission. Mr. Betz stated he is still considering for the 2017 summer park concerts.

Commissioner Gill inquired that as progress is being made for the skate park perhaps there can be an annual renewal for the mural or “free for all” tagging event. It was suggested that information should be sought from Director Mark Leyman, noting that the skate park will be finished in December, 2016.

Chair May inquired and was informed that the holiday lights installment at Metlox is being handled by the Downtown Business Association. Chair May noted that the artists group will be doing a fundraiser at that time.

H. GENERAL BUSINESS

16/1108.1 Discussion of Work Plan items for City Council consideration.

Manager Betz gave a status regarding the Sculpture Garden program, that staff is moving forward to obtain City Council approval on the Sculpture Garden program, per direction from the Commission at the last meeting. The Strand bench program is also moving forward, clarifying that benches are still being sold, but new benches are on hold.

Mr. Betz asked that the Commission discuss possible new Work Plan items and he discussed the following main programs, with the caveat that each item needs to have adequate staff support and resources.

1. Trust Fund re-granting program is typically done annually. The City would give away a certain amount of money to private artists and schools. This would create excitement and people can start organizing around the grants. The grants are privately written and submitted to the City, then a committee is formed to review and a recommendation is made to the City Council.
2. Public Art Assessment Plan (implemented after decommissioning policy is established). A number of pieces need maintenance - this calls for development of a plan to address annual

maintenance needs on public art pieces, to be developed by a professional art assessment consultant. The Commission agreed that this would be a prudent use of money.

3. Integrate schools with the Art Center. This involves providing supplemental educational materials, for example: bus tours for kids in the community to get to the art center. Mr. Betz would like to see this as the beginning of a next phase. Commissioner Dunn suggested also tying into the YAA program. Mr. Betz noted the concept is that once kids become aware of the Art Center, then the next phase would be for art to go into the classroom. The goal is to have a fully integrated art program between the Art Center and schools within the next two years.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

With these as basic programs, Mr. Betz explained that at some point they can bring in another big art piece and invited the Commission to discuss all items. Commissioner Gill inquired as to whether the updating of the Master Plan, being outdated should also be on the list, and Mr. Betz explained that this is not high on his list; however one piece perhaps missing is community outreach to find out what people want and some form of mail-out hard copy or digital copy was suggested.

Commissioner Dunn offered two more ideas: 1) commissioning a piece of permanent art, and 2) an artful “Welcome to the City of Manhattan Beach” perhaps at the entry to downtown at MB Blvd/Valley/Ardmore. Manager Betz responded that he would record these ideas and Commissioner Dunn expressed a concern that she believes the quantity and quality of the city’s public art should be increased, noting that the street light standards provide an opportunity to hold banners advertising art events. Mr. Betz stated he would put the pole banners on the Work Plan list.

Commissioner Prigozhin suggested giving high school students power by participating in a design competition for a piece of public art. Commissioner Gill suggested it may be difficult for the City Council to approve an unknown; Commissioner Prigozhin suggested perhaps an artist would work with the students and as a start they could design a public sign that would be a class project. Chair May expressed concern that the process with the schools may be challenging. Commissioner Dunn pointed out that students at the high school level can be very overworked and parents are concerned that their kids may get distracted from achieving important goals. Chair May also suggested that prospective Eagle scouts, looking for projects may be involved. Mr. Betz reminded that the Community Development Department is still working on wayfinding as part of the Downtown Specific Plan.

Commissioner Manna noted his concern that the Art Center sign needs improvement. His concern is that word of events may not be reaching the general public.

Commissioner Gill suggested that he could do a large version of the City’s centennial coin, perhaps it could be installed near the front entry to City Hall on the wall behind the bench near the fountain. While not sure how to get this going, he thought it may be financially feasible (estimated cost of \$7,000 - \$10,000); perhaps a local business could sponsor. Mr. Betz noted that under a prior Chair, there was an idea of improving or providing a kiosk - the art assessment plan can help in identifying other ideas.

Chair May stated she looks forward to getting the City’s programs off the ground so they can show other cities what Manhattan Beach can do. Mr. Betz stated that another goal is to do more collaboration with other cities.

Commissioner Dunn inquired as to the concept of a “first Friday” or monthly event, perhaps in conjunction with the downtown farmers market, where restaurants would remain open late. Mr. Betz suggested that such a program, while good, is usually organized by a fully engaged non-profit community arts organization.

Manager Betz summarized that the goal of this night’s discussion is to have consensus of the Work Plan list, and then take that list to the City Council for their approval.

Commissioner Gill endorsed the 4 discussed suggestions (including street light banners) plus one permanent art piece. Manager Betz stated that he would follow up with a high school concept. As to Commissioner Prigozhin’s idea of 3D light projections: at this point he could get it onto the Work Plan and then it can get more developed. Commissioner Gill suggested that it could be added in as a temporary Sculpture Garden piece, but Commissioner Prigozhin stated he prefers to develop the concept out more.

Mr. Betz stated that he needs to figure out the budget and costs of these items more but so far has estimated about \$45,000 for item 1, and \$5,000-\$6,000 for item 2, and perhaps \$10,000 for item 3, with another \$10,000 for bus tours. He needs to put this all together and bring back to the Commission before going to the City Council.

PUBLIC INPUT / DISCUSSION

Chair May invited public comment.

Gary McAulay spoke to the Strand bench program, noting he does not support using private bench memorials on public properties, preferring instead to have the public be able to donate anonymous benches, not private memorials. He reminded that the Pier, for example, is a state landmark and many like it the way it is. Regarding the hologram concept, perhaps it can be used on a wall somewhere; regarding the downtown entry, he doesn’t like the large rocks, because the lettering is difficult to read. He urged the Commission to consider replacing them. There are a number of issues regarding the downtown entry. For example, the greenbelt already has a master sign but it doesn’t necessarily provide for the Sculpture Garden, further in using the greenbelt, it should be recognized that this location doesn’t work as an entry to the whole city. The Downtown welcome sign is really the purview of Planning, or the Business Association. However, the Cultural Arts Commission could be involved if it is determined that an art piece would be used to signify the entrance to Downtown. He endorses using the art fund to educate about the Art Center as this works for the entire community.

Mr. Betz clarified the bench program at Commissioner Gill’s request, that there are 4 types of benches that are available to be donated.

ACTION

The Commission 5-0 agreed to the following list and approach: 1) Trust Fund Re-Granting; 2) Public Art Assessment Plan; 3) Art Center Exhibit Integration with Schools; and 4) Street Light Banners. Mr. Betz will prepare a report, circulate it to the Commission which would formally take action at a subsequent meeting. He will look into whether a special meeting can be called if needed.

I. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded (Gill/Dunn) and passed by voice vote (5-0) to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 pm to 6:00 pm on December 13, 2016 in the Council Chambers at City Hall.