

REGULAR MEETING, MAY 9, 2006
CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION

PRESIDING: VICE-CHAIR DEEN

**Call to Order
7:07 p.m.**

The Vice-Chair called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: Susan Deen; Gayle Smashey; Luther L. Henderson, III; and, Clement Hanami.

Ronnie Jayne's absence was excused.

**Pledge of
Allegiance**

Culver City Historian Julie Lugo Cerra led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States.

Staff Present

Christine Byers, Public Art & Historic Preservation Coordinator; and, Susan Obrow, Theatre Coordinator and Special Events Producer.

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Public Comment.

City Historian Julie Lugo Cerra thanked staff for their concerted efforts to ensure that the Culver City City Council and the community as a whole were aware of May as Historic Preservation Month. She remarked that historic preservation is a wonderful mechanism to assist communities as they develop and redevelop.

Ms. Cerra also indicated that she was extremely pleased with the recent unveiling of the Harry Culver sculpture. She remarked that it was a landmark occasion for the City, saying it was wonderful to see that one of Harry Culver's grandsons and his great grandchildren were able to attend the event.

Item #C-1.

Agenda Posting.

It was moved by Commissioner Henderson, seconded by Commissioner Smashey and unanimously carried, to receive and file the Secretary's Report regarding the agenda posting for this meeting.

Item #C-2.

Approval of Minutes.

It was moved by Commissioner Henderson, seconded by Commissioner Smashey and unanimously carried, to approve the minutes of the March 14, 2006 Regular Meeting.

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Item #A-1.

Consideration of a Public Art Concept for Tenant Improvements at Turning Point School.

Ms. Byers provided a summary staff report, noting that the public art concept under consideration is being offered in conjunction with proposed tenant improvements at 8794 National Boulevard; that the valuation of the tenant improvements are anticipated to range between \$2- and \$3 million; and, that the budget for the public art is currently set at just over \$31,000.

She reported that Ms. Marcus's previously approved public art concept entitled, *Shadows*, is located on the National Boulevard side of Turning Point School's other building at 8780; that the intent is to place this new concept on the fence and gate adjoining the two buildings to provide a visual link between them; that the CAC Public Art subcommittee and staff met at the end of March to review the submission; that the subcommittee voiced some concerns regarding the safety of the art work's design; that those concerns were forwarded to school administration and the artist; and, that the responses received provided assurance that the concept would be "playsafe".

Ms. Byers concluded by advising that staff and the Public Art subcommittee were recommending approval of the concept.

Ms. Byers reported that there were three cards on this item and invited Deborah Richman to the podium.

Deborah Richman, Head of Turning Point School, provided the Commissioners with a brochure containing information about the school. She remarked that Turning Point's relocation to Culver City was proving to be a truly delightful experience, saying they felt very welcome and embraced by the community. She indicated that the school is very involved in the Culver City community particularly in the area of community service learning. She stated they are very encouraged that Culver City takes such pride in its community and places such an emphasis on art, noting an appreciation of art as something the school definitely tries to instill in their students.

Arnie Levitt, architect for the project, commented that the acquisition of this adjacent building granted a unique opportunity to provide an entry statement for traffic approaching Culver City on National Boulevard. He noted that the yellows, tans, and greens of the existing building will be utilized on the new building and will be accompanied by a wonderful fence with a wave-like effect creating a sense of movement of color as it joins the two buildings together. He explained that individuals will be able to look through the fence and attached artwork to observe the school's new "eco park," a park containing seven different gardens designed to educate the students about nature and sustainability. He further explained that a trellis will also link the

buildings together creating an arbor as the students walk from one building to the other.

Jacklyn Marcus, artist, provided miniature samples of some of the components for the public art concept and advised that the finished work would be comprised of stainless steel an eighth of an inch thick, ground smooth and coated with approximately eight to nine layers of paint.

She described the concept behind her artwork, saying the circular shapes represent endless units which continue to grow and develop much like growing children and growing minds and that the interaction of those circles symbolizes connectivity and life experiences; that the abstract triangular or "lightning bolt" shapes portray input and knowledge and how those things interact to make everything else evolve and mesh together; and, that the colors represent young people of different backgrounds with different ideas and different styles of learning. She concluded by saying that in creating this piece she strove to encompass continued growth and forward movement, a flowing symmetry, and a balance of life.

Commissioner Smashey reported that she was one of the sub-committee members who expressed concern about the size of the circles. She indicated that the pieces were much larger than she expected, saying she would like to make certain the gates will be strong enough to support the size and weight of this heavy metal.

Ms. Marcus replied that she has done similar metal work for other buildings and gates and has had various engineers verify the process and strength of the materials. She advised that once the piece is bolted on it is virtually impossible to remove.

Commissioner Smashey stated that another concern is that the art work might create an attractive nuisance and make it possible for individuals to climb over to gain entry to school property.

Ms. Marcus reported that the individual pieces will be very difficult to climb on since are not very thick. She noted that, although they appear to be thick, the individual pieces are really quite flat and once they are adhered to the fence and gate it will be extremely difficult to loop a foot into any one of them to climb up.

Commissioner Smashey remarked that the artwork does create a wonderful tie in to the decorative elements of the buildings.

Commissioner Hanami inquired if the gate was actually moveable and if so by what mechanism it would open and close, i.e. rolling, swinging, et cetera. He also queried if the fence would be wrought iron with simple rods in between or if some other material would be used to allow visual access to the area behind the gate.

Mr. Levitt explained that the gate is controlled by a rolling mechanism and is designed to slide between the fixed pieces on the left and right. He advised that the goal is to share the park behind the fence with passing traffic on National Boulevard so the fence design compensates for this. He noted that he designed the same fence for a child care center at Children's Hospital in the central valley, saying, for safety and security reasons as well as to provide the strength to support the metal artwork, the pieces of metal are double and triple the thickness usually used for perimeter fencing.

In response to concerns about individuals trying to climb over the fence through the artwork, Mr. Levitt noted that the best mechanism to secure a facility is an issue that every public facility and every school has to take into consideration, saying they spend a large sum of money on security and cameras but will also pay attention to making certain that the pieces are positioned in a way that prohibits unauthorized entry.

Vice-Chair Deen asked how much space there is between the bars, saying her concern is that a small person might get a hand or foot caught or that a resourceful older child would be able to put a foot in in an attempt to get a leg up and over.

Mr. Levitt advised that building codes locally and across the nation require fencing spindles to be spaced four inches on center which is small enough that a tennis ball cannot pass through.

Commissioner Henderson remarked that architecturally the use of more vertical lines at 8780 and more horizontal lines at 8794 creates a nice contrast while providing a sense of balance between the two structures. He queried what type of maintenance would be required to preserve the vibrancy and colors of the materials and what their estimated life expectancy was anticipated to be.

Ms. Marcus stated the paint should last at least 15 years, saying that is a conservative estimate, and she would certainly make any repairs needed if problems were to occur.

Commissioner Hanami asked if Ms. Marcus had researched placing some type of film or coating on the pieces to protect them from being scratched or otherwise damaged.

Ms. Marcus replied that the final surface will have a very strong clear anti-graffiti coating making the pieces easy to wipe off.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER HENDERSON, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SMASHEY AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE CULVER CITY CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION APPROVE JACKLYN MARCUS'S CONCEPT FOR PUBLIC ART AS FULFILLING TURNING POINT SCHOOL'S PUBLIC ART REQUIREMENT FOR TENANT IMPROVEMENTS

AT 8794 NATIONAL BOULEVARD.

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Receipt of Correspondence.

Ms. Byers advised that copies of a memorandum from the City Attorney's office regarding revisions to the City's Charter had been distributed to the Commissioners.

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Items From Staff.

Ms. Obrow provided an overview of cultural events that had recently taken place in Culver City, including a reading by California Poet Laureate Al Young. She spoke about future events that were scheduled, including a reception for the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, the first annual ARTWALK Culver City, and the Summer Sunset Music Festival.

Ms. Obrow reported that staff was exploring the possibility of holding some different types of events, such as a children's event, and perhaps some spoken word or musical performances at the Culver Event Center. She advised that the facility is a beautifully restored arts-and-crafts era building with a lovely interior that seats up to 120 people, and includes catering facilities, and quality acoustics.

Ms. Obrow concluded by advising that the City Council would soon be entertaining a policy motion to allow acceptance of donations at cultural events produced by the City; and, that staff was continuing to work with City officials regarding the 501(c)(3) for Cultural Affairs and was hopeful to have that item included on the City Council's agenda soon.

Ms. Byers notified that the Commission's recommendation to approve modifications to the facade of the Helm's Bakery Complex had been forwarded to the Planning Commission which unanimously approved the project.

She provided an overview of some upcoming meeting and agenda items including the commissioning of a public art concept for tenant improvements at 3505 Hayden Avenue where Nike Corporation is locating one of their regional offices, and the convening of a panel to review artist qualifications for a public art project on West Washington Boulevard. She reported that there were 44 submissions in response to that Request for Qualifications, noting many were quite impressive and the task of narrowing them down should prove challenging.

Ms. Byers noted that the Commission had not received an Art Fund report for quite some time and advised that a draft copy had been distributed in the packets. She explained that there had been staffing changes in the City Treasurer's Department over the past year which impacted regular updates to the Art Fund report. With regard to the proposed Fiscal Year 2006-07 budget, Ms. Byers advised that there were three changes from last fiscal year: a small amount of money requested from the Redevelopment Agency for children's programming outside of Town Plaza; requested funding for an update of the 1987 Historic Structures Survey; and, \$5,000 requested for miscellaneous events.

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Items from Commissioners.

Commissioner Hanami announced that he had been selected to receive a City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Individual Artist Grant, noting only ten such grants are awarded each year.

Congratulations were offered by all.

Commissioner Henderson asked what the repercussions would be if funds were not allocated to update the citywide Historic Structures Survey.

Ms. Byers began by saying that the expenditure is a very wise use of money and is absolutely necessary to ensure that the City stays current with state and federal historic preservation guidelines. She advised that ideally the survey should be updated every five to ten years since one of the baselines of a historic survey is recognition of buildings that were at least 50 years old and that a number of buildings graduate into that category each year.

She explained that development projects where federal funding is involved are required under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act to evaluate the proposed sites to determine their eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. She stated that without a current survey each such project would have to be evaluated prior to moving forward and, for those projects where federal funding is not involved, there is the potential risk of demolishing or altering buildings that might not have received a designation twenty years ago.

Ms. Byers indicated that maintaining an updated historic structures survey would also allow the City to review the significance of sites that in 1987 were not eligible for a local designation but in the current environment may have acquired added significance.

Commissioner Henderson remarked that the item is actually more of an investment for the City than a cost.

Ms. Byers noted that even if only a handful of buildings are eligible to receive a specific level of designation at this time, Culver City can move forward as a City and a community with a collective understanding of the significance of its cultural resources.

Commissioner Henderson requested clarification of Ms. Obrow's comment regarding the City Council's pending discussion regarding donations to assist with cultural programming. He inquired if that would be in addition to or in lieu of the 501(c)(3).

Ms. Obrow advised there was no connection between the two.

Commissioner Henderson reported that he met with Chief Administrative Officer Jerry Fulwood and his assistant Martin Cole to discuss the 501(c)(3) and its strategic importance in empowering staff and the CAC to supplement funding for cultural events and activities in Culver City. He indicated that he left that meeting with a positive outlook and assurance that all the pending issues would be resolved, saying he strongly believes the matter will go before the City Council and receive approval very soon.

Commissioner Henderson remarked that he was quite impressed with the recent *The Art of the Restaurant* program and California Poet Laureate Al Young's presentation and commended staff for a great job putting together such creative cultural events.

Commissioner Smashey commended staff for the Harry Culver festivities, saying it was a wonderful and fun event. She mentioned that on a later visit to the site she noticed that the artist's name appears on the sculpture's plaque followed by a fish symbol, saying her concern is the creation of a potential problem for the City by displaying something with religious connotations on a public item.

Ms. Byers stated that this symbol is actually the artist's chop mark or signature. She explained that the religious symbol to which Commissioner Smashey referred almost always points in the opposite direction, saying the fish symbol is an ancient archetype that pre-dates Christianity.

Commissioner Smashey announced that the Fiesta La Ballona event would begin on Saturday August 26th, saying it should be an outstanding event with a number of fabulous musical performances.

Vice-Chair Deen commented that the entire *The Art of ...* series had been terrific, saying staff has continued to do a remarkable job on that event.

She voiced her gratitude to Sony Pictures Entertainment, noting she attended their annual Global Volunteer Day earlier in the

month at Culver West Alexander Park.

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8:22 p.m.

Adjournment.

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

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER SMASHEY, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER HANAMI AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:22 P.M. TO THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING ON TUESDAY, JULY 11, 2006 AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE MIKE BALKMAN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL.

Respectfully submitted,



Ronnie Jayne, Chair



Debra Presutti, Minutes Reporter