

Newport Beach City Arts Commission Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 14, 2021
Regular Meeting – 4:00 PM
Civic Center Council Chambers
100 Civic Center Drive
Newport Beach, CA 92660

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER – 4:00 P.M.

II. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Marie Little, Chair
Arlene Greer, Vice Chair
Maureen Flanagan, Secretary
Miriam Baker, Commissioner
Wayan Kaufman, Commissioner
Ritch LeGrand, Commissioner
Leonard Simon, Commissioner

Commissioners Absent:

Staff Present: Tim Hetherton, Library Services Director
Francine Jacome, Administrative Support Specialist

III. NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

V. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Approval of Minutes of the October 8, 2020 and November 12, 2020, City Arts Commission Meetings

1. Draft of 10/08/2020 Minutes

Motion made by Commissioner Baker, seconded by Vice Chair Greer, and carried (7-0-0-0) to approve the October 8, 2020 meeting minutes as written.

AYES: Little, Greer, Flanagan, Baker, Kaufman, LeGrand, Simon

NOES: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: None

2. Draft of 11/12/2020 Minutes

Motion made by Vice Chair Greer, seconded by Commissioner Baker, and carried (7-0-0-0) to approve the November 12, 2020 meeting minutes as written.

AYES: Little, Greer, Flanagan, Baker, Kaufman, LeGrand, Simon

NOES: None
ABSTENTIONS: None
ABSENT: None

B. Consent Calendar Items

3. Financial Report – Review of financial information

Library Services Director Hetheron stated that there was no news and little spending during COVID-19 for the fiscal year (FY) 2020-2021.

4. Cultural Arts Activities – Monthly review of cultural arts activities from the Library Administrative Office for upcoming Library and City arts events and services

Library Services Director Hetheron reported a new exhibition in the Central Library Gallery of acrylics on canvas by William Leung. It is a family theme and he recommended Commissioners and public view it.

Director Hetheron stated that they have received many high-quality submissions for the photo contest. The deadline for submissions is January 31 and the Commission will review the submissions in February. Administrative Support Specialist Jacome clarified there have been 197 submissions to date.

Motion made by Vice Chair Greer, seconded by Secretary Flanagan, and carried (7-0-0) to approve the Consent Calendar.

AYES: Little, Greer, Flanagan, Baker, Kaufman, LeGrand, Simon
NOES: None
ABSTENTIONS: None
ABSENT: None

VI. CURRENT BUSINESS

A. Items for Review and Possible Action

5. Sculpture Exhibition in Civic Center Park, Phase VI – Curatorial Panel Assessment of Submitted Works - *The curatorial panel will recommend ten of the submitted works for inclusion in the Sculpture Exhibition, as well as three alternates. The City Arts Commission will review the panel's assessment of the works and make a final recommendation which will be presented to City Council for approval at their February 9, 2021 regular meeting.*

Library Services Director Hetheron explained submitted work was to be reviewed for 1) artistic merit, 2) durability, 3) practicality, and 4) site appropriateness. The public had input through a survey, which is not binding. There will be a separate Ad Hoc Committee to tour the sculpture site for appropriateness and location of the pieces.

Director Hetherton introduced Richard Stein, CEO of Arts Orange County, who thanked the Commission for its partnership and stated that the public has embraced the artwork. Mr. Stein introduced Nicholas Thirkettle, the Program Coordinator at Arts Orange County, and two members of the curatorial panel: Jennifer Frias, Director/Curator, Begovich Gallery, Cal State Fullerton, and Maria Mingalone, Executive Director of Oceanside Museum of Art, which is owned by the City of Oceanside. Mr. Stein said that Joe Lewis, Professor of Art at UC Irvine, was also on the team and would join the call later. Mr. Lewis works through the installation phase with the contractors and communicates with the artists through installation and deinstallation as well as inspects the works periodically for damage.

Mr. Stein presented a map of Phase IV and V sculptures. The ten Phase IV sculptures will be removed in June and replaced with the approved Phase VI sculptures. Phase V sculptures will remain in place for another year. He noted there are three other sites on location for sculptures that are available for Phase VI sculptures aside from the sites vacated by the Phase IV sculptures.

Mr. Stein briefly mentioned the selection criteria and the results of the public poll. Last year they determined there was ballot box stuffing and they took precautions against that this year so there were fewer votes. 453 people participated in the poll and voted for up to three works for a total of about 1,100 votes. He reminded the Commission that this was an advisory poll and is not binding.

Mr. Stein presented an overview of the 59 sculptures submitted for Phase VI consideration. The information consisted of the dimensions, weight, medium, honorariums requested, if the piece was for sale and the purchase price, the jury ranking, and the public poll ranking. According to the ranking sheets there were 13 works that scored 5 and above, which fits as they like to have 10 selections and three alternates. Mr. Stein said the budget for the selected works is \$50,000, with the honorarium amount of \$6,000. That means if selected these works would put the program about \$5,000 over budget. The Commission has a State grant which would cover the overage should one occur.

Mr. Stein led the Commission through the slides of the top 13 sculptures noting their size, medium, ranking, and other notable information about the artists including where they have exhibited. *Birdman* artist, Steven L. Rieman, has offered to donate *Chairman of the Board* from Phase IV to Newport Beach. Director Hetherton said they are looking for an appropriate site to recommend to the Commission by its March meeting. The Ad Hoc Committee is focusing on park sites on the Balboa Peninsula.

Mr. Stein invited Commissioners to speak on any work outside the top 13 they wanted considered. The top 10 includes three artists already on display: Steven L. Rieman's *Birdman* with his *Chairman of the Board* leaving in June or being accepted into the Newport Beach collection, Joe Forest Sackett's *Dude Ascending* is on display for another year and he has submitted *Eve*, and Ron Whitacre's *Marble Shooter* is on display for another year and he has submitted *Finish Line*. Chair Little said that it most likely that *Chairman of the Board* would be moved to another park as a permanent piece since the objective at Civic Center Park is for a rotating sculpture exhibit.

Vice Chair Greer voiced approval of the top 10, especially *Talking Heads*, the Sackett piece, *The Migration of My Dreams*, and *Windows*.

Commissioner Baker commented that she did not find *Suncrest* particularly interesting and advocated for *Anna*. Mr. Stein stated *Anna* was 42nd in the public ranking and 36th by the judges.

Commissioner LeGrand was concerned about the height of *Windows* but was told that other sculptures on display were of similar height and it would be a matter of siting the sculpture. He was also concerned about having four sculptures featuring animals and voiced support for the marble sculpture. Similarly, he was concerned about multiple pieces by one artist in the collection as *Dude Arising* and *Eve* share characteristics.

Commissioner Simon agreed with Commissioner LeGrand on the animals, particularly the seal which would lend itself to being climbed by children. He suggested that it be eliminated and advocated for the marble piece.

Commissioner Flanagan agreed that *Eve* looked too like *Dude Ascending* and suggested its removal. She agreed with Commissioner Baker on *Anna*. *Finish Line* is unique enough to be included, despite the artist having another sculpture in the exhibit.

Commissioner LeGrand advocated for the kinetic sculpture *Celestial Carousel*.

Chair Little agreed that *Eve* was too like *Dude Ascending* and that too many animals were selected. She suggested removing *Scorpion* and requested other Commissioners opinions on the animals. She was impressed by *Suncrest*.

Commissioner Simon loved *Celestial Carousel* and suggested sacrificing *Scorpion* for it.

Maria Mingalone thought *Tranquil Lounger* could replace *Eve* as it is interactive and well ranked. *Celestial Carousel* could be switched for *Scorpion* or the seal. Mr. Stein noted *Tranquil Lounger* is interactive and solar powered, with lights and smartphone charging and was 12th in the public ranking. Ms. Mingalone also liked the piece with sage flowers and thought it would integrate into a garden. *Leaning Woman* was poetic and soft for a public sculpture but questioned the durability. Mr. Stein thought it would not pass with the City Council due to its reluctance to include nudes.

Jennifer Frias agreed that there were too many animals in the top ten but was in favor of *Scorpion*. She suggested eliminating the seal piece and *Birdman* and advocated for *Tranquil Lounger*, *Suncrest*, and *Celestial Carousel*. Ms. Mingalone agreed that of the animal sculpture the seal should be removed.

Commissioner Baker liked *Anna*, noted that it was unique and suggested it replace the seal.

Commissioner Kaufman liked the top ten and the alternates and agreed about the seal but questioned how they would advise the public of which pieces are interactive. Mr. Stein explained that they have put a focus on safety and that all the works were durable enough to withstand children climbing, if not adults. Director Hetherton stated that there had been no complaints of injuries in the first five phases. Mr. Stein said that there had been some vandalism, but that it was not a significant problem.

Commissioner Simon was concerned about sharp edges on *The Migration of My Dreams*. Mr. Thurkettle said the piece was treated with weather sealant, had been displayed outdoors and so probably has passed the safety check. The piece could be sited in a way where it was less accessible.

Vice Chair Greer raised concerns about sharp edges on *Eve*. The Commission felt it would be like *Dude Ascending*. Mr. Stein reiterated that *Eve* and *Dude Ascending* were by the same artist. He reminded the Commission that artists can resubmit works for future phases.

Commissioners stated their preferences for inclusion in the top ten and Mr. Stein went back through the slides for a second review and listed them in the order of preference. A concern was raised over the weight of *Suncrest*, but it could be installed to avoid the bridge.

Mr. Thurkettle advised that the sage sculpture had up to 15 pieces available for installation. The artist would have to clarify if additional pieces would change the honorarium.

Mr. Stein summarized the consensus formed around the pieces. Straw polling was conducted; *Eve* and *Seal of the Day* were rejected and *Scorpion*, *Suncrest* and *Celestial Carousel* were included.

Final pieces selected for presentation to City Council:

- *(x)ofmanychildren* by Roberto Visani
- *Birdman* by Steven L. Rieman
- *Celestial Carousel* by Adrian Susnea Litman
- *Finish Line* by Ron Whitacre
- *Scorpion* by Colin Selig
- *Suncrest* by Eino Romppanen
- *Talking Heads* by Oleg Lobykin
- *The Migration of My Dreams* by Marisabel Bazan
- *Windows* by Chris O'Rourke
- *Woodpeckers* by Michael McLaughlin

Mr. Stein summarized consensus around *Tranquil Lounger*, *Anna*, *Leaf Spiral* as alternates and conducted another series of straw polls.

Alternates (in order of preference):

- *Tranquil Lounger* by C.J. Rench
- *Anna* by Ilya Idelchik
- *Leaf Spiral* by Ken McCall

Mr. Stein indicated that when they need to substitute an alternate the selection is usually determined by which piece fits a specific location. He led the Commission through a final viewing of its selections.

Newport Beach resident Jim Mosher suggested the score sheets be posted for the public. He was specifically interested in the public top ten as the exhibit should be both artistic

and popular. He requested that the public's top five be seriously considered and recommended that in the future the public be asked for both its likes and dislikes.

Motion made by Vice Chair Greer, seconded by Secretary Flanagan, and carried (7-0-0) to approve the selections and alternates.

AYES: Little, Greer, Flanagan, Baker, Kaufman, LeGrand, Simon
NOES: None
ABSTENTIONS: None
ABSENT: None

Commissioner LeGrand and Chair Little thanked everyone for their work on Phase VI.

B. Monthly Reports

**6. Community Arts Survey Ad Hoc Subcommittee - Commissioners
Arlene Greer, Marie Little, Leonard Simon**

None.

**VII. CITY ARTS COMMISSION ANNOUNCEMENTS OR MATTERS WHICH MEMBERS
WOULD LIKE PLACED ON A FUTURE AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION OR
REPORT (NON-DISCUSSION ITEM)**

- Chair Little recommended the following for the next agenda:
 - Donation of "Grandma's Spirit" painting
 - Donation of "Chairman of the Board" sculpture
 - Results of Arts Survey

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None.

IX. ADJOURNMENT – 6:24 P.M.

Chair Little adjourned the meeting at 6:24 P.M.

Approved by: Marie Little