

**Newport Beach City Arts Commission Special Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, March 2, 2016  
Special Meeting – 6:00 PM  
Friends Meeting Room, Central Library  
1000 Avocado Ave.  
Newport Beach, CA 92660**

**I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER – 6:00 PM**

**II. ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present:       Arlene Greer, Chair  
  Lynn Selich, Vice Chair  
  Caroline Logan, Secretary  
  Rita Goldberg  
  Michael Kerr  
  Robert Smith

Commissioner Absent: Judy Chang - absent

Staff Present:                    Tim Hetherton, Library Services Director

**III. NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC**

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Michael Magrutsche questioned the City's commitment to arts, and whether the City government wants to include arts and culture. He supports continued funding of the Sculpture Exhibition in Civic Center Park.

Jim Mosher thought that the proposal for Phase III was done well. He requested that public comments be allowed after the discussion of the Proposal for Sculpture Exhibition in Civic Center Park – Phase III.

**V. CURRENT BUSINESS**

Items for Review and Possible Action

- 1. Proposal for Sculpture Exhibition in Civic Center Park – Phase III – Staff requests that the City Arts Commission review a proposal for a third phase of the Sculpture Exhibition in Civic Center Park for recommendation to City Council for approval.**

Chair Greer provided a brief background to the proposal to stage Sculpture Exhibition in Civic Center Park (Phase III). She stated that the original proposal, approved by the Arts Commission in January 2016, presented a plan in which Phase III would be funded at an estimated cost of \$108,750.00, expensed from 3 sources: a loan from the funds transferred to the City from the dissolution of the Balboa Performing Arts Theatre Foundation; funding from the Newport Beach Arts Foundation; and funds transferred from *Visit Newport Beach* for the purpose of supporting arts programming and cultural tourism in the City. She reported that before the proposal went to City Council, Library Services Director advised her that the item had been removed from the February 23 agenda. Director Hetherton told her that the proposal would

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have to be revamped to include a commitment by the City Arts Commission to fund 50% of the project with private money. Staff subsequently submitted a new proposal in which the Arts Commission would borrow \$45,000 from the funds transferred to the City from the dissolution of the Balboa Performing Arts Theatre Foundation and repay them by March 2017. Along with a \$10,000 gift from the Newport Beach Arts Foundation, these funds would be matched by funds transferred from *Visit Newport Beach* for the purpose of supporting arts programming and cultural tourism in the City. The City Arts Commission would also be requested to raise \$45,000 for Phase IV of the Sculpture Exhibition. The plan would also include opportunities for increased public engagement.

Chair Greer then opened the item for discussion.

Commissioner Kerr commented that he respected the direction from Council to fund art in the City partially through private money. However, he asserted that it would be difficult to repay the funds without an established fund raising effort. Commissioner Kerr asserted that the Arts Commission should develop a plan to develop private money and then pursue further phases of the Sculpture Exhibition. He questioned going into debt to fund the project.

Commissioner Goldberg concurred with Commissioner Kerr. She too thought that it would be difficult to repay the loan in addition to developing \$45,000 in private funds by March 2017 to fund phase IV. She suggested that the Arts Commission *Reach* out to the currently featured artists in the Sculpture Exhibition and extending their exhibition time while the commission comes up with a plan.

Commissioner Logan supported Commissioner Kerr's idea to develop private funding sources and return with a revised plan.

Vice Chair Selich expressed her support for the proposal. She said that the Commission should be focusing on developing a five year plan. She asserted that the Arts Commission knew that this direction was coming from Council and a plan should have been prepared. She encouraged the Commission to focus on raising money. She commented that the waiver of Council Policy A-5 was intended to allow the Arts Commission to direct private money towards the Foundation and not to supplant the Foundation. Commissioner Selich suggested that the Arts Commission take the funds, assist the Foundation, and accept the Council's offer. She urged the Commission to make a compelling argument for arts in Newport Beach and create a plan to drive demand.

Commissioner Smith stated that he did not support the loan. He said it was difficult to raise funds for art because potential donors want to know who has skin in the game. He commented that he cannot recall any formal public statement from the City Council about how funds were to be used for the arts. He said that other City Boards and Commissions were not required to raise funds. He asked staff about the availability of the Visit Newport Beach Funds, and requested that Council provide formal direction on the use of funds such as the Visit Newport Beach money or the Balboa Theatre Arts Foundation funds.

Director Hetherington responded that when staff presented the Master Plan for Arts and Culture to City Council in April 2015, Gary Sherwin of Visit Newport Beach suggested that these funds could be used for art. However, Council did not discuss the use of these funds by the Arts Commission.

Chair Greer expressed that the Arts Commission should be allowed to use existing City resources such as the Visit Newport Beach funds until a private funding matrix is established. She asked staff to look into

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the possible availability of the Visit Newport Beach funds to finance Phase III. She directed staff and the ad hoc committee to meet with city staff and clarify a few points.

Chair Greer opened the discussion to public comment.

Michael Magrutsche commented that arts were not valued and suggested that if arts were cut, why not cut funds for the Library?

Lila Crespino of the Newport Beach Arts Foundation expressed that she has worked hard as a supporter of the arts in Newport Beach, and the requirement for increased private funding has left a bitter taste in her mouth. She commented that Council's request for the commission isn't very realistic, and that fundraising requires an enormous amount of time and effort.

Carmen Smith of the Newport Beach Arts Foundation stated that it was difficult to raise funds for art and that the Foundation has had difficulty raising the \$35,000 it has now. She stated that they were given \$175,000 from the dissolution of the Balboa Performing Arts Theatre Foundation, but City staff asked them to turn the check over to the City. She said two women from the Balboa Performing Arts Theatre Foundation were angry that the City took this money and that if the money stayed with the Foundation, it would have been easier for the Arts Commission to access.

Vice Chair Selich responded that the funds went to the Foundation because the dissolution of the Balboa Theatre Foundation stipulated that the funds go to a 501(c) 3. Director Hetherton clarified that the funds were placed in a City account for the Arts Commission, and could be expended by budget amendment for arts programming with a preference for the Balboa peninsula.

Commissioner Goldberg questioned the proposal's request for \$19,000 for de-installation of Phase 1. Commissioner Smith stated that he thought that this was covered in the budget for Phase 1. Director Hetherton said he did not think it was included in the Phase 1 contract, and that he would investigate and get back to the Commission.

Carmen Smith asked about the availability of the Lenahan Fund. Commissioner Goldberg asked for a thorough accounting of all available funds for the Cultural Arts Division.

Chair Greer appointed herself to the Cultural Arts Collaborations Ad Hoc Subcommittee in place of Commissioner Chang, in order to work with Commissioners Kerr and Vice Chair Selich to develop a private funding matrix.

Commissioner Goldberg suggested that a Council Study Session might be appropriate for guidance on arts funding.

A motion made by Commissioner Kerr, and seconded by Commissioner Goldberg, to approve the proposal as presented failed (1-5-0-1).

AYES: Selich  
NOES: Goldberg, Kerr, Logan, Smith, Greer  
ABSTENTIONS: None  
ABSENT: Chang

**VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Jim Mosher expressed concerns that the City Council approved a waiver to allow the City Arts Commission to act as a fundraising body. He felt this was not handled well as it was a Consent Calendar item and there was no public discussion. He also commented that he cannot recall any direction to the Arts Commission from Council in a public meeting that discussed private funding.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT – 8:00 PM**

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_