

CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
MINUTES OF THE CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION

October 18, 2021

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

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Marcy called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Manna, Ryan, Spackman, Tokashiki (6:19), Chair Marcy

Absent: Rubino

Staff present: Eilen Stewart, Cultural Arts Manager (CAM), Linda Robb, Parks and Recreation Management Analyst, Rosemary Lackow, Recording Secretary.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - August 30, 2021

It was moved and seconded (**Manna/Spackman**) to approve as submitted. The motion carried 4-0-2 by a hand vote: 4-ayes; 0-noes, 2-absent (Rubino, Tokashiki)

D. CEREMONIAL – None

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

F. GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Discussion of Work Plan Items (committee members noted)

a. MBAC (Art Center) Revamp: (Manna, Rubino, Spackman)

Commissioner Manna reported that he is waiting for a call back from a sign contractor.

b. PR and Marketing Campaign: Manna, Spackman

Commissioner Manna reported the committee needs to meet with **CAM Stewart**.

c. Rainbow Crosswalk: Marcy, Rubino, Ryan

CAM Stewart reported this project is one of four that council will be considering for approval at its meeting tomorrow (10/19/21); a PowerPoint presentation will be presented.

d. Arts Grants – General Guidelines: Marcy, Spackman

Chair Marcy led a continued discussion on a draft informational document “Cultural Arts 2021 Grant Program”. The document is to include general application guidelines for a variety of grant types (murals, utility infrastructure beautification, etc.). **Chair Marcy** highlighted two revisions based on input from the last meeting in the Eligibility and COVID-19 Compliance sections.

Eligibility

- Added wording “Applicant must be at least 18 years old and students may apply under an education grant category”. In discussing, concern was expressed that the city contract must be with a

responsible adult; **CAM Stewart** advised that, based on past projects, she knows, though trickier, it's possible to allow minors to participate; she will review this and it will get legal review.

- Added wording "Applicants may not already be receiving funding from another city division or department." **CAM Stewart** stated she was not sure that this caveat is needed, possibly this can serve more as a disclosure.

COVID-19 compliance

- Added wording: "(ADDENDUM)". **Chair Marcy** noted this section was taken from another city and is intended to ensure as an addendum to the application that the activity will be in compliance with relevant public health protocols. **CAM Stewart**: this will get legal review.

Funding Categories: Public Art

Discussion included maximum allowance for various categories. **Chair Marcy** explained he felt having funding parameters based on average costs of similar projects may be more appropriate, noting amounts are based on past projects (e.g. Lightgate, utility boxes) but the Commission could stipulate just a maximum allowance. Concerns expressed include: 1) whether there should be an overall annual trust fund spending budget (none exists) to use as a fiscal guide; and 2) whether there should be a hard cap (or a suggested limit), noting Bruce's Beach artwork is expected to exceed \$350k). It was pointed out that perhaps that's not a big concern because, first, the parameters are intended to apply to routine applicants/community projects as opposed to projects such as Bruce's Beach, which came about as a Council initiative, and its funding is solely up to council. In addition, the **Chair** questioned: is this over-complicated, how much deviation should there be from the general guidelines and should the documents be consolidated while making sure that all categories will fit within the parameters? He believes streamlining could greatly help advancing the programs.

CAM Stewart confirmed: 1) past contracts with minor applicants had an adult co-sign; 2) each committee, after meeting with her, should aggregate their project category budget needs and then provide that info to the general guidelines committee. The guidelines committee will compile and report these back to the Commission; 3) project categories can have very different budgets, e.g., murals are costly, citing that two Bo Bridges works recently installed downtown together cost \$230k. This is appreciably higher than the max (\$150k) suggested; 4) to the point made, projects coming through the grant process should be a different category than one that is more Council driven and lastly; 5) we want to fund a steady stream of projects.

Additional considerations, general guidelines:

CAM Stewart provided some history about the prior grant program and why it did not go forward: it may have been overly ambitious (only 8 applications submitted, most considered non-viable for council approval) and some applications, based on current criteria had conflicts of interest.

CAM Stewart noted that to move forward each commission committee should meet with her, and get needed history and background, and update the reporting worksheets. Staff does not have a running document that lists how much has been spent for each project but she can get those numbers from internal city budget documents and go through the budget with each committee; these should be incorporated into the committee worksheets. After doing this for the general guidelines, a more granular review can be made by each committee. She clarified that each category of project will have unique parameters.

Commissioner Spackman noted that these are really selection criteria and emphasized cost is important for budgeting. **CAM Stewart** pointed out not every project will need ongoing maintenance but for those that do, a maintenance plan is necessary.

Reiterating, **CAM Stewart** noted that the need is for a general set of guidelines which will state criteria shared by all project categories, and then some supplemental “satellite” docs that will list additional criteria specific to each project category.

CAM Stewart and the Commission concluded that, with some additions (e.g., judging criteria, eligibility refinement and disclaimer as to city reserving right to determine content suitability) the general guidelines document may be wrapped up.

- e. **Performing Arts.** **Chair Marcy** suggested a \$25k maximum cost. **Commissioner Tokashiki** noted two categories (individual and group) are due to the fact that costs for costumes are different if the applicant/event is for a group. **CAM Stewart** suggested that applicants need to know limits for staging performances (e.g., Shakespeare in the Park needs \$4,000, each performance) and it is the City’s responsibility to inform up front if a proposal can be supported by the city. It is the applicant’s responsibility to secure a venue, but it’s the City’s job to disclose the appropriate criteria. An applicant might apply for an event that might attract 50,000 people but they also need to know that the city cannot support such an event even though they may be able to do for a much smaller (than \$25k) amount. **Chair Marcy** noted it is hard to compare a private with a city-run event – costs may not be comparable and it is paramount that safety be a number one priority. Wording was added that applicants must detail costs (rentals, porta potties, security etc.).
- f. **Speaker Series/Educational Events, Exhibits.** **Chair Marcy** noted a \$15k maximum allowance is suggested for limited engagements and he described what activities this covers. **CAM Stewart** noted confusion as to how this fits into the work plan and explained that a speaker series if part of education would have to be a grant funded to a school not a speaker. **CAM Stewart** went over how the work plan that was approved by Council per request by the Commission in January, consisting of a set list of projects (see agenda). The grants program has 6 categories: utility infrastructure, sculpture garden, performing arts, digital wall art, school/education, and permanent sculpture. She also clarified the differences between some categories, such as the sculpture garden (being temporary loaned pieces) and permanent sculpture (not temporary). Categories can be combined or amended but that would require modifying the Work Plan formally and there should be a good reason for doing this. **Chair Marcy** noted that simplification of the program would be the reason to make more “user friendly” for applicants as well as the city. **CAM Stewart** noted that changes to the terminology (e.g., Sculpture Garden changed to something suggesting short term public art) would need to be looked at by the subcommittee and brought to the Commission.

Commissioner Spackman suggested making one “Sculpture” category, broken down into two: temporary (aka Sculpture Garden) and permanent and expressed concern about the term “TEDx” which may be a private for-profit organization; **Commissioner Tokashiki** clarified the intent was to describe a speaker series that was a “TEDx – like”, not actual corporate TEDx event.

- g. **Miscellaneous (Applicant information, Acknowledgment, etc.).** It was determined that “City Acknowledgment” (from the previous grant info document) should be deleted. Use of City Logo and Required Language (event supported by the city): **CAM Stewart** advised to leave in now and she will check into these and report back.

- h. **Guiding Principles Score Sheet.** A caveat “Not to be provided to applicant” was suggested to strengthen clarity that the city retains discretion in selection process. It was decided that some additional language can be added that would be viewable by the applicant.

In addition, the elements of the score sheet were discussed, and possibly re-ranking or combining some categories was suggested. Combining “Accessibility” with “Community Outreach” was suggested upon being informed by the **CAM** that “Accessibility” is an ADA issue and as such can be addressed as a requirement in the general application section. However, **CAM Stewart** also noted Accessibility is appropriately in Community Outreach as relating to the project narrative being accessible to a wide range of the public. She will review these suggestions and whether this can be streamlined.

- i. **Next steps (bigger picture).** **CAM Stewart** suggested that the commission pick a few grant categories, ones that are most developed (utility infrastructure, murals e.g.) to fast track and start accepting applications and start “testing the waters”. Staff could take this to council as a pilot grant program for input. After that the Commission could work on one remaining grant category per meeting until ready to launch. In more detail, **CAM Stewart** clarified that once the final draft of the general guidelines is done, then a template for the specific grant applications can be built and posted on the City’s website with an invitation for applications. The commissioners should email the specifics for their categories to **Chair Marcy** as soon as they compile them.

Chair Marcy requested all committees to discuss and finalize their projects’ specific criteria to be ready to discuss at the November meeting.

CAM Stewart clarified how the Commission will be moving forward – emphasizing that they need to adhere to the Work Plan approved by council. There has been a demonstrated need from past experience that the grant description be well defined so that applications can be vetted and evaluated, and ultimately a contract can be written and the project brought to completion. So, once the general guidelines are completed the specifics for each grant category will be finalized and become attached to the guidelines but the details for all the grants will not be ready to go at the same time – the pilot program will launch with just a few grant categories.

CAM Stewart will again send out the document that shows examples of questions or specifics that need to be flushed out and **Chair Marcy** will also email the presentation on the utility boxes.

CAM Stewart noted that the specifics template does not have to be lengthy – each committee will pull out only what applies to that type of project, and it can be simplified.

Chair Marcy shared the draft utility infrastructure grant application as an example. He demonstrated the kinds of details that were included noting it’s to be expected that some are repeated from the general guidelines (such as the content must be appropriate for general audiences, estimated cost (project budget)) with the caveat that details are important, but not to the extent that will stifle creativity.

Commissioner Tokashiki inquired and it was discussed – whether the Sculpture Garden component of the MB Art Center improvement work plan item could be implemented with funding through one of the pilot grants. **Commissioner Manna**, as an MBAC committee member, pointed out that the “sculpture garden” envisioned for the center is a “phase 3” component – which had the lowest priority.

For the November meeting: 1) **Chair Marcy** stated that he and **Commissioners Spackman and Tokashiki** will do a final review of the general guidelines, and reminded all should email to him their projects' unique requirements. 2) Per **CAM Stewart**, Commissioners were advised to be prepared to discuss the next (2022) Cultural Arts Commission Work Plan

G. STAFF ITEMS

CAM Stewart reported:

- The Home Town Fair was held in early October and was very successful—kudos to Commissioners **Marcy and Tokashiki**, fair boardmembers. Notably, CA staff hosted a ceramic sale of student artwork which also promotes its ceramics classes.
- Homeira Goldstein's exhibition *Beyond Shapes* had an in-person opening at MBAC last Friday with artist David A. Peters present; well attended (180) and runs through December 19th, 2021.
- October 24 is the annual Pumpkin Race; the commission is encouraged to participate.
- The City's Historical assessment consultant, History Associates Inc, will be working at the "Red House" in Polliwog Park.
- The Public Arts Trust Fund has had no significant change in the last month. No funds will expire until 2023 at the earliest.
- City Council updates: As noted, the City Council will be considering funding four Cultural Arts Commission projects: Rainbow Crosswalk, MB Art Center frieze repair, stage for Polliwog Park, and the digital art wall for the City Hall lobby at its meeting tomorrow (10/19/21).

H. COMMISSION ITEMS

- **Commissioner Manna** suggested that the Commissioners actively explore art venues outside the city. He reported on an exhibit at Skirball and LACMA.

I. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:56 P.M, seeing no objection, **Chair Marcy** adjourned the meeting to November 15, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.