

REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION
CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

June 16, 2020
7:00 P.M.

Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Wisnosky Stehlin called the regular meeting of the Cultural Affairs Commission to order at 7:00 P.M. via teleconference.

Present: Chair Jeannine Wisnosky Stehlin
Vice Chair Zoltan Pali
Commissioner Len Dickter
Commissioner Tania Fleischer
Commissioner Brenda Williams

Staff: Christine Byers, Cultural Affairs Coordinator
Louise Coffey-Webb, Public Art Collections Manager
Lee Lawlor, Performing Arts Program Associate
Serena Wright-Black, Assistant City Manager

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Pledge of Allegiance

Kathy Sue Holtorf, Culver Arts Foundation, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Public Comment - Items Not On the Agenda

Chair Wisnosky Stehlin invited public comment.

Louise Coffey-Webb, Public Art Collections Manager, read public comment submitted by:

Dr. Janet Hoult: referenced a quote from Robert Lynch, President of Americans for the Arts; provided background on herself; indicated that she would continue to write and share poetry about things that matter to Culver City; and she

provided a recent poem that she had shared with the City Council in support of the arts and the Artist Laureate Program.

The following members of the public addressed the Commission:

Kathy Sue Holtorf, Chair, Culver Arts Foundation, provided background on herself; announced the launch of "Projecting Possibilities", a weekly series at the Helms Design Center featuring different artists; she requested support from the Commission in regard to delaying repayment of the \$35,000 loan received by the Foundation from the City, noting that the Foundation had funded eight programs valued at around \$40,000; acknowledged that the Foundation had raised approximately \$60,000 or about 80% of their budget; expressed desire to continue funding City programs as well as launching the grant program to directly benefit the community; indicated that a potential repayment plan is on the City Council agenda; discussed difficulties with fundraising due to the pandemic; the amount of the loan vs. the total City budget and the drastic impact of repayment to the Foundation budget; and she noted loans and loan forgiveness for small businesses and corporations in light of the pandemic, requesting that the same consideration be given to the Culver Arts Foundation.

Christine Byers, Cultural Affairs Coordinator, explained procedures for addressing the Commission.

Alexi Steel discussed the role of the arts in the joint response to the national emergency; recovery; he thanked staff for their remarkable work and support in response to the crisis and under difficult circumstances; invited staff and Commissioners to experience the exhibition put on by the Culver Arts Foundation; discussed his recent participation in the Curator's Circle; impacts to City programs; and he added that he was eagerly awaiting the Creative Economy Connect Report.

Commissioner Dickter proposed that a discussion about delaying repayment of the loan should be held in a subcommittee format.

Chair Wisnosky Stehlin agreed that the conversation about loan repayment should be discussed with the Cultural Affairs Foundation Liaison Subcommittee and she requested clarification regarding City Council involvement in the process.

Serena Wright-Black, Assistant City Manager, indicated that she had been directed to work out a reasonable repayment plan and bring the discussion back to the City Council by July 13th; and she added that if a meeting is needed with the Subcommittee prior to the City Council meeting it could be arranged.

Commissioners expressed interest in having a Subcommittee meeting prior to the City Council meeting on July 13th.

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Consent Calendar

Item C-1

CAC – Approval of Minutes of the Regular Meetings of December 17, 2019 and February 18, 2020

MOVED BY CHAIR WISNOSKY STEHLIN AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DICKTER THAT THE CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION APPROVE MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR MEETINGS OF DECEMBER 17, 2019 AND FEBRUARY 18, 2020.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: DICKTER, PALI, WILLIAMS, WISNOSKY STEHLIN
NOES: NONE
ABSTAIN: FLEISCHER

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Order of the Agenda

No changes were made.

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Action Items

Item A-1

CAC - 1) Presentation of the Draft Creative Economy Connect Stakeholder Meeting Summary Report; 2) Provide Comments on the Report as Appropriate; and 3) Make Recommendation to the City Council on Short and Long-Term Action Steps

Louise Coffey-Webb, Public Art Collections Manager, read written public comment submitted by:

Marla Koosed: discussed the legacy of Culver City's first Creative Economy Report; thanked Commissioners and staff for their hard work; emphasized the importance of supporting small businesses in Culver City as the foundation of the City's economy; expressed concern that creative giants within the City have the ability to push their own agendas in ways smaller businesses or startups cannot; and she expressed the importance of leveling the playing field for all stakeholders in Culver City's Creative Economy to have the same ability to be heard, network and grow.

Christine Byers, Cultural Affairs Coordinator, introduced the item and provided a summary of the material of record; noted that the staff report included potential short and long-term actions and review of information with Dr. Yolanda Gorman and the Subcommittee in January; she indicated that the bulk of the staff report drafted in 2019 had not been changed, aside from the addition of a few comments about the current pandemic and its impacts; noted that a draft had been forwarded to the City Council in April; and she added that Dr. Yolanda Gorman had drafted the text, in tandem with some input from the Subcommittee and staff.

Dr. Yolanda Gorman discussed recommendations that came out of the one day meeting with creative stakeholders in Culver City's Creative Economy; the information gathering process; defining the Creative Economy in Culver City; identifying shareholders and engaging them in conversation about the Creative Economy; she noted that the Creative Economy Connect Report provided a framework for discussions about ways to integrate creative industries in City planning and programming efforts; discussed work with the City Council on strategic planning; the importance of discussion around the Creative Economy of the City;

identifying needs and recommending priorities and actions necessary to support creative and cultural organizations; the importance of aligning recommendations with planning activities such as the General Plan updates and the Community Cultural Plan; noted that the meeting held in July included representatives from organizations within creative industries; discussed the meeting at The Wende Museum; appreciation for the partnership; the importance of feedback; the process to identify businesses and organizations to ensure that diverse stakeholder perspectives were represented; the World Café format; collective problem solving; sustained contributions; identifying challenges faced by creative industries; identifying and describing ways the creative industries contribute to the City's future; resources necessary to support growth; transportation, housing and access to commercial real estate; interdependence of the creative industry with other organizations and businesses in the City; marketing; ensuring access and equal participation; identifying opportunity; consistency of recommendations with the City's Economic Development Implementation Plan and the Strategic Plan; and areas of connectivity.

Commissioner Dickter noted that the Creative Economy encompasses business, arts and education, including leading advertising agencies, post production houses, music, fashion, film and architecture and generates a substantial amount of revenue; discussed participation in the stakeholder process; the fractured nature of the Creative Economy; the need for interaction with each other and the City; interdependency; the need for appropriate vehicles or invitations to connect and network and to connect with the City; growth of the City; mega-corporations coming into the City with large amounts of money and lobbying power; the Commission as a facilitator to draw everyone to network with each other and with the City in a fair and compelling way; next steps; collaboration between the Commission and the City Council Economic Development Subcommittee and teams; working in a public vs. private forum; transparency and levelling the playing field; benefits to the larger economic development plan; ensuring participation by companies that generate about one third of the GDP who do not see themselves as part of the plan; the need to root the companies as part of the economy and civic discourse; ensuring the companies are connected and want to stay; the importance of a healthy, diverse ecosystem; having the City take a leadership role; the urgency of the situation during dynamic times; dependence of the City on large corporations; and he encouraged

the City not to turn their back on those who generate a sizable portion of the GDP and are asking to be included, connected, and to have a voice.

Discussion ensued between Ms. Gorman, staff and Commissioners regarding support for including all parts of the Creative Economy in the process; appreciation for the work to create the report; short-term actions; long-term strategic actions; changes since the pandemic; the Commission as a point of information and insight for the City Council and the City; retaining the importance of access, connectivity and opportunity; identified actions; maintaining an open and transparent playing field; ensuring that stakeholders are part of the conversation; next steps; the formal presentation of the Creative Economy Connect Report to the City Council; highlighting short and long term goals; items already included in the Cultural Affairs Division workplan; internal discussion on how to move forward; alignment with the Equity and Inclusion Initiative and pre-existing goals; consideration of all programs and activity through the equity lens; creating policies, programs, partnership, branding and marketing efforts to expand the base while taking the needs of minority and women-owned businesses into consideration; ensuring a transparent and open process and a level playing field regardless of business size, ethnicity or gender; report layout; visual continuity; a request for more varied images; companies that are mentioned more than once; the feeling that the report is architecture and arts heavy; appropriately reflecting the breadth and variety of businesses in the City; businesses that are important but not as obvious as others; the economic argument vs. the arts argument; involvement of the Culver Arts Foundation; interdependence of arts organizations and businesses; and appreciation for the presentation and the process.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding making a summary motion on the recommendation together with comments provided by the Commission in terms of future priorities and the steps the City can take; consideration of actions in light of COVID-19; potential adjustments to the draft document to be more inclusive in terms of diversity in populations; types of businesses, non-profits and entities that constitute the City's Creative Economy; actions listed in the agenda; the difficulty of moving forward during COVID-19; facilitating the conversation by providing networking

opportunities and a level playing field; clarifying the importance of acting now; staff agreement to clarify language with Commissioner Dickter; and presentation of the report to the City Council.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER FLEISCHER, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION: RECOMMEND THAT THE CITY COUNCIL CONSIDER THE PROPOSED SHORT- AND LONG-TERM ACTIONS, TOGETHER WITH FINDINGS OF THE CREATIVE ECONOMY CONNECT REPORT AND SUMMARY COMMENTS PROVIDED BY THE COMMISSION ON NEXT STEPS AND ADJUSTMENTS TO THE DRAFT REPORT.

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Public Comment – Items Not On the Agenda (Continued)

None.

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Receipt of Correspondence

Christine Byers, Cultural Affairs Coordinator, indicated that no correspondence had been received.

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Items from Staff

Louise Coffey-Webb, Public Art Collections Manager, reported that one of the two elements of the Transportation Building sculpture, *Crossed Currents*, had been removed for cleaning and repair, and she reported that the large sculpture adjacent to Ballona Creek would be refurbished before the next Commission meeting.

Christine Byers, Cultural Affairs Coordinator, indicated that the next Public Art Subcommittee meeting would be held on June 22 regarding a permanent public art concept for Brick & Machine.

Serena Wright-Black, Assistant City Manager, invited everyone to attend the next Equity Subcommittee meeting on June 19.

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Items from Commissioners

Commissioner Williams thanked the writers and creators of the Creative Economy Connect Report; welcomed back all of the Commissioners; thanked the protestors who marched in Culver City; felt it was a great time to support Black Lives Matter noting the importance of making all the changes that can come from the recent and continuing occurrence of murders; she discussed police methods and injustice; she hoped that people would listen, sit at the table and have conversations about how to move forward; she observed a mix of protestors; noted that more had to be done and now was the time to commit; she felt that reallocating funds to more cultural and artistic education in schools with music, arts and technology and keeping Culver City the tightly knit community it has already been was important; she discussed COVID-19 and the quick shut down; quarantine; and she thanked the essential workers for continuing to serve during extraordinary times.

Commissioner Fleischer discussed work done by the Performing Arts Grants Subcommittee; brainstorming on how to move forward with the 2021 Performing Arts Grant Program; efforts of the Artist Laureate; the Culver City Arts Alliance; Culver City Cyber Fest; providing accessible, free art; equity; community; inclusivity; the Cyber Fest Curator Circle; outreach to Apple for potential sponsorship; the pandemic; systemic racism and threats to democracy; undervaluing artists of color; the opportunity and obligation to amplify the work of all artists; diversity; artists as second responders and essential workers; and the upcoming fiscal year's work plan.

Commissioner Dickter noted the time for self-reflection; thanked the Artist Laureate for his immediate contributions; discussed the Culver Arts Foundation; and providing an equitable recovery for everyone.

Chair Wisnosky Stehlin expressed appreciation to everyone for their work; thanked the City Council for her reappointment; discussed the Culver Arts Foundation; Performing Arts Grants; honoring the grants without live performances; appreciation for Alexey Steele; participation in a roundtable of Managing and Artistic Directors; the Los Angeles County Economic Resiliency Task Force; she indicated recognition of her privilege and that she stood in solidarity with the Black

community and Black Lives Matter; discussed the need to achieve a community that is responsive to, and responsible for, the needs of all people; the need for a diverse, welcoming and just society; the importance of denouncing despicable acts and the injustice of racial oppression, intolerance and bigotry; she noted that art can bring awareness of social issues, inspire dialogue, tell stories, and heal the hurt; she asserted that art could bring about positive change; discussed work to ensure equity and inclusion; places to do better; the goal of achieving perfection; and the importance of working together.

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Adjournment

There being no further business, at 8:38 P.M., the Cultural Affairs Commission adjourned to a meeting to be held at 7:00 P.M. on July 21, 2020.

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SECRETARY of the Cultural Affairs Commission

APPROVED _____

JEANNINE WISNOSKY STEHLIN
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 Green
CITY CLERK

Date