

REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION
CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

December 19, 2023
7:00 P.M.

Call to Order & Roll Call

Vice Chair O'Carroll called the regular meeting of the Cultural Affairs Commission to order at 7:00 P.M. in Council Chambers at City Hall and via Webex.

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

Absent: Chair Brenda Williams

Staff: Christine Byers, Cultural Affairs Manager
Lee Lawlor, Cultural Affairs Analyst
Sam Lee, Cultural Affairs Analyst

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Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Wisnosky Stehlin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Public Comment – Items NOT On the Agenda

Vice Chair O'Carroll invited public comment.

The following member of the public addressed the Commission:

Marla Koosed discussed her admiration and respect for Cultural Affairs Manager, Christine Byers and wished her well in her retirement.

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Receipt of Correspondence

Lee Lawlor, Cultural Affairs Analyst, reported that correspondence received had been provided to Commissioners.

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Consent Calendar

Item C-1

Approval of Minutes for the Regular Meeting of November 21, 2023

Vice Chair O'Carroll asked that language be added to indicate that the City would help with outreach to aid in identifying victims of gun violence on page 7 where it indicates "enlisting Culver 878 and Lori Escalera for help with research", and she requested that clarification be added on page 8 to identify the panel that Commissioner Mesghali served on at the Masonic Temple.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding clarification that Commissioner Mesghali served on a panel for a grant performance by Synchromy, featuring music about Ballona Creek.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER FLEISCHER AND SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR O'CARROLL THAT THE CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES FOR NOVEMBER 21, 2023 AS AMENDED.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: FLEISCHER, MESGHALI, O'CARROLL

NOES: NONE

ABSENT: WILLIAMS

ABSTAIN: WISNOSKY STEHLIN

Council Member Wisnosky Stehlin indicated that she had abstained as she was not present at that meeting.

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Order of the Agenda

No changes were made.

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Action Items

Item A-1

CAC - 1) Receipt and Discussion of a Report from Johnson Favaro Regarding the Future of Veterans Memorial Park and Bill Botts Fields at Culver City Park; and, 2) Provide Comments as Appropriate

Jim Favaro, representing Johnson Favaro, provided a summary of the report on the future of Veterans Memorial Park and Bill Botts Fields at Culver City Park; discussed the phased effort; the Feasibility Study; the process; creation of a road map; choices; the evolution of parks; changes to the city since its founding; nature preserves; types of parks; items to be addressed; enhancing and preserving the initial founding of the parks; feedback from the community; recommended changes to the parks; accommodating other uses; additional facilities proposed including an amphitheater at Culver City Park; parking; making use of all the acreage; character of the proposed trail; landscaping; micro-gardens; allowing for public transit; providing event spaces; allowing for support facilities to serve events; sports facilities; building maintenance; underperforming facilities; relocation of the ball fields at Veterans Memorial Park; creation of a comprehensive community and recreation center; the auditorium; accessibility issues; the Culver City Historical Society; community meeting rooms; the Teen Center; entirely replacing Veterans Memorial Auditorium; adding a performing arts center; making the most of facilities; centrally located PRCS (Parks, Recreation and Community Services) facilities; back-of-house operations for performing arts facilities; retention of the tower at Veterans Memorial Building; increasing park space; recreational activities that do not require fences; formalizing the namesake of the park; the Overland Avenue frontage; the public art components of the projects; and the Wende Museum.

Discussion ensued between Jim Favaro, staff, and Commissioners regarding soil settling at Bill Botts fields; levelling out of the sports facilities on the upper level; the goal of not having to rebuild the fields every few years; support for the proposed community center; taking advantage of the view; the proposed amphitheater; transportation to the site; proximity to the City Bus Depot; physical vs. financial feasibility; marketing; the character of the proposed trail; landscaping; micro-gardens; proposed changes; increased costs for subterranean parking; creating a less towering structure; creating an urban courtyard; multiple options available; appreciation for the description of parks; the importance of parks; support for finding an alternate location for the softball players; retention of outdoor basketball; the rooftop pool; neighborhood impacts; setbacks; retaining the parking entrance on Culver Boulevard; the need for an examination of traffic issues; theaters in Los Angeles with a similar capacity to the proposed 500 seat theater; current capacity of Veterans Memorial Auditorium; events that could take place at a new recreation center at Culver City Park; demand for a black box-style theater; dining options; providing a food venue in the park; private entities working on a public piece of property; structure height; retention of the Boneyard dog park; the current nature trail; the intent to improve the position within the Park-to-Playa trail; clarification that the road map had been created to meet needs that were expressed by the City; the playground at Culver City Park; purpose of the process; focus of the study; the ball fields; different configurations for the amphitheater; coordination of play on the ball fields; the parking structure; access to the fields; the landfill; shading; the Culver City Historical Society's museum; film screenings; theater size; staging; props; costumes; rehearsal space; aquatics facilities; spectator areas; art exhibitions in the theater lobby; priorities; appreciation for the transformative plans; shuttle parking for the proposed amphitheater; back-of-house needs; having the money vs. the will to make things happen; the amount of public participation; those who attended to advocate for paddle tennis; those who watch meetings from home; and appreciation for the presentation.

Vice Chair O'Carroll invited public input.

The following members of the public addressed the Commission:

Alicia Ide, Culver City Arts Foundation, discussed the conceptual report; appreciation for work done to incorporate constituent requests; support for allocation of space for the Historical Society and for the incorporation of performance spaces and back-of-house space in the city; continued need for smaller and more intimate meeting spaces; visual arts; the importance of finding space in the city for exhibition and maker spaces; architecture and landscaping; consideration of landscape design and buildings as works of art; art as a component of the trails; making art part of the design of locations; she offered help from the foundation; noted the cost of managing facilities; the role of the Cultural Affairs Commission in managing the facilities and programming; and the importance of words and the ability to accomplish whatever one sets their mind to.

Marla Koosed echoed comments from Alicia Ide regarding the nature walk; discussed the High Line in New York City and ongoing art installations; program management; the program in Torrance; funding; staffing to maximize the properties; transportation to facilities; and she expressed appreciation for the work done on the Feasibility Study.

Sehnita Joshua Madison, Culver City Arts Foundation, echoed comments made by Alicia Ide; discussed eagerness of the foundation to support the vision; and she encouraged interactive exhibits.

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Item A-2

CAC – 1) Review and Discussion of Culver City Municipal Code Section 15.06.100 et seq. Relating to the Art in Public Places Program; and, 2) Provide Comments and Direction to Staff as Appropriate

Christine Byers, Cultural Affairs Manager, introduced the item; discussed the Art in Public Places Program (APPP) in the Municipal Code; collaboration with Christina Burrows from the City Attorney's Office; new development impact

fees; updates since creation of the program in 1988; the update in 2013; work with CAC subcommittees; included updates; the actions of other cities to remove exemptions and incorporate Art for All; valuation of artworks; regular appraisals; adjusting original cost of artworks for inflation; inclusion of language pertaining to honoraria for review panels; stipends for artists who submit a proposal for review; moving language pertaining the Performing Arts to a new section; the Cultural Trust Fund; providing more options for the Performing Arts and projects not specifically related to permanent or temporary art; current restrictions on allocations; the 1996 decision in Ehrlich v. Culver City; the actions of other cities; latitude for developers; and input sought from the Commission.

Christina Burrows, Deputy City Attorney, indicated that input was being sought from the Commission in terms of a wish list for what could be done with the funds; she discussed precedent from other cities; and potential legal risks with implementation of proposed changes.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding previous staffing issues; concern with effects of financial crises; ensuring that funding is included; providing independent access to staff resources; novelty art; criteria to establish what is considered acceptable art; appreciation for adding clarification for future Commissioners; changing the reference from "his/her" to "their"; the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) phase for Public Art projects; providing a stipend for artists developing concepts; current practices; providing a process; standard amounts for other public agencies; support for eliminating exemptions for low and moderate income and senior housing; money for the Performing Arts; Commission recommendations to the City Council as part of the budget process; language and options in the 2021 adopted Public Art for Private Development Ordinance by Los Angeles County; and investment by developers in cultural activities and performances.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the Ehrlich vs. Culver City lawsuit; the way the money comes into the Fund; the developer challenge to imposing the fee; aesthetic regulation rather than health and safety regulation; cities that have expanded the use of

the funds; consultation with Los Angeles county; language to allocate funds for periodic restoration projects; maintenance costs; capital projects; adding an option for developers to put their Art in Public Places funding toward the Performing Arts; information regarding the process and percentage of Los Angeles County APPP allocations that are used for programming rather than for art; appreciation for the work done; ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance; the addition of the word "appreciating"; application of the stipends; building permit valuations; eligibility to commission an artwork for a site; consideration of eliminating the minimum requirement established ten years ago; Art for All; the balance between in-lieu fees paid and the number of art commissions; staff and City resources; raising the threshold to allow for a more substantial piece of art or performing arts series or event; tying the amount to the CPI (Consumer Price Index); developers that would be excluded with a certain threshold; developers that will exceed their 1% for Art requirement; language added to indicate that the art cannot be used to hide something; and less successful installations that were done to cover a vent shaft.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the imbalance between public and Performing Arts; the number of Public Art pieces in the City; maintenance; the evolution of the City; the need to bring more Performing Arts into the City in addition to the Performing Arts Grant recipients; the Summer Concert Series; activation of Downtown businesses; feeding the Creative Economy; benefits to the City; unification; support for increased allocation of monies to Performing Arts; the reference to "...balanced development of cultural and artistic resources..." on page 3 of Attachment 3 15.06100; definitions on page 5; including Performing Arts in the definition of Art; developer options; architecture as art; APPP allocations; developer option to use the 1% for cultural facilities; sponsorship of a Culver City Performing Arts series; attracting world class performers to Culver City; consideration of increasing the percentage of allocation for Performing Arts; multiple lawsuits challenging APPP; precedent; risk assessment; whether developers can contribute to more than one program; changing the name of the Performing Arts Grant Subcommittee

to the Performing Arts Subcommittee; and Brown Act subcommittees.

Vice Chair O'Carroll invited public comment.

The following members of the public addressed the Commission:

Marla Koosed discussed her work on the revision of the ordinance in 2013; the number of permanent artworks in Culver City; the APPP land use document created to mitigate development in neighborhoods; temporary art installations and exhibitions that bring cultural tourism; language on page 4 and 5 of the document regarding staffing qualifications; use of the word may vs. shall in language regarding consideration of qualified artists; Public Art submissions; situations created with the use of broad language; proposed changes to allocations; managing the money that comes in; and the law in California regarding time limit for spending monies.

Alicia Ide, Culver Arts Foundation; noted that some proposed changes restricted flexibility while others increased it; she discussed additional power or control provided to the Commission; long-term vision; not tying the hands of those entrusted with making decisions; the definition of the Arts as a moving target; and she expressed support for the process and for the proposed changes.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding changes to the definition of qualified artist to indicate that not all practicing artists must have a BFA (Bachelor of Fine Arts) or MFA (Master of Fine Arts); support for an art component required for low-income projects; support for redefining the \$75,000 to adjust with time or inflation; increased responsibility with the potential expansion of funds into the Performing Arts; legal concerns; allowing people to see and experience the Art; allocation of the Cultural Trust Fund; adding an option for developers; the opportunity to bring in world class performers; staff agreement to return to the Commission once research has been done; the timeframe for revising the ordinance; and the importance of consolidating conversations.

Public Comment – Items NOT On the Agenda

Vice Chair O'Carroll invited public comment.

Lee Lawlor, Cultural Affairs Analyst, reported that no requests to speak had been received.

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Items from Commissioners/Staff

Lee Lawlor, Cultural Affairs Analyst, announced upcoming music and dance performances as part of the 2023 grant program that had received extensions; 2024 grant contracts and performances; discussed the retirement of Christine Byers and expressed gratitude; assured Commissioners that staff would continue to keep things running smoothly; and read an email from Chair Williams in appreciation of Christine Byers.

Sam Lee, Cultural Affairs Analyst, indicated that Christine Byers was a legend in the public art field and thanked her for her friendship and mentorship.

Christine Byers, Cultural Affairs Manager, reported distributing copies of the third edition of the Red Walking Tours Book; noted the 35th anniversary of the APPP; thanked Lee Lawlor for her efforts; discussed accomplishments since the division's inception 22 years ago; reviewing the past in order to plan for the future; noted that despite adversity, the show always goes on; adoption of the last APPP ordinance in 2013; the demise of the Redevelopment Agency; reassignment of Cultural Affairs staff; proper implementation of programs written into the municipal code; reinstatement of positions and rebuilding of the department; the cautionary tale; hope for the future; the standalone element in the General Plan Update for Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy; the new Cultural Plan and Public Art Master Plan planned for 2024; collaborations; Culver Arts; the Historical Society; the Cultural Affairs Commission; temporary and permanent art installations; performances; the Artist Laureate Program; the Creative Economy Report; implementation of the Performing Arts Program; Artwalk; the Chamber Music Series and the Speaker Series; addressing protecting the division and programs from

future economic downturns while also advancing high quality and inclusive programming; and she thanked everyone, wishing them Happy Holidays.

Commissioner Wisnosky Stehlin discussed the Culver Arts party at the Helms Center; honors for Christine Byers; appreciation to everyone who participated in helping Arts programs move forward; pride in the division; and she thanked Ms. Byers for her work and wished her well in her retirement.

Commissioner Fleischer discussed minutes from the last meeting and follow-up on outreach in January; appreciation to Christine Byers for her outlook and for her efforts; and she expressed well wishes for her retirement.

Commissioner Mesghali discussed the Culver Arts Foundation Holiday Party; programming the Gun Store and creating an artist's compound or temporary performance space; he expressed appreciation to Christine Byers for her guidance and her efforts to make the City a better place; and he wished her luck in her retirement.

Vice Chair O'Carroll discussed attending the Tree Lighting; activating the Downtown area; the Creative Economy; noted that everyone would miss Christine Byers and her depth of knowledge, intelligence, and grace; and she wished her the best in her retirement.

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Adjournment

There being no further business, at 10:15 P.M., the Cultural Affairs Commission adjourned to a regular meeting to be held at 7:00 P.M. on Tuesday, January 16, 2024.

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SECRETARY of the Cultural Affairs Commission

APPROVED _____

LEORA O'CARROLL

VICE 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