

REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION  
CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

March 19, 2024  
7:00 P.M.

**Call to Order & Roll Call**

Chair Williams called the regular meeting of the Cultural Affairs Commission to order at 7:01 P.M. in Council Chambers at City Hall and via Webex.

Present: Chair Brenda Williams  
Vice Chair Leora O'Carroll  
Commissioner Tania Fleischer  
Commissioner Ehsaan Mesghali  
Commissioner Jeannine Wisnosky Stehlin

Staff: Jesse Mays, Assistant City Manager  
Sally Unsworth, Cultural Affairs Manager  
Lee Lawlor, Cultural Affairs Analyst  
Sam Lee, Cultural Affairs Analyst

o0o

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Williams led the Pledge of Allegiance.

o0o

**Public Comment - Items NOT On the Agenda**

Chair Williams invited public comment.

Lee Lawlor, Cultural Affairs Analyst, reported that no requests to speak had been received for Items NOT On the Agenda.

o0o

**Receipt of Correspondence**

Lee Lawlor, Cultural Affairs Analyst, reported no correspondence had been received.

o0o

**Consent Calendar**

Item C-1

**Approval of Minutes for the Regular Meeting of February 20, 2024**

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER WISNOSKY STEHLIN, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER FLEISCHER AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION APPROVE MEETING MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 20, 2024.

o0o

**Order of the Agenda**

No changes were made.

o0o

**Action Items**

Item A-1

**1) Discuss Potential Revisions to Culver City Municipal Code Section 15.06.100 et seq. Relating to the Art in Public Places Program Allocations; and, 2) Provide Direction to Staff as Appropriate**

Jesse Mays, Assistant City Manager, welcomed new Cultural Affairs Manager Sally Unsworth joining from New Jersey, and he provided background on her experience.

Sally Unsworth, Cultural Affairs Manager, was looking forward to meeting and working with everyone.

Commissioners welcomed the new Cultural Affairs Manager and expressed eagerness to work with her.

Jesse Mays, Assistant City Manager, introduced the item; noted that the Commission had expressed a desire to continue discussion of the ordinance regarding allocation of the Cultural Trust Fund, and options to consider.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding options for developers; providing an option to choose Performing Arts; the current limit of the Arts Fund in lieu fees collected to 25% during the previous year to be spent by the City on the Performing Arts; the need to change the Municipal Code in order to allow developers to pay for a Performing Arts Program to the amount of 1% of development fees; the need for a nexus study to ensure there is a connection made between the development impact and the Performing Arts contribution requirement; whether the option has been provided in other California cities; cities that appear to allow a developer to engage in Arts events or Performing Arts on the project site or in proximity; whether proximity is a requirement; offsetting development impacts; the potential for a nexus study to demonstrate that funding could be used throughout the City to offset development; the potential for legal challenges; the absence of legal challenges in other cities; the need to examine the city and county of Los Angeles; development funding vs. allocation of General Fund resources; the experience of the city of El Segundo; looking into the APPP (Art in Public Places Program) in Glendale; quantifying percentage of fund usage toward the Arts; other cities with Performing Arts facilities; providing free facilities for year-round Performing Arts; Grand Performances funded by the two high rises and the hotel at California Plaza; funding for on-site facilities and a performance series; the producer hired by the developer; and creation of a non-profit, expansion of the program, and support of the program by the developer.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding considering Performing Arts in public spaces as part of the APPP; using the Cultural Trust Fund to pay for Performing Arts; legal precedent related to physical art; language regarding special circumstances where a higher amount of money can be allocated to administrative costs; passing a resolution along with the regular budget; incorporation of the Artist Laureate Program into the 15%; use of funding for part-time staff and conferences; the

stipend for the Artist Laureate but not for staff administrating the program; residential vs. commercial developments; justifiable assumptions; staff agreement to research and examine other cities that have increased their Performing Arts budgets; the amount of physical art in Culver City; underfunding for Performing Arts vs. for physical art; large public art projects coming to the City; attracting world renowned artists to the City; using funds to support staff and enlarge the Performing Arts program; semi-professional performances; bringing live performances up to the caliber of the physical art in the City; legal structure to the physical art aspect; direction to staff to come up with a list of what other cities are doing with the money, how they justify it, and include a copy of Los Angeles' nexus study; the amount of money Los Angeles historically has allocated toward Art; calculations to extrapolate reasonable fees; defining fee usage; support of Arts projects and the Performing Arts through the General Fund and fees collected from developers by Los Angeles; the percentage charged for developments over a specific dollar amount with that money used for physical and Performing Arts in Los Angeles; the ability of the Culver City Council to use General Funds for Arts events; money approved for special events; and making a budget request.

Responding to inquiry, Sally Unsworth, Cultural Affairs Manager, indicated that her former place of employment did not have a Percent for Art Program, but she indicated that she would reach out to a colleague in New York City to see if they had any information to share.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding allowing developers to put money toward Performing Arts which could take away from Public Art; increasing the 25% allocated to Performing Arts in the Cultural Trust Fund to cover more than the Performing Arts Grant program; looking at the original determination of percentages; the Ehrlich lawsuit against Culver City; reasonable aesthetic regulation of property; previous amendment of the ordinance to allow a percentage of the deposits to be allocated for the Performing Arts without a nexus study; the decision to keep the percentage low to ensure that the vast majority of the funds were being used for Public Art; not deviating much from the ordinance that was challenged in the 1990s;

percentages established by staff and the City in 2012; clarification that prior to 2012 there was no allocation for the Performing Arts; the amount allocated vs. the amount that is not allocated; clarification that 15% of the Cultural Fund can be used for administrative costs, 25% for Performing Arts, and 55% for Public Art; the imbalance between Performing Arts and Public Art; upcoming Public Art projects; art that is not owned by a private developer or on private property; capital projects; creating a gateway for the Olympics; routine maintenance; direction to staff to research the experience of comparable cities in increasing their Performing Arts funds; cities with larger departments to run the programming; use of producers; venues in other cities; the need for venues in Culver City; identification of performance locations; partnership with an existing location to produce a show; the amount of Public Art in Culver City; branding; allowing the opportunity for a developer to designate use of their contribution to the Cultural Trust Fund; ensuring that money covers staff, follow-up, and publicity; the need for a parallel process for the Performing Arts; the nexus study as a cost benefit analysis for the art; the need for additional information to make a decision; research conducted so far; the fact that every City is different; use of a consultant to do the research; consultation with Cultural Affairs Managers from nearby cities; and staff agreement to research and return with additional information.

o0o

**Public Comment – Items NOT On the Agenda**

Chair Williams invited public comment.

The following members of the public addressed the Commission:

Rex Udan proposed that April be designated as White European month to honor the people who founded the nation.

Technical issues resulted in the remainder of the speaker's comments being inaudible.

Robert Colbert discussed Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Technical issues resulted in the remainder of the speaker's comments being inaudible.

Chair Williams indicated that the Commission was experiencing technical difficulties and she encouraged the speakers to submit their questions via email to be addressed at the next meeting.

oOo

### **Items from Commissioners/Staff**

Lee Lawlor, Cultural Affairs Analyst, announced upcoming Performing Arts Grant Program performances and she reported distributing registration for City-wide parking to Commissioners.

Sam Lee, Cultural Affairs Analyst, reported on the launch of the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the Farragut Connector.

Jesse Mays, Assistant City Manager, indicated that City Council Work Plan meetings would be held on March 20-21.

Commissioner Wisnosky Stehlin received clarification that there would be an opportunity for public comment during the City Council Work Plan meetings noting that she would be advocating that the Cultural Affairs Analyst position be made full time; she discussed distributing the Red Public Art Book to representatives from Uruapan, Mexico at the Sister Cities event at the Veterans Memorial Building; and she wished everyone a Happy Women's History Month.

Vice Chair O'Carroll echoed support for a full time position for the Cultural Affairs Analyst.

Commissioner Mesghali wished everyone a Happy Persian New Year and reported attending Frieze in Santa Monica.

Commissioner Fleischer wished everyone a Happy Persian New Year and Women's History Month; echoed calls for the Cultural Affairs Analyst position to be made full time; reported attending a celebration of life for a former colleague; discussed the alumni choir that came together to sing for their former director; the lifelong impact the choral director had made on his former students with their Performing Arts

experience; the value of the Arts in everyone's lives; and the importance of continuing to be stewards of the Arts.

Chair Williams wished everyone a Happy Persian New Year; acknowledged Women's History Month; echoed sentiments about making the Cultural Affairs Analyst a full-time position; indicated support for comments made by Commissioner Fleischer about the Arts; discussed a movie about a person who fixes old instruments and provides them to students; the need to support people who help children learn about Music and the Arts; and the impact of the Arts on people's lives.

o0o

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, at 8:21 P.M., the Cultural Affairs Commission adjourned to a regular meeting to be held at 7:00 P.M. on Tuesday, April 16, 2024.

o0o

---

SECRETARY of the Cultural Affairs Commission

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_

---

BRENDA WILLIAMS  
CHAIR of the Culver City Cultural Affairs Commission  
Culver City, California

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that, on the date below written, these minutes were filed in the Office of the City Clerk, Culver City, California and constitute the Official Minutes of said meeting.

---

Jeremy Bocchino  
CITY CLERK

---

Date