

June 6, 2022
Item 6

**SUBJECT: REVIEW AND DISCUSS COMMISSION REQUEST TO ESTABLISH A
CIVIC ARTS GRANT SUBCOMMITTEE**

SUMMARY

Each year, the Civic Arts Commission discusses opportunities to participate on subcommittees and selects commission representatives. Subcommittees meet monthly or as needed, are limited to two commissioners under the Brown Act, and focus on specialized subject areas and goals. At the April 2022 meeting, the commission shared recommendations for Civic Arts grants process improvements, and requested staff explore the benefits of forming a subcommittee to work on Civic Arts grant process changes.

RECOMMENDATION

Review and discuss commission request to establish a Civic Arts grants subcommittee

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

There is no financial impact to this action.

BACKGROUND

Each year, the Civic Arts Commission (commission) discusses opportunities to participate on subcommittees and selects commission representatives. Participation on these committees allows commissioners to have a deeper role in the visual and literary arts in Pleasanton. The commission currently has three active subcommittees: Joint Civic Arts and Library Teen Poet Laureate Subcommittee, Public Art Selection Subcommittee (PASS), and Public Art Website Subcommittee. Each subcommittee meets monthly with the staff liaison, is limited in size under the Brown Act, and focuses on specialized subject areas and projects.

At the April 4, 2022 meeting, the commission shared recommendations for Civic Arts grants process improvements and requested that staff explore the benefits of forming a commission subcommittee to work on specific Civic Arts grants improvements:

- Improve the application questions
- Ensure applicants identify community gaps through surveys, data, and research
- Market the grants to diverse non-profit arts organizations
- Offer information on grant-writing workshops to potential applicants

DISCUSSION

Staff explored establishing a commission subcommittee and recommends utilizing the full commission to implement grant process improvements. The commission would implement grant process improvements in the annual fall Civic Arts grant planning meeting, similar to the Youth Commission model.

Establishing a separate subcommittee to discuss the Civic Arts grant process would supersede the commission-wide perspective on grant Funding Criteria that is, in essence, the purview of the commission. The Funding Criteria that each commission establishes as a group to prepare for the Community Grant annual review process is crucial to ensuring rating determinations are followed. Additionally, Funding Criteria may be adapted to address the improvement goals below identified by the commission.

Improve the Application Questions

One suggested improvement brought forth by the commission was that information gathered in the Community Grants application was not adequate to make informed funding recommendations.

Community Grants for Civic Arts and Youth utilize shared questions (Attachment 1) that have been updated over time to ensure that a fair process is used for rating of applicants. The Community Grants application questions for Civic Arts and Youth Services are consistent throughout both areas to ensure equity in review and implementation. In certain instances, applicants apply for multiple grants and consistent rating scales are valuable for the review process done by both commissions.

Ensure applicants identify community gaps through surveys, data, and research

Feedback from commissioners during the March 2022 grant meeting reflected an interest that grant applicants better identify gap areas through surveys, data gathering and research, and use this information to plan projects where there is a demonstrated community need. While the use of need assessment tools is not a factor outlined in the application questions, the commission is able to add this to their Funding Criteria for approval at the October Civic Arts grant planning meeting.

Market the grants to diverse non-profit arts organizations

Marketing of Civic Arts grants and outreach to local arts organizations is a valuable part of the commission's role in the community, as advocates for the arts. City staff has compiled a list of Tri-Valley cultural arts organizations for commissioner outreach and marketing purposes (Attachment 2).

Offer information on grant-writing workshops to potential applicants

Free grant writing workshops are not provided by the City, but there are resources that may be of assistance, such as the online tool NonProfit Ready with grant-writing courses found at <https://www.nonprofitready.org/>. Alameda County Training & Education Center offers courses on Grant Seeking and Grant Writing Basics that may be of assistance to newer applicants.

Submitted by:



Lia Bushong
Assistant Director of Library and Recreation

Attachments

1. Community Grant Application Questions
2. List of Tri-Valley Cultural Arts Organizations, Groups and Studios