

REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION
CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

September 21, 2021
7:00 P.M.

Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Fleischer called the regular meeting of the Cultural Affairs Commission to order at 7:00 P.M. via WebEx.

Present: Chair Tania Fleischer
Vice Chair Brenda Williams
Commissioner Leora O'Carroll
Commissioner Jeannine Wisnosky Stehlin

Absent: Commissioner Zoltan Pali

Staff: Christine Byers, Cultural Affairs Manager
Lee Lawlor, Performing Arts Associate

Absent: Louise Coffey-Webb is in England

o0o

Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Fleischer led the Pledge of Allegiance.

o0o

Consent Calendar

Item C-1

CAC - Approval of Minutes for the Regular Meeting of July 20, 2021

MOVED BY VICE CHAIR WILLIAMS, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER WISNOSKY STEHLIN AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION APPROVE MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR MEETING OF JULY 20, 2021 AS SUBMITTED (ABSENT COMMISSIONER PALI).

o0o

Public Comment – Items Not On the Agenda

Chair Fleischer invited public comment.

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

o0o

Order of the Agenda

The Consent Calendar was considered before Public Comment – Items Not on the Agenda.

o0o

Action Items

Item A-1

CAC – (1) Update on the Cultural Element of the General Plan Update (GPU); and, (2) Discussion and Provide Comments as Appropriate

Christine Byers, Cultural Affairs Manager, introduced the item.

Chair Fleischer invited public comment.

The following member of the public addressed the Commission:

Rebecca Rona Tuttle, Equity and Human Relations Advisory Committee (EHRAC) Chair, announced a virtual Indigenous People's Day Celebration on October 12; discussed planned speakers and presentations; the Community Contributions Award created by the EHRAC; and she encouraged everyone to subscribe to updates for the EHRAC noting that the Committee would be holding six events this year.

Christine Byers, Cultural Affairs Manager, pointed out that the speaker was to have been heard under Public Comment – Items NOT on the Agenda.

Lee Lawlor, Performing Arts Associate, read written comments submitted via the website from:

Marla Koosed
Jeff Schwartz

Christine Byers, Cultural Affairs Manager, provided a summary of the material of record.

David Plettner-Saunders, Cultural Planning Group, provided background on the Cultural Element of the General Plan Update; discussed the process and next steps; the framework; the first draft of the Policy Element; the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC); outcomes and performance indicators; issues and opportunities; goals; recommendations; and comments on the draft from the TAC.

Eric Sims, Culver City Arts Foundation (aka Culver Arts) Board Member, expressed appreciation for the presentation noting the laudable goals; discussed references to Culver Arts; lack of direct outreach; clarification that Culver Arts is not a City entity and not subject to policy decisions of the City; concern due to a lack of partnership; concern about the proposal to reorganize the Cultural Affairs Commission as the Creative Economy Commission; differences between the arts and the Creative Economy; the goal to serve the public good; concern that the City is offloading responsibility for arts funding to everyone but itself; and the importance of City funding for the arts as a public benefit.

Alicia Ide, Culver City Arts Foundation Board Member, echoed concerns expressed by Eric Sims; discussed the need for the City to take responsibility for funding infrastructure to support policy; staffing; the number of arts-related jobs in the City and artists that live and work in the City; the need for recognition that the arts are important for art's sake regardless of economic impact because they are good for the community; the importance of the arts to people over the last year and a half; and feeling that the arts needed continued recognition.

Dr. Janet Hault, Culver City Arts Foundation Advisory Committee, appreciated the focus on the Artists Laureate Program; discussed the need to focus on the arts; and Culver City as a City of Kindness.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding appreciation to consultant for the presentation and to the public for their comments; support for comments made by the speakers; the importance of the Cultural Affairs Commission; appreciation for the enhanced focus that the Creative Economy requires; concern with the Cultural Affairs Commission being absorbed under a different Commission; the importance of Cultural Affairs to the community; the collateral economy generated by Cultural Affairs; contributions of the arts to the community; concern with the lack of mention of music, dance or theatre; other cities that are expanding the scope of their Cultural Affairs; the arts as an essential component of the City; succession planning for Cultural Affairs; knowledge and abilities of the incumbents; ensuring that the next wave of staff is able to carry Cultural Affairs forward; balancing the economic development portions of the plan with arts and culture; the presence of the creative sector in the City; clarification that "Creative Economy" does not mean "for-profit"; making improvements to accomplish the mission; support for the suggestion from Len Dickter that the City's Economic Development Division focus on the Creative Economy with support from the Cultural Affairs Commission Creative Economy Subcommittee; the timeline for suggested changes; adoption of the General Plan Update; the workshop to present the draft policy framework to the community; and the ability to review the draft in advance and provide comment.

David Plettner-Saunders, Cultural Planning Group, apologized to the Culver City Arts Foundation for any missteps; he indicated wanting to schedule a time to speak with Board Members to review the recommendation; he discussed origin and intent of the recommendation; communication with Jim Clarke; more effective fundraising; the desire for increased support from the City; structural budgetary challenges faced by the City; resource recommendations; and different approaches to increasing revenue.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the autonomy of Culver City Arts Foundation; the importance of the financial support provided by the Foundation; concern that the document does not mention arts programs such as poetry, theatre, art and dance; stakeholders; defining who is served; concern with the goal to consolidate Arts, Culture and Creative Economy functions into a Creative Economy office; ensuring that art can be enjoyed for art's sake and has value that a dollar value cannot be assigned to; moving the framework

goal pertaining to Ballona Creek to a subsection along with the Hayden Tract rather than having it included as its own individual section; engaging Culver City's creative workers; paying attention to the needs of individual artists and creatives; outcomes and performance indicators; increasing appropriate performance and exhibition spaces; the fact that the City does not fund the arts; private/public partnerships; the responsibility of the City to take the arts seriously and create spaces for arts to happen; putting artists in City programming; concern with the proposed awards program; support for the Artists-in-Residence Program; the feeling that policy recognizing the role and importance of the creative sector to the City's economic prosperity belongs in Economic Development; concern with economically driven goals; support for small creative businesses in the City; artists without business licenses; maintenance and improvement of facilities; the Wende Museum; adding Veterans Memorial Building into the discussion; creation of a dedicated performance space; creation of a Cultural Equity policy; work already being done by the Cultural Affairs Commission; creative placemaking; tourism opportunities; developer fees; creating a dedicated public revenue source; taxes; City leadership; keeping the Creative Economy distinct from Cultural Affairs; and the need for a Community Cultural Plan.

David Plettner-Saunders, Cultural Planning Group, indicated that all comments would be taken into consideration; discussed the policy framework outline being used across all elements of the General Plan; leveraging the number of creatives in the City and bringing them together; recognizing the role of individual artists in the community; distinct needs that should be attended to; outcomes and performance indicators included as a matter of format; and measuring change.

Further discussion ensued between the consultant, staff and Commissioners regarding appreciation to staff and to the Culver City Arts Foundation; concern with being taken over by a Creative Economy Commission; concern with an inappropriate emphasis on Economic Development over the value of Cultural Affairs; misperception that the Creative Economy does not encompass all of the elements in the creative sector; finding another city or district where the balance has worked; Creative Economy seen as overtaking those who originally start a space and are pushed out; creating a stronger platform for the Cultural Affairs Commission to be effective; concern expressed that the Commission was not supported by the City Council; the

feeling that a Creative Economy Commission would in no way provide a stronger platform for Cultural Affairs; the strong desire to retain the Cultural Affairs Commission as a dedicated Commission; the feeling that words matter; the pandemic as showing people that the arts are essential; the Arts, Culture and Creative Economy Commission in Sacramento; tourism as an untapped opportunity in Culver City; money coming in from the outside rather than taxing residents; generous contributions from the Culver City Arts Foundation; the need for additional support from the City; financial issues; concern that the arts are always put last; staffing; the Creative Economy Subcommittee serving as an advisory body to Economic Development; enhanced communication between the Commission and the City Council; artists embedded in City government; equitable programming across all city parks; the relationship between the Community Cultural Plan and the General Plan; the ability to have an extended community conversation with the Community Cultural Plan; building a consensus vision for Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy; the robust and integrated creative sector; revisiting how frequently the Community Cultural Plan is updated; additional support from large corporations; engaging individual companies with civic commitment; non-monetary contributions; support and expansion of the Artist Laureate Program; apprenticeships; the context for reassessing the City's role in Historic Preservation; the need to update the inventory; deferred maintenance; creation of a Community Cultural Center; the need for ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant community spaces; City support of businesses that want to be compliant and funding needed to comply; prioritizing Art in Public Places in underserved areas; projects initiated by the City; the Cultural Trust Fund; integrating branding and staffing to support tourism; the feeling that Ballona Creek could have been included in other goals; creative placemaking; different communities with their own identity; the ability of the Commission to review the next draft; budget; next steps in the process; clarification regarding responsibility for maintenance of certain facilities; film and digital media; the Creative Economy as encompassing the entire creative sector; a previous suggestion to rename Washington Boulevard to Louis Armstrong Boulevard; the Cultural Corridor; and the consultant encouraged Commissioners to email any additional comments or questions.

Public Comment – Items Not On the Agenda (Continued)

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

o0o

Receipt of Correspondence

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

o0o

Items from Staff

Lee Lawlor, Performing Arts Associate, provided updates on Performing Arts Grant Program performances and she indicated that the online application for the 2022 program had been posted and scores and recommendations from the Peer Review Panel would be brought to the Commission at the November meeting.

Christine Byers, Cultural Affairs Manager, thanked Commissioners for their careful review and thoughtful comments on the draft framework for the Cultural Element of the General Plan.

o0o

Items from Commissioners

Commissioner O'Carroll reported attending the Culver City Arts Foundation Strategic Planning Retreat on September 12 and discussed ideas proposed including creation of a creative directory and community calendar, holding bi-monthly networking events, and establishing a newsletter for the Culver City Arts community.

Commissioner Wisnosky Stehlin expressed appreciation for the invitation to attend the Culver City Arts Foundation Strategic Planning Retreat; she read the mission of the Foundation; discussed support provided by the Foundation to

the City; Foundation projects; and she thanked the Foundation for all their support.

Discussion ensued between Commissioners regarding appreciation for the behind the scenes work of the Foundation; making the public aware of their efforts; and the upcoming Tito's Fiesta Mexicana event to benefit the Culver City Arts Foundation on October 4.

Vice Chair Williams discussed her recent trip to Italy and the different approach to COVID taken there.

Chair Fleischer introduced West Los Angeles College student Taylor Yates, the Cultural Affairs intern courtesy of the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture Arts Internship Program; discussed a livestream portrait session by Artist Laureate Alexey Steele with Rich Yamashita; and she received clarification as to when and where the session would be accessible to the public.

o0o

Adjournment

There being no further business, at 9:25 P.M., the Cultural Affairs Commission adjourned to a meeting to be held at 7:00 P.M. on Tuesday, October 19, 2021.

o o o

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 Green
CITY CLERK

Date