

TO: CITY ARTS COMMISSION

FROM: Library Services Department
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PREPARED BY: Tim Hetherton

TITLE: Donation of sculpture from Ben Carlson Memorial Foundation

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Arts Commission:

- a. In accordance with Council Policy I-11, *Donation of Art to the City of Newport Beach*, and the approval of the Fine Arts Ad Hoc Sub Committee, recommend that City Council accept the donation of a memorial statue from the Ben Carlson Foundation.
- b. Request that the City Council waive Council Policy B-11, *The City Employees' Memorial At Bob Henry Park*.
- c. In accordance with Council Policy I-9, *Art in Public Places*, collaborate with City Council on the site placement of the statue.
- d. Request periodic updates from the Ben Carlson Foundation as work on the statue progresses.

DISCUSSION:

In July 2014, the Mr. Josh Yocam and Mr. Jake Janz of the Ben Carlson Foundation submitted an application to the Newport Beach City Arts Commission with a proposal to donate a memorial statue of lifeguard Ben Carlson to the City of Newport Beach. Mr. Janz, in conjunction with the Richard MacDonald Studio, devised the concept for the 9-foot memorial. The proposed work depicts Carlson in lifeguard trunks, holding a rescue tube in one hand, and using his other hand to shade his eyes, as if in perpetual watch over the coastline (see Attachment A). The statue is expected to include an interactive, educational component about ocean safety, having been designed to educate beachgoers and foster an appreciation of the perils lifeguards face daily.

The City Arts Commission typically accepts donations of finished work based on the criteria of Council Policy I-11, *Donation of Art to the City of Newport Beach*, (Attachment B) which does not explicitly account for work that is yet to be commissioned. Staff concludes that it is an unfair expectation to the Ben Carlson Foundation to raise the necessary funds to create the sculpture without a commitment from the City Arts Commission to recommend Council acceptance of the finished work. The Fine Arts Ad Hoc Sub Committee therefore recommends that the City Arts Commission apply the criteria of I-11 to the proposed concept for recommendation to City Council.

The donors have completed a standardized donation form that has been approved by the Fine Arts Ad Hoc Sub Committee. The statue concept is an original creation of high quality. The involvement of the Richard MacDonald Studio indicates a level of artistic excellence. It will add significantly to the balanced inventory of the City's collection. The concept specifies materials (matted stainless steel) that indicate that the finished work will be of satisfactory physical condition and durability. The proposed work will not require restoration or extensive long term conservation, and is of a manageable physical size and weight that it can be transported and displayed without difficulty. The concept is consistent with and relevant to the civic interests and broad variety of tastes within the Newport Beach community.

Staff also recommends that the City Arts Commission request that City Council waive Council Policy B-11, *The City Employees' Memorial At Bob Henry Park* (Attachment C). This Council Policy identifies Bob Henry Park as the appropriate venue for employee memorials. The rationale behind this request to waive this Council Policy is that the proposed sculpture would be more appropriately sited at a coastal location. As public art that includes interactive elements dealing with ocean safety, the proposed sculpture should be situated in an area accessible to beachgoers. Moreover, the work mandates a site that is responsive and appropriate to its subject matter. Finally, Mr. Carlson's profession, love of the ocean, and deserved reputation as a gifted waterman necessitates a coastal site.

The statue concept conforms to Council Policy I-9, *Art in Public Places* (Attachment D); however, staff requests that the placement of the statue be determined after a joint review of sites by the Arts Commission, Parks, Beaches, and Recreation Commission, Public Works, and the Lifeguard Division. Two potential sites have already been identified. The first is Newport Pier, which is adjacent to Newport Beach Lifeguard Headquarters recently named in honor of Ben Carlson. This location would offer maximum exposure to public viewing and access to the statue's interactive elements. The second site is Balboa Pier, which is located near Junior Lifeguard Headquarters. This site provides a more contemplative setting.

Lastly, staff recommends that the Arts Commission requests regular reports from the Ben Carlson Foundation, in order to chart progress and address potential issues as they occur.

NOTICING:

This agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the City Arts Commission considers the item).

Attachments: Attachment A - Statue
City Council Policy I -11 – Donation of Art to City of Newport Beach
City Council Policy B – 11 – The City Employee's Memorial at Bob Henry Park
City Council Policy I – 9 – Art in Public Places