

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

April 15, 2019  
City Hall – City Council Chambers  
1400 Highland Avenue  
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Manna called the meeting to order at 6:15 PM.

**B. PLEDGE TO FLAG**

**C. ROLL CALL**

Present: Matsumoto, May, Rubino, Ryan, Chairperson Manna

Absent: Taner

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

**D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - February 4, 2019 and March 18, 2019**

It was moved and seconded (Rubino/Matsumoto) to approve the minutes of **February 4, 2019** as submitted.

**ROLL CALL:**

Ayes: Matsumoto, May, Rubino, Ryan, Chairperson Manna

Noes: None

Absent: Taner

Abstain: None

Chair Manna called for any changes to the minutes of **March 18, 2019**, there being none, the minutes were unanimously approved by voice vote as submitted (5-0-1-0).

**E. CEREMONIAL -**

Recognize Chair Fred Manna for Beach Cities Health District Volunteer (Integrity)

Cultural Arts Manager Betz noted that this year Chair Fred Manna was nominated to receive a volunteer award from the Beach Cities Health District (BCHD). Each year the District recognizes four District volunteers for embodying its core values and this year Chair Manna was recognized for the Integrity award. Chair Manna expressed his appreciation and noted that the District held a very nice luncheon to honor its awardees. The Commission and staff expressed congratulations.

**F. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (3-Minute Limit) - None**

**G. GENERAL BUSINESS**

18/0820.1 Review of APPC City Hall Lobby Public Art RFQ Semi-finalists

**Cultural Arts Manager Betz** provided a brief introduction, noting that the purpose of tonight's discussion is for the Cultural Arts Commission (CAC) to review and affirm four semi-finalists who, out of about 100 submittals, were chosen by the Ad-Hoc Arts in Public Places Committee (APPC) to work with staff to present site-specific proposals. Mr. Betz explained the three-step vetting process undertaken by the APPC at its meeting last Wednesday involved first narrowing 100 submittals down to 35 (yes/no basis); then individually

scoring those 35, using a 3-category rubric, and lastly, choosing four out of the top ranked (above 90 points) as the four semi-finalists.

The task for the Commission is to review and affirm the four semi-finalists chosen by the APPC. The semi-finalists will later be forwarded to the City Council for final approval and allocation of funds to go towards development of specific proposals by the semi-finalists.

A brief discussion followed; **Manager Betz** clarified that, while the City Council is expecting four semi-finalists, the Commission could, if there is consensus, suggest alternatives.

**Lorenzo Baker**, Assistant to Manager Betz, proceeded to give a slide presentation with an overview of the qualifications and samples of works submitted by each of the four semi-finalists chosen by the APPC including Susan Zoccolo, Kip Kobayashi, Monica Bravo, and Nancy Hou.

Staff responded to inquiries from the Commission, clarifying: 1) in the RFQ stage, no specific proposals were to be submitted, at this point only statements of qualifications; 2) the City Council allocation at this stage would be \$4,000 for Staff to work with the semi-finalists in coming up with specific proposals; 3) the space to be involved would not just be the wall where the former mural was, but the entire lobby and the wall would most likely be covered, but integrated with the new art work. **Mr. Baker** noted that the artists will have a better idea of what to propose after visiting the site.

**Mr. Baker** then led the discussion with a presentation of seven other submittals who scored high (above 90 points) in the APCC vetting process; these included: Rob Ley, Benjamin Ball, Laura Haddad/Tom Drugan, Deborah Aschheim, Future Cities Lab, Amy Landesberg and Cliff Garten. **Mr. Baker** showed samples of work from their submittals and websites.

**Chair Manna** called for a break at 6:55, to enable the commissioners to look at the lobby space; the Commission reconvened 7:05 p.m.

**Manager Betz** discussed with the Commission the attraction of the APPC to the four semi-finalists and emphasized that strong points included not only the beauty of sample pieces but whether the artist demonstrated aspects such as versatility, innovation and the ability to respond with solutions that address the challenges of the lobby space.

The Commission discussed the project and the four APPC chosen submittals with some focus on the challenging aspects of the space. **Chair Manna** observed that the stairs are a main feature and are about moving people from one level to another, and thinks perhaps it's not appropriate to have something that is so eye-catching that it would make you want to stop on the stairs and stare at it. **Commissioner Rubino** stated she thought that the proposal should work both from a distance and very close up. **Chair Manna** also noted he would like to see something innovative, not necessarily a mural or painting on the wall.

Discussion focused on how to approach providing information about the artists to the City Council. **Manager Betz** suggested perhaps more focus should be on the artists' credentials than their existing art. It was also suggested that images chosen to be presented to Council should have more people in the photos. **Mr. Betz** noted that staff will consider how best to position the sample art pieces that are part of the submittals, in presenting to City Council. **Commissioner Rubino** noted that she found the information on the artists' websites to be very helpful. **Chair Manna** noted that he felt it was good to have a variety in the semi-finalists presented to Council.

**Lorenzo Baker** noted that in public art, sometimes a piece that you might like right away is really something fabricated “off the shelf” but the more enduring works may be those that are specially designed for a space that grow on you over time.

**Commissioner Rubino** suggested choosing two alternates to keep in the background when presented to the Council.

Staff went over the seven additional high scoring submittals (Ley, Ball, Haddad/Drugen, Ascheim, Future Cities Lab, Landsberg, Garten) and showed samples of their public art.

**Chair Manna** received unanimous agreement that the Commission accept all four artists chosen by the APCC as finalists and then pick two alternates to be presented to the City Council. The Commission voted in two rounds, each Commissioner nominated 2 alternates, with the following results: Round one: Garten-3, Ley-2; Ball-2 and Landsberg and Future City Lab, each 1, establishing Cliff Garten as Alternate 1. Round two: Ball-2; Ley-3; establishing Rob Ley as Alternate 2.

#### COMMISSION ACTION

It was subsequently moved and seconded (Rubino/Ryan) to accept the four artists selected by the APCC (Susan Zoccola, Nancy Hou, Kipp Kobayashi, and Monika Bravo) and that these four, plus two alternates chosen by the Cultural Arts Commission (Rob Ley and Cliff Garten) be presented to the City Council relative to the City Hall Lobby Public Art project .

#### ROLL CALL:

Ayes: Matsumoto, May, Rubino, Ryan, Chairperson Manna  
Noes: None  
Absent: Taner  
Abstain: None

#### F. STAFF ITEMS

##### **Cultural Arts Division Update**

Recreation Supervisor, **Eilen Stewart** gave a “sneak preview” of the upcoming exhibition opening May 3: “Morphologizing”, curated by Ceramics Coordinator Eric Brinkman and will have a focus on potteryworks – things made of clay. Having a ceramics show has been a goal for a long time and this is the first. Ms. Stewart showed slides of some sample works, Jonathon Keep (has embraced the technology of 3-D ceramics, very well established), Dino Capaldi (CSULB grad student), Peter Karner (more traditional, well established, will be doing a glazing workshop for the ceramics studio), Vince Palacios (El Camino teacher, uses decals) and Karen Koblitz (well known USC instructor, juxtaposition of traditional forms with pop culture). At the opening, there will be food, drinks, entertainment and hopefully a wheel throwing demonstration. A goal will be to have an educational aspect to it - with more text provided.

##### **Discussion of Work Plan items for 2019 – 2020:**

**Cultural Arts Manager Betz** reported that, with many projects “in the pipeline” he is developing a realistic timeline for completion dates. He is hesitant to add more projects to the staff “plate” at this time, given the joint meeting coming up in June, he is thinking that the best course may be to only add the “Art in the Park” as a major new project, and discuss a little more the improvements at the Art Center. He thinks there should be a more comprehensive approach to improving the Art Center and have a competitive proposal process - perhaps this year starting with developing a budget and putting out an RFQ.

Brief discussion followed. **Commissioner Rubino** inquired as to whether a directional sign could be placed in the Manhattan Beach Boulevard median as has been suggested in prior discussions to get more visibility.

Commissioner Rubino noted some type of banner sign was suggested and **Commissioner May** noted possibly some posters could be placed. **Commissioner Ryan** expressed concern that piecemealing the improvements would be disadvantageous and perhaps there should be one overall plan and vision. **Commissioner Rubino** suggested that staff can look at things that do not require a significant budget but might help to make the center more visible, such as a sandwich board type sign. The discussion ended in consensus to go forward with only one new Work Plan item (Art in the Park) and that staff would look into low level cost items to meanwhile improve visibility of the Art Center. This consensus will be presented by Vice Chair Rubino at the June Joint Work Plan Meeting with Council.

Manager Betz reported that the utility box project is progressing (waiting for contracts to be returned signed). Commissioner Rubino reminded that there has been discussion about renaming the Sculpture Garden program, and Manager Betz pointed out that, if this is to be done, it should be very soon. Manager Betz noted that there is one more Cultural Arts Commission meeting (May) before the June Work Plan joint meetings, and the renaming issue can be discussed at that meeting.

**G. COMMISSION ITEMS**

**Commissioner Rubino** mentioned a Foundation of Local Arts fundraiser; Chair Manna had attended late, it was fairly well attended, had some items for sale and some up for auction.

**Commissioner Rubino** inquired on the status of the Strand bench program, noting a bench designed and made by artist Benjamin Ball was bought by a family and given to the City but has been damaged by skateboarders. **Mr. Betz** is working on how to remedy this, how to repair and what can be done to prevent in the future. As to the program one can come in twice a year (February/July) and propose a unique bench but the “bench program”, where one can order a pre-approved design, has been stopped.

**Commissioner May** noted she was looking around the City website for a way to repost an upcoming local art sale and it seemed that the website was out of date. Eilen Stewart stated that posters have been distributed around town, but she will look into this issue, and work with the City’s social media team.

**Eilen Stewart** also noted an upcoming ceramics class sale that will be the day after the Morphologizing exhibition opening (May 2).

**Chair Manna** reported on the closing of the “TWO by Two” Amell/Chaidez exhibit and felt that the exhibit and related events were yet another very successful program. He also reported that the “Lives Well Lived” film documentary which was screened by the Rotary Club and Beach Cities Health District was very well attended and everyone seemed to not only enjoy the movie but hung around to discuss. The Chair also reminded that he will be on an art field trip in Italy so he will not be present at the June meetings, but knows Vice Chair Rubino will do a great job.

**H. ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:56 P.M, **Chair Manna** moved adjournment, to the regular meeting of May 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 1400 Highland Avenue.