

# Culver CITY

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## MEMORANDUM

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**DATE:** August 15, 2023

**TO:** Honorable Mayor Vera and Members of the City Council of the City of Culver City

**FROM:** Cultural Affairs Commission [Chair Tania Fleischer; Vice Chair Brenda Williams; Members Ehsaan Mesghali, Leora O'Carroll, and Jeannine Wisnosky Stehlin]

**SUBJECT:** **2023 Accomplishments and 2023 Proposed Activity and Upcoming Agenda Items for the Next Six Months**

**CC:** John Nachbar, City Manager  
Jesse Mays, Assistant City Manager

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On August 15, 2023, the Cultural Affairs Commission (CAC) approved the transmittal of the following information to the City Council:

### **Cultural Affairs Commission Accomplishments (January 1 – June 30, 2023):**

- **Art in Public Places Program:**
  - Public Art Subcommittee and CAC reviewed applications for new permanent artworks:
    - **12300 Washington Blvd.** - Consideration of a concept for a permanent art installation by Jorge Campos/PixelArt. The proposed concept, which centered around a portrait of George Washington by Gilbert Stuart, was denied due in part to not meeting the requirement per the CCMC Section 15.06.135 (D): creation of a desirable environment for the general community and whether the artwork is representative of a broad variety of tastes within the community. The applicant was presented with options which included returning to the CAC with an alternative concept.
    - **4520 Sepulveda Blvd.** - Consideration of a request by Pep Boys to deaccession a permanent artwork titled *After Market Wheel* by Paul Tzanetopoulos that had been removed from the site and destroyed at the beginning of 2022. The CAC emphasized the need for periodic appraisals of public art and for adequate and qualified staffing to monitor and help care for extant artworks throughout the city.
  - **APPP Ordinance Update** – CAC Public Art Subcommittee has met to review areas requiring updating for Culver City's program to align with current best practices and reflect the needs of the community.

- **Artist Laureate Program:**
  - **Outgoing Artist Laureate Alexey Steele:** Alexey Steele concluded three years as Artist Laureate and the CAC received a comprehensive presentation of 2022 activities, plus a recap of activities since his appointment, in January 2020. CAC members attended the City Council meeting on January 23<sup>rd</sup> when Alexey Steele received a commendation.
  - **Incoming Artist Laureate Katy Krantz:** Ceramics artist and educator Katy Krantz was recommended by the CAC and appointed by the City Council as Culver City Artist Laureate (for a two-year term through December 2024). The CAC Subcommittee met regularly with Ms. Krantz for orientation, introduction, and to assist with planning of a new community art project. Members of CAC attended an artist networking event at The Wende Museum on June 15, 2023, hosted by Culver Arts. This was an opportunity for local artists to meet Katy Krantz, participate in making ceramic tiles, and to learn more about the Artist Laureate Program.
  - **Artist Laureate Activities:** CAC received a report from Artist Laureate Katy Krantz at the June 2023 meeting describing current activities and plans for a city-wide community art project titled “Dear Culver City...” The project includes free ceramics-making workshops and participation opportunities at the Culver City Senior Center, city parks, library, YMCA, Pride celebration, Fiesta La Ballona, among others.
  
- **Commission Business:** CAC received a presentation by Culver City Arts Alliance of the Culver City LA28 Olympics Arts Festival (CCLA28). CAC created a new Ad Hoc Olympics 2028 Subcommittee, assigned members, discussed the work plan of the subcommittee, and coordination with the City Council Olympics subcommittee.
  
- **Creative Economy:** Subcommittee met several times with Cultural Affairs and Economic Development staff on the planning of stakeholder activities and events, to be reinstated in early fall 2023.
  
- **Cultural Affairs Division:** CAC received a report and presentation regarding status updates for the FY 2022-23 Cultural Affairs Work Plan, and upcoming Work Plan priorities for the FY 2023-24. CAC made inquiries and provided recommendations to staff regarding edits to the Work Plans. CAC discussed staffing needs, changes to organizational structure within the City Manager’s Office (Office of Economic and Cultural Development), on-going and new projects, powers and duties of the Commission, community need for performance venues, Creative Economy events, and budget considerations. CAC received comments from prior Commissioners regarding the Work Plan and recommendations for additional activities (e.g., Music in the Chambers).
  
- **Culver City Arts Foundation (Culver Arts):** Culver City Arts Foundation Liaison Subcommittee attended monthly Board meetings and planning event. Commissioners attended community events hosted by Culver Arts. CAC received updates from Culver Arts and provided feedback about scholarships, recent grant-making, parks community meetings, and other projects by Culver Arts.

- **Outreach and Community Engagement:** As appropriate, CAC participates in targeted outreach and attends cultural activities, museum exhibitions, and sponsored performances in Culver City.
  - CAC received a report detailing staff's promotional efforts on behalf of City-sponsored events and programs (City website, Public Art Archive, community calendar, social media, attendance, evaluations, etc.)
  - Vice Chair Brenda G. Williams wrote an article for UCLA School of Art and Architecture's newsletter (You See LA) with recommendations for "[Five Things to See and Do in Culver City.](#)"
- **Performing Arts Grant Program:** CAC regularly attends and supports grant-funded performances. Subcommittee monitored grantee activities and discussed questions of eligibility or compliance. Subcommittee also met with the City's Special Events Manager and made recommendations on musicians and promotional materials for the 2023 Summer Concert Series.

#### **Cultural Affairs Commission Activities Plan (July 1 – December 31, 2023):**

- **Art in Public Places Program:** Continue review of applications for new artworks in conjunction with private development. Public Art Subcommittee will continue work on Washington/National TOD project, The Culver Steps project, and other art projects and concept proposals in connection with development throughout the city. Performing Arts Grant and Public Art Subcommittees will complete revisions to the Art in Public Places Program Ordinance and will forward those to the CAC for a recommendation to the City Council.
- **Artist Laureate Program:** Receive updates and provide continuing support for Artist Laureate Katy Krantz.
- **Creative Economy:** Subcommittee will continue to work with Cultural Affairs and Economic Development staff on stakeholder activities and events.
- **Commission Business:** CAC will consider Municipal Code updates re CAC powers and duties.
- **Cultural Affairs Division:** Provide comments and recommendations to City Manager as appropriate.
- **Culver City Arts Foundation:** Continue to liaise and support Culver Arts. Provide input on MOU amendment, receive updates/report, and attend Board meetings.
- **Economic Vitality Task Force (EVTF):** CAC members continue to support EVTF meetings with a focus on the launch of an art in empty storefronts/businesses program.

- **General Plan Update**: CAC will provide feedback on relevant GPU cultural elements as they are completed and presented for review.
- **Historic Preservation Program Update**: CAC will work with staff to update program as included in the CCMC.
- **Outreach and Community Engagement**: As appropriate, CAC participates in outreach about various programs and attends cultural activities in Culver City.
- **Performing Arts Grant Program**: CAC regularly attends and supports grant-funded performances. Subcommittee will provide support for drafting of guidelines, consideration of eligibility criteria, and preparations for incoming applications. Subcommittee will provide support for the independent evaluation of grant applications, determine appropriate levels of grant funding based on panel scores, and make recommendations to the City Council. CAC will consider recommendations of the Subcommittee and prepare corresponding recommendations to City Council regarding 2024 grant awards.