

REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION
CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

September 16, 2025
7:00 P.M.

Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair O'Carroll called the regular meeting of the Cultural Affairs Commission to order at 7:01 P.M. in Mike Balkman Council Chambers at Culver City Hall.

Present: Leora O'Carroll, Chair
Ehsaan Mesghali, Vice Chair
Tania Fleischer, Commissioner
Shona Gupta, Commissioner

Absent: Nicki DiLoreto, Commissioner

Staff: Sally Unsworth, Cultural Affairs Manager
Lee Lawlor, Cultural Affairs Analyst
Sam Lee, Cultural Affairs Analyst

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Pledge of Allegiance

Chair O'Carroll led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Public Comment - Items NOT On the Agenda

Chair O'Carroll invited public comment.

Lee Lawlor, Cultural Affairs Analyst, indicated that no requests to speak had been submitted.

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Receipt of Correspondence

Lee Lawlor, Cultural Affairs Analyst, reported that she had forwarded the one piece of emailed correspondence received to Commissioners.

Chair O'Carroll thanked former Commissioner Marla Koosed for her comments, ongoing engagement, and care for Culver City and Cultural Affairs.

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Consent Calendar Items

Item C-1

Approval of Minutes for the Special Cultural Affairs Commission Meeting of August 19, 2025

Lee Lawlor, Cultural Affairs Analyst, reported that she had corrected a small error of a duplicate name that had been pointed out by Commissioner Fleischer.

MOVED BY VICE CHAIR MESGHALI AND SECONDED BY CHAIR O'CARROLL THAT THE CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION APPROVE MINUTES FOR THE SPECIAL MEETING OF AUGUST 19, 2025 AS AMENDED.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: FLEISCHER, GUPTA, MESGHALI, O'CARROLL
NOES: NONE
ABSENT: DILORETO

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Order of the Agenda

No changes were made.

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Action Items

Item A-1

(1) Discussion of the Proposed Donation and Installation of the Historic MGM Sign; (2) Provide Recommendations to Staff for City Council as Appropriate

Sally Unsworth, Cultural Affairs Manager, provided a summary of the material of record.

Hope Parrish, Culver City Historical Society, discussed origination of the lion; the journey of the sign; historical significance of the sign in Culver City; she felt that there would be an opportunity to be a part of history; and discussed providing a gateway with the signage.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding project timeline; installation before the Olympics; the sizable amount of work to be done; community outreach; determining whether to keep both sides; execution of the donation agreement; obtaining estimates from three art handlers for procurement; coordination and logistics for moving and installation; City Council consideration; adding the piece to the Public Art collection; the path forward; branding; photo opportunities; having the piece in place before the World Cup; the nature of the barrier around the patio at the Senior Center; design and execution; support for maintaining the sign in its current form; lighting; placement of a plaque; ensuring a proper barrier for the Senior Center; potential scenarios; maintenance; clarification that the rendering only contains one side of the sign; and proximity to trees.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding placement on the Cultural Corridor; width of the sidewalk; lack of parking; selfies; safety; concern with people climbing on the ground level sign; increased visibility; the feeling that the discussion is premature; historic preservation; the tree surrounds; a suggestion to agendize formation of a Historic Preservation Subcommittee at the next meeting; support for the project; discomfort with providing a recommendation to the City Council without more consideration; the conservation assessment done at a

distance; more assessments before the item goes through; and the feeling that more issues need to be vetted.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding concern about the lack of parking at the proposed location; support for placement downtown where there can be more pedestrian traffic; incorporation of the Culver City Historic Preservation Program ; the recent tree surrounds event spearheaded by Jeff Morrical; transference of the tree surrounds from Public Works to Cultural Affairs; lack of a personal CAC member invitation or notification for the September 14, 2025 tree surrounds event; people committing time and effort to the tree surrounds; concern with exclusion of the Cultural Affairs Commission (CAC) from certain matters and the absence of a Historic Preservation Subcommittee; consideration of subcommittees at the last meeting; Commission purview; *Music in the Chambers*; exclusion of the Commission in Cultural Affairs matters; and Commissioners expressed support for agendizing an item to reinstate the Historic Preservation Subcommittee at the next meeting.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding CAC consideration of the item; process; Public Art Subcommittee process; save-the-date announcements; outreach; the City Council meeting where the item was remanded to the CAC for feedback; collection of feedback to provide to the CAC; possibility of the tree surrounds and the signs being entered as either art pieces or historic pieces; the intent to add the Historic Preservation subcommittee next month; historic preservation consultant who will provide advice; the budget cycle; City Council approval of contracts; consultation with the Commission about press releases and speaking at events; .

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding social media posts; created by the Communications; video of artist Sonia Romero; clarification regarding City Council direction regarding the Washington Blvd tree surrounds and staff intent to collect public feedback to present feedback to the CAC for a recommendation; Staff work with Jeff Morrical regarding the tree surrounds to provide public engagement efforts;; ensuring Commissioners understand the public process; and acknowledgement of concerns.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding Historic Preservation Subcommittee consideration on the next meeting agenda; inter-departmental conversations about MGM sign location siting; identification of potential sites around Vets Park; problematic components for locations considered; the opportunity of the revamp in front of the Senior Center; CAC feedback as part of considerations if the item moves forward.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding concerns around pedestrian safety with the proposed siting of the MGM Lion sign expressed at the Public Art Subcommittee meeting; investigation of feasibility; and public safety.

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Item A-2

(1) Discussion of Potential Partnership and Requested Funding for the Attune LA Temporary Outdoor Sound & Frequency Exhibition by Now Art; (2) Provide Comments as Appropriate; and (3) Provide Recommendation to Staff

Sally Unsworth, Cultural Affairs Manager, provided a summary of the material of record.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding review of the project by the Public Art subcommittee; presentation from Now Art; the need for a system to consider temporary projects; agencies that do similar installations; support for adding to the repertoire of experiences for the City; timeframe and funding structure for a potential pilot program with a formal application process; the need for infrastructure to support experiential events; and creation of a focused goal.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding involvement of other cities in the proposed exhibition; the need for municipalities to be in agreement on the particular project; potential locations; concern with the short timeframe for the proposed project; appropriate locations near public transportation; activation of certain parts of town; building a culture of experiential activations in Culver City; Ivy Station and Ivy Substation; looking at

which cities are ultimately participating in the project and what areas they leverage; and support for the interesting ideas.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding absence of letters of intent; lack of sound examples provided; timing; support for having an RFP (Request for Proposals) process; clarification that a vote was not necessary; and Commission consensus was achieved to agendize a future discussion of exploring a pilot program to create a system for accepting RFPs for similar events once per year.

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Public Comment – Items NOT On the Agenda (Continued)

Chair O'Carroll invited public comment.

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

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Items from Commissioners/Staff

Lee Lawlor, Cultural Affairs Analyst, announced that Performing Arts Grant Program applications for 2026 were open and available on the City website along with guidelines; discussed maximum grant request amount; requirement for matching funds; conversations with potential applicants; the September 26, 2025 deadline; information about events available on the City website; and promotion of the events.

Sam Lee, Cultural Affairs Analyst, discussed the *Culver City: Colorful Communities* Poster Program; the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) shared at the Public Art Subcommittee meeting; launch of the program; applications being received; the October 6, 2025 submission deadline; five neighborhoods to be highlighted; and other Culver City neighborhoods to be highlighted in future cycles.

Sally Unsworth, Cultural Affairs Manager, discussed proposals received for the Cultural Plan RFP; communication with major firms; neighborhoods identified in the poster program as being

complimentary to areas identified for the rotating sculpture program; ensuring activation of every community in Culver City; the booth for Artist Laureate Victoria Marks at Art Walk and Roll on October 18; the Artist Laureate Subcommittee; she reported that due to availability at the Wende, the new date for the Creative Economy event would be on October 29; noted the extensive invitation list from last year; asked Commissioners to let staff know if they wanted to recommend individuals, artists, or groups that they felt should be invited; discussed opportunity to announce the Cultural Plan, discuss the process, and possibly announce the firm chosen for the task; planned agenda items for the October CAC meeting including the work plan presentation from the Artist Laureate; planning a meeting for the recently formed Communications Subcommittee in November or December; recent discussions with Culver Arts to discuss partnership and their MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the City; discussions with the Communications Director and the Foundation about communications for the partnership; logo ideas and cross-promotion; the call for mural locations and open call artist's booths for artists during the *Art Walk and Roll* put out by Culver Arts; tree surrounds; distribution of the public survey; feedback gathered; public engagement at Art Walk and Roll; communication with Jack Morrical; Jazz Concerts at the Kirk Douglas Theater; and encouragement for Commissioners to reach out to Edgar Varela if they want to attend an upcoming show.

Commissioner Gupta congratulated Commissioner Fleischer on *Music in the Chambers*; discussed attending *Refuge for Being* in the Arts District, most of the summer concert series, Emer Kinsella's concert at the Kirk Douglas Theater, and a Heidi Duckler performance at a private home; she was looking forward to *Art Walk and Roll* on October 18; and she reported that Culver Arts was looking for muralists, artists, and booth sponsorship.

Commissioner Fleischer discussed the successful *Music in the Chambers* concert on September 7 with the Sakura Cello Quintet; development of a distinctive chamber music or classical music series; a previous series in Pasadena at the Ambassador Auditorium; upcoming world events; she encouraged any attendees who had not yet taken the survey to do so; thanked her fellow Commissioners for their support of the program and Culver Arts for their support of the artists; expressed

appreciation to everyone who worked on the event; and she read some of the comments received.

Vice Chair Mesghali echoed comments made by Commissioner Fleischer about *Music in the Chambers*; expressed appreciation for the lighting; discussed the joyful environment created; was looking forward to future versions of the event; expressed concern with putting responsibility for all the aspects of the event on staff; discussed ensuring that the reception afterward is executed on the same caliber as the music and environment; procuring professional services to help represent the City in a better way; people coming from outside Culver City to see the event; and putting Culver City on the map regionally for people who love culture and art.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding a local restaurant that catered refreshments for the *Dear Culver City* event with Artist Laureate Katy Krantz; support for creating structure to ensure that everything does not fall upon staff; branding for Culver City; important people attending; and ensuring that hospitality is on par with peers and competitors.

Chair O'Carroll discussed the *Music in the Chambers* event; acknowledged extra work for staff to put on the event; suggested hiring a dedicated concert coordinator or producer with catering provided by a local restaurant and allowing for open seating rather than tickets; she discussed being part of the opening ceremony for *Fiesta La Ballona*; attending the unveiling of Sonia Romero's tiled mural, *The Speedway*, at the Farragut Connector, the Culver City Arts Foundation Artist Meetup at Jeff Morrical's studio, *Music in the Chambers*, the September 11 Remembrance Ceremony at the firehouse, the tree surrounds event, and the first jazz concert of the series at the Kirk Douglas Theater noting there were two more concerts remaining in the series; and she announced upcoming events including the *Tito's Fiesta Mexicana* fundraiser for the Culver Arts Foundation, *Art Walk and Roll* on October 18, and the invite only Creative Economy Mixer at the Wende later in the month.

Adjournment

There being no further business, at 8:24 P.M., the Cultural Affairs Commission adjourned to a regular meeting to be held at 7:00 P.M. on Tuesday, October 21, 2025.

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SECRETARY of the Cultural Affairs Commission

APPROVED _____

EHSAAN MESGHALI

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