



Harini Krishnan, District 1
Stephen Seymour, District 1
Kimberly Gordon, District 2
Elizabeth Stone, District 2
Belinda Hernandez Arriaga, Dist. 3
Laura McHugh, District 3
Jeanne Heise, District 4
Edward Sweeney, District 4
VACANT (2 seats), Dist. 5

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REGULAR MEETING OF THE ARTS COMMISSION

Wednesday, May 26, 2022 – 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Zoom link

MINUTES

1. **Roll Call** Chair Stephen Seymour called the meeting to order at 3:05 with roll call. Chair
In Attendance: Commissioners Gordon, Krishnan, McHugh, Heise, Seymour, Stone, Sweeney
Absent: Commissioner Hernandez Arriaga
Staff: Robin Rodricks, Mara Grimes, Juda Tolmasoff
2. **Action Item** Chair
A. AB361 Remote Meeting Requirements: in keeping with the recently enacted California AB361 and Governor Newsom's suspension of Brown Act Open Meetings law, vote to approve continuation of virtual Commission meetings. Commissioner Stone made a motion that we approve continuation of virtual Commission meetings. Commissioner Sweeney seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: approved unanimously.
3. **Agenda Amendments** Chair
The Director noted that at the Chair's discretion, she would like to include an item regarding the East Palo Alto Word Slam to be discussed during her staff report. Commissioner Seymour agreed. She also indicated that Aileen Cassinetta, the County Poet Laureate would not be presenting today and would do so at a later date.
4. **Poem reading** by, and acknowledgement of, SMC Poet Laureate Aileen Cassinetta – rescheduled. Chair
5. **Oral Communications** Chair
To allow the public to address the Commission on any matter not on the agenda. If your subject is not on the agenda, please use the Zoom "Raise hand" feature and the Chair will recognize you at this time. Speakers are limited to two minutes. No oral communications received.
6. **Consideration of Minutes** of March 16, 2022 and April 20, 2022 Commission meetings Chair
Motion made by Commissioner Heise to accept the March 16, 2022 minutes and seconded by Commissioner Sweeney. Roll Call Vote: approved unanimously. Motion made by Commissioner Stone to accept the April 20, 2022 minutes with the correction of only one #4 and seconded by Commissioner Sweeney. Roll Call Vote: approved unanimously.

Public records that relate to any item on the open session agenda for a regular Arts Commission meeting are available for public inspection. Those records that are distributed less than 72 hours prior to the meeting are available for public inspection at the same time they are distributed to all members, or a majority of the members of the Commission. The Commission has designated the Board of Supervisors Office, located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063, for the purpose of making those public records available for inspection. The documents are also available to be sent electronically by e-mailing jtomasoff@smcgov.org. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), auxiliary aids and services for this meeting will be provided upon request when given three days notice. Please call (650)599-1005 (voice) or e-mail jtomasoff@smcgov.org. For the safety of those sensitive to airborne chemicals, please refrain from wearing chemically based products.

7. **Reports**

A. **Staff Reports**

- **Robin Rodricks:** Director stated that public art projects have been keeping her busy. She is working with the Projects Development Unit (PDU) and will draft an outline for the Commission with details of each project and regular updates. All of the projects that were previously on hold due to the pandemic are now moving forward and each project will have a specific selection process that deals with and understands the complexity of each project. She advised the Commission that the OAC received \$62,000 from the CA Arts Council for the annual state-local partner grant we submitted. Director is working with the County Finance Department about the budget for the upcoming new fiscal year.

Director advised the Commissioners that Kalamu Chache has been the East Palo Alto Poet Laureate for 39 years. She started a poetry competition several years ago called WordSlam Poetry Contest. She is recruiting sponsors so that she may provide gift cards (\$750 total) to the winners. She is requesting \$500 from the Commission. Chache and her fiscal sponsor will purchase and distribute the gift cards. Director said that last year she has sponsored the event personally and that she would be willing to pay for the cards in an effort to save time and get reimbursed from the County should the Commissioners agree to sponsor the event.

Commissioner Seymour questioned if they were able to take a vote for an item not included on the agenda.

Ms. Tolmasoff advised that the item could be discussed at this meeting and direct the staff to include as an action item on the next agenda.

Commissioner Seymour responded by stating that he was in favor of sponsoring the Poetry Contest for the full \$750 and asked staff to include on the next agenda as an action item.

Commissioner Gordon questioned why was this the first time we were hearing about this now after 39 years? She asked if the Commission had a process for these types of requests.

Director explained that the Poet Laureate had been in office for 39 years and that this was the third year for the Contest. She went on to explain that the Commission has \$2,000 in discretionary funds that can be used for unexpected expenses like this. In the future we can include the expense like we do for the County Fair awards and vote on it each year.

Commissioner Stone questioned why we were being asked so late especially since the flyers showed that the Arts Commission was a sponsor? She also inquired how many teens participated in the Contest.

Director stated that she had been trying to work with County Finance and was not having much luck. She acknowledged that the Arts Commission was included as a sponsor on the flyers. Thirty students from East Palo Alto and East Menlo Park participated in the Contest last year.

Commissioner Sweeney asked if they were a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and if they were supported by EPACENTER. He noted that he liked when we were able to support collaborations.

Commissioner Gordon remarked that we should try to get these teens involved in Poetry Out Loud in the fall. She wondered if there were other groups would like the Commission to be sponsors. She noted that maybe the Commission could create a process, criteria, and an easy-to-use form for the future.

Director noted that we have not had many requests in the past. Previously we had a D4 Commissioner request that we sponsor the OYE Conference which is one of the ways our Commissioners can serve their communities. We could create a simple rubric to use for future. In the past we have designated unused funds up to \$2,000 in this manner.

Commissioner Heise asked how often we have funds leftover.

Director stated that in the past the funds were rolled over into the next fiscal-year but this is no longer the situation. She also indicated that part of the reason why the Commission offered grant opportunities in the spring was to use all existing funds before the end of the fiscal-year.

Commissioner Heise asked what year this expense would fall under. She stated that \$750 is a third of the \$2,000 of the total discretionary funds and wondered if there was anyone else that has used these funds? Director reiterated that she is working with the County Fiscal Office, her boss, and Ms. Tolmasoff to figure out the budget for the next fiscal-year.

Commissioner Seymour asked that we direct staff to bring discussion back as an action item on the next meeting agenda. As the amount of money needs to be committed now, he asked for an informal vote of

the amount of money to be allocated. Based on this vote, he directed the staff to allocate \$500 to sponsor this Contest.

Commissioner Sweeney asked that we have a discussion on how to set policy at the next meeting.

Director stated that the Commission could create a rubric including limits for these types or requests and

Commissioner Stone added that she would be happy to work with the Director to develop a rubric.

- **Juda Tolmasoff:** Passed.
 - **Mara Grimes:** She reported that she was working with DEI expert Irma Zoepf to co-produce the second equity workshop, "How to Diversify Your Board and Staff, and Why It Matters," on June 1 which will be available to all County arts and culture organizations and artists as well as the general public. She is also part of the Boards and Commissions Equity Committee and they are currently concentrating on an application for new Board and Commissioner members. She has been out more attending the Women's Hall of Fame event, the opening of the new art space at CZI in collaboration with the Redwood City Parks and Art Foundation, and also meeting grantees/arts organizations in person. She also reviewed, updated, and posted the 2022 Advocacy Tool Kit on both the Commission and OAC websites.
- B. Commissioner Reports:**
- **Commissioner Krishnan:** She asked that she be able to give her report on Arts, Culture, and Creativity Month now as she had to leave early. This designation was created by the Americans for the Arts. She is one of the captains for Arts Advocacy Week, an important part of the month. She thanked the Commissioners who joined the calls to legislators Becker, Berman, and Mullin. It was interesting to see that every staff member that was on the call had a connection to the arts, and stories about how the arts helped them get through the pandemic. The main ask right now is \$1 per person for the arts as California is 28th in state arts funding, Minnesota spends \$7 per person and is number one. The mission was to support the CA Cultural District Program for \$30M to be distributed throughout the state. She reported that every session she attended was amazing and Commissioners Gordon, Stone and Hernandez Arriaga spoke passionately about why the arts are important. She offered to put something together on how to advocate for the arts and Director reminded the Commissioners that there is an Advocacy Toolkit on the Art Commission website for their reference and use.
 - **Commissioner Stone:** She reported that we have a new partnership with Filoli Gardens and CASA. There will be four programs including annual passes for 125 CASA children, Holiday of Lights, an art show in October featuring photography by high school students and a joint project with the Peninsula Jewish Community Center for a Sukkot program in the fall. She went on to state that she would be asking that the Commission support this program formerly in the budget and that she was also in the process of securing some sponsorships too. Ms. Tolmasoff suggested that she might want to contact the Fashion Design Department at Canada College.
 - **Commissioner Heise:** She reported that the mural projects are back on track thanks to the Director and the establishment of the Public Art Policy. They are scheduled to have a call for artists at the end of summer. The Causeway Mural Project group met, and they still need additional funding before they can move forward.
 - **Commissioner Sweeney:** He continues to attend the mural meetings too. Redwood City is still focused on the Arts Center. The initial part of the feasibility study has been funded and they are working on developing a plan to define the project needs, resources, and outcomes. Commissioner Heise asked if a location had been selected. He responded that a location had not been confirmed yet, but the group was working with some developers and that the conversation was moving forward now that the project has the support of Redwood City government.
 - **Commissioner Gordon:** The Commissioner expressed that she was heartened by the work of the other Commissioners, the new public art policy and their work with underserved communities.

- **Commissioner Seymour:** His time has been directed towards June art fairs. The first, the County Fair *Fine Arts Galleria* on June 4th, will include not only visual arts but musicians and dancers. The second, an art fair that will cover two blocks in downtown San Bruno on June 5th and will feature 40 chalk artists which will be paid by the city. He is also working with a farm-worker inspired mural funded by Dragonfly Community Arts as well as four murals that will be designed and painted by students which will be completed shortly. He suggested that maybe he could head up another Art Fair in San Bruno as part of the Countywide Celebration in August and also that there might be events that could be held at Tanforan.

8. Action Item

Chair

Election of Officers

Director announced she individually surveyed (phone and email) the Commissioners to gauge their interesting in serving as Chair and Vice Chair for the upcoming fiscal year. Commissioner Gordon volunteered to serve as Chair, and Commissioner McHugh agreed to be Vice-Chair. Commissioner Seymour asked for a motion to accept this slate. Commissioner Heise moved that the Commission accept the slate as presented and Commissioner Krishnan seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: approved unanimously.

9. Discussion Items

A. Update on Arts Celebration Subcommittee Meeting of April 20, 2022

Vice Chair

Commissioner Gordon shared the list of events the Administrator-Manager has compiled. She asked that the Commissioners volunteer to attend at least one of the events in their district. She noted that Commissioner McHugh has volunteered to develop and manage a participatory art project that can be done at each of the designated events.

Commissioner Sweeney stated that he would try to feature the project at Music@Menlo. Commissioner Gordon questioned our speaker/sound systems at these events and if the event hosts would have something available for us to use. Commissioner Seymour said that he would attend events in Millbrae and San Bruno. It was noted that there might be multiple events on any given day that would be noted in the calendar.

Commissioner Krishnan asked for clarification to the date and time of the Festival and was told August 27th from 12:00-3:00 pm. There was some question about whether movie nights should be listed on the calendar. Commissioner Krishnan suggested that film is an art medium and should be included. Commissioner Heise added that they could be listed on the calendar but there was no need for the Commissioners to attend those events.

Commissioner Gordon noted that we would use the \$2,500 in budget funds for promotion, the traveling participatory art project, and sound system for August 27th. She stated that we will need collateral for the Commissioners at the events they attend. She went on to suggest that they hold another subcommittee meeting in June and that she needed to connect with Commissioner McHugh about the project. She stated that we should hold June 22, 3:00-4:00 pm for next ad hoc meeting specific to the topic of the Celebration.

B. Report: Arts, Culture, and Creativity Month

Commissioner Krishnan

Included in Commissioner Krishnan's Commission report.

10. Adjournment

Chair

Commissioner Gordon made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Heise seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously. Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:57 pm.

NEXT REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING: July 20, 2022 – 3:00-5:00 PM