

REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION  
CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

January 21, 2025  
7:00 P.M.

**Call to Order & Roll Call**

Member Fleischer called the regular meeting of the Cultural Affairs Commission to order at 7:00 P.M. in the Dan Patacchia Conference Room at City Hall.

Present: Commissioner Tania Fleischer  
Commissioner Ehsaan Mesghali  
Commissioner Damon Willick

Absent: Chair Brenda Williams  
Vice Chair Leora O'Carroll

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

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**Pledge of Allegiance**

Meeting attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Member Fleischer invited public comment.

The following member of the public addressed the Commission:

Jack Bommarito, Culver City Historical Society, invited Commissioners to the installation of new Officers on January 28 in the Rotunda Room at Veterans Memorial; discussed goals for 2025; and indicated that they were seeking donations and volunteers.

Warren Mullison was called to speak but was not present in person or on Webex.

Angus MacDonald, Monarch Theater, noted that Media Park and Veterans Park were allowed a PA system with wireless microphones during the summer; he asked about having a one foot stage or platform for people to perform on; discussed safety; smoke; the inability to have a PA system at Carlson Park; and he questioned whether Culver City grant money could be used for the Blue Door Theater.

Member Fleischer clarified that questions could not be answered during the public comment period and staff provided an email address for questions to be forwarded to: cultural.affairs@culvercity.org.

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#### **Receipt of Correspondence**

Lee Lawlor, Cultural Affairs Analyst, reported distributing one email received from Marla Koosed.

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#### **Order of the Agenda**

No changes were made.

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#### **Action Items**

Item A-1

**1) Discuss Potential Programmatic Options for 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games 2) Provide Recommendations to the City Council As Desired**

Sally Unsworth, Cultural Affairs Manager, extended love and support to those impacted by the fires; noted that the losses were almost incomprehensible; discussed cultural disaster relief efforts; information on organizations that have launched relief efforts and potential grants at [getty.edu](http://getty.edu); difficulty considering the Olympics given the current

uncertainty and upheaval; the need to stay resilient and flexible; the ability of artists to bring people together for a common purpose; envisioning the future together in the context of the 2028 Olympics; the City Council directive that relevant Commissions, Boards, and Committees (CBCs) make recommendations on policy and program ideas for the 2028 Olympics; the City Council Olympics Subcommittee; input sought from the Cultural Affairs Commission for policy and program issues related to the arts in the Olympics; City meetings held since 2023 to gather ideas for how Culver City can participate in the Olympics; ideas included in the staff report as a starting point; openness to other ideas; the Commission's ability to make recommendations on what policies and programs Culver City should pursue; the process; recommendations from the Commission to the City Council Subcommittee for their recommendation to the full City Council on what to pursue; the budget process; alignment with other Los Angeles cities and regions; the Cultural Olympiad; working together to align programs and activations; non-profit arts organizations that have expressed concern that Culver City has approved Olympic arts programming that has not been shared with other large municipal arts partners; clarification that Culver City is still in the planning stages; planning alongside other regional partners; ensuring that any approvals consider the larger Los Angeles-wide planning efforts; communication; and partnership in overall planning for 2028.

Member Fleischer invited public comment.

The following members of the public addressed the Commission:

David Mack, Artist Magnet Justice Alliance and Executive Producer of the Culver City Olympic Arts Festival, provided revised packets with updated information to Commissioners; discussed his previous work in Culver City and commitment to art and artists in Culver City; acknowledged colleagues in the room; discussed the proposal for an arts festival centering iconic Culver City venues; communication with the venues; pop-up performances throughout Southern California throughout the day during the games; providing flexibility for community members and tourists; collaboration with Culver City to provide a bus to take audience members to different performance locations; centering Culver City in the process; members of the Community Collective; the Curators Circle; exploring the cultural history of Culver City; impact of the festival;

providing an immersive experience; finding unique ways to get to know Culver City; showcasing artists through public art; openness to collaboration; estimated budget; ensuring sustainability for artists; acknowledgement of the fires; displacement; the opportunity to provide work and sustainable support of artists; funding through institutional, individual, and private donations; he noted that a letter of support from the Commission would empower their fundraising efforts; discussed ensuring a successful festival; providing artistic excellence; and he indicated that a link to a one minute video that encapsulated the spirit of the event was included the staff report.

Discussion ensued between Mr. Mack and Commissioners regarding length of the festival; events in tandem with the Olympics and the Paralympics; number of performances; proposed locations; rental costs; supporting venues financially; event costs; level of support required from Cultural Affairs staff; coordination and communication support with the venues; documentation; after-performance information available; responsiveness to the story of Culver City; documenting the work and the process; having a screening at the Kirk Douglas Theater of the work for those who could not be present; the fiscal receivership fee; Curator's Circle fees; the 20% management fee; the budget for 2025 through 2028; the Metro portion of the festival project; focusing on the Culver City sites and aspect of the festival; the bus element of the proposal; accessibility; the proposed Zero Emission Fleet in Culver City; integration into an existing route vs. a dedicated bus for the festival; arts events happening in Culver City; clarification that the proposed budget is for the entire festival across Los Angeles county; and branding the festival as centered around Culver City.

Alicia Ide, Culver City Arts Foundation, introduced herself; proposed that Culver City create a space, or arts center that could be activated by all organizations and artists in Culver City; discussed the potential launch for a new municipal arts center; a proposed film festival to honor and celebrate the legacy of Culver City; planning and major costs; potential partners; work and funding involved; the need for a producer for the film festival; consulting costs; space rentals; venues willing to participate; outdoor movies; involvement of PRCS; events on the border of Culver City; creating an independent City production with support from the Foundation or others;

potential collaboration with partners; creating a truly international film festival; major studios in Culver City; the Historical Society; Sister Cities Committee; student films from AVPA; minimum time required for planning, artist selection, art installation, and promotion; gateway art; delineating City boundaries; Public Art installations; installations by significant artists; goals; creating visitor locations and Culver City identifiers; size; individual or connected art works; major costs; coordination with other City departments; potential funding from Culver City beyond the Cultural Trust Fund; mural projects installed in advance of the Olympics; creation of an app identifying art tours across Culver City; the kiosks; promoting artists and drawing visitors to Culver City; and she indicated that active collaboration was being sought, not funding.

Jim Clarke, Culver City Arts Foundation, indicated that they were not looking for funding, but rather wanted Culver City to know what they were planning to do; discussed acknowledgement and support of their ideas; ongoing collaboration; and joint projects to enhance the cultural environment of Culver City.

Discussion ensued between Foundation representatives, staff, and Commissioners regarding support for the gateway arts project; the process for placement of public art; a gateway project currently in the works; the Call for Artists; the RFP (Request for Proposals) process; identification of a location; length of the process; different phases of the process; involvement of different departments in Culver City; consideration by the Public Art Subcommittee, the Cultural Affairs Commission, and the City Council; prioritizing the gateway art already in the work plan; extensive site visits done over the past year; appreciation for the presentation; the Municipal Art Gallery proposal; the Parks Plan; use of the former gun store; options for cultural space as part of fulfilling the developer fee; appreciation for the partnership; support for the mural project and for the walking tours; a suggestion for a county-wide film festival rather than a Culver City film festival; creating sustainable events; staffing resources necessary to coordinate different film festivals; and willingness to formulate a budget if the City is interested in moving forward.

Jeff Morrical provided background on himself; discussed preparing the Arts District for the pedestrians of the 2028

Olympics and beyond; Los Angeles as the only the third city to host the Olympics three times; the 1984 and 1932 Olympics that turned a profit for the city; use of existing infrastructure; the need to be resourceful; existing cultural tree surrounds featuring films created in Culver City; creating a pedestrian experience for the Olympics and beyond; efforts to unify the corridor when the Arts District was originally created; the Ballona Creek gateway; unique art frame bus stops; the pedestrian-scaled experience; the cultural asset created by a local firm; origination of the district at the Metro stop; City funds earmarked for removal of the 66 tree surrounds; purview of the Public Works Department; maintenance concerns; planned improvements for the Ballona gateway; he proposed preservation of the tree surrounds and leveraging the system for pedestrians of the 2028 Olympics and beyond; discussed the look created for the 1984 Olympics by Sussman Prejza who also created the system for the Arts District; deconstruction of iconic structures created for the 1984 Olympics afterwards; classification of the items as public art rather than infrastructure; partnership between Public Works and Public Art; placing the focus on the portion of the system between National and La Cienega; cosmetic and structural damage on the title strips that could be removed; projects expected to be completed by 2028 including the extended bike trail and the new bus rapid transit line; creation of an activated pedestrian experience for the Olympics and beyond with a walking tour, networked lighting at street level, temporary easels for live painting, and City and community involvement; the intent to foster discussion; urban inspiration in other areas; and he presented some of his art work as well as memorabilia from the 1984 Olympics.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding an example of a temporary art installation; the tree surrounds as part of Public Works and not considered to be public art; collaboration with the Culver City Arts Foundation; the connection to the 1984 Olympics; collaboration with LA County Cultural Affairs to have the objects preserved; the out of date ordinance; jurisdiction; partnership; preservation vs. reimagining; and using the Olympics as an inspiration for the preservation discussion.

Glen Ward, Jazz Bakery, provided background on the Jazz Bakery; discussed the importance of jazz in Culver City; legacy; the mission of the Cultural Olympiad; the concept for the Jazz

Festival 2028; number of proposed concerts; providing Sister City representation; the time frame; the educational component; historic partnerships; building on the legacy; estimated festival budget; sponsorships; a request for a \$35K grant from Culver City; donors; venues; use of volunteers; partnerships; answering the core objective of the Cultural Olympiad; enabling Culver City to become the cultural and creative epicenter for the games; highlighting and expanding the region's rich cultural landscape; celebrating diverse voices; integrating cultural affairs into the economic fabric of Culver City; improving quality of life for residents; and fulfilling the Olympic cornerstone to combine art and sport.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding appreciation for the presentation; the creative economy; synergy; location and size of the Robert Frost Auditorium; and encouragement to look at the work of pianist Hazel Scott from the 1930s.

Ehsaan Mesghali provided a presentation on Global 28: An International Gathering of Music and the Arts; discussed his work with the Sister Cities Committee; large scale activation and cultural programming during the Olympics and Paralympics building a global community on existing connections; the overall concept; partnership between Culver City and enterprise partners; the ability to scale back; the Cultural Olympiad; past examples; establishing Culver City as a cultural hub for the games; creating a large-scale festival; activating existing performance venues; pop-ups and small-scale activations sponsored by third-party institutions and enterprise partners; case studies in other cities; the Youth Artist and Author Showcase; potential venues; street closure necessary for the proposed festival; the marketing and communications strategy; the master timeline; planning; cost; enterprise partner proximity; partnership with NPR; creating an annual flagship event; potential revenue for Culver City; and the potential to move the event to other areas of the world in the future.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the need to utilize a professional company with previous experience vetted by the City for the event working outside of staff; approaching corporate partners once a producer is procured; studio partnerships; the proposed street closure; increasing the economic impact; focusing on activating

downtown; keeping events more bike and pedestrian friendly; scope of the proposed festival; the Annual Car Show; partnerships and funding; contributions from the Sister City community; ideas contributed regarding programming; collaboration on diplomatic missions; and panel discussions on issues that concern cities and local government.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding appreciation for the presentations; clarification that Vice Chair O'Carroll serves on the subcommittee but had not submitted specific comments though she had expressed support for the Jazz Bakery and for working with the Sister Cities proposal; support for all of the proposals; coordination; overlap; ensuring that all of the arts are represented as equally as possible; Culver City as a hub; opportunities for Culver City to highlight its position within the area; coordination with other cities; the general theme of legacy; formulating recommendations; general themes to present to the subcommittee for consideration; general approach and feasibility; how projects work across different departments; past experience and track record of certain presenters; projects that support local artists; pop-up performances; providing access through free experiences; synergy with the local arts foundation; the tree surrounds as a separate discussion with the Olympics as inspiration; recommending valid proposals for the City Council Subcommittee to consider; concern with making a decision without input from the Chair and the other member of the Olympics Subcommittee; timeline; concentration of proposing the strongest elements to consider for the mix of arts and culture programming; continuing the list of what elements to include in the recommended programmatic scope; and a suggestion to recommend one proposal rather than several by using the festival as an organizational umbrella that other projects could fit into.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding carrying the item to the next meeting; consideration of proposals presented; ideas in the staff report that were not presented; creating a mixed, balanced programmatic suggestion; the need for additional information about ideas discussed by the Subcommittee; staff time necessary; feasibility; consideration of what Culver City would contribute to the mix of arts and culture programming; the

different scale of the proposed projects; budget implications; including other Commissioners in the conversation; collectible posters; precedent; history; agreement to carry over the item; and sending an email to all Commissioners with the presentation.

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Item A-2

**(1) Review of a Cultural Affairs Commission Biannual Written Report to the City Council, including Accomplishments During the Period July to December 2024, and an Update on the Upcoming January through June 2025 Plans; and (2) Authorization of Transmittal of the Report to the City Council**

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

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding clarification that Commissioners Fleischer and Mesghali had attended the jazz series; a suggestion to add that CAC Members had attended the jazz series; appreciation for the report and how much staff has accomplished; the intent to get a pilot program for Music in the Chambers before the end of the fiscal year; noting that the plans to revamp the historic preservation discussion would be included in the next six months; the tree surrounds; re-envisioning vs. preserving; the Olympics conversation; purview of Public Works; consideration by the Public Arts Subcommittee; the role of the Commission to make recommendations to the City Council; the full inventory of cultural assets in Culver City as part of making adjustments to the Municipal Code with regard to Historic Preservation; and clarifying the timeline regarding the tree surrounds removal.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER WILICK AND SECONDED COMMISSIONER MESGHALI BY THAT THE CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION:

1. APPROVE THE BIENNIAL REPORT OF ACTIVITIES AS AMENDED; AND,
2. AUTHORIZE TRANSMITTAL TO THE CITY COUNCIL.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: FLEISCHER, MESGHALI, WILICK

NOES: NONE

ABSENT: O'CARROLL, WILLIAMS

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

Chair Fleischer invited public comment.

Lee Lawlor, Cultural Affairs Analyst, indicated that no public comment had been received.

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**Items from Commissioners/Staff**

Lee Lawlor, Cultural Affairs Analyst, asked Commissioners to alert her if they had not yet received their stipend payments; reported that the City Council had officially approved the Performing Arts Grants for 2025; discussed execution of contracts; and announced a performance of Outliers: A Black Women's Theater Showcase at the Blue Door Theater.

Sally Unsworth, Cultural Affairs Manager, provided an update on the Artist Laureate Program; announced that Artist Laureate Katy Krantz had completed her term; invited everyone to attend the February 10, 2025 City Council meeting where Katy Krantz would be presented with a commendation for her work with Culver City; discussed completion of the tile installation of the trapezoid mosaic murals at the former Martin B. Retting Gun Store location; Katy Krantz report at the February 18 Commission meeting; the upcoming application cycle for Artist Laureate; the discussion led by an arts facilitator on the future of the Artist Laureate Program; review by the Artist Laureate Subcommittee; staff efforts to implement recommended program enhancements; agreement to expand geographic boundaries for artist eligibility; the updated FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) page outlining programmatic changes made; timeline for the applications; and she indicated that Sam Lee had created a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to expand City's list of qualified conservators and arts consultants in anticipation of ambitious work plan.

Commissioner Mesghali discussed creativity and professionalism brought to the role of Artist Laureate by Katy Krantz noting that he would miss her.

Commissioner Fleischer discussed previous applications for Artist Laureate; she encouraged everyone to go see the trapezoids; noted that the fires had resulted in a difficult start to the year; discussed artists who lost everything; the ability of art to heal wounds; the need for time to heal; the rebuilding process; she thanked Sally Unsworth for her acknowledgement of the fires at the start of the meeting; expressed appreciation for changes to improve the Artist Laureate program; and she thanked staff for their work to coordinate with other agencies on how to help artists affected by the fires.

Commissioner Mesghali encouraged people to support the Go Fund Me for Craig Wisner, the ceramics teacher at the High School as he lost everything in the Eaton Fire.

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**Adjournment**

There being no further business, at 9:44 P.M., the Cultural Affairs Commission adjourned to a regular meeting to be held at 7:00 P.M. on Tuesday, February 18, 2025.

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SECRETARY of the Cultural Affairs Commission

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_

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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.

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Jeremy Bocchino  
CITY CLERK

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Date