

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

November 18, 2019

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

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Rubino called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

**B. PLEDGE TO FLAG**

**C. ROLL CALL**

Present: Manna (7:20 PM), May, Ryan, Taner, Chair Rubino

Absent: Bennett

Staff present: Martin Betz, Cultural Arts Manager, Jessica Vincent, Recreation Services Manager, Rosemary Lackow, Recording Secretary

**D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - October 21, 2019**

It was moved and seconded (Ryan/May) to approve the minutes with two changes: 1) Pg 1, General Business, second paragraph: revise first sentence to read “Chair Rubino noted she’d like to add two projects to the Work Plan projects list: discussion of a “Night Market” and discussion of performing arts events at the Art Center.” And 2) Pg 4, fourth paragraph from bottom: second line, replace “Commission Orhan” with “Commissioner Taner”.

ROLL CALL:

Ayes: May, Ryan, Taner, Chair Rubino

Noes: None

Absent: Bennett, Manna

Abstain: None

**E. CEREMONIAL - None**

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

**G. GENERAL BUSINESS (agenda order revised)**

**Agenda re-order motion:**

It was moved and seconded (May/Taner) that item G.d of “H. Staff Items” a staff presentation of regarding the Parks Master Plan, be moved up on the agenda and considered after F. Audience Participation and before G. General Business.

ROLL CALL:

Ayes: May, Ryan, Taner, Chair Rubino

Noes: None

Absent: Bennett, Manna

Abstain: None

19/1021.1 Discussion of 2020-21 Work Plan (*followed Staff Item G.d Parks Master Plan Presentation*)

**Cultural Arts Manager Martin Betz stated** that the goal tonight will be for the Commission to discuss items 1. A-F on the draft CAC Work Plan report presented this evening and agree on a final “short list” of projects to be discussed at the joint CAC/CC meeting on January 6, 2020. Mr. Betz explained that projects (first group of bulleted items on the report) expected to be completed by the end of this year- will not be up for discussion as they will not be on the new Plan. Looking forward, at its December meeting, the Commission will consider budget information related to the draft new work plan.

At 7:20 Commissioner Manna arrived (from community meeting on Parks & Rec Master Plan) and was seated.

Upon discussion, the following was the consensus for each Work Plan item per report October 21, 2019:

**A. Manhattan Beach Art Center façade/grounds improvements** (revise to be “B”): Keep in Work Plan but combine first two bullets (to reimagine the existing ID sign, and consider a new sign by an artist). Chair Rubino emphasized this is an interim “stop gap” (one year out) plan until a larger overhaul plan can be devised. Discussion: the new sign must be an artistic endeavor to be able to use art fund money and yet must not be too distracting (Manna). An electronic sign could be considered as the display part of the new artistic sign (Taner against a very large changeable copy sign). The metal tin section (last bullet) is not visible to the street and so does not lend itself to a street banner. Commissioner Manna emphasized that the end result is to get people into the building not just look good. Manager Betz noted that the city-wide wayfinding program is active and whatever is done must work with that program when finalized. Commissioner Taner also suggested that before giving to the City Council, the Commission should come up with a brief introduction (2 paragraphs) about the plan.

**Action:** A motion was made and seconded (Taner/Ryan) that the Commission form a 2-person subcommittee, comprised of Commissioners Ryan and Taner, to write a brief (1-2 paragraphs) introduction to the 2020/2021 Manhattan Beach Cultural Arts Commission Work Plan, to be given to staff one week prior to the December 16 meeting. The motion passed 5-0-1 (Bennett absent).

There was a brief discussion regarding a suggestion by the Chair that the existing mural wrap around the Arts Building seemed to have faded, and Manager Betz will look at this.

**B. Promotional materials for Public Art Projects** (revised to be project A): Proposed by Commissioner Ryan, it was agreed to refine the title to reflect goal to raise awareness of arts and culture and rename as Program A to highlight priority (Art Center improvement becomes B). Manager Betz emphasized that the Commission should keep in mind that all programs and funding are ultimately decided by the City Council as an overall City program. Commissioner Orhan feels that this should include some entertainment at CA sponsored events and this should be budgeted. Manager Betz pointed out that, in the future as the Community Grants Program gets going those events will need promoting and staff currently utilizes social media extensively. Rubino asked and received clarification that the bullet for “talking presentation” should include having a city map (already in progress by City GIS); Mr. Betz agreed to add a GIS developed map to the appropriate bullet item (see number 2?). Rubino asked if having a presence at city events (booth at HTF) should be added. Commissioner Ryan clarified that, as under bullet 3, the many City service clubs can be opportunities for the “talking presentation”.

**C. Develop Public Art Projects in the North End/El Porto area** (to be eliminated): Mr. McCrary of the North End BID was invited to this meeting but was not present. It was agreed to eliminate this as an individual work plan item, but to be open for collaboration as projects come up. For example, more utility box locations in El Porto (one only to be done now) might be agreed to be recommended with the BID’s input. Mr. Betz will communicate with the BID on ways to collaborate during “Phase 2” of the existing

utility box program.

**D. Develop an RFP to address the issues of conservation and preservation highlighted in the Public Art Assessment report** (to be eliminated). At Mr. Betz’s suggestion, this item was agreed to be eliminated as this item is already part of the current Plan and this was put on the list mainly to address the cost, which can be done and brought back to the Commission at any time, without being on the new Plan.

**E. Organize a “Night Market” Style arts event. Possibly in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce.** (revise to have generic collaborators, park setting) Night Market received enthusiastic support with the following revisions: keep the title of it as relating to possible collaboration – more generic, not particularly limited to just the Chamber of Commerce (also other organizations like Rotary) and that the description of a location should include “a park” which could include, but not be limited to Marine Avenue Park.

Chair Rubino mentioned that she had attended a Night Market in San Pedro and she was open to discussion about any changes. Commissioner Ryan asked whether this would be an annual event, like the Pier Lighting but arts oriented? The Chair responded that, while the San Pedro has had its Market for about 3 years now, (likewise Torrance and Hollywood, and many other cities have a recurring Night Market 3-4 times/year, but for Manhattan Beach this is proposed as once/year. Anything to add? Commissioner Manna related a LACMA one time only member event (\$10 entry) he recently attended that featured 4 different art installations and had mini-plays that were designed around appreciation of art (using art as reference) and suggested this was a concept that could be looked into - to see if any part of it could be incorporated into the Night Market. Chair Rubino welcomed the idea but perhaps could be part of the next item (F); however, concern was that such an event would be too large for the Art Center as part of an exhibit. It was agreed that this could be developed in the future in this item if Night Market is approved in the Plan and funded.

**F. Produce monthly programs at the Manhattan Beach Art Center (revised to “Produce Monthly Arts Programming at MBAC”)** Manager Betz indicated that this arose from an internally derived staff goal to have two performances for each exhibit/show as part of the routine budget process. The City of Temecula had something similar. In concept the goal is to develop a small production program to bring in small performance groups to be used at openings, closings and possibly more often at other events, more of a “black box” theater concept and this would bring in more “art aficionados” to the Center. Chair Rubino commented that this is a wide open as to content (mime, chamber music, poetry reading, drama etc.) and could be experiential as suggested by Commissioner Ryan. This is also a situation where there needs to be more discussion with the City Council on obtaining more staff resources including whether the arts fund could be used. The Commission agreed to simplify the title to: “Arts Programming (Monthly) at the Manhattan Beach Art Center” and it was suggested that the City could sub-contract or work with a non-profit entity (check FOLA) for a project program/production manager for this program so as not to involve existing staff. This could be noted in the committee’s introduction when given to the council but not with too much detail at this time.

Chair Rubino called for any other public interested parties if present, to express opinions, seeing none, the including any member of the North End BID, and none came forward. The Chair will huddle with Mr. Betz immediately following the meeting to compare notes.

In conclusion, Mr. Betz will bring back a revised list at the next meeting.

## **H. STAFF ITEMS**

Parks Master Plan presentation – Jessica Vincent, Senior Recreation Manager

**Jessica Vincent, Parks & Recreation Department (P&R)**, presented “Manhattan Beach Parks Master Plan: Road Map into the Future”, covering: Purpose/background; 2) Demographics; 3) Current Parks & Recreation infrastructure; 4) Timeline (goal to present to Council March, 2020; and 5) Input requested from CAC regarding 5 questions: **Q1:** What would you like P&R to look like in 10 years?; **Q2:** What additional programs would you like to see? **Q3:** What additional amenities would you like to see to enhance public P&R experience? **Q4:** How would you like to see P&R facilities improved? ; **Q5:** What would be your “dream project”?

**Ms. Vincent** received individual input from the Commission:

**Comm. Taner:** described two main suggestions: (1) that, in the shorter term, the CA Division/Commission would be re-named and ultimately re-structured as a wholly new City Department; and (2) that the City develop a long-term goal to build a new y arts facility.

Regarding (1) – he feels that the current name “Cultural Arts” is a misnomer, in that it is more of a particular type of art (art that has to do with culture) and it sounds a lot like “martial arts”. Following the lead of LA County, the Division and Commission would be renamed from “Cultural Arts” to the “Arts & Culture (or Culture & Arts) Division/Commission”. Later the CA Division should be elevated to a wholly separate department. He feels such changes and improvements, though significant and costly, are warranted due to the importance of the arts and culture to the community.

Regarding (2) - he has a couple of ideas for dream projects and amenities in the longer term. First, he envisions building a cultural center, architecturally significant (like the library) with two levels. There would be a subterranean parking level and above, a museum and state of the art performing arts facility that could also double as a movie theater and a terrace for entertaining. Possible locations include the current Joslyn Center and the above ground 3-level parking structure across from Metlox. If the City were to use the Joslyn Center site for this, perhaps the classes and activities being done at the Joslyn Center area could re-locate to the Art Center on MBB. Second, he would like to see a bike path be built in the greenbelt that would co-exist with the walking path, connecting the Manhattan Village Mall and east side of the city with the Joslyn Center and west side. This will have the effect of making art more accessible for all ages and make crossing Sepulveda safer if the underpass of the Sepulveda bridge can be used. He feels that the new center especially is a “must” because existing facilities are old and very inadequate.

**Comm. Ryan:** stated that she feels there are quite a few programs and facilities already established and a lot can be done with the facilities the City already has. Feels those need to be refreshed or restored before adding new things. She feels that the City should promote resident serving programs.

**Comm. May:** Very much in favor of taking care of what the City already has and pointed out that the City is just now starting to build up its history and we can do a lot with that. She recognizes that land is scarce and yet building a new facility would be a great investment. She would be very interested in things like the proposed “Night Market”. She noted also that the schools are doing fantastic art and there’s a lot of talent. Agrees with Commissioner Ryan in terms of focus.

**Comm. Taner:** added that he also supports preserving facilities and he believes if there is concern for funding, the City can look at non-city sources, such as fund raising for corporate sponsors and possibly naming rights, and he also believes that its important for the city to have a movie theater as a community center without having to leave Manhattan Beach. A performing arts center can double as a theater.

**Chair Rubino:** The Chair thanked Ms. Vincent for her hard work and noted its importance - she has been participating in the survey and meetings and it’s a wonderful project. In ten years, she would like to see the Commission continue in its current mission and capacity and would like to see the city as a more

thriving arts community, with more galleries, and performing arts (plays etc.) as was the case 30-plus years ago (theater held in council chambers). Models are Laguna Beach and Taos New Mexico. Her dream project would be a performing arts center, and, though siting such is difficult and expensive, to have something like the Armstrong Theater in Torrance where various activities are consolidated in a complex and function as a center of the community revolving around the arts.

**Ms. Vincent** thanked the Commission and encouraged everyone to complete the surveys.

**Agenda Re-order motion:**

**Chair Rubino** called for a motion to re-order the staff items on the agenda – to take the remaining “Staff Items” (Cultural Arts Division updates, PATF update, City Council updates) to come after Section F (Audience Participation) and after the Parks Master Plan presentation.

It was so moved (Taner/May). The motion carried 4-0-1 with a voice vote.

- **Cultural Arts Division updates** - Cultural Arts Manager Betz reported on the following: Art Trust Fund: staff has given a “big picture” report to each Commissioner. In response to Commission inquiries, Mr. Betz reported: in past average growth was about \$50k per month, but that slowed down; fund contributors are commercial and larger residential projects, last year large contributors were the parking structures at Manhattan Village; if funding expires (will not be expiring!) money must be returned to the developer, and funds cannot be used for construction (except for art pieces) though a portion can be used for “administration”; the CAC is an advisory board to make a recommendation to council on how to spend this money; CA staff can discuss expectations of large building projects with Building Official; the monies are held in a trust fund; amendments to the program ordinance can be made by the City Council (Mr. Betz will look into how this is done and it was agreed that staff should mention that the CAC is in support of looking at amending the fund ordinance and innovative ideas (i.e. how to use larger amounts of money to make bigger impact). Mr. Betz will provide a copy of the arts fund enabling Ordinance to the Commission (in Muni Code Title 10); Light Gate (replaced glass): re-dedication ceremony was held November 14; Mural project: some are already installed, including parking lot across from City Hall and at Metlox and upcoming: exterior of elevator shaft below Police/Fire facility and in December at Joslyn and the Council will be looking at some new mural locations in January (Mr. Betz will present to CAC an update for a recommendation in December); Utility box wraps: five are now going in (Mr. Betz will provide list); City Hall Lobby Art: the APPC will be meeting December 9 (2 councilmembers, Napolitano and Hadley, have been added to the Committee); Community Grants: deadline to apply s December 16<sup>th</sup> and an info meeting was held with a good turnout; Historical Society Archive collaboration: a new employee hired and is working hard.

- **PSTF Budget update** – see above

- **City Council updates** – City Council approved a citizen request to relocate *Dragon Tales* sculpture from the greenbelt to an existing concrete pedestal at the Art Center. Some comment has been received regarding the mural across from City Hall on Highland, but to his knowledge there has been no staff direction on this. Mr. Betz informed that reason for the relocation of the greenbelt sculpture was that the residents near it did not find it to their personal taste; there was a brief discussion in which concern was expressed that such could set an undesirable precedent. Mr. Betz commented that it is possible that in the future public notification may be required prior to installing public art visible to nearby residences. This hasn’t been done in the past because if there was opportunity to complain, no art may be able to be sited. Conversely, if notification is to be done, it may not mean that one complaint will automatically deny a location. Mr. Betz acknowledged that although significant time was spent on finding a location for Dragon Tales that would not cause impacts, a complaint still was made.

**I. COMMISSION ITEMS**

**Commissioner Taner** requested, and upon discussing briefly, Commission agreed to add to next (December 16 agenda “Consideration of change of Commission/Division name (from Cultural Arts Commission to Culture & Arts Commission)”. Commissioner Taner encouraged other Commissioners to do research on this proposal in advance of this. Manager Betz noted he would send information to the Commission including a power point presentation and emphasized a renaming if to occur should apply to the Cultural Arts Division.

**Commissioner Manna** attended the Light Gate re-dedication and the piece looks great.

**Commissioner May** inquired regarding a City Visitors Bureau where Cultural Arts info can be disseminated. Mr. Betz noted that typically an outside entity, like the Chamber does when tourism is, as policy, a goal of the City. Mr. Betz noted he does not think this is a prominent goal of Manhattan Beach and is outside the CAC scope, but if interested, Commissioner May might contact the Chamber or City Council.

**J. ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:41 P.M, **Chair Rubino** moved to adjourn to the regular meeting of December 16, 2019 at 6:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 1400 Highland Avenue. No objections, so ordered.