



## Civic Arts Commission Meeting Minutes

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### Zoom Webinar – Pleasanton, CA April 4, 2022 - 7:00 p.m.

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chairperson Huling Song.

#### **Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was recited.

#### **Roll Call**

Commissioners Present: Commissioners John Biaocchi, Janice Coleman-Knight, Anne Giancola, and Chairperson Huling Song. (Commissioner Jamie Yee arrived at 6:07 p.m.)

Commissioners Absent: Commissioners Katie Brunner, Jeanne Farley-Rodgers, and Hira Raghaven.

Staff Present: Rachel Prater, Recreation Manager; Lia Bushong, Assistant Library and Recreation Director and Edith Caponigro, Recording Secretary.

#### **AGENDA AMENDMENTS**

None

#### **MINUTES**

##### **1. Approve regular meeting minutes of March 7, 2022**

Correction: Item 1, page 1, para.1: Kiaorong should be Xiaorong

Correction: Item 4, page 8, para.3: ...indicated that Commissioner ~~Song~~ Coleman-Knight and Commissioner...

A motion was made by Commissioner Coleman-Knight, seconded by Commissioner Biaocchi to approve the minutes of the March 7, 2022 meeting as corrected. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

## **MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

### **2. Introductions/Awards/Recognitions/Presentations**

Ms. Prater advised that although Commissioner Raghaven was not in attendance at the meeting she wanted it to be noted in the minutes since her term as a member of the Civic Arts Commissioner would be finishing at the end of the month that staff and commissioners thanked her for serving as a member of the commission.

### **3. Public Comment from the audience regarding items not listed on the agenda.**

None.

## **MATTERS FOR THE COMMISSION'S REVIEW / ACTION / INFORMATION**

### **4. Discuss and Identify Process Improvements for the Annual Civic Arts Grant Meeting**

Ms. Prater discussed the Community Grant Program and the funding recommendations made by the commission for community grants in the Civic Arts category and suggested commissioners discuss process improvements for the annual grants meeting. She noted that as recommendations to begin the discussion process, staff was suggesting as topics: a) a Joint Youth Commission and Civic Arts Commission meeting in October, and b) a Commission Deliberation Process.

Commissioners were advised by Ms. Prater that the City of Pleasanton provides the Community Grant Program for non-profit organizations that serve the Pleasanton community in the areas of art, culture, and youth programs with a mission of enhancing the quality of life in Pleasanton and organizations are encouraged to apply for a grant in either the Civic Arts or Youth grant programs.

Ms. Prater advised that staff was recommending a joint meeting of the Youth and Civic Arts Commissions take place in October to review the community grant program and discuss updates for the application, funding guidelines and categories, and to enable staff to provide training on the ZoomGrant platform. Commissioners were also advised that staff recommends the commission discuss ways to standardize the deliberation process that leads up to the final voting by commissioners.

Commissioner Coleman-Knight suggested that a subcommittee be formed to look at the grant process. She felt questions on the grant application were not providing commissioners with the information needed for them to make good decisions on funding recommendations and there

appeared to be some redundancy in the process and the actual voting and awarding of the grants. Commissioner Coleman-Knight felt standardization was needed and that waiting to look at this until October was too late. She suggested two commissioners from each of the Civic Arts and Youth commissions be selected to form a subcommittee.

Commissioner Giancola felt getting information out about the grant program needed to be improved since many groups were unaware that the grants are available. She also commented on the possibility of individual artists working under the umbrella of a nonprofit group.

Commissioner Yee agreed with Commissioner Coleman-Knight's comments and felt it was something that needed to have some time and effort put into having discussions and making recommendations. She agreed with the idea of putting together a subcommittee and thought they could look at and address the criteria items that are in place on the grant applications. Commissioner Yee felt most grantees did not address the funding criteria and she did not feel that gaps were being filled because applicants did not know what the gaps were. She felt it was important the commission think about this and better identify the criteria.

Commissioner Yee felt more training was needed to help applicants with completing grant applications and providing better information on how the funds needed to be used. Commissioner Yee noted that several applicants at the March meeting had indicated their programs were addressing school and district standards, but they did not actually know what the standards were, they were not reaching out to schools equally and seemed to be depending on the relationships they had with teachers and schools.

Additionally, Commissioner Yee felt it would be beneficial to have someone from the PUSD curriculum department provide commissioners and current/potential grantees a presentation on visual performing arts standards, so better connections and equality can be provided on who receives programs. Commissioner Yee stated that she had been inclined to reject most of the grant applications and that applicants did not demonstrate that they were going to provide a satisfactory level of programs to a wide variety of attendees in the community. She reaffirmed her agreement for the formation of a subcommittee to work on this with members from the Youth Commission.

Commissioner Coleman-Knight had a question about the number of nonprofit organizations in Pleasanton that fall under Civic Arts category and the possibility of reaching out to individual artists who could join and work with them. She questioned how information could reach these people, so they become aware of what the commission is looking for in Pleasanton.

Chairperson Song discussed the issue of organizations and individuals not knowing how to write grants and there was a need to provide them with this information and training. Commissioner Coleman-Knight noted that grant writing was something specific and what Chairperson Song suggested could be accomplished in a workshop environment. She commented on the vast amount of reading and writing required when she had participated on a review panel for the National Endowment for the Humanities in Washington D.C. Commissioner Coleman-Knight indicated she would be willing to participate in a workshop environment providing help in grant writing.

Commissioner Yee questioned what support was provided by the city to grant applicants and Chairperson Song and Ms. Bushong provided information about the mandatory orientation meetings grantees are required to attend. Commissioner Yee commented on a grant training course she had attended which she felt would be of great service and benefit to nonprofits if the City of Pleasanton could offer it. She felt a complete overhaul of the grant process was needed that included changes to the criteria, outreach, training, and scoring. Commissioner Yee agreed with Commissioner Giancola's earlier comment that more outreach was needed and Commissioner Coleman-Knights' comment for learning about the number of nonprofits in the city.

Ms. Prater asked Commissioner Coleman-Knight to provide additional information about the grant meetings she had attended. Commissioner Coleman-Knight indicated she had attended at least four of the meetings and found that little information pertained to civic arts until the last 10-minutes of the meeting, and nothing was provided on how to write a grant. She felt the meetings were more of a briefing to announce the grants and a workshop is what should be provided with information for civic arts and youth being provided separately.

Commissioner Giancola felt the process could be made more friendly and indicated she understands the need for requiring the orientation but thought providing information about the steps for writing a grant would be helpful to make the process less intimidating. Commissioner Giancola would like for there to be a more friendly approach with diversity and equity in what is trying to be accomplished.

Commissioner Coleman-Knight agreed with Commissioner Giancola that a more friendly process is needed to attract individuals to participate under the umbrella of a nonprofit.

Commissioner Yee felt the city should still consider offering a program to help people with grant writing, especially since it would help in writing for larger grants through the National Endowment and other organizations. She felt this would be helpful in setting people up for success and provide community-based organizations with necessary training to write and provide well thought out grants.

Commissioner Coleman-Knight discussed with Commission Yee funding and training programs available through Alameda County. Commissioner Yee discussed the benefits of people being able to apply for other grants if they have the necessary background in grant writing. She commented on the possibility of the City of Pleasanton allocating funds to provide for this workshop training. Ms. Bushong indicated there would be significant costs involved and the commission would need to establish this as a priority and request funding through the City Council's 2-year priority setting process.

Ms. Prater summarized commissioner comments as follows: 1) Commissioners are looking to improve application questions and reduce some redundancy within the application process, 2) Commissioners would like to focus on marketing to nonprofits, 3) Commissioners are interested in a presentation from the school district that addresses spending criteria, 4) Commissioners would like to explore grant workshops for applicants, 5) Commissioners are recommending a

subcommittee with members of the youth and civic arts commissions for the June meeting agenda.

Commissioner Coleman-Knight asked about development of a subcommittee at the June meeting to address the points. Ms. Bushong noted that the subcommittee could be no more than two members with an Alternate, which would allow for one member from each of the Civic Arts and Youth commissions and the Alternate. She indicated that the Youth Commission staff liaison would be contacted to plan for the subcommittee.

Commissioner Yee questioned the number of members from each commission, indicating she thought it was two from each commission. Ms. Bushong advised that under the Brown Act, the subcommittee cannot have a quorum, with no more than three commissioners total from both commissions with an alternate. Subcommittee alternates would only attend if the regular members could not attend. There was further discussion about the putting together the subcommittee and scheduling meetings during the summer. Staff was reminded that the Youth Commission does not meet during the summer. Ms. Prater advised that she will speak with the Youth Commission staff liaison to discuss meeting dates and scheduling.

## **5. Review Civic Arts Project Status Report**

Ms. Prater reviewed with commissioners the Civic Arts Project Status Report commenting on recruitment for a new Teen Poet Laureate and applications being accepted until April 13, 2022. Chairperson Song asked about grade level requirements for the applicants. Ms. Prater confirmed that applicants need to be incoming high school junior and senior students and all application documents are available on the Firehouse Arts Center website.

Chairperson Song discussed the Holocaust Memorial event to be held at the Firehouse Art Gallery.. Commissioner Giancola advised that because of the success of this event and the impact of the paintings displayed at the Bothwell in Livermore and at various locations, the artist has now launched the nonprofit East Bay Holocaust Education Center. She felt this was an exhibition that speaks to youth.

## **COMMISSION REPORTS**

### **6. Committee Meetings**

#### **a. Public Art Website Subcommittee**

Commissioner Coleman-Knight advised that there are a total 62 pieces of art now on the public art website, with seventeen sculpture writings completed and writings recently completed for the Yak and Sing-a-Song-of-Sixpence. Both of which were donated to the Pleasanton Cultural Arts Council and after being placed for 10-years in the garden of a Pleasanton resident and later installed at Centennial Park. She advised that the writing for Girl Reading was also completed.

Commissioners were informed by Commissioner Coleman-Knight that writings on nine of the painted utility boxes, considered to be a secondary public consideration, have also been completed. She also advised that she has spoken with an IT person who believes he may be able to help with the STQRY mobile application but needs to discuss next steps with staff.

#### **b. Mobile Wallpaper and Virtual Background Art subcommittee**

Commissioner Giancola advised that she had met with Chairperson Song and staff members Michele Crose and Lia Bushong who all agreed that developing a digital background, digital artwork, and holding a contest was a nice idea, but there were concerns with other more pressing issues requiring staff time and that the decision has been made to suspend matters and work on this in the future.

Ms. Bushong felt the decision to suspend this until some time in the future would allow for the commission to focus on other items such as the public art website and the grant process. She also commented on technical issues that had arisen regarding how the background would be downloaded and accessible to the community.

#### **7. Other brief reports on any meetings, conferences, and/or seminars attended by the Commission members.**

Commissioner Giancola provided an update on her judging of parks for Assembly Member Rebecca Bauer's nature photography contest. She noted there were three sections to be judged 1) wildlife, 2) water, and 3) parks. The parks section alone had eighty-six entries to be judged. She advised that the winner of the parks section was Vanessa Thomas who had provided a lovely image.

Chairperson Song asked that Commissioner Giancola provide the link for commissioners to be able to look at the entries.

Commissioner Coleman-Knight noted that the City of Pleasanton issued two proclamations recognizing the month of March as Arts is Education Month and the month of April as Arts, Culture and Creativity Month. These proclamations set the stage for following up on the California for the Arts program that has information about activities available on the California website. She also commented on California Arts Advocacy Week that has a Zoom meeting scheduled for Wednesday April 20, 2022.

Chairperson Song was provided information by Ms. Bushong on how the City of Pleasanton puts in place proclamations for specific community recognitions as a way of showing support.

#### **FUTURE AGENDA TOPICS**

Chairperson Song commented on future agenda topics discussed earlier in the meeting.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 p.m.

### **NEXT MEETING**

Special Joint Meeting with Library Commission  
May 2, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.