



City of Culver City

Mike Balkman Council
Chambers
9770 Culver Blvd.
Culver City, CA 90232

Staff Report

File #: 20-240, **Version:** 1

Item #: C-8.

CC - 1) Consideration of a Recommendation from the Cultural Affairs Commission to Approve a Concept for Temporary Art by Nate Mohler for City Hall; and 2) Approval of a Related Professional Services Agreement with Nate Mohler in an Amount Not To Exceed \$55,000; and (3) Approval of \$55,000 in Carryover Funding from the Cultural Trust Fund for FY2019/2020.

Meeting Date: September 9, 2019

Contact Person/Dept: B. Christine Byers / Administrative Services - Cultural Affairs

Phone Number: (310) 253-6003

Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒

General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒

Public Hearing: ☐

Action Item: ☐

Attachments: ☒

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council (09/04/19)

Department Approval: Serena Wright-Black, Assistant City Manager (09/03/19)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council (1) consider the recommendation of the Cultural Affairs Commission ("CAC"), together with the additional information provided herein, a concept for temporary art by Nate Mohler for City Hall; (2) approve a related professional services agreement with Nate Mohler in an amount not to exceed \$55,000; and (3) approve \$55,000 in carryover funding from the Cultural Trust Fund for FY 2019/2020.

BACKGROUND

In conjunction with the 30th Anniversary of the establishment of Culver City's Art in Public Places Program, staff with input from the Cultural Affairs Commission's Public Art Subcommittee (Vice Chair Pali and Commissioner Williams), issued an Request for Proposal (RFP) for an art consultant to implement a temporary art installation at City Hall. Three responses were submitted by the deadline and staff and the CAC subcommittee unanimously selected Irina Panasyuk of IVP Public Art as the consultant for the project.

Again with input from the CAC subcommittee, ten diverse artists (see attached list), representing

disciplines in multi-media, 3D projection mapping, sculpture, installation art, murals and art walls were invited to respond to a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) developed by IVP Public Art. Potential locations at City Hall for siting temporary art as included in the RFQ were reviewed and vetted by Cultural Affairs and Public Works staff from the perspective of access, safety and proximity to power sources. Five artists submitted materials by the deadline in response to the RFQ. They were: Nate Mohler, Nova Jiang, London Kaye, Uri Davillier and David Torres. The CAC subcommittee reviewed the RFQ responses at its meeting on July 23, 2019 and selected Nate Mohler, Nova Jiang, London Kaye and Uri Davillier to develop a proposal for further consideration. Nova Jiang, however, withdrew from the project a few days before the submission deadline on August 15, 2019 which left three proposals for further consideration.

The CAC subcommittee, staff and IVP Public Art reviewed the proposals together with presentations by the artists at its meeting on August 19, 2019. The CAC subcommittee recommended to the CAC that Nate Mohler's concept for a digital fountain be forwarded with a recommendation in support of the project to the City Council for consideration. In turn, the CAC unanimously passed a motion recommending the City Council approve Nate Mohler's concept at its meeting on August 20, 2019.

DISCUSSION

Nate Mohler is a Los Angeles native, raised on the Westside. He recently graduated from UCLA with a B.A. in Design and Media Arts. While at UCLA, he has worked on some high-profile installations, including *WDCH Dreams*, a collaboration between one of his mentors, Refik Anadol, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic that transformed the exterior of Walt Disney Concert Hall in the fall of 2018 with animated, data-driven patterns.

Mr. Mohler, with a team comprising experienced media artists, designers, fabricators, a project manager, engineer and architect, is proposing to transform the currently non-operational fountain in the center of the City Hall Courtyard into an interactive digital fountain. The digital fountain would capture the digital energy of Culver City through open source data activity (e.g., Twitter and other social media feeds; activity levels only, no personal information) and translate that activity visually onto the LED screens incorporated into an approximately 8' wide x 10-12' tall cylinder structure that would be built over the existing fountain. A second interactive component would allow the LED screens to respond to the presence of a passerby, displacing some of the digital droplets or changing the shape of an image on the screen. Mr. Mohler plans on designing this feature with a buffer around the cylinder's surface so that direct contact with the cylinder is not encouraged. The interior fountain floor would be covered with an acrylic that would reflect the images projected on the LEDs. Computer hardware would be housed within the cylinder and the top sealed so as to be tamper-resistant and water tight. Mr. Mohler is also proposing a protective acrylic shell over the LED screens.

This temporary art installation project was initially conceived of with a budget of \$50,000 for the art component. Mr. Mohler's current budget, which came in at \$49,186, includes costs associated with design and fabrication of the cylindrical structure, LEDs, computer hardware (including Wi-Fi components to support the project), as well as design fees and other administrative expenses. The

budget also incorporates costs associated with on-going maintenance of the digital fountain while on view at City Hall, including regular inspections and cleaning. Mr. Mohler is prepared to work with Cultural Affairs, Public Works and Information Technology staff to address details relating to power and network connectivity. Staff is therefore recommending an additional \$5,814 contingency to cover any costs associated with these areas as well as any costs associated with an educational outreach component.

Mr. Mohler and the CAC recommend the digital fountain be installed for approximately 12 months to allow for maximum public exposure at different times of the year. Pending Council approval and preparation and execution of an agreement, the goal is to have the digital fountain installed and operational by end of November / December 2019.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

There is currently \$62,054 available in the Cultural Trust Fund (CIP) in account 41322400.619800 PZ676 from FY 2018/2019. Staff requests authorization to carryover \$55,000 of available funds into the FY 2019/2020 budget, which will provide sufficient funding to cover consultant fees and the requested contingency.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 19-09-09_ATT_List of Pre-Qualified Artists
2. 19-09-09_ATT_Nate Mohler Resume
3. 19-09-09_ATT_Temporary Art Proposal
4. 19-09-09_ATT_Project Budget

RECOMMENDED MOTION(S)

That the City Council:

1. Approve a temporary art concept by Nate Mohler for a digital fountain to be installed for approximately 12 months in the City Hall Courtyard; and,
2. Approve a related professional services agreement with Nate Mohler in an amount not to exceed \$55,000; and,
3. Authorize the City Attorney to review/prepare the necessary documents; and
4. Authorize the City Manager to execute such documents on behalf of the City.
5. Authorize \$55,000 in carryover funding from the Cultural Trust Fund for FY 2019/2020.