



June 7, 2021

City Council of Culver City

Dear Members of the City Council:

In June 2020, with the support of the Cultural Affairs Commission (CAC), the Culver City Arts Foundation (Culver Arts) requested that City Council vote to waive repayment of the \$35,000 loan made by the City to Culver Arts in 2018. Council is permitted to waive loan repayment under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Culver City and Culver Arts. Council voted to defer repayment for one year, and to revisit the subject at that time. As we approach the one-year mark, the Board of Directors of Culver Arts respectfully asks Council to waive repayment of the loan permanently. The CAC has graciously agreed to support this request.

The loan was initially granted to Culver Arts in 2018 with the intention of providing “seed money” for the nascent foundation. Since that point, Culver Arts has provided or committed to providing \$57,600 for Cultural Affairs programming – specifically the Performing Arts Grant and Artist Laureate program. In addition, Culver Arts has provided or committed to providing \$50,300 to artists living and/or working in Culver City. This includes a grant to AVPA; the #ProjectingPossibilities program in partnership with the Helms Bakery District; and smaller grants to the Wonderful World of Trash at Fiesta La Ballona and Small Press Book Fair in 2019. This also includes a \$20,000 commitment to the Arts Resiliency Fund, a grant program created by Culver Arts which provides money directly to Culver City artists whose income has been decimated by the pandemic to help them pay their bills, following the model of the Actor’s Fund. In total, Culver Arts has provided or committed to providing \$107,900 to the arts in Culver City, a “return” of 208% on the City’s initial “investment” of \$35,000.

While the past year has been difficult for everyone, the economic effects of the pandemic have been particularly acute for artists and arts organizations, whose sources of revenue have been effectively shut off by prolonged lockdowns. While there is hope on the horizon, arts organizations find themselves in the difficult position of having to rebuild and re-open with very limited resources and individual artists still struggle to pay their bills having gone for many months without work.

We can all agree that the arts are essential to the wellbeing of our community. The sooner that our arts organizations are able to re-open and artists are back to work, the better for the entire City. Culver Arts is committed to supporting the creative community of Culver City during this transitional period and restoring our city to its proper place as the creative capital of the region. We are aggressively pursuing funding from corporate and private sources which we can use to fund Cultural Affairs programming and to providing direct assistance to artists and arts organizations to help them get back on their feet. To do that, we need operating capital for outreach, donor engagement, marketing, and to supplement our initial rounds of funding.

We understand that this is a difficult and challenging time for the City, and that funding for the Arts is very limited. Forgiving the loan and allowing Culver Arts to retain the money is the best way that the City can invest in the resurgence of Culver City’s creative community, without having to provide any additional funding at this time. We hope that the Council will approve Culver Arts’ request for loan forgiveness and look forward to partnering with the City over the coming year as we rebuild, reopen, and thrive once more.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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Vice Chair: Jim B. Clarke

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