

REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION
CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

March 21, 2023
7:00 P.M.

Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Fleischer called the regular meeting of the Cultural Affairs Commission to order at 7:06 P.M. in Council Chambers at City Hall and via Webex.

Present: Chair Tania Fleischer
Vice Chair Brenda Williams
Commissioner Ehsaan Mesghali
Commissioner Jeannine Wisnosky Stehlin

Absent: Commissioner Leora O'Carroll

Staff: Christine Byers, Cultural Affairs Manager
Lee Lawlor, Cultural Affairs Analyst

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Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Fleischer led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Public Comment - Items NOT On the Agenda

None.

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Presentations

Item P-1

CAC - Presentation by Culver City Arts Alliance of the Culver City LA28 Olympics Arts Festival (CCLA28)

David Mack, Artist Magnet Justice Alliance, provided background on the organization and discussed the plan to have an impactful arts festival in 2028.

Thomas Small discussed his service on the Cultural Affairs Commission; the origin of the idea for the group; momentum of the concept; providing an arts festival for everyone; collaboration with the founder and director of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Arts Festival; the location of Culver City at the heart of the Olympics diamond; allowing Culver City to participate in the Olympics; and the important mission to create an Olympics arts festival for all.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the intent of the presentation and the goal to get started early and to unite efforts across the city; Commission involvement; corporate sponsorship; real costs; creating a sustainable project with dozens of artists and sites that provide capacity building for artists involved; the concept; the project budget; funding; collaboration with LA County Metro; the ability of the arts to increase ridership of public transportation; tourism; the Olympics Arts Committee; involvement of local arts groups; the City Council Subcommittee; Culver City Forward; use of existing infrastructure; Culver City Performing Arts Grant Program; the city's centennial; involving the Culver City Historical Society; case studies of other successful activations of the same caliber; creating cultural activation in the area around The Culver Steps, Metro station, downtown, and the Arts District; ancillary grants; utilizing different venues; gallery sponsorships; block parties; involving Apple; the intent to interface with the City through the Commission; creating buy-in, endorsement, and collaboration; City permits; the work plan meeting; types of performances envisioned; providing wide representation; visual arts; expansion to include community interests; current and former Culver City Artist Laureates; Commission support; Commissioner participation in arts alliance meetings; a suggestion that the

Commission work with the Olympic Subcommittee of the City Council first; Art Walk & Roll Festival; municipal buy-in; encouraging pedestrians; activating different areas in the city; the importance for the City to take the lead on the Olympics in Culver City; and clarification regarding public comment procedures.

Chair Fleischer invited public comment.

The following member of the public addressed the Commission:

Marla Koosed expressed support for the vision and what they are trying to do; discussed congestion; liability; concern with taking large chunks of money from the Cultural Trust Fund; concern with the loss of galleries on Washington Blvd.; ensuring a fair process; and a suggestion to put out an RFP (Request for Proposals) to producers and see what they can contribute.

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Receipt of Correspondence

Lee Lawlor, Cultural Affairs Analyst, reported that an email comment had been received and distributed to Commissioners.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER WISNOSKY STEHLIN AND SECONDED BY CHAIR FLEISCHER THAT THE CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION RECEIVE AND FILE CORRESPONDENCE.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: FLEISCHER, MESGHALI, WILLIAMS, WISNOSKY STEHLIN
NOES: NONE
ABSENT: O'CARROLL

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Consent Calendar Items

Item C-1

Approval of Minutes for the Regular Meeting on February 21, 2023

MOVED BY VICE CHAIR WILLIAMS AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER WISNOSKY STEHLIN THAT THE CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION APPROVE MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR MEETING ON FEBRUARY 21, 2023.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: FLEISCHER, MESGHALI, WILLIAMS, WISNOSKY STEHLIN
NOES: NONE
ABSENT: O'CARROLL

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Order of the Agenda

No changes were made.

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Action Items

Item A-1

CAC - Consideration of a Concept for a Permanent Art Installation by Jorge Campos/PixelArt Toward Fulfillment of the City's Art in Public Places Program Requirement for a Project at 12300 Washington Boulevard

Christine Byers, Cultural Affairs Manager, introduced the item noting differences between Attachment 1 and the staff report; she clarified that the lobby doors leading to the artwork will be locked for security reasons; discussed visibility through the storefront windows; the degree of discernment of the pixelated effect from a distance; and the updated lighting plan after consideration by the Public Art Subcommittee.

Chair Fleischer invited public comment.

Christine Byers, Cultural Affairs Manager, indicated that no public comment had been received.

Phil Silver, Jacmar Properties, indicated that the art should be visible to pedestrians and anyone driving by.

Warren Brand, Branded Arts, provided background on his organization and a rendering of the artwork; discussed the artist selection process; the chosen artist; digital art; urban art; project location; public access and viewing; lighting; materials; maintenance; the plaque; the budget; and project installation.

Phil Silver, Jacmar Properties, discussed changes to the lighting plan to avoid shadows and to avoid physically blocking the artwork.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding secondary lighting; emergency lighting; lighting per code; clarification that the project met the requirements of the ordinance; concern that the artwork concept is not exciting; a suggestion to add more color and add space to the top of the image; clarification that the site is on Washington Boulevard rather than Washington Place; the artist's concept; lighting; glare; criteria for artwork submission; concern that the concept did not meet the following conditions per the CCMC: "Creation of a desirable environment for the general community by the design and location of the artwork", and "whether the artwork is representative of a broad variety of tastes within the community and makes a contribution to the provision of a balanced inventory of artworks commissioned through the APPP (Art in Public Places Program); whether it is acceptable to have George Washington supported by public art; and clarification that historical figures are not to be blamed for living in their time, but do not need to be actively promoted.

Additional discussion ensued between project representatives, staff, and Commissioners regarding whether it is appropriate to use a traditional depiction of a founding father; those who have concerns about the founding fathers; Culver City as sitting on the land of the Gabrielino/Tongva Indians; treatment of native Americans by George Washington; concern with people who may walk by the rendering and be unable to see the pixelation and also be uncomfortable with the Gilbert Stuart rendering; concern that based on the findings in the ordinance, the concept cannot be supported; important things George Washington tried to create; people acting within their times; the Civil

War; the rendition of a famous portrait; pixelation; the feeling that art should lead to conversation; subjectivity of art; the distance of the artwork from the public right of way; size of the tiles; whether the pixelation effect would translate; and the definition of "freely accessible".

Further discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the way the city is represented and why it matters; the image of the city; whether the image of George Washington means something in Southern California; the artist being from another country and the perspective that may lend; the importance of experience in the place and understanding cultural context of where the art is going to go; putting personal taste and political views aside and determining whether the project meets the program's requirements; imposing personal concerns or judgements on others; concern with getting caught up in temporary and trending views; concern with slandering those who got the country to where it is today; concern with derailing the process; ensuring a diverse representation; concern with looking at the project through a biased lens; neutralization of the concerns since a Chilean artist chose the portrait; what constitutes slander; the Eurocentricity of the artist; laziness in the concept; the 75 different Washingtons listed in Wikipedia; the ordinance; addressing what the developer wants for their project site; the art consultant; the fact that the conquerors are the ones who write history; and what has been left out of history.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the many things all over the country that commemorate George Washington; whether something new in celebration of George Washington is necessary; the feeling that condition no. 9 of the ordinance has not been met; the area of the city where the project is located; diversity of the city; the project as being unrepresentative of a broad variety of tastes in the area; support for the piece as private art, but not public art; concern with being representative of constituents in the city; concern that the piece is not exciting or forward thinking; adding another dimension to the art to make it more broadly acceptable; and whether the Commission can impose changes on the artwork concept.

Warren Brand, Branded Arts, discussed subtle effects in the background of the portrait; the pixelation; and the artist's style of pixelation.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding pixelation of a famous painting; seeing George Washington through a different lens; laziness of the concept; choosing what to do with the art based on the street name without understanding the cultural awareness; the responsibility of the art consultant to guide the artist; and parameters.

Responding to inquiry, Phil Silver, Jacmar Properties, discussed issuance of permits; the construction timeline; and he clarified that the mural would be one of the last items completed and would take 2-3 months.

Warren Brand, Branded Arts, discussed murals of school namesakes; direct portrait tributes; and iconography.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding more subtle ways to pay tribute; the process in the event of a stalemate; the unexpected Commissioner absence; bringing the item back for further consideration; Commission purview; City Council consideration of an appeal; the ability to approve the item, approve with conditions, or deny; ensuring that the pixelated condition translates when viewed through the lobby windows; options for the developer if the art project is denied; the politically charged concept; agreement that there is sufficient time to revise the art concept; deaccession of other artworks approved on appeal to the City Council; underlying reasons for denial that come to fruition; the recent deaccession of *After Market Wheel*; the important conversations; sending developers back to create something stronger and better; time and money invested in the process; the experience of Branded Arts in working with the City; sentiments voiced at the Council level; public participation; and honoring the current time.

Responding to inquiry, Christine Byers, Cultural Affairs Manager, discussed the process for making an appeal to the City Council.

MOVED BY CHAIR FLEISCHER AND SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR WILLIAMS THAT THE CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION: DENY AN ART CONCEPT BY JORGE CAMPOS/PIXELART TOWARD FULFILLMENT OF THE APPP REQUIREMENT FOR A PROJECT BY JACMAR PROPERTIES LLC AT 12300 WASHINGTON BOULEVARD DUE TO NOT MEETING THE REQUIREMENT IN THE PUBLIC ORDINANCE 15.06.135 (D) SUBHEADING 9, WHETHER THE ARTWORK IS REPRESENTATIVE OF A BROAD VARIETY OF TASTES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

AYES: FLEISCHER, MESGHALI, WILLIAMS, WISNOSKY STEHLIN

NOES: NONE

ABSENT: O'CARROLL

Discussion ensued between the project representatives, staff and Commissioners regarding in-lieu fees; public art as a community benefit; instances when the developer did not want to comply with the requirements, paid the fee, and did the art as they saw appropriate; permitting; choices available to the developer; moving forward as an art concept in fulfillment of the requirement; the opportunity to regroup and return with a stronger concept; clarification that the developer is not being singled out; staff as a resource; consultation with the owners; options and opportunities available; street art at Platform; the learning curve in working with the City; the outside perspective; support for a partnership with the City; protecting the project from backlash; and the feeling that sufficient time was available to make changes.

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Public Comment – Items Not On the Agenda (Continued)

Chair Fleischer invited public comment.

Christine Byers, Cultural Affairs Manager, indicated that no comment had been received for Public Comment for Items NOT on the Agenda.

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Items from Members/Staff

Christine Byers, Cultural Affairs Manager, discussed a recent walk-through at Westfield Culver City; onsite permanent artworks requiring restoration; the budget; integrating

suggestions from the February meeting into the work plan; and, responding to inquiry about creative economy networking events, she indicated that a follow-up meeting would be scheduled in a couple of weeks.

Lee Lawlor, Cultural Affairs Analyst, discussed grant-funded performances coming up in April and May.

Commissioner Wisnosky Stehlin reported attending *Sweatshop Overlord* by Kristina Wong at the Kirk Douglas Theatre.

Vice Chair Williams indicated that she would be visiting the new exhibition at The Wende Museum, and she received clarification that the Veronika Kellndorfer project had been completed and was visible from the street.

Chair Fleischer indicated that she had seen the Veronika Kellndorfer project; reported attending the production of *Kristina Wong, Sweatshop Overlord*; and she expressed support for the collaboration of Center Theatre Group with smaller theaters.

Lee Lawlor, Cultural Affairs Analyst, indicated that she would forward an update from Center Theatre Group to Commissioners, and reported on a productive meeting with the new Artist Laureate Katy Krantz.

Commissioner Mesghali discussed advocating for an additional staff member; communication with City Council members; time spent by staff on public art; allowing staff to work a regular work day rather than a 14-hour day; support for creating an interactive map for public art on the City website; creation of a Cultural Affairs-specific events calendar; building an app; and the need for professionally managed social media.

Chair Fleischer indicated that she had seen Council Member support of an additional staff member at the budget meeting.

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Adjournment

There being no further business, at 9:30 P.M., the Cultural Affairs Commission adjourned to a meeting to be held at 7:00 P.M. on Tuesday, April 19, 2023.

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SECRETARY of the Cultural Affairs Commission

APPROVED _____

TANIA FLEISCHER
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.

Jeremy Bocchino
CITY CLERK

Date