

CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION

Minutes

April 10, 2012

Manhattan Beach City Hall

1400 Highland Avenue

Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting called to order at 6:12 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioner Peter De Maria, Commissioner Nancy Humbarger, and Commissioner Susannah Rosenthal.

Absent: Commissioner Russ Samuels.

Others Present: Parks & Recreation Director Richard Gill, Recreation Manager Gina Allen, and Acting Cultural Arts Manager Megumi S. Moisen

III. APPROVAL MINUTES

None.

IV. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Manhattan Beach resident James Gill introduced a medallion that he manufactured to commemorate the City's Centennial. (www.MB100coin.com).

Manhattan Beach resident Jim Murray expressed his concerns about the decision-making process of the City's art programs and the use of the Public Art Trust Fund. He proposed a comprehensive assessment by an outside consultant for better handling of those issues. Director Gill asked Mr. Murray to come back next month with a written proposal for further consideration.

V. GENERAL BUSINESS

12/0410-1 Strand Bench Design Review – Proposal from Mr. Bushman

Manhattan Beach resident John Bushman introduced to the Cultural Arts Commission his preliminary idea for a bench donation on the strand. The bench is to commemorate his deceased parents who had lived in Manhattan Beach more than 50 years. He distributed a photocopy of an ornately carved stone bench as sample, indicating that he would like to have a bench similar to the photocopy. The Commission asked Mr. Bushman to come back with a more elaborate plan with specific information such as material and size.

12/0410-2 Clarification from the City Attorney for the Cultural Arts Commission's Role Related to Expending Funds from the Public Art Trust

The Cultural Arts Commission continued discussing the definition of the word "designate" in the Public Art Trust Fund Ordinance (Ordinance No. 2040, Section 10.90.060 Use of Funds). Commissioner De Maria shared his understanding that all

projects must be “designated” or endorsed by the Commission although the Commission does not have authority to approve the use of the fund. Commissioner Rosenthal stated that artwork or a program could be originated by the City Council, staff, or the public, but everything must come through the Cultural Arts Commission. After the Commission examines the project and makes a recommendation on how to proceed with it, then the project will be presented to the City Council for the final decision for funding. Commissioner Rosenthal stressed the importance of establishing a process of review using forms or other devices. Commissioners all agree on the need to clarify the process, reduce miscommunication, and increase transparency related to the use of the Public Art Trust Fund. The Commission wanted the City Attorney to come back for further explanation on the boundary of the Commission’s authority.

Mr. Murray stated that very few people understand what art is and that they make decisions with a lack of artistic standards. The City needs professional help to establish a strong aesthetic rationale for the selection of artwork. Manhattan Beach resident Loli Ramezani-Mazhar pointed out that art is somewhat subjective, and you cannot compare with other professional fields such as medical care. Manhattan Beach resident Gary McAulay requested the Commission involve the public in the artist selection process because it uses public funding.

12/0410-3 The Centennial Art Project – Process and Budget

The Commissioners expressed their concerns with the use of the official process of RFQ to select artwork for the Centennial Art Project. Although the Commission previously planned to have artists invitational only, for high artistic quality of work, the City Council directed to have an open call RFQ process for the artist selection.

Commissioner Rosenthal expressed her hesitance to move forward with the Centennial Art Project. Although it was originally thought to be a significant permanent art work, the timeline is too tight to complete the project this year. She suggested temporary projects such as an art festival more suitable in this situation. Commissioner De Maria stated his willingness to continue the Centennial Art Project even with a smaller budget than previously planned. Commissioner Humbarger said that the Centennial Art can still be a significant piece of artwork.

The Commission will review a report and sample RFQ prepared by staff and discuss further in the next meeting.

12/0410-4 New Library Art Project Update

Director Gill reminded the Commission of selecting their representative for the Los Angeles County’s Art Selection Committee for the new library. The position has been vacant since February 2012 when Commissioner Sweeny resigned. Commissioner Rosenthal questioned if someone from the community with the Cultural Arts Commission’s recommendation could satisfy the eligibility requirement. Director Gill clarified the City Council’s specific request that the Cultural Arts Commission choose two of its members to serve on the Selection Committee, and they will be with the Councilmembers as non-voting art expert advisors.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner De Maria and seconded by Commissioner Humbarger to select Commissioner Samuels to fill the vacancy on the Los Angeles County's Civic Art Selection Committee.

Ayes: De Maria, Humbarger.
Noes: None.
Abstain: Rosenthal.
Absent: Samuels.

Mr. Murray strongly recommended the Commission's active involvement in the Library Art Project especially when the Selection Committee determines how \$150,000 of the City's donation is to be spent. He expressed his opinion that it is a mistake to have two art works by one artist as the County previously recommended. Commissioner De Maria, one of the two Cultural Arts Commissioners on the County's Civic Art Selection Committee, reported that City Councilmembers Powell and Lesser also wanted to have artworks in multiple locations. Commissioner De Maria was hopeful that the County listens to the Councilmembers' request similarly to when they had approved the City's ownership of the artwork in the new library created with the City's Public Art Trust Fund.

VI. REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS

None.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.