



Civic Arts Commission Meeting Minutes

Zoom Webinar – Pleasanton, CA June 6, 2022 - 7:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chairperson Song.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was recited.

Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Janice Coleman-Knight, Jeanne Farley-Rodgers, Anne Giancola, Jamie Yee, and Chairperson Song.

Commissioners Absent: John Baiocchi, Katie Brunner, and Grace Mundaden.

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

AGENDA AMENDMENTS

None.

MINUTES

1. Approve regular meeting minutes of April 24, 2022

A motion was made by Commissioner Coleman-Knight, seconded by Commissioner Giancola, to approve the minutes of the April 4, 2022, meeting. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

2. Approve joint meeting minutes of May 2, 2022

A motion was made by Commissioner Giancola, seconded by Commissioner Yee, to approve the minutes of the May 2, 2022, Civic Arts Commission and Library Commission Joint Special Meeting. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

3. Introductions/Awards/Recognitions/Presentations

None.

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 Approve Location and Installation of Temporary Public Art Murals

Ms. Bushong informed commissioners that the Pleasanton Cultural Arts Council (PCAC) was presenting information on the temporary placement of two rotating public art murals that had been selected by the Pleasanton community. She further advised that on May 9, 2022, the Public Art Selection Subcommittee (PASS) had met to discuss the public art pieces and their artistic merit, location, installation, and maintenance. Their discussions help inform the Commission's decision to approve the temporary location and installation. PCAC and staff are recommending a mural placement at the entrance of the Cultural Arts building on Black Avenue.

Commissioners were advised by Ms. Bushong that the murals would be placed in a metal frame with the ability to be rotated during the year so they could be enjoyed by visitors and program participants visiting the Cultural Arts building.

Kelly Cousins and Les Duman, PCAC representatives, advised that PCAC had been working on this project for some time during COVID-19 pandemic and then applied for the funding. Ms. Cousins advised that the murals would be placed outside to celebrate the community's uniqueness and cultural character. She noted that this project has been a collaboration of PCAC with the City of Pleasanton, who had helped provide a place for displaying new projects at the library.

Commissioners were provided information by Ms. Cousins about the community survey and outreach that had been done at community events. PCAC conducted a survey for all ages, asking for comments about the artistic styles and preferences of several murals. The most popular murals were Mural A and Mural B, titled 'JOY' and 'QUAIL'. She discussed the surveys received that included comments about paint colors and diversity. PCAC decided to use funds for the two murals 'JOY' and 'QUAIL' and arrange painting by the artists.

Ms. Cousins noted that PASS had met and recommended some changes to the 'JOY' mural in terms of the figures in the painting and their positioning in the picture. She also noted that having temporary murals allows for changing each one out periodically in the frame.

Chairperson Song asked about rotating placement of the temporary frames in various locations in the City and Ms. Cousins indicated that moving the pieces would be both labor and time intensive. In the PASS meeting, other locations such as Rotary Park and the adjacent trail were considered, but PASS determined that a more appropriate location would be the back entrance to the Cultural Arts building along the exterior wall. Ms. Bushong noted that the PASS committee, which includes commissioners as well as Civic Arts, Parks, and Operations Services staff, had looked at several proposed locations for the murals in parks, but had concerns over a freestanding frame and the wind sway as well as concerns over underground irrigation.

Ms. Bushong thanked Mr. Duman for producing the creative frame design that would accommodate the Cultural Arts building location. She noted that the Cultural Arts building welcomes a number of visitors for art classes, ceramics, summer programs and the regular meetings of the Pleasanton Art League (PAL).

Mr. Duman provided information about the frame design for the murals. The frame was originally designed to be two-sided and mounted into the ground with a mural on each side. Mr. Duman indicated a new design with the flexibility to be either hung or freestanding if used in a future location. Upon approval, Mr. Duman would work with staff on the design, and how it would be anchored at the location and used later. Mr. Duman also provided information about a powder coating used on the frame that would be baked in place to prevent rust and damage.

Ms. Bushong asked Mr. Duman about graffiti prevention for the mural paintings. Mr. Duman indicated that the mural paintings are being designed using paint with UV-inhibitors for sun damage protection, and a clear coating for graffiti prevention and would allow the pieces to be easily cleaned.

Commissioner Farley-Rodgers indicated she is a member of PASS and participated in the PASS meeting and was pleased with the proposed improvements for the framing and would like to see this project move forward so people will see the murals during the summer while they attend classes and programs.

Commissioner Coleman-Knight felt both murals were very expressive. She shared that the 'QUAIL' mural titled "Gentle Beauty" reflects the environment while 'JOY' shows people wanting to be outside. She noted that the City's 2014 Cultural Plan talks about diversity which she felt was being accomplished in the two murals.

Commissioner Giancola agreed with the comments of other commissioners and felt the murals would make people feel joyful and reflected an appreciation of the arts and outdoor spaces. She felt the framing recommendation was brilliant and a good solution going forward.

Commissioner Yee stated she is also a member of PASS and had a chance to participate in the PASS meeting to discuss location artistic merits. She felt that both the murals and the proposed location were good.

A motion was made by Commissioner Yee, seconded by Commissioner Coleman-Knight, recommending approval of the temporary installation and location of public art murals 'JOY' and 'QUAIL' at the Cultural Arts Building on Black Avenue.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Commissioners Coleman-Knight, Farley-Rodgers, Giancola, Yee, and Chairperson Song.

NOES: None

ABSENT: Commissioners Baiocchi, Brunner and Mundaden

6. Review and Discuss Civic Arts Grant Subcommittee

Ms. Bushong advised that the purpose of the discussion was to address a commission request to consider establishing a Civic Arts Commission Grant subcommittee. She noted that at the April 4, 2022, meeting, commissioners shared recommended improvements for the Civic Arts grant process and asked staff to explore the benefits of forming a subcommittee to work on specific improvements. She shared that the commission had recommended four process improvements that she will address individually.

Ms. Bushong shared that the first two improvements brought forth by the commission were to improve the Community Grants application and questions, and ensuring applicants identify community gaps through surveys, data, and research. She noted that Community Grants for Civic Arts and Youth utilize shared questions that have been updated over time and were recently approved by City Council. While one of the concerns voiced by the Commission was that the grant applicants did not address the Cultural Plan and gap areas, she confirmed that question #2 in the application addressed this. She encouraged commissioners when rating grants to carefully consider and rate appropriately the answer to this question.

Ms. Bushong reported that commissioners had shared that grant applicants needed to better identify gap areas through surveys, data gathering and research, and use this information to plan their organizations' projects to address 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 discussion for approval at the October Civic Arts grant planning meeting.

Ms. Bushong reported that the third process improvement recommended by the commission was to market the grants to more diverse group of arts organizations. She shared that Pleasanton Library staff researched Tri-Valley arts organizations and developed a list of neighboring agencies for commissioner marketing and outreach. Ms. Bushong noted that the role of the commission is to be advocates and connect with organizations and this is important work for the entire commission, rather than the focused work of a single subcommittee.

Ms. Bushong reported that the fourth and final process improvement recommended by the commission was to provide information on grant-writing workshops to potential applicants. Ms. Bushong informed commissioners that the City does not offer grant-writing workshops and that such trainings can be expensive. She shared that several commissioners had recommendations for outstanding workshops through organizations such as the National Endowment for the Arts. Because City grant workshops are not funded, if the commission was interested in pursuing further recommendations, this would need to be part of the two-year City Council priority setting process.

Ms. Bushong informed the commission that staff recommends that the grant process improvements being recommended by the commission be accomplished through closer evaluation of applications using the ZoomGrants software, better utilization of the Civic Arts Grant annual funding criteria, and enhanced marketing to non-profit arts organizations. She shared that these improvements would be best managed by the entire commission, rather than a single subcommittee.

Commissioner Giancola felt that grant writing workshops would not assist applicants and what was needed was making the process easier for people to apply. She asked if commissioners could provide encouragement and consultation for grant applicants. Ms. Bushong advised that the role of the commission is to connect with organizations to make them aware of the grant process, but not coaching them through the grant process. She advised that commissioners have an obligation as unbiased evaluators of grant applications, as they ultimately make recommendations to City Council.

Commissioner Coleman-Knight provided feedback on the annual Grant Workshops in December. She noted that at the workshop meetings little information is provided for the Civic Arts and Youth grants, as these two grants are presented at the very end of the workshop meeting after Housing and Human Services, and she thought this order needed to be changed. Ms. Bushong indicated that staff would investigate whether that change could be made.

Commissioner Coleman-Knight indicated she had asked at the workshop if all questions are to be equally weighted. She also shared that she was not able to view the attached documents in the ZoomGrants software. Ms. Bushong asked Commissioner Coleman-Knight to clarify this and stated that staff would check further on this and report back at a future grant meeting as well as provide software training upon request.

Commissioner Yee agreed with Commissioner Giancola's comments but felt there should be a training process to help organizations apply not only for these grants but also for others. She thanked the Pleasanton Library for compiling the list of arts organizations. She felt providing more assistance would be helpful to small agencies and help them with grant writing skills, and suggested information be sent to them. Commissioner Yee indicated she would reach out to the Tri-Valley Nonprofit Alliance organization to determine if they might be interested in doing a workshop.

Commissioner Yee felt that while surveys are critical for arts organizations to provide, they need a special writing skill and do not always provide the right picture and data. She felt it would be good if the City could conduct a big survey that goes to all city households and would provide better information for spending the grant funds.

Ms. Bushong shared that the City had conducted a broad survey recently, but it was not focused specifically on the arts.

Commissioner Yee commended the report that staff created to address the commission's grant suggestions for process improvements.

Commissioner Coleman-Knight discussed the 2014 Cultural Plan and felt Commissioner Yee was looking to get good support for the next Cultural Plan. Commissioner Yee felt the current plan was no longer relevant in many areas and the charge of the commission was to distribute the grants based on the Cultural Plan. She recommended an updated plan.

Ms. Bushong noted that the City's Ignite arts event was born out of the 2014 Cultural Plan and there are acknowledged benefits to these plans. However, each new plan has significant costs for its development. If the commission was interested in pursuing a recommendation for a new plan, this would need to be part of the two-year City Council priority setting process.

7. Review and Comment on the Civic Arts Project Status Report

Ms. Bushong reviewed the Civic Arts Project Status Report with commissioners commenting on several aspects of the report. She shared the popular summer youth theater programs, with students participating in productions, playwriting and running technical theater. She highlighted that public art projects are paced to provide ample staff support and quality for each. She also shared that the 2022/23 Teen Poet Laureate, Tho Nguyen, would be presented at an upcoming City Council meeting. Commissioners were encouraged to attend upcoming theater productions over the summer, Movies in the Park, as well as the upcoming Harrington Gallery events that are listed on the Firehouse Arts Center website.

Chairperson Song commented on the number of upcoming programs and activities scheduled to take place and indicated she had downloaded the list.

8. Review and Comment on the Library and Recreation Department Quarterly Report for January – March 2022

Ms. Bushong reviewed with commissioners the Library and Recreation Department Quarterly Report. She highlighted departmental programs and services in the most recent quarter of the year, including Library outreach to veterans, the City's Youth in Government Day, and the continued expansion of Harrington Gallery exhibits and theater ticket sales. She shared the importance of recruitment for temporary employees in the sports, aquatics, preschool, youth, and teen areas, as many staff are needed to run these popular summer programs.

Ms. Bushong shared the new format for the report that showcases trends, a report enhancement put in place in response to commission feedback, as well as developing new survey tools that will be incorporated in future reports.

Commissioner Song commented on enjoying lap swimming at the pool.

Commissioner Coleman-Knight commented on the 2,000 tickets sold for the Seussical event at the Amador Theater. Ms. Bushong answered questions about the City's partnership with the Pleasanton Unified School District for the school's use of the Amador Theater. Commissioner Yee commented on the musical being a successful collaboration between Amador Valley High School and Foothill High School.

Commissioner Yee stated that she liked the report and suggested staff look for 'results-based accountability' tools that address how the programs enhance people's lives. Ms. Bushong shared that the department is starting to use a 'logic model' that incorporates statistics, surveys, and program outcomes for future planning.

Commissioner Coleman-Knight provided information on a recent Ptownlife news article written by former Teen Poet Laureate, Kanchan Naik and commented on how well-written and engaging the article was. Ms. Bushong reported that she would share that information with the team and provided further information on how commissioners could sign up for the Ptownlife newsletter.

Commissioner Yee advised that she and Ms. Bushong recently discussed the budget cycle. She then asked about grant reports and when they are due. Ms. Bushong advised that staff is currently working on this with grant participants, and reports will be provided in the fall as organizations are beginning to send in their invoices.

Commissioner Yee suggested discussing items in the Cultural Plan as an agenda item for a future commission meeting. Commissioner Coleman-Knight also suggested the commission discuss mid-term reports.

COMMISSION REPORTS

9. Committee Meetings

- a. Teen Poet Laureate Subcommittee** – no report.
- b. Public Art Website Subcommittee** – Commissioner Coleman-Knight advised that three additional art-based writings have been completed and staff is reviewing these. She was unsure what the next step would be. Ms. Bushong advised that after review, the completed writings will be uploaded as a group to the STQRY and public art website at a future date. Commissioner Coleman-Knight felt that the STQRY app may

not be sufficient to support the writings, and this will be discussed at a future subcommittee meeting.

c. Public Art Selection Subcommittee (PASS) – no report

10. Other brief reports on any meetings, conferences, and/or seminars attended by Commission members

Chairperson Song commented on a cello concert she had attended at the Concord Pavilion, a May 15th Dance Festival in San Francisco, and a Camilla Cabella show at the Shoreline Theater.

Commissioner Yee discussed the Downton Abbey movie.

Commissioner Giancola provided information about a Native American event to be held in Livermore.

Commissioner Yee provided information about an app entitled ‘Here and Now’ that provides information about different historical places.

FUTURE AGENDA TOPICS

11. Firehouse Fall Program Season Presentation

12. Funding Criteria

13. Discuss percent-for-art for public and private development projects

Ms. Bushong advised commissioners that the July and September commission meetings have been cancelled because of conflicts with the Independence and Labor Day holidays, and after conferring with Chairperson Song and Commissioner Coleman-Knight it has been decided to also cancel the August meeting. She noted that the free time will allow for staff and subcommittees to continue working on subcommittee items and public art projects.

Commissioners were informed by Ms. Bushong that two downtown art pieces were recently damaged and in the process of being repaired.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

October 3, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.