

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

August 21, 2017

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

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Gill called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Chase, Manna, May, Prigozhin, Rubino, Chairperson Gill.

Absent: None

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

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – July 17, 2017

It was moved and seconded (May/Manna) to approve the July 19, 2017 minutes as submitted/with 2 changes on page 1: second paragraph under Strand Bench Proposal: line 3, replace “plaved” with “placed” and in line 6 replace “surprisinging” with “surprisingly”.

The motion carried unanimously with a voice vote.

D. CEREMONIAL – None

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

F. STAFF ITEMS

Cultural Arts Manager Betz suggested a reordering of the agenda, with the first item being a presentation by the City’s consultant on the City’s Signage and Wayfinding project followed by the Strand bench proposal presentation, followed by the Staff updates. There being no objections, the agenda change was so ordered.

1. Presentation: City Of Manhattan Beach Signage And Wayfinding

Cultural Arts Manager Betz explained that it is appropriate for the Commission to receive the presentation, discuss and provide input to the Public Works Department’s consultant.

Chair Gill invited the City consultant to address the Commission.

Clifford Selbert, Selbert Perkins Design, addressed the Commission, explaining that the presentation is about the evolution of ideas since the initial presentation to them about a year ago. The ideas being presented reflect guidelines from the City Council. The main purpose of the program is to build awareness of the City through a comprehensive and intuitive identification and wayfinding system for visitors and residents. A key goal is to preserve the city’s small town beach character, but the project should also: create a unified visual language; create a welcoming experience; facilitate parking; eliminate sign clutter; reinforce the City’s history through storytelling; to have a unified and flexible

system that facilitates maintenance and replacement; and that integrates sustainable processes.

Mr. Selbert covered the following for a background: **Overview** (timeline, goals, project process and solicitation of input, photos of existing signs, challenges and opportunities, results of a community survey, etc.); **Precedents** (examples from similar projects his firm has worked on); and **Design Options** (3 main concepts: “Repurpose”, “Vintage/Retro”; and “Modern”). For each concept Mr. Selbert explained the inspiration, sign types, a preliminary city-wide sign location plan and “before/after” comparisons for major intersections.

Examples of **existing** signage, public art and related items (eg. City seal, phone apps, logos) were shown that speak to opportunities. Mr. Selbert also provided a summary of the results of a public survey and then went over each of the three proposed design concepts in detail. In conclusion Mr. Selbert emphasized that he seeks the Commission’s input as to what they like about each of the concepts emphasizing that elements can be “mixed or matched.”

Chair Gill invited the Commission to ask questions.

In response to **Commissioner May’s** question, Mr. Selbert stated that the thinking of the metal motifs on the banner poles downtown is that these can help tell the stories of Manhattan Beach.

Responding to **Commissioner Rubino**, Mr. Selbert stated that the goal in concept 1 was to use a slate blue (blue/grey) noting that he felt the blue suggested more of a resort town and would be different from Santa Monica and Long Beach. Regarding the survey, he believes that there were close to 70 respondents, including residents and visitors and he would be happy to research and provide more information regarding the demographics. He also clarified that mixing elements of the different concepts could mean inter-changing any elements and colors, and he agreed that maintenance issues have been taken into account.

In response to **Commissioner May’s** concern about the North End’s branding, Mr. Selbert explained that input and buy-in was received from the North End BID for the proposal to basically retrofit the existing branding (the red surfer) but with a lightened background on signs.

Chair Gill invited public comment.

DeAnn Chase, resident and past Chair of the Board of the Manhattan Beach Chamber of Commerce stated she likes that the proposal brings unity across the City while letting the various districts to retain their logos on the banners. She also likes: mixing/matching; the city entrance in #2, the blue of #1, but didn’t like the brown in #3.

Chair Gill invited the Commission to provide its input.

Commissioner Prigozhin stated: theming is good but suggested that in #1, the pylon sign be translated a little more literally with adjustment of the scale; color scheme: likes using the city seal for direction and its colors could be subtly incorporated into graphics; wondered if, regarding pavement treatments, if crosswalks can be used to direct people to parking; personally likes concept #3 as it is more contemporary and straightforward (everyone recognizes the Pier); suggests building on the things the residents are familiar with; and doesn’t like the floating letters in #3 as this is not seen currently in the city.

Commissioner Manna likes: #2 color scheme which seems to tie into the city symbol; the parking structure graphics; small street pylons which add character and fit into the neighborhood although those currently in place such as in the Tree Section are not unified and have visibility and maintenance problems. Commissioner Manna wondered if a pylon gateway sign should be added at the northern entry on Highland at 45th Street since this is where the City starts; and suggested that diagonal crosswalks might be desirable at the intersection of MBB and Manhattan Avenue. Mr. Selbert noted that a major modification of crosswalk design is outside his purview and would have to be reviewed by the City Traffic Engineer.

Commissioner May likes #1 as best fit for the community; wants to avoid sign clutter and blockage of any ocean views by new signs; recalls that the Council has discussed adding lights to crosswalks for safety. Mr. Selbert stated that should the Council want to add lights to crosswalks, this would not be a conflict with the proposals.

Commissioner Rubino likes: simple and sleek design; the aqua of #2 (as opposed to the slate blue of #1 because is too similar to Santa Monica) and a modern grey (as opposed to browns); using beach symbols of sun, surf, sand, volleyball (but questions relevance of a sailboat motif); wants to stay away from wood and steel; and believes that resiliency/maintenance is very important. Commissioner Rubino noted she would like a chance to study the proposals more and give additional input.

Commissioner Chase likes: #2 design concept, especially the graphics on the parking structures and the circular motif elements attached to the banner poles. She has concern that the pylon signs might be too tall to be clearly readable.

Chairperson Gill noted he believes that the “pylon” city identity signs should be referred to as “obelisk” signs and likes: concept #1 in that it is simple, not busy and is consistent with a “less is more” approach; the obelisk street signs as they capture the history of the city and he also likes the blue/white color scheme and idea of incorporating art into the pavement at intersection(s).

Chair Gill thanked Mr. Selbert for his presentation.

Mr. Selbert thanked the Commissioners for their input and invited their further comments either as a group or individually. He would be happy to come back to the Commission if it can be arranged before September 19 when he is scheduled to go before the City Council.

2. Cultural Arts Division Update

Deborah Hom, Recreation Supervisor, provided an update on the summer programs and events:

- “Movers, Shakers & Art Makers” pilot multi-art media youth camp: was a success with an average of 9 students per week of which 4 attended multiple weeks. Next year they may divide out the disciplines into distinct camps and bring back the “Art in the Park” program for both the recreation camps and teen center.
- Shakespeare by the Sea: 2 nights about 350 attendees each night.
- Movies at the Library (2 movies): continues to be very successful with local residents, with an average of about 200 attendees/movie. Staff hopes to educate more to integrate movie-making with other arts (e.g. how the musical score contributes to the experience).

- South Bay Film Festival: there were 3 film nights, with an average of 50 attendees and 200 attending the culmination event in Hermosa Beach. She is unsure if the City will participate next year.
- Concerts in the Park: 8,000 attendees; Parks and Rec partnered with the City Police Department and a private security firm and staff feels that the concerts as a whole were very successful and the added security was beneficial in keeping the event enjoyable and safe.

All Commissioners were very positive about the summer programs, **Commissioner Rubino** especially encouraging the continuance of the multi-discipline art camp. **Chair Gill** expressed concern that the large growth in attendance at the concerts has resulted in more crowding and parking issues that required stronger security and enforcement. He cautioned that continued growth could result in the concerts no longer fitting the park setting. Ms. Hom acknowledged this concern and stated that she felt that having the additional security with extra eyes and better communication contributed to everyone having a better time.

Commissioner Rubino commented that, while there has been significant growth, the concerts were very enjoyable and well managed. She encouraged more publicity and support for the Shakespeare by the Sea events; Ms. Hom noted that staff is working with the Shakespeare group to provide more publicity and tie in with a summer camp next year.

Commissioner May asked if the City had a rule regarding the practice of park concertgoers staking out and reserving space early with an unattended blanket. Cultural Arts Manager Betz acknowledged this practice but ~~he has not has occurred~~ but staff has not enforced a rule since they are not trained in handling the conflicts that can arise. There currently is no city policy or enforcement, instead relying on self-policing by attendees; however this is an issue that will be discussed by staff.

3. Other Staff items:

Arts Manager Martin Betz reported/announced the following:

- Public Arts Trust Fund: there is an undesignated balance of \$663,218 which brings the fund to within about \$18k of the maximum allowed to accumulate. Mr. Betz plans to take the Cultural Arts Commission Work Plan to the next City Council meeting in September for authorization to start spending from this fund including the first round of the Sculpture Garden program.
- The “Space Needle” sculpture in front of the Arts Center has been removed by the artist.
- August 25, 8-10 pm at the Library there will be a conversation with the “Method, Movement, Memory” exhibit artists.
- Last weekend there was a meditation in the Art Center exhibit hall conducted by LACMA. It was very interesting and was effective in showing how to relax, view and appreciate art.
- September 2, ”Art as Experience” family printmaking workshop at Art Center (collaboration with the Library)
- September 10, 3-6 pm: closing reception/artist walkthrough at the Art Center for “Method, Movement, Memory”
- September 15, 6 pm: opening reception for Jose Lozano, Trickster/Chicano“

A brief discussion followed as to how the Commissioners are informed of cultural arts events. Mr. Betz noted that staff will double check to ensure that all of the Commissioners are on the “Commission list” that receives notices.

Commissioner Rubino stated that she would like to agendaize a new item for next month – the possibility of having an arts event that would be a collaboration between the City and school arts departments. She will meet with Mr. Betz to discuss and develop a presentation (will fall under “Commission Items” on the agenda).

G. COMMISSION ITEMS

Commissioner May noted that the next North End Art Walk will be Saturday, September 23. She will create and share a Facebook event for the walk.

H. GENERAL BUSINESS

17/08.21.1 Strand Bench project presentation Alex Weinstein

Mr. Weinstein stated that not much has changed since the last time he visited the Commission except that he has been in contact with the fabricator. His current proposal is for a single cast (not four separate blocks) bench, 18 inches tall/deep, 6 feet long with the sitting surface mimicking the ocean surface. It will be made of cast concrete and believes that the surface will be sufficiently comfortable. He showed examples of his art works sculptures and paintings. There is a straightforward method for getting made – and there could be some divots in the bottom to enable a forklift to lift it and will be hollow and therefore will be relatively light in weight. Reinforcements will be used probably with fiber and lead time to build is expected to be two months.

Chair Gill invited questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Manna stated, while liking the design, his main concern is the bench’s comfort given the undulations in the top surface. He wondered whether a prospective purchaser, looking at its image in the City’s bench catalogue, might think it doesn’t look comfortable. Mr. Weinstein responded that he has toned down the rigidity of the surface to address comfort and has made a small model which can be delivered to the City if that would help. He also noted that toning down the surface can compromise its aesthetic appearance.

Commissioner Prigozhin stated he loves the piece and believes the bench can be comfortable without sacrificing the aesthetic. He suggested making the wave undulations more subtle and making the bench appear to be floating perhaps by having a piece below that the bench sits on. Mr. Weinstein noted his concern that in making the undulations softer the piece might become too stylized.

Commissioner Rubino asked about using resin and Mr. Weinstein responded that resin is not practical in that it would crack and fade in the sun.

Commissioner May asked about using a color other than as shown, and Mr. Weinstein responded has not investigated using other colors other than that of the natural concrete color.

Chair Gill asked about getting Public Works engineering input and whether the cost would be competitive with other benches offered by the City. Mr. Weinstein noted he was unable to connect with the City engineers. Manager Betz stated because the estimated weight is 700 pounds, he does not expect that this would be an issue. Mr. Weinstein estimates the bench to cost \$10-12k and

would be able to give a closer estimate by conferring with the fabricator which he will do if the City supports the project.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND ACTION

There being no further questions, Chair Gill invited public comment. Seeing none, the Chair invited the Commission to discuss and take a vote whether to forward to the City Council with a recommendation to approve. Chair noted his reservation that more information may be needed from Public Works as to any installation issues and the price. Mr. Betz stated he is comfortable that the only outstanding critical information is the cost and he is confident that he can address all outstanding issues when he reports to the City Council.

The Chair polled the Commissioners and there was unanimous agreement that the proposal be forwarded to the City Council. Chair Gill added that he thought staff should pursue the option of a donation by the artist because having a bench already in place would be the best way of advertising the bench.

It was moved and seconded (Manna/Rubino) that staff forward the Weinstein Strand bench proposal to the City Council with a recommendation to approve adding it to the City's catalogue of possible public benches. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Weinstein thanked the Commission.

I. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:12 P.M, it was moved and seconded (Prigozhin/Rubino) and passed unanimously by voice vote to adjourn the meeting to 6:00 P.M. on September 18, 2017 in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 1400 Highland Avenue.