

REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION
CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

March 10, 2015
7:00 P.M.

Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Koosed called meeting of the Cultural Affairs
Commission to order at 7:00 P.M.

Present: Chair Marla Koosed
Vice Chair Regina Klein
Commissioner Len Dickter
Commissioner Thomas Small
Commissioner John B. Williams

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Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Dr. Janet Hoult.

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Public Comment – Items Not On the Agenda

Chair Koosed invited public comment.

The following members of the audience addressed the
Commission:

Dr. Janet Hoult congratulated the Commission on the success of the *ArchitectureTALKS*; complimented the Commission on their efforts; noted the absence of literary events in the City; discussed the importance of assisting the disabled and elderly; mentioned the idea of a Culver City poet laureate; suggested agendizing a discussion of having a new poet laureate every two years; discussed her poetry workshops; establishing a curriculum that follows the timeline of the City; the Centennial; the Historical Society; she distributed copies of her book to Commissioners; and she read a poem about painting with words.

Leslie Graham, reDiscover Center, received clarification that the City did not keep a list of working artists in the City.

Discussion ensued between staff, Commissioners and Ms. Graham regarding ways to identify working artists in the City and Ms. Graham was encouraged to sign up for the City's Cultural Affairs public notification list.

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Receipt of Correspondence

Christine Byers, Public Art and Historic Preservation Coordinator, reported that no correspondence had been received.

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Consent Calendar

Item C-1

Meeting Minutes

Vice Chair Klein noted that the thank you extended by Susan Obrow on page 2 of the minutes should have also included gratitude extended to Vice Chair Klein and Commissioner Williams for their work on the Performing Arts Grant Program.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER SMALL, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION APPROVE MINUTES FOR THE SPECIAL MEETING OF NOVEMBER 19, 2014 AS AMENDED.

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Action Items

Item A-1

Discussion of 1) Presentation and Update From Staff on Cultural Affairs Work Programs and Budget for FY 2014-15; and, 2) Invitation to Commissions, Committees, and Boards to Provide Comment during the City's Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Budget Process

Christine Byers, Public Art and Historic Preservation Coordinator, introduced the item; noted that this marked the beginning of the budget process; indicated that there would be three opportunities for the Commission to comment and provide input on the budget as it pertains to Cultural Affairs, but as an individual, Commissioners were welcome to attend any meeting to express their views; she discussed the process; her role; administrative duties; the new legislative management system being implemented by the City Clerk's office; the Art in Public Places Program; The Culver Studios' Comprehensive Plan Amendment #6; the review of cultural resources; the Transit Oriented Development at Washington/National; the development process; action items for the Commission; maintenance of permanent artworks throughout the City; the backlog of work since 2012 when there was no full-time cultural affairs staff; the collections management component; restoration and retrofitting of the piece adjacent to the Kirk Douglas Theatre; historic preservation; the municipal code; applying for Certified Local Government status; support for costs of the Historic Preservation Program; grant money for specific sites; and City Council support.

Susan Obrow, Special Events Coordinator, reported managing the Culver City Performing Arts Grant Program; discussed the intern paid for by the Los Angeles County Arts Commission; contract management and publicity coordination for the grantees; management of the Veterans Memorial Building; Fiesta La Ballona; technical enhancement of Veterans Auditorium; the goal of increased performances and film screenings; engagement of Technology Artists as a sound and lighting consultant; input from theatre companies in the City; and solicitation of quotes from lighting companies.

Christine Byers, Public Art and Historic Preservation Coordinator, reported on the *ArchitectureTALKS* fundraisers; the Cultural Affairs Foundation; net proceeds from the fundraisers; the Creative Economy Report; the NEA Our Town grant; non-profit partners; and arts organizations in the City.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding whether the City Manager and City Council are aware of the workload carried by Ms. Byers; assessment and evaluation of

what is working and what is not working; sustainability; creating new, permanent full-time staff positions; contract staff; interns; the Cultural Trust Fund; restrictions on the way the money is spent; alternatives and making exceptions; the practices of other cities; the non-sustainable nature of the Cultural Trust Fund; changes to the Art in Public Places Ordinance; the creation of an internal threshold; the revenue stream; the breakdown of usable funds; funds allocated to the performing arts; new permanent art pieces; the allowable percentage for administrative costs; contractors; collections management; staff hours; coordination of public meetings; creating an action plan to address needs without hiring staff; putting together a team to address the backlog of work; oversight and training necessary for interns; hiring part time staff; the public art graduate program at USC; the ability to rollover administration funding to the next year; benefits of, and time required by the Granicus system; allowable uses for grant money for historic preservation; components necessary to become a Certified Local Government; updating the survey; the context statements for surveys; management of consultants; cities that have preservation officers on staff; the Cultural Corridor grant; staff time devoted to hiring and overseeing a coordinator if the City were to receive a grant to hire one; the amount of time required from staff to coordinate the Foundation fundraisers; and small elements of management that siphon time.

Christine Byers, Public Art and Historic Preservation Coordinator, discussed the review of the Commission application process by the Commission last fall; she noted that amendments would be made as possible in coordination with the Granicus system; and she noted that information was being input and applications were being revised, but there would be no public meeting with further discussion of the matter.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding efforts to make changes appropriate and possible for the next round of applications; timing of the applications and the process; the NEA grant; the City request; matching funds; and clarification that the Culver City Cultural Corridor Coordinator would be funded through the matching portion of the grant.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding addressing the maintenance of Art in Public Places; access to funds; private property; inspection reports; assessing the need for a conservator; how to most effectively communicate with the City Council; identifying priorities for the next year: historic preservation, the development process, the public art program, maintenance of the collections, and the Creative Economy Report; the Economic Development Plan; programming new works; updating the Community Cultural Plan; examining of new festivals or events; having the Commission set priorities; concern with striking things off the list; a feeling that all items should be retained but put in priority order; concern that it is not fair to the Community to continue in the same fashion; an observation that the staff is overworked while the City Manager evaluates the process; previous efforts to salvage programs; outreach to community groups in the City; the importance of collaboration; the need for adequate staff to allow the Commission to move forward; the need for assistance with collections management in the public art program; administration tasks associated with managing the Commission and the Foundation Board; competing projects that require critical thinking; the required level of skill, institutional knowledge and expertise; bringing back temporary art; creating an action plan; advocating for staff needs; what is possible within existing constraints; reducing burdens on the City budget; programs that could generate revenue; clarification that there is no staff designated to handle a festival; staff time required for coordination of any event; coordination with the professional grant writer working on the NEA grant this year; land use programs; the Community Cultural Plan; frustration with not being able to move forward with proposed items; the Cultural Planning subcommittee; input from the community; the loss of redevelopment funding; concern with operating without a plan, timeline or goals; the upcoming Centennial events; resources and opportunities; other people working on cultural events for the Centennial; the Performing Arts grant program; Veterans Auditorium; previous assistance from Martin Cole and Jeremy Green; the tabling of long-range projects; finding creative solutions; concern with burdening the General Fund; making the Cultural Trust Fund work; communication with the City Manager; clarification on the process; examination of work programs; clarification that the City Manager is looking for comments from Commissioners; formulating top

recommendations for the City Manager; the importance of a transparent public process; the Community Cultural Plan; money earmarked to hire a consultant but direction to halt the process; gathering community stakeholders together to make a plan for the long term; the importance of an annual plan; establishing priorities and a working framework; disappointment and concern with not feeling that efforts are coordinated; the Town Hall meetings; concern with duplicating the work of other Commissions; support for workshops and an inclusive structure; having a mechanism to put ideas into place; clarification that the Commission is under the City Manager's Office; resources; clarification that Ms. Obrow's position is under Parks, Recreation and Community Services; overlap; clarification on the role of the Commission in Centennial planning;; and taking advantage of events that do not stretch staff resources.

Susan Obrow, Special Events Coordinator, reported that Veterans Memorial Building had many diverse performing arts groups using the space; she discussed her job of making the building a welcoming place and generating revenue important to the General Fund; her assignment to Fiesta La Ballona due to her skill set; she discussed the annual amount of money set aside for cultural enhancement for City owned and operated buildings; and the synergistic connection between the events.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the possibility of a joint meeting with the Cultural Affairs Commission and Parks and Recreation and Community Services Commission or the City Council; agreement to pass along the question to the City Manager's office; the role of the Commission in the upcoming Centennial; other Commissions working on the Centennial; opportunity for collaboration with other Commissions; suggestions from members of the community; the Performing Arts Grants subcommittee; a suggestion to discuss ideas with the six entities within the Cultural Corridor; temporary art installations for the Centennial; working within the existing structure; designing programs to incorporate the Centennial; the performing arts grant application for the 2016-2017 Fiscal Year; marketing; using the grants program as a vehicle for Centennial celebrations; the Centennial logo; the importance of having staff time and resources to accomplish goals; the role of the Commission to provide recommendations

to the City Manager; additional temporary staffing; ensuring that staff is not constantly sidelined to other projects; establishing a priority list; work waiting to be done since 2012; and solving the issue of being able to move forward.

Christine Byers, Public Art and Historic Preservation Coordinator, discussed maintenance of the art collection; City pieces needing restoration; the development process; and the number of projects vs. the varying amount of work involved in each particular project.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the process moving forward; the proposed budget for the City formulated by the City Manager; the ability of the Commission to provide comments on the budget; budget hearings in June; the importance of clarifying ideas by the April meeting; availability of the meeting for viewing on the website; willingness of the Commissioners to help staff in any way possible; the importance of moving forward as a body rather than individually; and Brown Act issues.

Chair Koosed discussed the difficulty for staff to talk about what is needed vs. what is possible; the function of staff; the responsibility of the Commission to provide clear and concise comments on how to move forward; she felt that if the staff deficit is not resolved the Commission will be in the same position next year; and she felt that the job of Cultural Affairs Coordinator was not realistic moving forward and that overseeing so many programs was not feasible.

Christine Byers, Public Art and Historic Preservation Coordinator, clarified her comments regarding her administrative duties.

Chair Koosed discussed outstanding projects needing attention; the role of the Commission to advise the City Council; concern with limitations on their ability to serve at the capacity they were appointed to; the defunding of the Commission the inability to take advantage of unplanned opportunities; pulling of staff to handle other issues in the City; the need for a minimum of two full time staff members; appreciation for the reinstatement of Ms. Byers; she asked for support to push hard for adequate staffing; discussed options to address the concerns of the City Manager regarding hiring a full time staff person; she urged everyone to send

letters to the City Council noting the importance of public involvement and letters; and she asserted that all the programs were important and that shifting priorities would not address issues.

Christine Byers, Public Art and Historic Preservation Coordinator, clarified that a motion was not necessary; noted that the issue was not just that not only is there one staff person to do the job, there is one person to do the job with a backlog of work from the last 2+ years.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding an observation that Cultural Affairs is the only Commission with this level of staffing; the workload of various staff members; looking for solutions; what is possible with the resources available; appreciation to staff for their efforts; ways to move forward; a suggestion to change the location of the meeting place; the importance of creativity in the Commission; the need for more culture in Cultural Affairs; inundation of administrative tasks; the poem from Dr. Hoult; bringing artists to the meetings; the public comment period; drawing interest to the Commission; and spending a portion of each Commission meeting on culture.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the report prepared last year; preparation of a statement or a summary at the April Commission meeting; collaboration with another Commissioner to formulate the document; Brown Act issues; the April agenda item pertaining to the budget; and using an existing subcommittee; noticing requirements.

The Commission recessed from 9:44 P.M. to 9:49 P.M.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding a suggestion that the Chair and Vice Chair work to create a document outlining needs and priorities; concern that forming a subcommittee is not on the agenda; the ability of the Chair and Vice Chair to confer on many issues; a request for comments from the evening in bullet points in order to capture consensus; an offer by Commissioner Dickter to work on the document; a suggestion that staff research whether two other Commissioners could be chosen to work on the document and communicate with the Commission; submission of comments by all Commissioners to staff for compilation; the

comprehensive conversation and consensus; agreement by staff to provide basic information from the meeting; providing a statement for the agenda packet and considering it at the meeting; the ability of any two Commissioners to work together; interest in passing along a more cohesive statement about work plans for the future; agreement that if only one document can go forward that it be the one generated by the senior members of the Commission; possible ideas and directions that may emerge from the more considered process; taking the summary and crafting an advocacy/summary document as seen fit; the time frame for providing the comments for the agenda; concern with duplicating efforts; and the monthly agenda meeting with the Chair and Vice Chair.

Chair Koosed indicated that staff would communicate with Commissioners with instructions on how to proceed regarding which group of two Commissioners could work on a statement to bring forward to be included in the April agenda packet.

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Public Comment – Items Not On the Agenda

Chair Koosed invited public input.

No cards were received and no speakers came forward.

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Items from Staff

Susan Obrow, Special Events Coordinator, reported that the Performing Arts Grant performances had begun; she discussed a performance by Overtone Industries; and announced a performance of Heidi Duckler Dance Theatre on March 22.

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Items From Commissioners

Chair Koosed provided a report on the December Cultural Affairs Foundation meeting; reported a productive meeting as part of DCAT; discussed her involvement with the CCUSD Arts

for All program; the K-8 visual arts programming; a donation from Sony to each elementary school and middle school for visual arts; potential support from the Los Angeles County Arts Commission; she reported sitting on the LA County grant panel for arts services; attending a performance of the Centre Theatre Group's *Chavez Ravine* with a high school group; plans to go to Norco with the Actors' Gang's men's prison group; reported that March 11 would be the release of the Otis Report on the Creative Economy in film form with speakers; and she discussed the State of Creativity program on March 24 on KCET with video segments on Art Bound's website.

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Adjournment

There being no further business, at 10:14 P.M., the Cultural Affairs Commission adjourned its meeting to a meeting to be held at 7:00 P.M. on April 14, 2015 in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

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SECRETARY of the Cultural Affairs Commission

APPROVED _____

MARLA KOUSED
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.

Martin R. Cole
CITY CLERK

Date