

REGULAR MEETING, JANUARY 10, 2006
CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION

PRESIDING: CHAIR JAYNE

Call to Order
7:08 p.m.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: Susan Deen; Gayle Smashey; Luther L. Henderson, III; and, Ronnie Jayne.

Clement Hanami joined the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

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.

Item #C-1.

Agenda Posting.

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

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Item #A-1.
7:11 p.m.

Town Hall Meeting – Staff Overview.

Chair Jayne voiced appreciation to the members of the public for their attendance.

Ms. Byers noted that this is the second annual town hall meeting of the Culver City Cultural Affairs Commission and that it is intended to provide the community with an opportunity to come forward and address the Commission on issues relating to the adopted Community Cultural Plan. She reported that the Community Cultural Plan outlines six primary goals to which specific outcomes or tasks have been linked.

Ms. Obrow summarized the six goals included in the Community Cultural Plan and provided an update on the accomplishments for 2005.

Ms. Byers reported on some concepts for future public art projects, including plans for an artwork on the western end of Culver City along Washington Boulevard; she referenced the Architecture Review Panel which was implemented for the first time in 2005; the recently completed inventory of the Culver City's public art; and, the installation of plaques explaining the zoetropes and their historical significance to Culver City's film industry.

Ms. Obrow reported on the work program for 2006 including the production of the 5th Annual Music in the Chamber series which will take place Friday nights from February 17th through March 17th; plans for an art walk which is intended to highlight the City's art galleries; the 12th annual Summer Sunset Music Festival to be held on Thursday nights between June 15th and September 7th; and plans to identify and develop an new intimate theatre space in Culver City.

In closing Ms. Byers advised that the updated Community Cultural Plan is available on the Cultural Affairs page of the City's website at www.culvercity.org.

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Item #A-2.
7:18 p.m.

Town Hall Meeting – Public Comment.

Chair Jayne opened the floor to audience members who submitted speaker cards.

Cathy Zermeno, on behalf of the Culver City Historical Society, thanked the Commission and commended them for their fine work in helping to preserve the history of Culver City. She announced that as the newly elected President of the Historical Society she will be available during her term to assist the City and the CAC in every way possible to continue that effort.

Julie Lugo Cerra, Culver City Historian, congratulated the Commission for their continuing work on the Community Cultural Plan and the achievements they have made so far. She remarked that communication is the cornerstone of every good program and reminded those present that not everyone has a computer or reads the newspaper so it is important to reach out through all available modes of communication to ensure public involvement and a successful and workable plan. She stressed that there is a tremendous amount of strength in partnerships and suggested continued collaboration between various organizations. She noted that the Culver City Historical Society is continuing to partner with the City and the Culver City Unified School District and that the Living History Project is going strong and expanding. She advised that the City's website has a large section devoted to the city's history which she will be updating later in the week. She concluded her comments by extending good luck wishes and encouraging the CAC to broaden their scope and continue to work hard as they move forward.

Jeannine Stehlin, Culver City resident and Managing Director of Circus Theatricals, a nonprofit professional theater company, indicated that one of their goals is to perform some of their productions outdoors, saying they would love to do that in Culver City. She noted that, while Culver City has erected temporary outdoor spaces to accommodate events such as the Summer Sunset Music Festival, the City does not have a permanent outdoor

performance space. She urged the City and the Commission to actively explore locations to build an intimate outdoor space or amphitheater either in one of the larger city parks or in a new green area yet to be discovered, saying such a venue would greatly benefit Culver City and would provide a wonderful place to hold musical and theatrical events.

Greg Reiner, representing The Actors' Gang, praised the Redevelopment Agency, the CAC, and the entire community, noting the best thing about coming to Culver City was discovering that it actually is a community and that the support for the arts has been overwhelming. He reported that many long-time patrons of The Actors' Gang have commented that it is very easy to park in downtown, that there are many wonderful places to dine; and, that they feel extremely welcome in Culver City. He commended the City for their vision in hiring Ms. Obrow to coordinate their theatrical and performing events, saying that was an incredible move which will ultimately benefit everyone. He indicated that The Actors' Gang has been working with Ms. Obrow to find a second space for performances, saying that when a location is finally identified, they will work very closely with the City for assistance with renovations and technical support.

Mr. Reiner advised that some of the tangible results of their relocation to Culver City are that they have doubled their subscription base in the past six months and have expanded their education program from two to four days a week with the ultimate goal of increasing it to seven days a week. He remarked that the schools have been willing and active participants, that their principals have exhibited a discerning vision for the arts, that the parents have been interested and involved, and that the students are very motivated and talented. He mentioned that every time one of their productions goes on a national tour, their program includes a special thanks and acknowledgment to Culver City for its generous support.

Joel Kimmell, also representing The Actors' Gang, thanked everyone for making them feel so welcome in Culver City, saying they moved here only six months ago but in many ways it seems they have been part of the community forever. He remarked that their relocation has not only elevated their visibility but their enthusiasm as well.

Mr. Kimmell indicated that Culver City's support has been instrumental in their plans to creating a children's theater program this summer in Media Park as well as the implementation of an internationally acclaimed prison project where actors visit penitentiaries to work with the incarcerated population on theater and performance skills.

Mr. Reiner and Mr. Kimmell expressed gratitude to their fellow speakers, saying they feel embedded in Culver City's cultural affairs community.

Veronica Reyes introduced herself as a seven-year resident who recently began working for the City. She mentioned that Culver City has a wonderfully tightly knit community with which she feels a very strong bond. She suggested putting more effort into outreach programs to keep the community apprised of the various events taking place, saying different media options such as radio or perhaps partnering with Sony Pictures Entertainment might be explored to help get that information out to the public. She stated she has noticed a particular interest in different types of cultural experiences as evidenced in the wide variety of ethnic foods available in Culver City and proposed setting aside a day to explore international cuisine and culture.

Scott Malsin indicated he was extremely pleased to hear the sincerity and commitment to the community expressed by the previous speakers. He commended the CAC for the accomplishments they have made in their work program over the past year, noting many of them are very visible and it is obvious every attempt is being made to create a comprehensive program that encompasses the many different forms of art.

Mr. Malsin opined that a crucial component of the work of the CAC and staff should be to focus more attention and resources on promoting their programs. He suggested consideration be given to devoting a larger portion of their funding to event promotion, saying the mission of a city's arts program is in part economic development so it makes sense to concentrate attention on that aspect.

Mr. Malsin strongly encouraged developing a dynamic Architecture as Art program and suggested creating literature to provide a reference tool for developers building projects in Culver City. He stated he would very much like Culver City to be known as a community with truly creative physical space, noting architecture is the most easily accessible form of the arts. He voiced approval of the proposed art walk program and suggested creating an arts or theater district as a means to organize and promote the different cultural events in certain areas of the city. He remarked that the art galleries along La Cienega and Washington Boulevards made The New York Times and may be something that can be leveraged to raise the profile of the community, saying the most important thing to consider as things move forward is ensuring people are informed.

Matthew Hetz, of the Culver City Symphony Orchestra, advised that, while they do not travel on a national/international level like The Actors' Gang, they are hired by the Department of Beaches and Harbors of Los Angeles County for a series of summer concerts

in Burton Chase Park each year and that they advertise for Culver City at those performances and have brought audience members from the Marina, expanding the City's outreach on a local level. He expressed gratitude to Culver City for its continued support.

Mim Shapiro, one of the original members of the former Culver City Art Committee, stated she is extremely pleased with the work that has been accomplished and the continued progress being made in Culver City. She thanked staff and the CAC for all their diligent efforts and wished them much success as things progress.

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7:45 p.m.

Receipt of Correspondence.

None.

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7:46 p.m.

Items From Staff.

Ms. Byers provided the Commissioners with a tentative schedule of upcoming agenda items, including discussion of the Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation for the proposed 501(c)(3) for Cultural Affairs and the public art concept for Turning Point school.

Ms. Obrow announced that notices for the Summer Sunset Music Festival's Public Review Committee meeting would soon be going out and that a very special event is being planned for the anxiously anticipated celebration and unveiling of the Harry Culver sculpture in Town Plaza sometime near the end of March.

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7:50 p.m.

Items from Commissioners.

Commissioner Hanami thanked the audience members for their participation.

Commissioner Henderson stated that the annual Town Hall meeting provides an opportunity for the general public to share some of their ideas regarding the Community Cultural Plan with the Commission. He advised that one of the long-term goals of the Community Cultural Plan is to develop a permanent location for outdoor performances, saying that that suggestion is certainly on the docket. He supported the idea of collaboration occurring between the various cultural organizations in the community and inquired on the status of the arts directory on the City's website as a mechanism to help those groups learn about and get in touch with each other.

Ms. Obrow advised that a new intern began working in the Cultural Affairs Division this year, saying the directory will be one of her projects.

Commissioner Henderson expressed his enthusiasm for moving forward with the development of a 501(c)(3) for Cultural Affairs, saying it will go a long way towards supplementing some of the things the CAC is doing to implement the six goals and related outcomes in the Community Cultural Plan.

Vice-Chair Deen thanked the audience members for providing some very excellent comments and suggestions.

Chair Jayne remarked that she was immensely pleased to have people come out to share their thoughts and ideas. She stated she very much appreciated hearing from some of the organizations that have received funding, saying it is good to know how they are faring. She encouraged organizations who have received grants to keep the Commission informed of their events so there is an opportunity to make announcements. She commented that she is very interested in the idea of food as culture as mentioned by one of the speakers.

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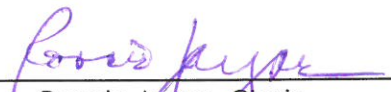
8:00 p.m.

Adjournment.

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

MOVED BY VICE-CHAIR DEEN, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SMASHEY AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:00 P.M. TO THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2006 AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE MIKE BALKMAN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL.

Respectfully submitted,



Ronnie Jayne, Chair



Debra Presutti, Minutes Reporter