



Civic Arts Commission Meeting Minutes

Zoom Webinar – Pleasanton, CA August 2, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. by Chairperson Huling Song.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was recited.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: John Baiocchi, Jeanne Farley-Rodgers, Hira Raghavan, Jamie Yee, Katie Brunner, Janice Coleman-Knight, and Chairperson Huling Song.

Commissioners Absent: Stephanie Pellegrino

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

AGENDA AMENDMENTS

None.

MINUTES

1. Approve regular meeting minutes of April 5, 2021

Corrections noted by Commissioner Coleman-Knight:

Page 3, para.4 – Ann Giancola.... Should be *Anne* Giancola

Page 3, para.5 - ...viewing one of the ~~Boswell~~ *Bothwell* store windows.

Approval of these minutes was postponed due to attendees at this meeting not being members of the commission at the April 5, 2021 meeting.

2. Approve joint commission meeting minutes of May 24, 2021

Correction:

Page 2, Item 2, para.3 - ... pause for the 2021-2021 *school year*.

A motion was made by Commissioner Brunner, seconded by Commissioner Yee, to approve the Civic Arts Commission and Library Commission Joint Special Meeting minutes as corrected.

The motion was approved unanimously.

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

3. Introductions/Awards/Recognitions/Presentations

a. Pleasanton Cultural Arts Council Signpost Update

Ms. Whitney introduced Pleasanton Cultural Arts Council representative Anne Giancola and advised she was to give a report on the public art signposts.

Ms. Giancola advised that the temporary public art signposts have been installed and she has been periodically checking on them and they bring smiles to people's faces. Ms. Giancola provided information on artists who had painted the signs and commented on a sign that needed to be repainted. She indicated that the sign pointing to Centennial Park had been replaced with an art piece representing the public art sculpture "The Yak". Commissioners were informed that signs on the signposts are pointing in different ways to some of the city's public art piece locations.

Ms. Giancola noted that the signposts will remain in place through the end of September or the beginning of October, and are a nice way to display temporary public art. She pointed out that the artists were given freedom to create signs that pointed to different pieces of public art and each one had a different flavor.

She reviewed with the commission photos of the signposts and commented on their locations, one being on Neal Street across from Meadowlark Dairy and the other in front of the Museum on Main Street. She pointed out the QR code on the signposts that can be scanned to link back to the STQRY website with the City's public art information. She stated that it was great to work with the City of Pleasanton on the planning and installation and they were a good partner on the project.

Commissioner Coleman-Knight commented on how the signposts are bringing a note of bright cheeriness and enthusiasm to the community about art and stated she has noticed people standing close to them taking pictures. Ms. Giancola thanked her and said it had been a fun project to work on and her passion is connecting artists to public art.

Ms. Whitney thanked Ms. Giancola for her presentation, and for providing information and answering questions from the commission.

4. Public Comment from the audience regarding items not listed on the agenda.

None.

MATTERS FOR THE COMMISSION'S REVIEW / ACTION / INFORMATION

5. Review and Comment on Firehouse Arts Center Updates

Ms. Whitney greeted the commission and advised that staff is happy to be back in offices and encouraged members of the commission to visit staff members in their new offices in the library, as they have recently moved from the Recreation modular building. She advised staff to review the Staff Report that details the programming that was offered during the pandemic.

Commissioners were advised by Ms. Whitney that during the COVID-19 pandemic, staff created a virtual weekly show called "Firehouse Live" held Thursday evenings that featured local artists, businesses, and City programs. Creatures of Impulse moved their shows to a virtual environment and hosted eight shows. With the opening of the Firehouse Art Center, live performances were held with 99 tickets being sold for two shows in June, and in July 160 tickets were sold for a performance. Ms. Whitney noted that virtual shows are still available on the city's YouTube and Facebook sites. She provided details on how people can connect to these for a fee and noted that a family living in New York had purchased tickets to attend a show.

Additionally, Ms. Whitney advised the commission that during the pandemic, Civic Arts staff members had spent time working as Disaster Service Workers, shopping for groceries and cooking meals at Open Heart Kitchen, assisting at the library, as well as running summer camp and childcare programs. She advised that a reboot plan was worked on and put in place as things began to open while the city paid attention to working within State guidelines.

Ms. Whitney informed commissioners that the Firehouse Arts Center and the Harrington Gallery are allowed to open. She advised commissions that after fourteen months of closure the Firehouse Arts Center and Harrington Gallery reopened for in-person programs in May 2021 with a "Fresh Works" juried show at the Harrington Gallery. By June 15th, with the change in the California Blueprint, other Firehouse programs reopened including the first in-person show that featured High School Musical Collaborative, the Teen Improv Troupe Creatures of Impulse show and a vocal performance of America's Got Talent stars. In July, the jazz musician Jeff Borges sold 160 tickets with a trumpet show. Ms. Whitney stated that as health orders are relaxing, staff is working to identify which shows to bring back safely and using the upstairs classrooms as a true arts center for art classes. With the recent mask order, all attendees at events will be required to wear masks in indoor facilities.

Chairperson Song commented on the value of the Fresh Works gallery show she had seen, as well as the performance with the stars from America's Got Talent.

Commissioner Yee discussed the opening of big theaters in New York and attendees being required to show proof of vaccination and requirements for wearing masks and questioned whether this was something staff in Pleasanton had given any thought to for people attending events. Ms. Whitney advised that any direction pertaining to the proof of vaccinations needed to come from the city management. Ms. Bushong advised that information about a state mandate effective August 3, 2021, had been recently distributed through the city newsletter and individuals will be required to wear masks indoors in all facilities. She and Commissioner Yee discussed the effects of sitting in close proximity in theaters and other venues and what steps the City of Pleasanton was taking for people to remain safe from the current pandemic surge.

Commissioner Coleman-Knight stated she was encouraged to learn about the extemporaneous work of kids in their programs and really enjoyed watching their shows on YouTube. She was also pleased to learn how people in other states had been able to watch these shows virtually.

Commissioner Farley-Rodgers was pleased about summer camps and classes that had been offered and stated her granddaughter had enjoyed participating in the two-week art classes with Debbie and the Little Veterinary School. She stated that the teachers were excellent and appreciated that the students were required to wear masks throughout the class.

Commissioner Baiocchi noted he had heard that some people were upset that artists on-stage were not required to wear masks and were not necessarily vaccinated. He wondered what the protocols were for this and the difficult issue of having to ask performers if they are vaccinated and to show proof of such. Ms. Whitney agreed this was a good question and noted that with current changes in mandates she will continue to learn about new protocols pertaining to vaccination of performers. She clarified that the existing requirement was self-attestation.

Commissioners and staff discussed the issue of asking people to show proof of vaccination. Commissioner Yee questioned if something could be included that mandates proof of vaccination. Ms. Bushong indicated she was more comfortable seeking an answer on this with the city and the legal team.

Commissioner Yee inquired about the Shakespeare in the Park event. Ms. Whitney informed Commissioners Baiocchi and Yee that being able to offer Shakespeare in the Park this year was not budgeted and that the SF Shakes had to pause in-person programs for a period of time.

Commissioner Brunner asked about the status of the Amador Theater and how decisions are made about the use of the theater. Ms. Bushong offered to provide updates. She reported on a recent walk-through of the theater, with Operations Services, to discuss repairs needed which were caused by a basement flooding incident during the pandemic that had damaged the electrical system, the dressing rooms, the water heater, walls, and speakers. She noted that completion of repairs will also include several other improvements and by winter, the theater may be available for PUSD shows. The Amador Theater would be brought back with limited capacity and the balcony of the theater will still not be available for use due to safety issues with the fire stairs. She shared that the Amador Theater is a beloved facility for the community and the Theater Assessment is a Council Priority. The assessment is an extensive multi-phase process, and more updates will be available in the future when a timeline is established.

6. Review the Current Public Art Approval Process

Ms. Whitney advised that city staff will be updating the Firehouse Arts Center website to include information about the public art process. She informed commissioners that the public art acquisition process has been used for about 10 years and the city has three documents that help guide the public art program: 1) The Cultural Arts Plan, 2) The Pleasanton Downtown Public Art Master Plan, and 3) The Pleasanton Municipal Code (Muni Code).

Commissioners were advised that the Cultural Arts Plan was adopted in 2014 and states that the “public art program should evolve to better serve the needs of the community, match the aesthetic standard of the city, and enhance the artistic reach”. The Pleasanton Downtown Public Art Master Plan was approved in 2007 and provides examples of how “existing public art can be integrated into community programs”. Ms. Whitney noted that the Muni Code outlines the process for public art and details two things: 1) How new pieces of public art are approved and 2) Gifts and loans of public art and public art that is in private places.

Ms. Whitney reviewed with commissioners the process for approving public art that includes review by the Public Art Selection Subcommittee (P.A.S.S.) for the merit of the piece and site appropriateness, and consultation with the Operations Services and the Landscape Architect departments regarding installation, maintenance, and landscaping. She noted that once P.A.S.S. has reviewed the piece, the commission will make a recommendation to either approve or reject the piece and then it goes to City Council for them to either approve or reject. If a piece is being gifted by a donor, city staff will work with the donor and artist to determine suitability and location and will then take ownership of the art piece.

Commissioners were advised by Ms. Whitney that staff would like a recommendation from the commission to add this information to the city’s website, so it is clear and easily understood by the public what the correct process details are for public art. Commissioner Coleman-Knight asked Ms. Whitney to further clarify details about the process.

Chairperson Song discussed with Ms. Whitney the Kaiser mural and was informed that this was a collaboration mural. Ms. Whitney advised that Kaiser had approached the city saying they would like to have a mural and were prepared to spend a certain amount to have this done but would like for the City of Pleasanton to facilitate the project.

Commissioner Yee asked about the process if a cash donation is made with specifics about the type of art for which it should be used. Ms. Whitney provided details about the process. Commissioner Yee thanked Ms. Whitney for the explanation and questioned whether this was something that should be included in the Muni Code. Ms. Whitney felt the Muni Code would cover many different scenarios but thought Commissioner Yee’s scenario is one that might be included on the website. Commissioners then discussed other possible scenarios.

Commissioner Yee commented on providing opportunities for the public to weight in on public art selections, especially when it was done from a cash donation. Ms. Whitney agreed with the suggestion. Chairperson Song felt it was important for the Civic Arts Commission to provide

input but was unsure about involving the public. Commissioner Yee felt public feedback on items was what she was referring to, especially if an item is to be commissioned. She referenced what is being done by the Alameda County Arts Commission.

Commissioner Coleman-Knight indicated she was unsure on how the P.A.A.S. operated so Ms. Whitney provided information.

7. Review and Comment on the Library and Recreation Department Quarterly Report for April – June 2021.

Ms. Whitney reviewed with commissioners the April-June 2021 Library and Recreation Quarterly Report advising that moving forward, three quarterly and one annual report will be provided. The quarterly reports are intended to showcase what the department has been working on by providing statistics and numbers with interesting photos. She discussed the reopening of the Harrington Art Gallery shows, events at the Firehouse Arts Theater, programs, and activities in other departments, and changes that staff has been working through to adjust programs and opening of facilities as things changed within the pandemic.

Chairperson Song felt the quarterly report was very informative and provided the commission with helpful information.

Commissioner Raghavan liked the report and was pleased to learn about the virtual programs that have provided ways for people to participate in programs without needed to do so in-person.

Commissioner Yee had no comments about the report but questioned when the Cultural Plan was to be updated because she thought it was outdated and missing some things from Pleasanton history. Ms. Whitney advised that it was updated in 2014 and was unsure, but thought it was updated every 10-years.

Commissioner Coleman-Knight stated she had enjoyed reading the report and was surprised to learn about the number of rides each month for the Senior Center.

Commissioners Farley-Rodgers and Baiocchi had no comments but said they had enjoyed reading the report.

Commissioner Brunner reiterated an earlier comment about retaining some of the virtual offers as they allowed people to participate in programs and events that they would be able to do normally.

8. Civic Arts Project Status Report

Ms. Whitney reviewed with commissioners the Civic Arts Project Status Report commenting on the installation and removal of the Signposts and the planned installation of the Evantide art piece in October. She noted that the Evantide piece weighs about 299 pounds and staff is looking for a large boulder on which it can be installed.

Commissioners were informed by Ms. Whitney that because of the pandemic, some agencies were unable to complete projects and utilize grant funds they received for FY 2020-2021 so these funds have been extended through 2022 and agencies that received FY 2021-2022 grant funds will be required to complete projects and use funds during the period of July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.

Commissioner Yee questioned if it was possible to review a past grant application. Ms. Whitney advised that applications are on Zoomgrants but she will forward one to Commissioner Yee.

Chairperson Song reminded everyone that the next Civic Art Commission meeting will be in October.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 p.m.