

CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
MINUTES OF THE CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION

May 17, 2021

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 5:04 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Manna (5:10 pm), Marcy, Rubino, Chair Ryan.

Absent: None

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

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - April 19, 2021

This item was considered after the Ceremonial item, at 5:11 pm., upon arrival of **Commissioner Manna**, in order to have a quorum. It was moved and seconded (**Rubino/Manna**) to approve the minutes as submitted; said motion passed by a vote of 3 (ayes) -1 (abstain).

D. CEREMONIAL

ICAM Stewart, with **Commissioners Marcy and Rubino**, joined in expressing appreciation to Chair Ryan for her leadership and service in her term on the Commission including during the past year as Chair. **Chair Ryan** expressed her gratitude and enjoyment in serving on the Commission.

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

F. GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Discussion of Work Plan Items

a. MBAC Revamp (Manna/Rubino): Commissioners Rubino and Manna provided a PowerPoint presentation and led discussion. After visiting the Art Center site, they now recommend that although there are three phases identified, the Commission focus only on Phase 2 (signage) and specifically, three components: 1) site ID signage, 2) directional or wayfinding signs at site driveways, and 3) murals in strategic places. Conceptually, their recommendation has three parts: 1) remove the 2-posted “Manhattan Beach Art Center” identification sign due to its deteriorated condition and replace with an eye-catching 3-dimensional sign; 2) install an artistic mural with a sign component on the front wall; and 3) install wayfinding signs at the driveways (guiding visitors to parking for both the art center and adjacent park) at the front and rear driveway. Currently they are open to finding sign contractors and/or designers and guidance is needed as to whether or how these signs might be able to be financed through the public trust fund.

ICAM Stewart suggested and there was discussion and agreement that going forward, the process would be to develop a plan calling for three categories of improvements: 1) the front 3-dimensional art work that has a sign component,; 2) wayfinding signs which most likely will be done through Public Works but an

outside vendor can be requested; and 3) a front mural artwork that also identifies the site. Both 1 and 3 would require RFPs, and all need to have estimated costs, and approval by the City Council.

Commissioner Marcy opined that he felt it was very important for the signs to align with the City’s wayfinding and sign program so that visitors readily can identify the site as a public city venue.

Commissioner Manna suggested that for the front wall mural, there should be consideration for removing vegetation to reclaim that area for the mural, to ensure its visibility.

Chair Ryan suggested that, once the concept is more developed, the project parameters could informally be run by a Councilmember to “test the temperature”. **ICAM Stewart** endorsed this and pointed out that because this project is on the approved Work Plan, this should be a familiar topic for councilmembers. It is well to recall that the overall goal of the project is to not just improve the site but make it much more visible as an art center.

The Commission discussed the existing Van Hamersveld vinyl mural which is included in “Phase 1” of the project and is on hold pending information from the city legal department. **Commissioner Manna** expressed concern that not only is part of it peeling off, but five or six panels are also showing cracks. **ICAM Stewart** reported that the damage has also been observed by staff and there are a number of challenges in repairing the frieze, The cracking and peeling mainly on the south side, is caused by the reaction from sun exposure combined with the fact that the underlying surface is a textured stucco which is porous and allows moisture to get in. Staff has contacted the original installer who has responded that the damage is too severe and there is no feasible way to repair at this point. A new underlying skim coat of cement would have to be applied and waterproofed. Staff is considering the feasibility of keeping the damaged panels, but using them like a stencil to transfer the art design in paint onto the panel where the damage is severe.

Although the City owns the vinyl mural there are legal considerations still even if a portion is removed – as to whether the artist’s rights extend not only to the physical artwork but also to the design concept. **ICAM Stewart** concluded that her first priority would be to save and repair the frieze if this is a legal option. Her recommendation is to keep this component on hold until staff can confer with the City Attorney; upon polling the Commission found them to be in agreement.

- b. PR and Marketing Campaign: **Chair Ryan** noted this project is on hold.
- c. Rainbow Sidewalk: **ICAM Stewart** reported that she still needs to discuss the viability of the proposed locations with the City Traffic Engineer.
- d. Arts Grants – general guidelines. The Commission discussed the individual arts grants categories.
 - 1. **Murals**: Per **Commissioner Rubino**, no new information. Once the grants application is finalized, the mural component at the Art Center can go forward but under the murals committee. **ICAM Stewart** added that staff is awaiting information from legal as to the ability of the City to install publicly funded murals on private property to allow more mural locations, as public space is very limited.
 - 2. **Utility Infrastructure Beautification**: **Commissioner Marcy** noted some possible budgeting parameters that have been discussed with staff, including: a stipend not to exceed \$500 (flat amount), installation fees not to exceed \$1,000; encouragements to submit the design via a digital file and to submit designs for multiple units. The city would provide a list of vendors with preference for those who are local. Also included in the application would be maps showing some locations of utility boxes and parking meters. There were no comments at this time from other Commissioners.

3. **Sculpture Garden: Commissioner Manna** noted that no new information is available. **ICAM Stewart** noted that the City still intends to install the *Dragon Tale* piece at the Art Center when allowed by COVID protocols.

4. **Performing Arts: Commissioner Rubino** inquired as to the status of the “umbrella” art grant parameters and application which, as she understands, will establish a basic set of criteria which will ultimately be tailored to each individual grant programs. **ICAM Stewart** suggested, it was discussed and agreed, that after the Commission is reorganized with new members, a committee be re-established to work on the generic umbrella grant application. It was clarified that the committee would first go to each subcommittee to find out what aspects are important and then those parameters would be taken to the City Attorney’s office to be drafted into an application format which then would come back to the Commission. **ICAM Stewart** shared as an example, a write up for a craft workshop explaining the kind of parameters that are needed, such as timing, eligible participants, class fee, activity description, and background. She explained that each of the work plan projects will need a writeup that states what it is, why it is being done, where is it being done, how much does it cost and who will implement it, etc.

5. **Digital Wall Art (City Hall). Commissioner Marcy** noted this is in a holding pattern. **ICAM Stewart** informed that she and **Director Leyman** have been looking for locations and have talked to a potential vendor. **Commissioner Marcy** noted while he loves the concept and technology, he feels that the economics and frugality should be a strong consideration.

6. **School/Education (Ibaraki/Ryan). Chair Ryan** noted no new information.

7. **Permanent Sculpture Piece (Manna/Ryan). Chair Ryan** noted no new information.

Chair Ryan requested that her following statements below, be written into the record:

Regarding the Cultural Arts Commission: “It is my opinion from a business standpoint after serving on this Commission for three years, that if the City Council wants to continue an arts commission in the city of Manhattan Beach, there needs to be more collaboration between the City Council and the arts commission. It feels like a little bit of a gotcha sometimes when you work for months and years and it gets to City Council and they turn it down, but on the other side, if we’re not communicating with them and we’re surprising them, and they don’t like it so then it’s a gotcha for them too. So unless this Commission and the City Council start more fluid communication I don’t see a purpose for this Commission. I think there is a deep purpose for this Commission, I think it can do phenomenal work, but I absolutely believe that it needs to be a Commission that is so good that the city council members respect this commission and work hand in hand with this Commission. I do not believe that has been the full case to this point. I’m encouraging City Council, and I am encouraging this commission to do so, going forward I think there’s a lot of value, if handled correctly, in this commission.”

Regarding **ICAM Stewart**: “I’ve spent 28 years in the business environment, I have run huge organizations and I have rarely seen leadership of a quality as Eilen Stewart I just believe that she is absolutely one of the best leaders that I have worked with in the last 30 years. And it’s been my privilege to be the chair this year and have one on one working relationship with her, and I do hope that you choose to make her the permanent manager of the arts”.

ICAM Stewart thanked **Chair Ryan** for her comments.

2. Selection of 2021/2022 Cultural Arts Commission Chair and Vice Chair

ICAM Stewart announced that this is the time to assign a new chair and vice chair, noting that three new commissioners have been appointed: **Rod Spackman** (seat 3), **Karen Tokashiki** (seat 4), both as members at large, and **Lauren Ryan** will be the student representative. The process traditionally has been that the outgoing vice chair, in this case **Joe Marcy**, would be chair and then the commissioner with

highest seniority would become vice chair or in this case, **Fred Manna**. The new commissioners will start June 1st.

Commissioner Manna observed that he could serve as vice chair for the 2021-22 cycle but at the end of the year he will be term out and would not be able to move up as chair for 2022-23. He also noted that after he terms out, **Commissioner Rubino** would have the highest seniority and would be eligible to be chair, therefore he was willing to defer the vice chairship to **Commissioner Rubino** for the upcoming year. It was subsequently moved and seconded (**Ryan/Manna**) that **Commissioner Joe Marcy** be assigned as chair and **Commissioner Betsy Rubino** as vice chair of 2021-22.

The motion passed 4-0 (Ayes: Marcy, Rubino, Manna, Chair Ryan).

G. STAFF ITEMS

Cultural Arts Division updates – **ICAM Stewart** reported:

- The next CAC meeting will start at 6pm.
- The PATF trust fund remains at a little over \$2 million, and \$700k allocated, and about \$1.3 million unallocated. No funds will expire until 2023.
- The Art Center is open to the public with reduced hours, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. The current exhibition “*Architecture of Touch*” is the biannual ceramics showcase and the upcoming exhibit is the *Annual Community Exhibition: 80 Years of Creating Community* in honor of Parks and Recreation Department turning 80. The application window is currently open for the community exhibition.
- COVID reopening: the ceramics Open Lab is expected to open in June, with classes starting back up in July. “Micro classes” for kids which have been ongoing will continue. There are also plans, once reopening allows, to conduct education initiatives at the Art Center.

H. COMMISSION ITEMS

Commissioner Manna acknowledged **Commissioner Ryan** for her past year’s leadership and doing a fantastic job including as chair, in particular, her organization and communication skills and she will be missed. **Commissioners Rubino and Marcy** echoed the comments. **Chair Ryan** thanked the Commission noting that her goal was to serve for a second term, but her attention unexpectedly was needed to help her daughter launch her “Unstoppable Protective Gear” enterprise. She looks forward to seeing the progress that will be made by the Commission.

I. ADJOURNMENT

At 6:47 P.M., **Chair Ryan**, seeing no objection, adjourned the meeting to June 21, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom; said meeting time to be confirmed by **Commissioner Marcy**.