

REGULAR MEETING, NOVEMBER 9, 2004
CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION

PRESIDING: CHAIR ALICIA MILLIKAN

Call to Order
7:06 p.m.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: Susan Deen; Julie Lugo Cerra; Luther L. Henderson, III; Alicia Millikan, and Ronnie Jayne.

Pledge of Allegiance

Joan Potter led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States.

Staff Present

Christine Byers, Public Art & Historic Preservation Coordinator; Linda Simmons, Event Supervisor; Elaine Gerety, Management Analyst; and, Susan Evans, Community Development Director.

Agenda Posting

It was moved by Commissioner Deen, seconded by Vice-Chair Cerra and unanimously carried, to receive and file the Secretary's Report regarding the agenda posting for this meeting.

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Commissioner Henderson, seconded by Commissioner Jayne and unanimously carried, to approve the minutes of the Meeting of October 12, 2004.

∞

Item #6A
7:10 p.m.

Consideration of the Performing Arts Grant Award Recommendations.

Ms. Byers presented the staff report.

Chair Millikan recognized the following speakers:

Joan Potter, of Vox Femina Los Angeles, voiced gratitude for their recommendation and acknowledged Culver City for its attention to and love of the arts. She guaranteed that much effort will be put into their third show for the community.

Louise Reichlin, of Los Angeles Choreographers & Dancers, introduced herself, saying she was very excited to hear of their recommendation. She indicated their proposal will incorporate children in a multimedia piece called The Patchwork Girl of Oz.

Louis Lebherz, of the Culver City/Marina/Westchester Symphony, announced the lineup of their upcoming performances.

Jill Thomsen, of the Henry Mancini Institute, expressed gratitude for their recommendation.

Deon Price, of NACUSA, expressed disappointment and queried the rationale behind their not receiving a recommendation.

Ms. Byers explained there was a question about the strength of the diversified funding in their application.

Commissioner Deen confirmed that the subcommittee did have some concerns about funding and offered to meet privately with Ms. Price and staff to discuss the matter.

Dolores Aguanno, of dee-Lightful Productions, expressed disappointment and indicated she would be grateful to speak to someone to determine why their application was not accepted.

Taylor Gilbert, of the Road Theater Company, expressed appreciation for their recommendation, saying they are very excited at the prospect of performing in Culver City.

Lisa Richards, of the Debbie Allen Dance Academy, introduced herself and announced some of their upcoming performances.

Gary Hall, on behalf of dee-Lightful Productions, spoke highly of Ms. Aguanno and her company and urged reconsideration of their application.

Chair Millikan asked for Commissioners' questions or comments.

Commissioner Henderson thanked all the performing arts groups that applied. He indicated he is very pleased that Culver City is currently adopting and refining best practice standards for a panel review process to screen grant applicants.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER HENDERSON, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DEEN AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE CULVER CITY CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION CONSIDER THE 2005 PERFORMING ARTS GRANT APPLICATIONS AND THE GRANTS RECOMMENDED BY THE REVIEW PANEL AND THE CAC GRANTS AND ARTS SUBCOMMITTEE; AND, THAT THE CAC RECOMMEND TO THE CITY COUNCIL THAT THE GRANT AWARDS BE ALLOCATED AS OUTLINED IN THE STAFF REPORT.

Commissioner Deen voiced appreciation to the grant review panelists: Adrienne Bratton, of La Danse Orientale; Brandy Maya Healy, of the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department; Judy Pissaro-Grant, of La Danserie; Gayle Smashey, Culver City resident; and, Janice Pober, of Sony Pictures Entertainment. She indicated she is very pleased with the outcome of the process, saying there were many outstanding applicants and she is looking forward to some wonderful projects.

Commissioner Jayne requested clarification on the criteria for awarding the grants, saying, she is not certain why the Culver City Education Foundation's application was denied while the application submitted by No Limits For Deaf Children was accepted.

Commissioner Deen explained the decision was based on the information provided in each of the applications. She indicated the application presented by No Limits talked extensively about their production history and plans for the upcoming year. On the other hand, the primary emphasis of the Education Foundation

appeared to be as a fund-raising organization with production and theatrical performance as a secondary rather than primary focus. She further explained that, although No Limits has also been performing some fundraising activities to acquire an audiologist, part of their therapy is theater based. She continued by stating that, their application indicates they are the only theater group in the nation featuring the talents of deaf children learning to speak, and in the next two years they plan to produce an original production and establish a theater group for teens who are hard of hearing. Based on that information, the overall emphasis of No Limits seemed to be more focused on performance and theatrical production.

Vice-Chair Cerra remarked that the quality of the applications was wonderful and the choices must have been extremely difficult to make. She noted she is very pleased that the process has been refined into the creation of a panel and congratulated the subcommittee and the panelists for an outstanding job. She urged anyone who did not receive a grant this year to speak to staff to determine how they might improve their chances for being selected as a recipient in the future.

Chair Millikan indicated she was thrilled to see some of the applicants on this year's list. She voiced accolades for the Los Angeles Women's Shakespeare Company and said she was very disappointed they did not receive a recommendation due to an oversight in their application.

Chair Millikan recessed the meeting at 7:58 p.m. and reconvened the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

80

**Item #6B
8:10 p.m.**

**Consideration of Proposed Production Services
Proposals for the 2005 Summer Sunset Music Festival.**

Ms. Evans presented the staff report and indicated there had been an excellent response to the Request for Proposal. She advised that staff's recommendation is that a panel be convened to interview the seven applicants and requested that the Commissioners provide their comments on the interview and selection process.

Chair Millikan recognized the following speakers:

Megan Jacobs, of Sunset Promotions, indicated they have been producing outdoor festivals in California and are passionate about music, diversity, and bringing community together.

Ron Millberger, Chairman of the Volunteer Committee for the California Traditional Music Society, spoke in support of Gary Mandell, saying, in the years he has been producing for Culver City, concert attendance has increased as well as the quality of the performances.

Kathy Weaver and William Gamble also voiced support for Gary Mandell.

Ginger Campbell introduced herself and indicated she is very excited at the prospect of working in Culver City.

Chair Millikan entertained questions and comments from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Jayne indicated the applications contained a wide range of fees and suggested requiring more specific information of the charges and services included. She recommended providing a more detailed outline of duties and responsibilities to better structure the responses.

Ms. Evans advised that one reason staff is recommending each of these respondents be interviewed is to determine more precisely their fees and services. She indicated the application was deliberately left open to enable staff to better evaluate the professional experience and capabilities of each of the prospective producers. She explained staff felt it best to determine experience first since fees are generally open to negotiation.

Vice-Chair Cerra opined that the Summer Sunset Music Festival should be more clearly defined by contemplating how it might be structured to appeal to a diverse audience as well as provide a benefit to the City and its merchants. She recommended involving local people as much as possible. She also suggested having a Council or Agency member make announcements and introductions at the beginning of each performance rather than leaving that task to the producer.

Vice-Chair Cerra indicated that the experience of the producer translates into their contacts and connections, all of which combine to help ensure the production of a quality series.

Commissioner Henderson queried as to what kind of revenue stream is generated back to the City through this production and what kind of reaction it has received from the downtown business community in the past.

Ms. Evans replied that a number of programs have been implemented to help gain an understanding of the connection between the Festival and increased business downtown, but hard numbers have not been obtained. She indicated the Downtown Business Association was one of the Festival sponsors last year and has been very supportive.

Commissioner Henderson remarked that he, too, was concerned by the wide range of fees in the applications. He urged that serious consideration be given first to quality, followed by negotiation of a fair price for services rendered. He suggested that speaking to some of the professional references listed by the respondents might provide further insight into their backgrounds and capabilities. He also recommended considering whether the

candidates have the capacity to provide exposure to the other cultural programs being provided in Culver City through the media or other mechanisms.

Commissioner Deen noted, while most of the respondents indicated their producer's fee, many did not include an anticipated production budget which is an important consideration. She suggested requesting that the respondents provide a list of examples of the types of entertainment planned over the 15-weeks of the Festival. She noted that the current producer maintains his own mailing list which provides some additional advertising beyond what the City places in the local papers and suggested the applicants be questioned on their ideas regarding publicity outside Culver City.

Commissioner Deen agreed the Festival needs to be more clearly defined and a decision needs to be made as to whether its function is merely to serve as a special benefit to the City's residents or if the purpose is to introduce Culver City and what it has to offer to people outside the community.

Chair Millikan voiced agreement with the other Commissioners' comments. She indicated she is a huge fan of Gary Mandell and the productions he has presented, and noted, while there are many other wonderful and qualified potential producers, she is not certain exactly why this process has been initiated.

Commissioner Henderson commented that the Summer Sunset Music Festival plays a key role in providing entertainment that brings friends and families together and creates a sense of community in Culver City. He indicated, although it is unclear how much revenue is actually brought back to the community, that the Festival is a good investment because it brings residents and others out to patronize the City's businesses and become more aware of the myriad programs Culver City has to offer.

Commissioner Henderson commented he, like Chair Millikan, is not certain of the rationale behind proposing something different for the upcoming festival, but noted it is not within the Commission's purview to answer the question of whether to use the same producer or not. He indicated some very impressive applicants have come forward and it will ultimately be in the City's best interest to investigate them and determine who they are and what they might be able to provide to Culver City.

Commissioner Jayne suggested the candidates' experience producing music festivals be emphasized and also whether they have any familiarity working with the complexities of governmental entities. She agreed it is important to have a concept of what types of performances they have the ability to provide.

In response to Commissioner's questions and concerns Ms. Evans explained that in the past the Agency has engaged in the practice of rolling many contracts over but there is now a general policy direction of generating RFP's even for those contracts that have been ongoing.

MOVED BY VICE-CHAIR CERRA, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DEEN AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE CAC SHALL FORWARD THE BODY OF THEIR COMMENTS TO ASSIST THE INTERVIEW PROCESS AND THE SELECTION OF A PRODUCER FOR THE SUMMER SUNSET MUSIC FESTIVAL.

80

Item #7
9:01 p.m.

Information Items

A. Update on 501(c)(3) Workshop to be held on November 18, 2004

Ms. Byers indicated that staff has completed the requested research and will present the information at a publicly noticed workshop November 18 at 1:00 p.m. in the Cathedral Room at City Hall.

B. Update on the Art Fund Report

Ms. Byers provided a handout and indicated there were some recommended changes to the Accounting Division of the report for the month ending August 2004. She advised that subsequent reports will be forwarded to the Commission on a quarterly basis as requested.

C. Update on the Art of ... Speaker Series

Ms. Gerety provided a brief overview of the upcoming presentations being developed.

D. Update on the Art Revolution Program

Ms. Simmons noted that the Art Revolution was canceled in November due to inclement weather. She indicated the one planned for December is anticipated to be the most exciting yet featuring 25 artists, Town Plaza in full holiday decor, carolers, live music, and the winning art pieces from the Children's Art Contest on display. She invited everyone to join the festivities.

E. Update on the Harry Culver sculpture

Ms. Byers indicated Monday, November 22nd is the deadline for the three semi-finalist artist teams to submit their proposals and a meeting with the CAC Public Art subcommittee will be held the following day to review the proposals. She noted the matter will be brought to the CAC for consideration at the December 14th meeting.

F. Update on Utility Box installation

Ms. Byers indicated that installation of the images on eight of the nine boxes has been completed and noted a tentative date has been scheduled for the ninth, the fountain control

box. She indicated staff is also currently gathering ideas to create a lively distraction for the box adjacent to the Kirk Douglas Theatre on the north side of Culver Boulevard.

G. Update on installation of historical plaques

Ms. Byers advised that all but four of the first batch of plaques have been installed with the Washington Building, The Culver Hotel, the Coombs House, and the Thalberg Building at Sony Picture Studios still pending. She noted plaques with images for the gas station previously on Washington Boulevard and the King's Tropical Inn would soon be ordered as well as the additional eight plaques for Lafayette Place.

80

Item #8
9:09 p.m.

Commissioners' Comments.

Vice-Chair Cerra mentioned she had the pleasure of viewing an excellent exhibit of artwork by local artist Darrell Fusaro at the Jazz Bakery. She described the project as an evolving exhibit of sketches on local buildings.

Commissioner Henderson inquired if staff had received examples and explored the processes other cities utilize for performing arts grants and 501(c)(3) entities.

Ms. Byers responded staff has gathered the information and will be providing it to the Commission at the November 18th workshop.

Commissioner Henderson remarked that he had the opportunity to see the sold-out performance of the first play at the Kirk Douglas Theatre and noted it is great to have a world-class theater venue across the street from City Hall.

Commissioner Deen indicated she has been enjoying some vacation time the past couple of weeks and is thrilled to have gotten tickets for an upcoming performance at the Kirk Douglas Theatre.

Chair Millikan said she has received much positive feedback on the new theatre.

80

Item #9
9:14 p.m.

Announcements.

Ms. Byers presented a thank you letter from Nancy Keystone, a 2004 Grant recipient, and outlined the upcoming meeting schedule for the Commissioners.

80

Item #10

Director's Comments.

9:16 p.m.

None.

80

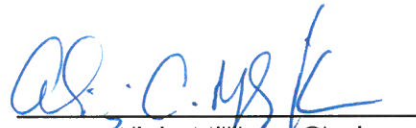
Item #11
8:46 p.m.

Adjournment.

With no further business for the Commission to consider, the Chair entertained a motion for adjournment.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER HENDERSON, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER JAYNE AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, TO ADJOURN THE WORKSHOP AT 1:00 P.M. ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2004, CATHEDRAL ROOM, CITY HALL.

Respectfully submitted,


Alicia Millikan, Chair



Debra Presutti