



Agenda Item #: \_\_\_\_\_

# Staff Report

## City of Manhattan Beach

**TO:** Cultural Arts Commission

**FROM:** Richard Gill, Parks & Recreation Director  
Megumi Sando Moisen, Acting Cultural Arts Manager

**DATE:** March 27, 2012

**SUBJECT:** Discussion of Artwork Selection Process, Budget, Timeline, Location, and Eligibility for the City's Centennial Art Project.

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Cultural Arts Commission discuss artwork selection process, budget, timeline, location, and eligibility for the City's Centennial Art Project.

**FISCAL IMPLICATION:**

After the allocation of funding to the new Manhattan Beach Library art project, uncommitted balance in the Public Art Trust fund is approximately \$153,645. There is a committed balance for the temporary sculpture garden of \$67,154.

**BACKGROUND:**

In January 2012, City Council approved the use of "up to \$400,000" from the Public Art Trust fund to be used for the City's Centennial art project and public art for the new Manhattan Beach library. The City Council appointed Mayor Pro Tem Powell and Councilmember Lesser to serve on the Public Art Ad Hoc Subcommittee and asked them to return to Council with the details of the process for allocation of the funds to each art project and the process for selecting the art.

During the February 21, 2012 Council meeting, City Council approved \$150,000 towards the new library based on the stipulations in the staff report (i.e. that public meetings be held, that the City's and County's funds for art be accounted for, held separately and not comingled, etc.). The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Powell and passed.

For the Centennial Art Project, the Council agreed with the vision statement that the Cultural Arts Commission had developed -- "The Manhattan Beach Cultural Arts Commission's goal is to commission a significant piece of public art to acknowledge Manhattan Beach's first 100 years." Mayor Tell directed Mayor Pro Tem Powell and Councilmember Lesser to work with the Cultural Arts Commission to further clarify the scope of the project and identify the artwork selection process. The City Council approved up to \$150,000 for the Centennial art project.

During the City Council discussion on the library and Centennial art pieces, the City Attorney noted to City Council that the Commission had been using the formation of an “ad hoc committee” that was not consistent with the rules governing ad hoc committees. The City Council approved the use of an “ad hoc” committee for the development of an art piece for the City’s Centennial by the Commission as long as they adhered to the guidelines given to the Commission by the City Attorney during their February 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. If the Commission wishes to develop an ad hoc committee for the Centennial art project, they must assign only two commissioners to work with experts in the field of public art on this project only.

**DISCUSSION:**

To move forward with the Centennial art piece, staff suggests that the Commission discuss the RFQ process suggested by staff below, the timeline, selection process, stipends for artists selected to develop designs, locations, and the budget.

Regarding the RFQ, staff suggests an open RFQ with nominations. This process is recommended by the American for Public Art Network in its special issue paper (*Methods of Artist Selection* by Greg Esser, Director of Public Art Phoenix Arts Commission, March 2004). This process will accommodate different perspectives regarding the selection process expressed by the City Council and the Cultural Arts Commission—openness and transparency vs. high artistic quality. This method is also similar to what the Los Angeles County Arts Commission is using for the selection of art for the new library.

**Method of Artist Selection: RFQ Combined with Nominations**

- The American for the Arts recommends an RFQ combined with nominations from individual panel members to achieve openness and transparency in selection process as well as quality of artwork.
- Why RFQ? It does not require artists to complete significant creative work without compensation.
- Why combination? More established artists are frequently reluctant to an open competition. The nomination process can approach those artists through dialogues with the nominees focusing aesthetic values.
- This process requires 6 – 8 weeks to allow artists to have sufficient time to respond.
- Publicize by local and national publications, websites, and list serve.

**Selection of Art Panel:**

- The Art in Public Places Committee (APPC) will be formulated with appointment by the City Council based on recommendation of the Cultural Arts Commission.
- APPC can be made up with the following categories of individuals: Cultural Arts Commissioners, City Council member(s), art professional(s), community member(s) at large, local business member(s), art student(s).
- The Cultural Arts Commission can select two members of the Commission to formulate Ad Hoc Committee to research and identify potential APPC members reaching out to community members and art professionals, and come back to report to the entire commission.

**Selection Process Model: RFQ Combined with Nominations**

Step 1: Two different processes will be taken to identify artists who may submit entries to the project:

- a) Initial review of nominations by commissioners
- b) Receive applications through RFQ process

Step 2: Informal interview and visitation to selected artist work

The artist and APPC will coordinate an informal interview and site visitation to view the work in a real setting as opposed to a digital format.

Step 3: Select three finalists to commission developing design concept and presentation

APPC vote will be taken and a maximum of **xx artists** will be shortlisted based on presentations, visitations and other selection criteria. A stipend in the amount of **\$XXXX** will be granted to each artist to develop conceptual design.

Step 4: Development of Proposals

The finalists develop conceptual designs with visual aide such as drawing and three-dimensional models. Detail information of budget, materials, fabrication, and installation should also be provided in writing.

Step 5: Presentation of Proposals to APPC

Step 6: City Council Review and selection of artwork

Step 7: Awarding design contract

**Selection Criteria to select finalists to develop design concepts:**

- Strength of past artworks,
- Experience working in public settings, and
- Experience fabricating and installing permanent artwork.

**Selection criteria to select artwork:**

A. Aesthetic Criteria (excerpt from Public Art Master Plan)

- Does it add to the attractiveness and /or usefulness of the site?
- Does it provide comfort and amenity?
- Does it promote communication among members of the community?
- Does it stimulate curiosity and interest in the community's heritage?

B. Practical Criteria (excerpt from Public Art Master Plan)

- Is the project appropriate for the intended site?
- Will proper maintenance be feasible?
- Will the art work withstand vandalism and can its design be altered either to deter vandalism or make the cleanup of vandalism easier?

C. Conceptual Criteria

- Does it honor and commemorate the rich history of the City?
- Does it strengthen the visual identity of Manhattan Beach.
- Does it create excitement and interest for the community?
- Does it encourage community members to remember and contemplate the past, present and future?
- Does it inspire younger people to see a legacy that belongs to them and to future generations?

**Timeline:**

March – May	Artist nominations by Cultural Arts Commission
Mid-April, 2012	Publish and distribute RFQ
May	Selection of APPC by Commission Approval of the APPC by City Council
May 30	Submission due for both RFQ and nominations
June	Review applications and select xx finalists Approval of the APPC by City Council Conceptual design contracts awarded to the finalists
Early September	Finalist presentations to APPC
Late September	Seek approval from City Council Project Contract Awarded
October – April, 2013	Artwork Creation, fabrication
May, 2013	Installation and unveiling reception

**BUDGET:**

As stated earlier, the City Council approved up to \$150,000 for this project.

**LOCATIONS:**

The Commission should discuss possible locations and the significance of those locations for the Centennial art piece.

**CONCLUSION:**

Staff recommends that the Cultural Arts Commission consider an RFQ combined with nominations to use for the Centennial Art Project. To move on with the project, the Cultural Arts Commission should also determine the project budget, number of finalists, amount of stipends for conceptual design development, location, eligibility, and timeline.