

CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
MINUTES OF THE CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION

September 21, 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 5:02 PM.

B. PLEDGE TO FLAG

C. ROLL CALL

Present: Davis, Ibaraki, Manna, Marcy, Rubino, Chair Ryan

Absent: None

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

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - August 17, 2020

It was moved and seconded (Manna/Davis) to approve the minutes, with one change: Pg 3, fifth line from the bottom, change “Darcy” to “Marcy”. The motion passed by hand vote (5-1): Ayes: Davis, Ibaraki, Manna, Marcy, Chair Ryan; Abstain: Rubino.

E. CEREMONIAL – None

F. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (3-Minute Limit)

Former CAC Commissioner Orhan Taner addressed the Commission, informing that he has asked Mayor Montgomery (thinking the CAC was still in recess) to consider providing a one-time donation from the Public Art Trust Fund to support Mira Costa High School’s drama program and the Mayor seemed very enthusiastic. He believes this would be an eligible use of public funds, qualifying as “art education”.

Chair Ryan thanked Mr. Taner and suggested that he also reach out to CAC Commissioners Rubino and Marcy who are working on performing arts enhancements.

G. GENERAL BUSINESS – Discussion of Work Plan Items

ICAM Stewart commented about protocols. Regarding the agenda: Commissioners shouldn’t wait until receiving it to act within their committees; 72 hours prior to a meeting it is posted/distributed, after which no more items that require Commission action can be added; also, should anyone not receive an agenda 72 hours ahead, please contact her. Regarding communications, she reminded: she is the Commission’s staff liaison; she is the one to consult with first regarding the Work Plan projects or other commission matters; others such as councilmembers or Director Leyman, do not need to be contacted or copied on emails. It’s important to know she works a 4/10 schedule (10 hours daily Monday thru Thursday, off Fridays); if possible, Fridays should be avoided and a little advance notice is helpful.

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

1. MB Art Center Project Ad Hoc Committee (Manna/Rubino): **Commissioner Manna** reported no change in status but **Commissioner Rubino** is informed of his suggestions. Prior to the next meeting they

will look closely at the landscaping (what should stay, what should go) and the on-site signage (existing ground mounted sign, and possible locations for new signs). **Management Analyst Linda Robb** reported on the citywide street banner matter being studied by Council committee: 1) Will be on the Council agenda October 20; 2) will be more broadly about banner policy citywide; and 3) banners will be installed on existing light poles, in case of the MBAC, on existing pole in MBB median. This will be part of an overall 30 pole/banner program – to start, three areas will have hardware installed on 10 poles each (Downtown, Highland Avenue Commercial North End, and along Manhattan Beach Boulevard outside of downtown).

Brief discussion followed; **Chair Ryan** reminded that the Committee can move forward while the Council action is pending. **Commissioner Davis** emphasized the need for signs, **Commissioner Manna** suggested in advance of next meeting, he and **Commissioner Rubino** can look at potential banner pole locations; **Commissioner Davis** added her observation that in more congested areas, such as Downtown, there might be one banner per pole, but in other areas as near the Art Center, may be two banners (one facing each direction of traffic).

2. Public Relations and Marketing Ad Hoc Committee (Ryan/Davis): **Commissioner Davis** reported that the following ideas have been discussed with ICAM Stewart: 1) Create a separate website or Instagram/Facebook account for Cultural Arts to make it easier to find cultural arts items which are new ; 2) Start an electronic newsletter; 3) Start a postcard campaign targeted to older adults who might not be accessing email or social media; and 4) Create a “Did You Know?” regularly appearing or “buffered” piece. **Chair Ryan** welcomed **Commissioner Ibaraki**’s participation in the Committee and summarized their goal is to look at how accessibility to cultural arts info and events can be enhanced, within the City’s guidelines, to reach all of its residents including students, older adults etc.

The Commission provided input: **Commissioner Manna** likes the “Did You Know?” idea, suggesting it be published in local outlets (Beach reporter, EZ Reader, The Patch etc.). **Commissioner Marcy** suggested that if the City can tell the story of the art – what was the inspiration, when it was acquired/installed - could be a very good marketing tool; **Commissioner Davis** suggested incorporating historic information since such is part of cultural arts; **Chair Ryan** concluded by suggesting starting out, having high quality communications will go far to raise interest and draw attention to the City and more opportunity may be created. **ICAM Stewart** advised that at this time, CAC would not have the option to have its own platform, or host a link or reference to a private outside Facebook account (would set a precedent) and for now the Commission should work within the existing parameters of the City. She noted however, that the ideas presented, if done well, could strengthen the Cultural Arts Commission platform and eventually aid in the campaign to branch out, and working with the Historical Society to include historic elements is a wonderful idea and very much within the scope of the CAC work.

3. Performing Arts Enhancements (Rubino/Marcy): **Commissioner Marcy** gave a general status: The Committee has given considerable thought, including what other organizations (e.g. Hometown Fair, HTF) are doing to showcase performing arts under virtual conditions and the Committee has met with **ICAM Stewart**. They recognize also there are many projects overall and priorities need to be set. They have looked to the downtown for possible opportunities and whether something could be done before the end of 2020, or whether it is better to wait until sometime next year so that artists can perform in person. Generally, they are at a point of figuring out what can/cannot be possible. One thought was to collect videos of cultural art performances as has done by the HTF Battle of the Bands and project the videos on downtown walls.

In initial discussion, **ICAM Stewart** clarified that because the Concerts in the Park program is under the Cultural Arts purview, 100% staff programmed/driven, if there is something the Commission wants to change, it can be taken directly to her. **Commissioner Marcy** noted the Committee is interested in many types of performing arts (dance, poetic expression, etc.). **Chair Ryan** stated she thinks it’s important to be able to gauge demand for cultural arts; **Commissioner Marcy** indicated that he can track viewership of the

HTF's Battle of the Bands online event – sharing that the Battle has had 20,000 “hits” in its first two weeks with an average view of 2-3 minutes. **Commissioner Davis** suggested adding a link to the HTF Battle of the Bands on the City website. **Commissioner Manna**, recalling the request from Orhan Taner, and recognizing that the high school is a community cultural arts venue, asked whether the CAC could explore creating a subscription platform similar to the commercially available platform “Broadway HD”- and make the High School performances available to be viewed?

ICAM Stewart confirmed that any project over \$5,000 must go through a competitive bidding process and be approved by City Council. Regarding the proposal by former Commissioner Taner - the City Council has the authority, if they wish, to act directly on this without waiting for the arts grant program to be developed, and without input from the CAC.

ICAM Stewart explained the feedback from Director Leyman regarding the Committee's ideas - which includes both a fully virtual event and an “in person” event. The Director believes the in-person event would fit well into the grant program but he'd like to see the Commission focus on establishing the parameters of the grants program up front so that implementing similar projects will be easier, cleaner and faster. **ICAM Stewart** also clarified that if the Commission “self-funds” a project under the grants program, it wouldn't necessarily need to relinquish “ownership” or control; that would only be the case if a Commissioner submits a project for grant funding that benefits mainly a personal idea.

Chair Ryan encouraged the Commissioners, through **ICAM Stewart**, to have conversations with council members or others to gauge interest in project ideas.

Commissioner Marcy shared a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the options with timelines: **Option 1** involves soliciting performing artists to submit videos to compile for a holiday show to be livestreamed for remote, virtual viewing in December, 2020. Preference would be given for Manhattan Beach submittals, and recordings would be made available. The estimated cost is \$4,500. **Option 2 estimated to cost \$10k** similarly involves soliciting a variety of performing artists to submit videos also compiled but would be displayed at an “in-person” event in that the compilation video would be played on a loop in a public space (e.g. Metlox) projected on an inflatable screen or building wall. Preference would be again given to Manhattan Beach submittals and the video would play on Sundays in May 2021 in the evening. **Commissioner Marcy** stated that he feels the second option would support the downtown but would not necessarily be one that would draw crowds.

Commissioner Rubino emphasized that the first option could be easily implemented but the second one seems to require more time, but both are excellent opportunities to advertise and promote what the Commission is doing. Other input: **Chair Ryan** liked both ideas – especially having something around the holidays (maybe including a recording of the high school caroling group) and questioned whether the second option might be able to be implemented by mid-December. **Commissioner Davis** expressed enthusiasm for the Metlox location and **Commissioner Ibaraki**, for involving Mira Costa.

ICAM Stewart noted two concerns with promoting the in-person event for December: it may be criticized as encouraging gatherings of people during the pandemic, and the idea would need to be endorsed by and coordinated with the private management of the Metlox center. **Commissioner Davis** suggested that having the recorded production on a loop more in the background rather than an advertised event, would be a discouragement from gathering; **Commissioner Rubino** suggested that keeping the display on a brief cycle (1-2 minutes) might also deter gathering. **Chair Ryan** suggested that the idea is such a good one, and supports downtown merchants, and encourages pursuing further. **Commissioner Manna** asked whether taking this concept and spreading it out to other locations downtown might actually result in people moving through, not congregate, downtown. **Chair Ryan** suggested that they pursue finding AV equipment or reach out to the community for expertise or resources.

It was agreed that the Ad Hoc Committee refine the concepts and confer further with ICAM Stewart.

H. STAFF ITEMS

1. **Ad-Hoc Committees**: Chair Ryan called for status reports on each of the five ongoing projects.
 - **Sculpture Garden (Manna/Ryan)**: Commissioner Manna reported the committee will be meeting with ICAM Stewart.
 - **Utility Box Beautification Round 2 (Davis/Marcy)**: Commissioner Davis reported the following progress has been made: identified 12 new locations throughout the City; started review of the RFP with suggested theme of “Diversity and Inspiration”; a marketing plan will feature the story of the art on one utility box per month; mapped out a timeframe leading to installation in April, 2021; and estimated a budget of \$12k. **Commissioner Davis** suggests changes to the “Call For Artists” RFP that will open up the competition (i.e. eliminate requirement for experience, outreach to all South Bay and bordering areas, with preference to City MB) and make the document more simple and user-friendly. It was agreed to agendize this item for approval of locations and issuance of RFP on the October 19th agenda.
 - **City Murals (Manna/Ibaraki)**: **Commissioner Manna** reported: he has brought **Commissioner Ibaraki** up to speed on this project; the next step is to reach out to private property owners for interest in participating, but this effort is pending receiving direction from the City Attorney on a number of issues that arise due to collaboration with private properties.
 - **Art Grants (Rubino/Marcy)**: **Commissioner Rubino** reported: Committee is reviewing the application, the process and entire program; one immediate concern is the timeline (1 year to complete) which seems very unrealistic. **Commissioner Marcy** added that they are examining similar programs in other cities and COVID implications. **ICAM Stewart** advised that the entire program, including the budget, is up for reconsideration.
 - **Art Assessment/Conservation (Davis/Ryan)**: **Chair Ryan** reported that the Committee’s next step is to work with **ICAM Stewart** on an inventory list of pieces and in that process identify which of the three actions might be warranted (refurbish/remove/replace) and a vendor to accomplish. **ICAM Stewart** reported that the City is still working with the family of the artist towards their recovery of the large mural that has been removed from the City Hall lobby; she will send a photo to **Commissioner Davis**.

Before proceeding, **Chair Ryan** welcomed and invited new **Commissioner Ibaraki** to introduce herself. Juliana Ibaraki is a Senior at Mira Costa High School involved in Model UN and Bio Tech. Looking forward to college she hopes to major in a field such as Global Health. She loves being involved in the community and has participated in the Mayor’s Youth Council and Leadership Manhattan where she learned of this opportunity to serve on the CAC.

2. **Cultural Arts Division Updates**: **ICAM Stewart** briefly reported on exhibits and classes:

“Pierspective” has been taken down and the Art Center is being readied for the Fall exhibit “Form and Movement”, starting October 16, is the work of large-scale sculptor Simon Ouwerkerk, after which the Winter program will commence with the A.C. Conner/Goldsheid exhibit. At this time the exhibits will be virtual. Adapting to COVID, the ceramics subscription program continues to be very successful and staff is

working on a pilot DIY craft program where kits would be shipped out or picked up and completed at home.

3. **PATF Budget Update:** **ICAM Stewart** reported that the fund has \$2.1 million with \$756,249.56 allocated; by the end of 2023 some funds will be expiring.

4. **City Council Updates:** The City Council has approved two new Bo Bridges murals, one of the MB Pier at night on the south wall of City Hall, facing the Library and another, an underwater diver, on the west wall of the City parking structure on 12th Street, next to SugarFish; **ICAM Stewart** will send photos to the Commission and clarified that when the City Council approves a project – funds for that project are immediately set aside to pay for it, and are therefore “allocated”. She also clarified that the Council will, at its October 6 meeting, decide on additional improvements being added to the scope of work for the City Hall Lobby project (funding and how executed) as well as a final project rendering.

I. COMMISSION ITEMS

Commissioner Manna inquired as to whether there will be an art component of the Bruce’s Beach review and if so, whether that would come before the CAC for review. **Commissioner Marcy** commented that he’d like to see a “rainbow sidewalk” installed in the City, possibly on MBB at Peck or Redondo Avenue. It was agreed to place this on the October meeting agenda under “Commission Items”. **Chair Ryan** thanked everyone for all the great work being done and will send a follow-up email. It was agreed that 5:00 pm continues to be a good meeting time.

J. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:02 P.M, Chair Ryan, seeing no objection, adjourned the meeting to October 19, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. via Zoom.