

**City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report**

Meeting Date: 05/23/11		Item Number: A-3	
AGENDA ITEM: Approval of a Streetlight Pole Banner Installation Featuring Swimmers from the Culver City Municipal Plunge			
Contact Person/Dept.: Christine Byers/ Community Development		Phone Number: (310) 253-5776	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☒ No ☐		General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☒ Attachments: ☒	
Commission Action Required: Yes ☒ No ☐		Date: 04/12/11; 05/03/11	
Cultural Affairs Commission/PRCS Commission			
Public Notification: Meetings and Agendas – City Council (05/19/11); Downtown Business Association (05/11/11); Judy Starkman (05/11/11); Select Sepulveda Boulevard Property/Business Owners (via e-mail) (05/11/11)			
Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld (05/04/11)		City Attorney: Carol Schwab (by H. Baker) (05/17/11)	
Fiscal Impact Approval: Jeff Muir:(by K. Marsden) (05/18/11)		City Manager Approval: John M. Nachbar (05/19/11)	
<u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> Staff recommends the City Council approve the Streetlight Pole Banner installation based on an art concept by Judy Starkman featuring photographs of swimmers from the Culver City Municipal Plunge. <u>BACKGROUND:</u> Pursuant to Section 15.06.115 of the Culver City Municipal Code, all exterior and interior modifications and additions of existing commercial, industrial and public buildings are subject to the City’s Art in Public Places Program (APPP) requirements if the remodeling project has a valuation as appears on the City-issued Building Permit(s) exceeding \$250,000. In 2005, the City initiated a remodeling project for the Culver City Municipal Plunge (the Plunge) with a Building Permit valuation of \$750,000 (Permit No. 63984). Based on this, the minimum amount required for fulfilling the APPP requirement was \$7,500. These monies were transferred into the Art Fund from the project account. <u>DISCUSSION:</u> In 2010, staff was contacted by Ms. Starkman, a professional photographer, filmmaker, and documentarian, who regularly swims at the Plunge. Ms. Starkman			

**City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report**

apprised staff of a photo documentation project she had initiated on her own entitled: "The Secret Life of Swimmers." At that time, Ms. Starkman had photographed or had scheduled to photograph approximately a half dozen individuals she met at the Plunge. Each subject was to be photographed twice: the first portrait was of the subject in their swim gear at the pool. The second portrait was with the subject in an identical or similar pose but in their "regular" life. Initial subjects included a UCLA literature professor, a businessman, a world-renowned long-distance swimmer, a housewife with a passion for exercise, and a physical trainer.

As is the case with Ms. Starkman, many of the Plunge patrons come from other parts of Los Angeles for an hour or two of exercise, relaxation, and socialization. From the connections and the stories each of the individuals shared about their lives away from the pool, Ms. Starkman was inspired to begin this project. To date, Ms. Starkman has photographed approximately 20 individuals, many of whom are Culver City residents.

When Ms. Starkman first contacted staff about this project, she expressed a hope that eventually the project would result in a book or an exhibition and wanted City staff to be aware of her work in case there was an opportunity to incorporate these portraits into a public art installation or some other City-sponsored project.

There is an opportunity for a permanent art installation at the Plunge that would include portrait images such as those created for "The Secret Life of Swimmers." These include highly durable, photo tiles mounted to either an existing wall (e.g., the north wall at the Plunge) or incorporated into a new permanent wall that would replace the existing Overland Avenue chain link fence. (A new wall along the Overland Avenue side of the property would reduce the current noise and debris issues and provide increased privacy for pool patrons.) Costs associated with such permanent installations range from approximately \$25,000 for a tile installation (for fabrication only) to \$200,000 for a new wall (measuring approximately 7'-10" high x 207'-9" long), plus the cost for reproducing images on tile and installation of the same. Although this type of permanent art installation may be considered in the future, it has been determined that it is not financially feasible at this time. In lieu of a permanent art project, a temporary art installation was considered, as discussed below.

After conferring with the City's Aquatics Coordinator, the Acting Director of the Parks, Recreation & Community Services Department, and the CAC's Public Art sub-committee (Vice Chair Koosed and Commissioner Musicant), staff proceeded with development of a proposal for a temporary banner installation to be installed for up to 24 months along a major corridor in Culver City. The project scope would include:

City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report

- Fabrication of a total of 40 - 60 double-sided banners (same image on both sides), measuring 3' x 8' each;
- Banners to be installed on 20 - 30 light poles, with the banners double hung on each light pole (i.e. one banner on each side of the light pole);
- Approximately 5 individuals to be featured, each with two portraits (one pair of portraits for each light pole);
- The series of portraits would be repeated two or three times, depending on the total number of light poles incorporated into the installation;
- Banners featuring the title of the project and information on where the public can find more information about the installation would be incorporated into the series; and,
- A two-phased installation is proposed: the first phase would be in Downtown Culver City from approximately mid-June through mid-September after which the banners would be relocated to Sepulveda Boulevard (between Franklin Avenue, just south of Braddock Drive. and Washington Boulevard/Washington Place to the north).

While conceived of primarily as an art installation, an ancillary benefit of the project is that its focal point is the Plunge and the individuals who patronize this facility. In order to give the project a high level of attention, locations were selected based on high traffic volumes and good visibility.

Because the banner program will include only a small selection of individuals photographed to date, a virtual gallery featuring all individuals photographed to date and background information about them would be included.

Very few of the nearly 100 artworks commissioned through Culver City's Art in Public Places Program are located in or feature City park facilities and only one installation to date (*Culver City Currency*) includes portraits of actual residents and visitors to the City. Streetlight pole banners were recommended as they allow for implementation of an art installation with a relatively short turnaround timeframe and small financial investment. A banner installation does not preclude pursuing a permanent art installation at the Plunge which staff will continue to explore.

This agenda item was considered by the Cultural Affairs Commission (CAC) at its regular meeting on April 12, 2011. The CAC unanimously supported this project and recommend the City Council approve the Streetlight Pole Banner installation based

**City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report**

on an art concept by Judy Starkman featuring photographs of swimmers from the Culver City Municipal Plunge. This item was also considered by the PRCS Commission on May 3, 2011, which voted to support the CAC's recommendation.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

The total outside cost for this project is \$24,000. This includes an estimate for fabrication, installation and relocation of 40 – 60 banners of \$8,150 - \$11,445, a design/production fee of \$7,500 for the photographs and costs associated with the design/production of a virtual gallery and promotional materials. The project would be paid for by the Art Fund (41300676).

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Profiles descriptions and images by Judy Starkman
From "The Secret Life of Swimmers"
2. Sample banner layouts

MOTION:

That the City Council:

1. Approve the Streetlight Pole Banner installation based on an art concept by Judy Starkman featuring photographs of swimmers from the Culver City Municipal Plunge.; and
2. Authorize the City Attorney to review/prepare the necessary documents; and,
3. Authorize the City Manager to execute such documents on behalf of the City.