

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: 02/26/07		Item Number: <u>A-4</u>	
AGENDA ITEM: Discussion and Direction Regarding Acceptance of the Sister City Committee's Donation of Room Designation Tile Plaques for the Rooms Named After the City's Sister Cities in the Veterans Memorial Complex.			
Contact Person/Dept.: Pam Robinson		Phone Number: (310) 253-6632	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒		General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☐	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☒	Attachments: ☒
Public Notification: Master Notification List (02/21/06); Sister City Committee (02/21/06).			
Department Approval: William La Pointe, PRCS Director (02/15/2007)		City Attorney Approval: Carol Schwab (by H. Iker) (02/19/2007)	
City Controller Approval: Marlee Chang (02/20/2007)		City Manager Approval: Jerry B. Fulwood (02/21/2007)	

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the City Council discuss and provide direction to staff regarding the acceptance of the Sister City Committee's donation of room designation tile plaques for the rooms named after the City's Sister Cities in the Veterans Memorial Complex.

BACKGROUND:

Staff requested information from the Culver City Sister City Committee (CCSCC) regarding the history of the creation of the Sister City program in Culver City and the history of the naming of the rooms in the Veterans Memorial Complex (VMC) (Attachment 1).

Throughout the course of the last 10 to 15 years, the CCSCC has discussed the placement of designation plaques or signs outside of the rooms in the VMC. Attachment 1 refers to a 1990 memo regarding the Lethbridge Garden Room from Human Services Director Syd Kronenthal stating "the Sister City Committee has pledged to identify the room with appropriate signage and pay for the expense therein".

VMC staff began to work with the CCSCC in the late 1990's on this project and, although the initial purpose of the signage was to assist in the identification of the rooms, there was general consensus that the rather institutional looking meeting room hallway could be beautified if the signage was something other than a simple plaque or map. The CCSCC began a dialogue with the Culver City ART Group in 1998, but put the project aside in order to attend to other priorities.

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DISCUSSION:

Cultural Affairs and Public Art

Since its inception in 2001, the Cultural Affairs Division and the Cultural Affairs Commission (“CAC”) oversee the implementation and administration of the City’s Art in Public Places Program (also referred to as the “Public Art Program”). As presently defined in the City’s Municipal Code (Sections 15.06.100, et seq.), the Art in Public Places Program is tied to publicly and privately initiated development projects. When a public art requirement applies to a development project, the minimum valuation of that requirement is 1% of the valuation that appears on any City issued Building Permit.

Art work commissioned through this program is formally designated “Public Art” and undergoes a rigorous review and approval process and carries with it a long-term commitment on the part of the property owner. In conjunction with the Art in Public Places Program, the City manages the Art Fund (Fund 413), a restricted fund, which is paid into by developers electing to fulfill the public art requirement for their development project by paying an in-lieu fee. Art work that is commissioned by the City and paid for from the Art Fund is also considered “Public Art,” and requires both CAC and City Council review and approval. A recent example is the project by Kyungmi Shin for Washington Blvd. (between Sepulveda Blvd. and Walnut Ave.). A few select pieces (e.g., Natalie Krol’s *Filmstrip USA*, and the *Rivers of the World* mural along Ballona Creek) were already grandfathered into the Public Art Program when the CAC assumed purview over the program in 2001. To date, there are approximately 65 public art commissions in Culver City (some of these include more than one piece of individual art work) of which approximately half are owned by the City of Culver City.

There exist many examples of art work within the City that were not created under the Public Art Program and although they may be publicly visible, are not formally considered “Public Art.” Recent examples include a mural on private property in the Paseo off Main Street depicting a farmer’s market scene and a mural completed as a community project at Culver West Alexander Park.

Cultural Affairs and the Culver City Sister City Committee’s Proposal for Designation Plaques

In the Spring of 2006 the VMC Manager and CCSCC representative once again discussed the idea of identification signage. After this discussion, the CCSCC met and decided to proceed with the idea and decided to hire an artist to create tile

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designation plaques in keeping with the desire to beautify the hallway. The VMC Manager was informed of this decision and progress by the CCSCC. The VMC Manager then advised the CCSCC representatives that they should consult with the Public Arts Coordinator as this might be considered Public Art. The Manager further advised that, although tile designation plaques had been discussed by the CCSCC and the VMC Manager many years ago, the Cultural Affairs Commission did not exist at that time and new policies and procedures were in place.

The Public Art Coordinator was then approached at different times by the CCSCC and by the artist regarding having Lori Escalera complete four designation plaques for the VMC. The VMC Manager also spoke to the Public Arts Coordinator about the CCSCC proposal. The question was asked as to whether there was a possibility of using Art Fund money for the installation costs of the plaques and whether or not this should be considered by the Cultural Affairs Commission as a public art project. Cultural Affairs staff explained that if Art Fund money were to be used then this would come under the Public Art Program, and that both the Cultural Affairs Commission (CAC) and the City Council would be involved. Staff further outlined that for City (or Redevelopment Agency) initiated public art projects, there is usually a proposal process through which an artist is selected. In this case the artist already had three projects included in the City's Public Art collection and to ensure continued diversity within the collection, a recommendation could not be made by staff to the CAC without first soliciting other artists' proposals. Given the scope of this project and the fact that Ms. Escalera had already begun design work (this was borne out in a subsequent conversation between the Public Art Coordinator and the artist), it was decided that it was no longer feasible to pursue this route.

Ms. Escalera has now completed the tile designation plaques and the CCSCC would like to donate them to the City to be displayed next to their respective rooms. Attachment 2 is a copy of a memo from the CCSCC that was sent to City Council on October 2, 2006 informing them of the project. This memo includes pictures of the plaque designs.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

The cost for the project is approximately \$1,200. The CCSCC originally intended to charge half of the cost for the tile plaques to the City and pay for the other half with funds raised on their own. However, the CCSCC has informed staff that they would be happy to pay the full cost. The amount of \$600 was charged to the City on June 29, 2006. The CCSCC has offered to refund the City this amount. The only other cost to the City will be the installation which will be done by Public Works.

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ATTACHMENTS:

1. History of the Culver City Sister City program and history of the designation of Sister City rooms in the Veterans Memorial Building
2. Memo from the Sister City Committee to City Council dated October 2, 2006.

MOTION:

That the City Council:

1. Accept the donation of designation tile plaques from the Culver City Sister City Committee to be displayed next to their respective rooms in the Veterans Memorial Building;

or

2. Not accept the donation of designation tile plaques from the Culver City Sister City Committee;

or

3. Discuss the item and provide further direction to staff.