

REGULAR MEETING, APRIL 12, 2005
CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION

PRESIDING: VICE-CHAIR JULIE LUGO CERRA

Call to Order
7:01 p.m.

The Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: Susan Deen; Julie Lugo Cerra; Luther L. Henderson, III; and, Ronnie Jayne. Chair Millikan's absence was excused due to illness.

**Pledge of
Allegiance**

Gayle Smashey led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States.

Staff Present

Christine Byers, Public Art & Historic Preservation Coordinator; Linda Simmons, Event Supervisor; Elaine Gerety-Warner, Management Analyst; and, Susan Evans, Community Development Director.

Item #C-1.

Agenda Posting.

It was moved by Commissioner Henderson, seconded by Commissioner Deen 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 Deen and unanimously carried, to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2004 Workshop and the March 8, 2005 Regular Meeting.

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Item #A-1.
7:03 p.m.

Consideration of a Proposal and Request for Funding from Ballona Creek Renaissance for an Art Project at the Ocean Drive Pedestrian Bridge.

Ms. Byers presented the staff report.

Vice-Chair Cerra recognized the following speakers:

Lucy Blake-Elahi provided images to illustrate Ballona Creek Renaissance ("BCR") description of the proposed project: a tile mosaic on the walls flanking the entries to the bridge on both sides that depict images relating to Ballona Creek and the surrounding wetlands. She noted that the project would involve local school children, utilizing their assistance in creating the art work and that there would also be an educational component. She indicated that some of the neighbors in the community have been very helpful and innovative, providing native vegetation plantings, and that the entire Ballona Creek Renaissance membership will assist with helping maintain the area.

Mim Shapiro provided some background history, noting that originally three strongly attended workshops were held and a decision was made to build a leaf bridge because of the simple yet elegant design and more reasonable cost. She indicated that the Art Committee at the time proposed, and the City Council accepted, a \$180,000 contribution from the Art Fund toward the leaf bridge project. Jim Lamm, President of BCR, was quite active in garnering the interest of some conservancies which resulted in additional grant funding. She explained that due to a series of events, including personnel changes in the City, problems in receiving adequate bids ensued, and with the toll of inflation, the project was held in abeyance. Ultimately, a totally different plan to build a catalog bridge was initiated and, in the process of switching gears to implement this other project, BCR and many of the previous aspects of the leaf bridge, i.e., placement, landscaping, terracing, safety features, and aesthetics, were set aside.

Ms. Shapiro noted that BCR is implementing a new "Adopt-A-Creek" plan; that many of the neighbors in the Lindberg Park area adjacent to the pedestrian bridge are very actively involved in planting and taking care of the area; that many Friends of Ballona Creek are interested in seeing the art work come to fruition and participating in its care and maintenance; and, that Farragut School is very excited about incorporating the project into their curriculum as an additional learning experience. She urged the Commission's serious consideration and recommendation that the item be included in the budget for FY 05-06.

Ms. Blake-Elahi addressed the maintenance issue by noting that the mosaic incorporated in the "Rivers of the World" mural has not been destroyed or damaged by graffiti and that mosaics are the most durable of the colorful forms of art media.

Vice-Chair Cerra requested Commissioners' comments.

Commissioner Deen indicated that as one of the members of the CAC Public Art Sub-committee she was quite surprised to see this item on the agenda, saying her understanding is that a procedure is in place directing that these matters first come before the sub-committee for review and recommendation. She stated that, while the project proposed is in line with BCR's mission statement, she is concerned that Ballona Creek Renaissance is offering no money to augment funding for this project and that the proposal, as submitted, includes an artist and a specific design without having gone through a request for proposal process. She indicated a tile mosaic created in conjunction with local school children is currently located at another location along Ballona Creek, saying there have been maintenance problems with that work, i.e. tiles coming loose and falling off and, while there might not be graffiti there, the site has been vandalized and the ongoing maintenance is a concern.

Commissioner Deen commented that she would be more supportive of a different type of art concept than of another tile mosaic done in conjunction with the schools. She stated she does not view this as the City's highest priority for public art because it will be seen by only a limited number of people rather than art work placed somewhere else in the city where it could be enjoyed by considerably more people. She noted that the Redevelopment Agency and City Council are currently preparing to revitalize the west end of Culver City and that project will most likely include requests for art work. She remarked that, while she does not like to deny any group funding, unfortunately, the Art Fund does not contain an endless stream of money. She noted that anyone interested in having an art project considered should feel free to contact staff or a member of the Commission, adding the proviso that funds need to be attached to pay not only for the project itself but to endow its maintenance. She concluded by voicing support of staff's Option No. 3, to deny the request for funding and recommend that no art work be incorporated at the pedestrian bridge at this time.

Commissioner Jayne remarked that she walks Ballona Creek regularly and enjoys the art work and tiles at the Duquesne Avenue entrance. She indicated she would be extremely pleased to see some type of artistic enhancement to the bridge and, while BCR has presented a lovely plan and she appreciates they are offering much in terms of "sweat equity", she would also like to see them provide a portion of the funding. She commented that she would be inclined to support staff's Option No. 1, to allocate an amount of money to be determined, adding that she would be interested in exploring other funding sources such as naming tiles or some other mechanism that would involve the community. She agreed that the maintenance issue must also be considered. She said the changing plans over the years must be an incredible disappointment to everyone involved, reiterating that she does believe there should be a project and the City should provide some funding, but BCR needs to make some financial contribution.

Commissioner Henderson remarked that he was concerned that this particular item had not first gone through the appropriate subcommittee channels for review and recommendation, saying the Commission is attempting to implement a consistent procedure and practice to address these matters. He inquired if the current budget is adequate to provide maintenance for the City's existing art work.

Ms. Byers responded that it is not, advising that conservation of the art work at the Heritage Fountain alone is anticipated to cost between \$15,000 and \$18,000, which is a large portion of the money allocated in the Art Fund for maintenance and conservation. She added that much of the City's art work has been exposed to the elements for over a decade and, while some pieces have received routine maintenance and/or repair, the resources necessary to perform more extensive maintenance and conservation for the entire collection, are not readily available.

Commissioner Henderson, commenting that the Ballona Creek Renaissance has implemented other projects in the last few years, inquired if there are other areas of the City that are desirous of public art.

Ms. Evans agreed that other public art projects have been incorporated at Ballona Creek. She indicated that this Commission and the City Council have been focusing a great deal of time, energy, and resources on the downtown area and advised that staff will soon be bringing a proposal to the Commission for budgeting for art work in west Culver City, where the Redevelopment Agency is very active.

Commissioner Henderson queried if staff had received anything in writing from the local neighbors expressing any interest in the BCR proposal.

Ms. Byers answered that staff had not. Ms. Byers noted that Ms. Shapiro recounted some conversations BCR had had with the school, but that staff was unaware of the other discussions BCR had had with the community, as mentioned by Ms. Shapiro and Ms. Blake-Elahi, prior to the meeting.

IT WAS MOVED BY COMMISSIONER HENDERSON AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DEEN TO DENY BCR's REQUEST FOR FUNDING AND RECOMMEND THAT NO ART WORK BE INCORPORATED INTO THE SITE AT THIS TIME.

Commissioner Henderson explained that there are other neighborhoods in Culver City which the Commission has an obligation to give equal consideration to. He indicated that, while there is a valid argument for the bridge being in need of art work and aesthetics, there is a limited amount of funding available.

Vice-Chair Cerra commented that she visited the site several times recently. She noted that while the landscaping was a wonderful exercise and the plants themselves incorporated a variety of heights into the scenery, part of the bridge and art work would actually be obscured by the plants once they had matured. She remarked that some of the other vegetation was seriously lacking upkeep and questioned how this type of care might later apply to the maintenance of the bridge and artwork. She stated she is just not convinced this is the right place to utilize the talent, energy, and creative spirit of artists.

Vice-Chair Cerra noted that making the creek more aesthetically pleasing is a wonderful idea since it is a place that cannot be restored to its original environment. She commented that the City's transportation facility provides a good example of what could be done in the area and suggested working with the neighbors to gather additional ideas and perhaps concentrate more energy on the landscaping aspect. She indicated she is heartsick to see that the mural at Duquesne Avenue has clearly

become a victim of skateboarders, saying it is a terrible affront to an artist to have their hard work destroyed and she is reluctant to involve children in another project that has the potential of being damaged or destroyed and that this does not send a good message.

Vice-Chair Cerra stated that she is also uncomfortable with the fact that, by making a recommendation to allocate funds in this amount without going through the proper competitive bidding procedures, the Commission would be straying from City policy.

Ms. Evans advised that Public Works projects do have certain bidding requirements. She indicated that, while the Redevelopment Agency is not legally required to issue an RFP and may enter into a contract without the same level of competitive bidding unless sitting as the City Council on a Public Works project, it has routinely been the Agency's practice to issue RFP's.

Vice-Chair Cerra voiced concern that BCR is also requesting \$2,000 for administration but nothing has been factored in for the Cultural Affairs Department's management costs, noting it is unclear who would actually be administering the project.

Ms. Byers indicated staff's understanding of the proposal was requesting the funds and that they were proposing that BCR would administer the project if funding is approved. She added that, as proposed by BCR, Cultural Affairs staff would act as a contact but would not necessarily manage the day-to-day oversight of the project; this creates an additional concern in terms of the amount of money requested by BCR for a sole source contract.

Commissioner Jayne urged that, although this item may have come forward in a procedurally questionable fashion, the project itself should not be punished nor rewarded by virtue of that fact.

Vice-Chair Cerra reminded that the Santa Monica Quilt Guild brought a proposal to the Commission about a year ago that required follow-up, saying above all else there needs to be consistency in how these things are addressed.

Ms. Evans explained that a practice has been established to hold a town hall meeting through which proposals come before the Commission in ample time to make a recommendation for staff to incorporate them or not as part of the full budget package. She indicated that this applicant came forward and made their proposal at the CAC town hall meeting and that this is the next logical and appropriate step in that process. She indicated that, depending on the Commission's decision, staff will take this item forward to the City Council as part of the budget recommendation or not.

Commissioner Henderson explained that the Commission's policy is that items first appear before the appropriate subcommittee for review and recommendation, noting there are a number of very

viable projects all over the City waiting for funding. He reiterated that this particular neighborhood has already implemented a number of projects, saying Culver City is a very large city with many neighborhoods looking for opportunity. He said the Commission is attempting to be as fair as possible and do the best it can with the resources available.

Vice-Chair Cerra queried if the neighbors had received formal notification by US mail of the project.

Ms. Byers answered that staff had not notified the neighbors because staff was handling this item as a preliminary budget request rather than a finalized art proposal.

Vice-Chair Cerra called for the question on the motion.

The motion carried 3:1 on the following roll call vote:

AYES: Henderson, Deen, Cerra

NOES: Jayne

Vice-Chair Cerra thanked the participants for their creative interest.

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**Item #A-2.
7: 56 p.m.**

**Recommendation of Interview Questions for the Applicants
Submitting Proposals to be the Resident Theater Company for the
Ivy Substation.**

Ms. Evans presented the staff report.

Vice-Chair Cerra called for Commissioners' questions or comments.

Commissioner Deen commented that she hopes the applications will be received far enough in advance to allow ample time for the financial statements to be reviewed and offered her services to staff. She recommended that a list of each company's past performances be provided and, in answer to the appropriate questions to put forth, suggested the following: What their plans are for the upcoming season? How their productions would complement or contrast with those at the Kirk Douglas Theatre? Whether their plays tend to be of the same genre, i.e., new works, ethnically-based, musicals, drama, avant-garde and, if so, if they envision doing something in a different vein? Name three or four projects they would like to produce if money or licensing fees were not an issue. Who is their target market? How large a mailing list do they have? How often do they contact the people on that list, and is it an e-mail or US mail list? Whether they envision incorporating Media Park into any of their productions? What is their vision for the Ivy Substation and Media Park? And, finally, how would becoming the resident theater company impact their fundraising efforts, production schedule, and choice of projects?

Commissioner Jayne remarked that she would include the following questions: Given the diversity and demographics of the Culver City community, how have their productions bridged these gaps in the past and how will that be continued in the future? Will a variety of performances appealing to different groups be provided or will they have a more universal appeal? Who is their current audience and do they anticipate that a large percentage will follow them to Culver City? And, on a more whimsical note, besides the money and availability of a great theater venue, what attracted them to respond to the RFP?

Commissioner Henderson indicated that first and foremost the theater company should be one of outstanding world-class quality that inspires people to visit Culver City. He indicated he would be interested in determining the following: Their artistic integrity; What their funding sources are and whether they possess the financial wherewithal to sustain the theater and bring people to Culver City; Can they bring a benefactor in that it would make more good news about Culver City? What types of plays do they offer that are family oriented and have a universal appeal? And, what critical awards or acclaim have they garnered in the past?

Vice-Chair Cerra commented that she found it difficult to formulate questions since the Redevelopment Agency did not provide much direction as to what exactly it was looking for in this theater group. She remarked that she has received a tremendous amount of positive input from people in the community about the Kirk Douglas Theatre; that it is a great venue, residents are proud of the renovation, pleased that the building is still standing, and enjoy attending the performances there. She noted that people have also expressed a great deal of disappointment that season tickets sold out, excluding them from enjoying what the theater has to offer, noting she is not sure how this should be resolved. She suggested that it is very important to cater somewhat to the community members in whose city these plays are taking place by offering a broad scope of performances and informing people what types of productions are being provided.

Vice-Chair Cerra suggested including the following questions: How many productions are envisioned during the eight-month period? How would those productions be characterized? Are a variety of cultural experiences, i.e., poetry readings and dance, also offered? Are the actors in the group professionals or amateurs? Are actors drawn from the community? Who is their target audience and does that audience vary? How do they envision themselves in relation to the Center Theatre Group, i.e., competitor, complement, or appealing to a different audience? And, are they aware of the Academy of Visual and Performing Arts at Culver City High School and would they act as mentors?

IT WAS MOVED BY COMMISSIONER HENDERSON, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DEEN AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION RECOMMEND THE FOLLOWING

QUESTIONS FOR THE REVIEW PANEL TO ASK THE APPLICANTS WHO SUBMITTED PROPOSALS TO BECOME THE RESIDENT Theater COMPANY FOR THE IVY SUBSTATION.

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8:13 p.m.

Public Comments.

None.

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Receipt of Correspondence.

None.

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8:13 p.m.

Items From Staff.

Ms. Byers advised that Commissioners were provided a copy of the April 3rd New York Times article about commercial art galleries in and adjacent to Culver City. She announced that, at a conference she recently attended in New York, one of the speakers on a panel about trend setting in the art world remarked that it appears Culver City is the hottest trend at this time.

Ms. Byers provided an update on the zoetrope and historic designation plaque installations as well as ongoing work on The Lion's Fountain. She indicated that an Art Fund report for the month ending February 2005 was included in the Commissioners' packets and advised them of tentative agenda items and meeting schedules for May and June.

Ms. Simmons reported on the Music in the Chamber series scheduled to begin May 19th and indicated that the lineup for the Summer Sunset Music Festival was printed in the April 7th edition of the Culver City News.

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8:19 p.m.

Items From Commissioners.

Commissioner Jayne expressed great pleasure that her old home town, New York, was giving Culver City some well-deserved accolades. She mentioned that she attended the opening of Assemblywoman Karen Bass's office where there was an exhibition of art work from local school children on display, saying it was very nice to see what the youth are doing these days.

Commissioner Deen reminded everyone of the upcoming Culver City Homeowners Association and Historical Society meetings, saying they are open to the public and it would be wonderful to see some new faces in attendance.

Commissioner Henderson said he is very pleased that the Music in the Chamber series is about to begin and provided a little overview of some of the scheduled artists, saying he anticipates it to be varied and interesting series with topnotch performances by all. He commended staff for all the hard work behind the scenes that is helping to make Culver City a truly "hot spot" in the art world.

Vice-Chair Cerra said she was very pleased that the City Council proclaimed May as Historic Preservation Month in Culver City. She noted she has been busy working on the Living History Project with the local schools, saying the presentations have been a great deal of fun and very well received by the students.

Vice-Chair Cerra mentioned that, in light of the wonderful success of the utility boxes, staff might look into one across from the window of the Pacific Theatres and consider changing the image. She also suggested that larger trash cans be provided so people can view the artwork on them without the trash overflowing.

8:29 p.m.

Adjournment.

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

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER DEEN, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER HENDERSON AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:29 P.M. TO THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING ON TUESDAY, MAY 10, 2005 AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE MIKE BALKMAN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia Millikan, Chair

Debra Presutti, Minutes Reporter

City of Culver City, California
Certification of Documents by the City Clerk

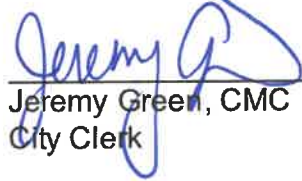
I, Jeremy Green, being the duly appointed City Clerk of the City of Culver City, California hereby depose and declare

The 9 pages of the Cultural Affairs Commission Approved Minutes for the Regular Meeting of April 12, 2005 attached hereto are true and correct copies of documents in the possession of the City of Culver City.

I have affixed the Seal of the City of Culver City, California to indicate they are such true and correct copies.

Certified on this 7th day of March, 2022.

BY:



Jeremy Green, CMC
City Clerk

