

**Newport Beach City Arts Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, March 11, 2021**  
**Regular Meeting – 5:00 PM**  
**Civic Center Council Chambers (Via Zoom)**  
**100 Civic Center Drive**  
**Newport Beach, CA 92660**

**I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER – 5:00 P.M.**

**II. ROLL CALL**

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

Commissioners Absent: Miriam Baker, Commissioner  
Leonard Simon, Commissioner

Staff Present: Tim Hetheron, Library Services Director  
Camille Escareal-Garcia, Cultural Arts Assistant  
Francine Jacome, Administrative Assistant

**III. NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC**

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**V. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**A. Approval of Minutes of the February 11, 2021, City Arts Commission Meeting**

**1. Draft of 2/11/2021 Minutes**

Motion made by Chair Little, seconded by Secretary Flanagan, and carried (5-0-0-2) to approve the February 11, 2021, meeting minutes as written.

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

**B. Consent Calendar Items**

**2. Financial Report – Review of financial information**

Library Services Director Tim Hetheron reported that there had been little spending outside of expenditures in January for maintenance of the Sculpture Exhibition. More expenditures are expected in April when the checks for the Cultural Arts Grants go out and staff begins planning future events. Overall, they are well funded and conserving money during the pandemic.

**3. 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 Hetherington announced that City Council approved Phase VI of the Sculpture Exhibition in Civic Park in February. Staff has disseminated the contracts. Sculptor Chris O'Rourke withdrew *Windows* from the exhibition over insurance concerns and it has been replaced with first alternate *Leaf Spiral*.

Library Services Director Hetherington stated that Cultural Arts Assistant Camille Escareal-Garcia is conducting the art inventory and is working on a local history project documenting landmarks in Newport Beach. The Commission will review this work upon completion.

Motion made by Chair Little, seconded by Commissioner LeGrand, and carried (5-0-0-2) to approve the Consent Calendar.

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

**VI. CURRENT BUSINESS**

**A. Items for Review and Possible Action**

**4. Community Arts Survey Results** - *The Community Arts Survey Ad Hoc Subcommittee will present the results of the recent public arts survey.*

Library Services Director Hetherington said that in 2020 the Commission approved a survey that was disseminated beginning in mid-September and closed November 9, 2020. Participation and response were both rather positive and he asked Chair Little to present the findings.

Chair Little read the City's description of the City Arts Commission (CAC) out loud. She explained how she and Vice Chair Greer approached Library Services Director Hetherington about a Community Arts Survey. The objective of the survey was that answers obtained would be used as a tool for improving the Arts Commission's choices in the planning of future Arts programming and events. Chair Little formed the Community Arts Survey Ad Hoc Subcommittee (the Subcommittee) and appointed Vice Chair Greer, Commissioner Simon, and herself. The Subcommittee reviewed and revised the draft survey presented by staff. Afterwards, the Commission released a call to the public via the press, City website, and social media. The survey was for residents and nonresidents alike.

Chair Little reported that the Subcommittee highlighted results from the survey and shared its takeaways from participant responses. The Subcommittee also recommended improvements to arts and cultural programming and events based on the survey. Some of the Subcommittee's recommendations are up for immediate consideration while others are for future consideration. Out of a total of 619 participants, 196 participants left personal comments that were read by the Subcommittee, and many more comments were addressed in its report and recommendations to the CAC.

Out of the total of 619 participants, 57.83% were Newport Beach residents, 46.5% were seniors, and 30% were adults with children. The survey results indicated that seniors and adults with children have more interest in the arts than other groups within the local population.

Participants were asked how they learned about City Arts programs. The top six means used by survey participants are the Newport Beach Library email, Newport Beach City Website, word of mouth, outdoor advertising, and print newspaper. The survey found that a great number of participants are active with the City Library. 65.3% of participants learned about arts programs through the Library email and 76% would like to see more public art at the libraries. This group is mostly made up of students and seniors who utilize the library for academic, professional, or leisure purposes. Many adults also take their children to the library and attend cultural arts events offered at the Library. The Subcommittee believed these results give the Arts Commission justification to shift focus towards the interests of seniors and families with children or teenagers.

The survey participants would like to see more sculpture (70.5%), themed gardens (70.1%), and murals (58.3%). The top four locations participants would like to see more art at are libraries (76%), community centers (66.4%), the Civic Center (63.6%), and beaches (54.2%).

The ongoing gain in popularity of the sculpture exhibition at Civic Center Park has made it one of the most highly rated outdoor experiences in Newport Beach. Chair Little stated that the sculpture exhibition is the only exhibition of its type in Orange County. The State of California recognized it as an asset for the public, and in 2019 awarded Newport Beach a \$500,000 grant to fully fund Phases V and VI. From Phase I to the most present phase, the City Arts Commission has received strong support from the City Council, which is expected to continue. Survey results showed that 81% of participants have visited the sculpture exhibition. The Subcommittee recommended the CAC continue raising public awareness of the sculpture exhibition at Civic Center Park, increase the numbers of visitors by finding ways to utilize the venue for more events, and improve upon the works selected for upcoming phases.

The Subcommittee also wants to increase public interest and attendance at its annual Newport Beach Art Exhibition. 46% of the survey participants have attended the event and attendance has grown to over 2,000 people. The exhibition has been held annually for 55 years, with more than 160 artists participating and displaying more than 300 original works for sale to the public on the Civic Center campus. The event also features live music and food for purchase. The Subcommittee recommends the Newport Beach Art Exhibition Ad Hoc Subcommittee present fresh ideas to the City Arts Commission about raising artist and public interest to further expand the exhibition and increase attendance.

Chair Little said the Subcommittee feels the rotating gallery exhibition at the Central Library has enough visibility and does not recommend changes to the program.

The survey also found a moderate interest in performing arts. 51.5% of respondents have attended the Summer Concerts on the Green at the Civic Center. 33.1% attended at least once, and 18.4% attended “many times.” Survey participants were most interested in musical theatre performances (91%), classical music concerts (89%), jazz concerts (88%), rock/pop concerts (85%), concert pianists (82%), and ballet performances (80%). This suggests that survey participants want a wider range of programming than the CAC has provided. The Survey Ad Hoc Committee wanted to point out that in 2016 and 2018 the CAC hosted two Pacific Symphony Concerts where an estimated number of over 5,000 people attended. In 2019, the Queen Nation Tribute Concert drew the highest attendance ever recorded for a Summer Concert on the Green performance with an estimated crowd of over 7,000.

The survey found a moderate interest in all types of programs offered by the CAC. The programs in order of popularity are: Summer Concerts on the Green (66%), the Sculpture Exhibition at Civic Center Park (62%), the Newport Beach Art Exhibition (52%), the Central Library Gallery Art Exhibition (49%), performing arts on the Balboa Peninsula (41%), and art lectures and receptions (34%). Chair Little noted that the program on Balboa Peninsula was most popular with peninsula residents largely because of density and parking concerns.

The Subcommittee recommended a future presentation to the City Council for consideration of a private/public partnership initiative for an art museum. The survey found a high level of support for an art museum in Newport Beach, with 70.7% of respondents in favor and only 24.2% against. The Subcommittee supports a small art museum and feels there are ways to ensure success, however, while acknowledging the public’s desire for a museum, believes the CAC should take the project to the City Council in the future as a goal.

In addition to allowing larger exhibitions, the Subcommittee believed a museum could serve as a venue for indoor art events and programs, as well as outdoor events where flat terrain is preferred. The CAC could host small venue programs for members of the community such as educational lectures and workshops. Other suggestions for revenue included designated spaces for rent from artists without galleries or representation to display their work. The museum could also be rented by private and public schools for student art exhibitions. Paid annual memberships could be available alongside daily visitor fees. The Subcommittee believed these were a few suggestions for revenue streams to support the museum.

The Subcommittee found there was a higher level of support for Newport Beach to have its own Cultural Arts Center. The survey question was not in reference to the Central Library’s planned lecture hall, which is a public/private partnership. A Cultural Arts Center is generally much larger and is appropriate for use for all performing arts. The Subcommittee thought a Cultural Arts Center could be used for CAC programming and events and could also be made available for use by local public and private entities. The Subcommittee recommended the CAC open a discussion regarding a cultural center with the Newport Beach Arts Foundation and City Council regarding an initiative for public/private partnership in the near future. As with the museum, fees would be set for outside use of the cultural center to defray the facility’s upkeep and an opportunity for passive revenue for the City.

Chair Little stressed that the Subcommittee believed that any cultural center or museum would have to be a public/private partnership. A show of public commitment would maximize the opportunity and strengthen the possibility for development.

The CAC is responsible for the administration and preservation of historical aspects and landmarks in the City. The top historical sites survey participants visited in Newport Beach were Sherman Gardens and Library (74.1%), the Balboa Pavilion (61.6%), and the Balboa Island Museum and Historical Society (39.8%). Most survey participants placed high importance on the preservation of archives, historical sites, and buildings. 86.3% of survey participants wanted cultural resources available at libraries and museums, 84.3% were interested in commercial buildings of historical significance, 62.6% were interested in private vintage beach cottages, and 59.7% were interested in private residences of architectural significance.

Chair Little said that although the CAC views historical aspects of Newport Beach to be of great importance, the Subcommittee believed the CAC's involvement is sufficient at this time. The CAC can better use its time planning and providing arts programming and events.

The Subcommittee recommended goals and objectives for the CAC to better align with the Arts Survey results. The first goal is to improve overall community engagement in arts and culture. Goal two is to elevate programming focus towards seniors and families with children and teenagers. Goal three is to promote more community investment and less reliance on public funding for the City's art and culture.

The Subcommittee's first objective is to select future Summer Concerts on the Green and other performing arts programs based on the interest of the community. The second objective is to introduce more arts programs and events tailored to the interest of the seniors, children, and teenagers. The third objective is to launch public/private partnership opportunities utilizing the Newport Beach Arts Foundation to initiate community collaboration of public/private funding for arts and culture.

Chair Little hoped the report was helpful to the CAC, the Cultural Arts staff, and members of the public. She acknowledged that the survey was not all inclusive and said it should be viewed as a starting point. The CAC intends to conduct additional surveys in the future. She thanked survey participants and said the Subcommittee learned that the majority valued art and its benefits. The arts bind people together and strengthens a community's character. Chair Little invited Vice Chair Greer to share her thoughts as a Subcommittee member.

Vice Chair Greer said that in focusing on the next survey she hopes to have the community focus on the public/private partnership and to invest in arts programming. Some people might choose for their businesses to support projects or events or people may wish to volunteer at events. Vice Chair Greer indicated the survey was a great steppingstone that yielded an incredible amount of information. In 2011, the CAC had two or three concerts per year and a small annual art show, so growth since then was considerable. She thanked everyone who contributed to the phenomenal growth of the programming.

In response to Secretary Flanagan's question, Vice Chair Greer indicated this was the first survey done by the CAC. The City previously engaged a Master Plan for arts and culture that many in the community took part in which is still online for review. Library Services

Director Hetherton stated he could send the document to any Commissioner who would like to review it.

Commissioner LeGrand thought the survey was tremendously valuable. He suggested a survey of the CAC regarding their thoughts on the ideas generated by the survey.

Chair Little explained how much time was spent on the survey and noted it was the Subcommittee's intention for the CAC to use the survey as a guide going forward. There would be future surveys and this one was just the beginning.

Vice Chair Greer added that the CAC always wondered about the response to the sculpture garden and the survey was wonderful. It documented that the sculpture garden is a wonderful program enjoyed by many at their own convenience. She thought City Council would be pleased with the response as well.

Secretary Flanagan thought that during the pandemic the sculpture garden was particularly wonderful and able to be enjoyed.

Chair Little agreed with Secretary Flanagan and said that negative comments about the sculpture exhibition were the minority. Overall, the sculpture exhibition was well known, well received, and enjoyed by the community and the general public.

Vice Chair Greer moved that the CAC proceed with publicity in Westways Magazine for the sculpture exhibition as a getaway activity, especially during the pandemic.

Library Services Director Hetherton stated staff could do that as part of the marketing for the sculpture exhibition and that the CAC did not need to vote on it. There is a marketing budget and grant funds available.

Newport Beach resident Jim Mosher voiced confusion over what action the CAC would take on the survey as the agenda simply called for a report.

Chair Little explained that there would be no vote on the report given. The Subcommittee's recommendations will be dealt with in ad hoc subcommittees and be formally presented to the CAC. So, the survey will be digested in a process over time.

Mr. Mosher stated he was still unclear if the CAC was asked to endorse the recommendations. He agreed that the survey has value. If the conclusions go to the City Council, they may question if it reached a broad cross section of the public or if it was self-selecting. He noted that more people attended the art exhibit than the Concerts on the Green, which seems to indicate a skewed response group. He thought a cultural arts center was a great idea, but he was not sure that the survey was clear that it was in addition to the library lecture hall. Mr. Mosher thought the City Council would not take the idea seriously unless the CAC suggested a site for the cultural arts center and a cost estimate. With respect to historical buildings, if the survey said "commercial" then that is what the question was, and it cannot be interpreted otherwise.

Chair Little clarified that a commercial building could be privately, or City owned.

Mr. Mosher stated that was not clear on the survey.

Chair Little suggested Mr. Mosher move on and make his additional comments.

Mr. Mosher suggested mapping the zip codes of survey participants. He also asked if the Subcommittee reached a conclusion on or found any themes in the many public comments submitted.

Chair Little stated that some of the recommendations made in the report directly addressed many of the public's questions and comments. It was not feasible to respond to individual questions and she stressed that this survey was a starting point.

**5. Recommendation of Sculpture Photo Contest Winners – *The Art in Public Spaces Ad Hoc Subcommittee will recommend the winners of the 2020-2021 Sculpture Photo Contest for City Arts Commission approval.***

Library Services Director Hetherington reported that the photo contest previously happened in 2018 and 2019. The contest is a way to get the public more involved with the sculpture exhibition. A large part of the CAC's mission is to expose residents to different cultural experiences, so this contest invites people to create art with their cameras. The contest was popular with over 330 submissions and the work was exceptional.

Chair Little said the Art in Public Spaces Ad Hoc Subcommittee (the Subcommittee) consisted of Vice Chair Greer, Commissioner Baker, and herself. The Subcommittee went through the 330 photo entries, which are all posted for public viewing on the Cultural Arts section of the City website. On behalf of the CAC she thanked everyone who participated in the contest. The Subcommittee found the works beautiful, creative, and inspiring and selecting the 12 finalists was difficult. The Subcommittee separated the 12 finalists into two categories; one being "Human Interplay with a Sculpture" and two being "Enhancement of a Sculpture Using Nature."

Chair Little invited Cultural Arts Assistant Camille Escareal-Garcia to give a slide presentation beginning with the first category. She instructed Commissioners to vote for their two favorite photos within each category.

Commissioners voted on the following categories:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Category: "Human Interplay with a Sculpture" – 1st and 2nd prizes
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Category: "Enhancement of a Sculpture Using Nature" – 3rd Prizes (4 in total)

The winners are as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> Category: "Human Interplay with a Sculpture"

- 1<sup>st</sup> prize: Photo 20-062 – 5 votes – "Catching Rainbows" – Sculpture: *Fractured Peace*
- 2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Photo 20-169 – 2 votes – "Circles" – Sculpture: *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*

2<sup>nd</sup> Category: "Enhancement of a Sculpture Using Nature"

- 3<sup>rd</sup> prize: Photo 20-078 – 4 votes – "Together" – Sculpture: *Wind Swept*
- 3<sup>rd</sup> prize: Photo 20-161 – 3 votes – "Hurricane" – Sculpture: *Hurricane*
- 3<sup>rd</sup> prize: Photo 20-262 – 3 votes – "Gentle Wind" – Sculpture: *Chairman of the Board*
- 3<sup>rd</sup> prize: Photo 20-286 – 2 votes – "A Step Forward" – Sculpture: *Contender*

Chair Little called for the public comment, but there was none.

Motion made by Chair Little, seconded by Vice-Chair Greer, and carried (5-0-0-2) to award the Sculpture Photo Contest Winners as listed above.

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

Chair Little congratulated the winners and thanked the entrants.

**6. Central Library Gallery Display of Ocean Quest Collection – Staff presents a proposal to display items from the Ocean Quest collection in the Central Library display cases.**

Library Services Director Hetherton reported Ocean Quest was vacating their property and moving some exhibits to a facility in Santa Ana. A lot of their collection will enter storage and so Colleen D’Aluisio, the Director of Operations, offered to loan some pieces to Newport Beach. Library Services Director Hetherton stated he thought the idea was good and requested the CAC approve it, as the Central Library could accommodate rotating the collection on display. He explained the collection was varied, interesting, and detailed and would provide another cultural experience to the public.

Secretary Flanagan stated that she saw no downside.

Library Services Director Hetherton agreed and added that local history is part of the CAC’s mission.

Chair Little said there were at least two comments in the Arts Survey regarding nautical history.

Chair Little called for the public comment, but there was none.

Motion made by Vice Chair Greer, seconded by Commissioner Flanagan, and carried (5-0-0-2) to approve the rotating display of the Ocean Quest Collection in the Central Library.

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

**B. Monthly Reports**

**7. Art in Public Spaces Ad Hoc Subcommittee - Commissioners Miriam Baker, Arlene Greer, Marie Little**

None.

**8. Newport Beach Art Exhibition Ad Hoc Subcommittee – Commissioners  
Maureen Flanagan, Arlene Greer, Marie Little**

Chair Little reported they continue to receive new entries weekly. The Subcommittee's first meeting will be March 17<sup>th</sup> and a report will be given at the April CAC meeting.

**9. Newport Beach Arts Foundation Liaison Ad Hoc Subcommittee –  
Commissioner Maureen Flanagan.**

Secretary Flanagan reported that Carol Lee resigned as the VP Membership Chair of the Foundation and has not been replaced. The focus of the meeting was on Greg Schultz of Creative Shoebox and the beautiful new website that will roll out at some point.

Vice Chair Greer added that, in listening to Mr. Schultz's presentation, she would ask the Foundation to focus more on the sculpture exhibition's recent phases rather than Phase 1 and 2. Chair Little stated she advised them that many of the photos were older and they should use more current photos. She believed the Foundation thought her suggestion was reasonable and they would follow it.

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

- Announcements:
  - Chair Little activated three ad hoc subcommittees: Newport Beach Art Exhibition Ad Hoc Subcommittee, Sculpture Exhibition Phase VI Ad Hoc Subcommittee, and Summer Concerts on the Green Ad Hoc Subcommittee.
  - Chair Little sunset the Community Arts Survey Ad Hoc Subcommittee.
- Future Agenda:
  - Chair Little recommended to staff two new events: A Children's Art Exhibition in midsummer and a Plein Air Painting Event centered around the sculpture exhibition at Civic Center Park in the fall. She will work on these ideas with Vice Chair Greer and bring them to the CAC for a vote.

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

Newport Beach resident Jim Mosher commented on Zoom Meetings and public attendance. He explained that he missed the last 30 minutes of the meeting due to a computer issue. He congratulated the CAC on the Ocean Quest vote, which he supported.

Chair Little stated the CAC was sorry that Mr. Mosher had a computer issue.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT – 6:35 P.M.**

Chair Little adjourned the meeting at 6:35 P.M.

Approved by: *Marie Little*