

CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
MINUTES OF THE CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION

August 17, 2020

Meeting by teleconference (Zoom) – in accordance with procedures on agenda
1400 Highland Avenue
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Ryan called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

B. PLEDGE TO FLAG

C. ROLL CALL

Present: Davis, Manna, Marcy, Chair Ryan

Absent: Ibaraki, Rubino

Staff present: Eilen Stewart, Interim Cultural Arts Manager (ICAM), Linda Robb, Parks and Recreation Management Analyst (Host Participant); and Rosemary Lackow, Recording Secretary

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - July 20, 2020

It was moved and seconded (Ryan/Manna) to approve the minutes with no changes. The motion passed by hand vote (4-0-2): Ayes: Davis, Manna, Marcy, Chair Ryan; Absent: Ibaraki, Rubino.

E. CEREMONIAL – None

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

G. GENERAL BUSINESS – Discussion of Work Plan Items

Chair Ryan noted there are two basic types of Work Plan items: “larger projects” that are the most recently approved projects, and ongoing projects carried over from a prior Plan.

Chair Ryan discussed the role of the Commission - to evaluate and make recommendations on Work Plan projects, not to make decisions, as that is the job of the City Council. However, the more the Commission works together and makes recommendations, the more viable the Commission will be and leaned on by the City Council. Although the Commission will be working in committees, it will form its recommendations as a whole Commission to the City Council.

Chair Ryan called for reports for the three “larger” Work Plan items from the Ad Hoc Committees.

1. MB Art Center Project (Manna/Rubino): **Commissioner Manna** noted that he and **Commissioner Rubino** had visited the Center prior to the Covid outbreak and two phases of improvements are envisioned: first signage improvements, and second, improvements to the building or grounds. He noted initially this phase only involved the ground mounted permanent identification sign but the signage phase has been expanded to include promotional banners on poles in the street right-of-way, subject to the final approval by City Council of a city-wide sign project. As to the building, the original idea was to possibly install new landscaping and improve the building with new paint or a series of murals but after recently going back to the site, he now thinks the second phase should be scaled down. He believes much of the landscaping, that actually complements the building (e.g. palm trees) can be kept and cleaned up, and instead of painting or installing murals, he thinks power-washing the exterior brick surface will brighten it considerably. He also suggested adding an art piece at the back side of the fountain/patio wall, and a welcome sign facing the

parking lot and possibly removing a concave wall, and placing sculptures around the exterior. Commissioner Manna noted that these are his own thoughts and hasn't discussed with Commissioner Rubino.

Commissioner Davis concurred with Commissioner Manna's revised approach and feels strongly that identification signage should be a high priority, and a much more prominent sign is badly needed. She especially likes placing sculptures around the building and a welcome sign at the back wall and suggested two more items: periodically changing the current black and white frieze mural and adding a mural on the interior surface of the rear cinderblock wall perhaps done as a community activity. **Commissioner Marcy** stated his agreement with the previous comments and would like to see some pop-up color.

ICAM Stewart confirmed that the City Council has delayed its decision on the pole banner program and suggested a 2-prong approach for the CAC committee – to focus on all other elements of the Art Center improvements, but also, if pole banners become an integral element to the project and while the Council banner discussion is pending, the Committee can flush out how they would like to see a banner program work for the Center, considering, for example: how many banner poles, what would they look like, how frequently should they be changed?

Chair Ryan has visited the site and agrees with the two-prong approach. She would like to see an early line-item to basically clean up the site, especially the landscaping; very much likes the power-washing suggestion including cleaning the wrap mural. She likes moving incrementally - after cleaning the site, then look and see what other elements (murals, sculptures, painting) might be appropriate as the greatest change may result from landscaping improvements.

ICAM Stewart commented that the frieze mural has been in place perhaps 4 years, and the artist, John Van Hamersveld, is very well know and currently experiencing somewhat of a renaissance – so his work is a valuable asset. She noted that the mural is not black and white but is off-white and replacing the mural due to the building shape is fairly expensive (estimated at \$15k).

Chair Ryan wondered if it would be useful to ask John Van Hamersveld for suggestions as to what the City can do to show off his work better. **ICAM Stewart** noted staff can reach out to the artist, if that is recommended by the Commission. **Commissioner Davis** commented that she thought the mural looks fine, but likes the idea of improving what is going on around the building, like adding sculptures. She can also help in making a power point that could illustrate how possible improvements could be done.

Chair Ryan noted that the next step will be for the Art Center Enhancement Committee to put some structure to the ideas discussed and present at the next meeting in September.

Commissioner Manna noted that a portion of the mural facing the parking lot seems to need repair; **ICAM Stewart** said she was aware there is an issue and made note of the comment.

2. Public Relations and Marketing (Ryan/Davis): **Chair Ryan** reported that she and Commissioner Davis have not yet met but they will be getting together; she has already discussed with **ICAM Stewart**.

3. Performing Arts Enhancements (Rubino/Marcy): **Commissioner Marcy** reported that he and Commissioner Rubino have not yet had a chance to meet, but will do so soon. **Chair Ryan** noted that the Council is very supportive of performing arts.

Chair Ryan noted that between now and the next meeting, the Ad Hoc Committees should confer first with **ICAM Stewart** to make sure they have a clear understanding of the “rules of the road” in proceeding, reach out to each other to discuss ideas for going forward and come to the September meeting with the beginnings

of a structured plan.

H. STAFF ITEMS

Chair Ryan made introductory comments, noting that staff has a report which was prior emailed summarizing all ongoing Work Plan projects; copies can be provided.

1. **Ad-Hoc Committees: ICAM Stewart** gave an overview and explained what tasks are needed for each of five new committees for ongoing projects that are well on their way but still need assistance:

- **Sculpture Garden:** The project has had several iterations over the years and two years ago it was revamped as the City has had difficulty finding artists to participate. The changes include: a longer (2-year) display cycle, discontinuing a “pot and pole” installation and offering a larger financial stipend. After revamping the program, staff realized that, in abandoning the pot and pole, other physical concerns arose that over time could be problematic for City property. The committee needs to: work with staff to research and come up with alternative installation methods; get feedback from other City Departments; develop an RFP; review the submissions; and assist in preparing a PowerPoint presentation for full Commission review and recommendation to the City Council.
- **Utility Box Beautification:** is “Round 2” (Round 1 = 12 boxes completed). Using an existing RFP, the committee will need to: pare down submissions, identify a list of locations; and put together a PowerPoint presentation which will be presented to the full Commission in considering a recommendation to the City Council. In the last round 100 submissions were received; the City website (an “Art in Public Places” program) shows locations and artists for the first round. ICAM Stewart discussed pros and cons of wrapping vs. painting.
- **Art Assessment/Conservation:** Staff has made initial recommendations regarding all public art works; the committee needs to: review recommendations made by Staff; and help identify best courses of action with conservation vendors and eventually strategize how to best present to Council.
- **City Murals:** Three murals have been installed and City Council is interested in installing a few more. The committee needs to: identify new locations, work with existing and possibly new artists through an RFP, review submissions, and prepare a PowerPoint presentation for full Commission review and recommendation to the City Council. A caveat: public locations owned by the City that have high visibility are becoming scarce, so staff is working with legal counsel on developing an ordinance that would allow a city mural on a private property. In response to **Commissioners Davis and Marcy**, respectively, **ICAM Stewart** stated: 1) regarding the empty lot at corner of MBB/Sepulveda, she does not have the details on the installation some time ago of historic photo images placed on construction fencing, and 2) the school district has jurisdiction over installing murals on school property, however this does not preclude a collaboration with the school district.
- **Art Grants:** Staff had piloted this program and learned that it did not work out as intended. They found that the applications submitted this past year were found to **not** be viable for Manhattan Beach because the parameters used, although common in larger jurisdictions, were impractical for a smaller city. Also, performance pieces with audiences have become impossible due to Covid-19. The committee will strategize and take ownership of this project. One option to be considered would be, once an ordinance for city murals is finalized, to combine this with the City murals project to create a mural art grant. This would involve writing parameters in requesting submissions and could be an easier and faster way of getting more murals. Another consideration is whether the program should

have categories, e.g. performing arts, or a festival type of event such as an art “walk about”.

ICAM Stewart reminded that there are other Work Plan projects that do not require an Ad Hoc Committee but are ongoing: the A.C. Conner exhibit (January 2021), programming events at the MB Art Center, as well as the Historical Society project in which items in the “Red House” are being catalogued and the City Hall Lobby project which will be considered by the City Council tomorrow (8/18). **Commissioner Davis** suggested that the City Hall lobby install be video-taped.

Chair Ryan led the Commission through the process of forming five new Ad-Hoc Committees, project by project. **ICAM Stewart** noted that each Commissioner should serve on two committees and suggested that the City Murals and Arts Grants could be different committees but will have some overlap for example, the City Murals Committee can set up parameters for the murals which could be plugged into the Art Grants program if combining the programs is ok with the City Council.

The Commissioners volunteered for the following committees:

- Sculpture Garden Committee: Manna/Ryan
- Utility Boxes Beautification Committee: Davis/Marcy
- City Murals Committee: Ibaraki (appointed in absentia)/Manna
- Arts Grants Committee: Marcy/Rubino (appointed in absentia)
- Public Arts Conservation Committee: Davis/Ryan

Chair Ryan noted that she will email Work Plan information right away to the entire Commission.

2. **Cultural Arts Division Updates:** ICAM Stewart noted on-line classes such as Ceramics Studio have been very successful, using a subscription model; regarding current exhibits, all of the “Pierspectives” submissions are viewable on-line and a video virtual exhibit walk through of those works that are physically up on the wall is being developed. The final decision of artist and funding approval for the City Hall lobby project will be on tomorrow night’s City Council agenda; the City archivist is busy cataloguing “Red House” Historical Society items and, for the Sculpture Garden, staff is working with Public Works for installation of last pieces including Dragon Tales at the Art Center. Regarding upcoming Art Center exhibits: due to Covid, instead of a “Time 4 Art” Homeira Goldstein group exhibit this winter, there will be a solo sculpture artist exhibit, with hopefully, sculptures on the exterior of the Art Center. In January, 2021 there will be an exhibit of plein air artist/city historic figure A.C. Conner’s works, with the works of late local artist and beloved instructor, Eva Goldsheid. Finally, next year’s spring ceramics exhibit is being planned, that will showcase ceramic traditions from Southern California works such as Catalina or Malibu tiles and Metlox. The next Community Exhibit will follow in the summer.

3. **PATF Budget Update:** ICAM Stewart reported that the fund is strong: it has \$2,103,466 total of which \$746,724 has been allocated; no funds are in danger of expiring for about two more years.

4. **City Council Updates:** As mentioned, tomorrow the Council will be deciding on the artist and approving funding for the City Hall Lobby project, but the Council decision on banner policy has been delayed.

I. COMMISSION ITEMS

Chair Ryan reviewed, upon consulting with staff, the purposes of the meeting agenda sections, noting: “General Business” covers topics where the Commission takes action in the form of a recommendation to City Council; “Staff Items” covers a range of Staff updates and information. However, going forward, “Commission Items”, which in the past has been used by the Commissioners to report on cultural arts events

and happenings, will be realigned to primarily be used to discuss and get information and feedback regarding the projects being worked on in the Committees.

Chair Ryan explained the Commission's work roles between now and next meeting: for the three larger projects the commissioners should meet with their fellow committee member and get together with ICAM Stewart and then create an outline of what feedback is needed from the whole Commission. Communication should be done with one or two other Commissioners, subject to the Brown Act. Email is encouraged.

On the secondary projects, the Committees should reach out to ICAM Stewart first for guidance; **Chair Ryan** will send out material that can be used as a guide when discussing projects. The Chair also encouraged the Commissioners to talk to each other between meetings as this will result in being better prepared.

ICAM Stewart advised the Commission that they should not text each other because text messages are subject to the FOIA (Freedom of Information Act). She also emphasized that, as staff liaison to the Commission she is the sole point of contact for City staff.

Commissioner Marcy requested clarification as to whether the "Ceremonial" agenda section is used for recognizing artists; ICAM Stewart responded that it is not because such is not in the purview of the CAC but rather is something the City Council does. It could be, if CAC recognition of artists were to be approved by the Council as a new work plan item. "Ceremonial" is typically used to recognize outgoing or new Commissioners.

Commissioner Davis inquired, **ICAM Stewart** responded that the City has paid artist Patricia Vader an amount owed to her.

Commissioner Manna stated he likes and appreciates the direction to use Commission Items for project discussions, but wondered if another line item can be included in the agenda for reporting cultural happenings as he feels this has value. He also saw at the dog park in Marine Avenue Park, an unauthorized art work - "Oh Crap" - made of brightly colored doggy bags arranged in a floral pattern, which he thought was neat and commended staff for the selections in the "Pierspective" exhibit.

Chair Ryan clarified that she had been frustrated by discussions on cultural events and had inquired of staff if this agenda section should be used more for working on Commission City projects; she respectfully asks that this section be used only for Commission projects from now on.

The Chair asked whether there was input from the Recording Secretary or Analyst Robb; Secretary Lackow requested that any additional meeting related materials distributed to the Commission for a meeting be emailed to her.

Chair Ryan noted that on the City website, their meeting time still shows 6:00 p.m., not 5:00 pm. Management Analyst Robb stated she will check with the City Clerk regarding this.

J. ADJOURNMENT

At 6:53 P.M, Chair Ryan, seeing no objection, adjourned the meeting to September 21, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. via Zoom.