

## August 11, 2022, City Arts Commission Comments

The following comments on items on the Newport Beach City Arts Commission agenda are submitted by:  
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### ***Item V.A.1 Draft of 07/14/2022 Minutes***

**Page 2, paragraph 3:** “Commissioner Greer said that **from 2011 until 2015** the CAC had the same Chair, Robyn Grant, and she did an excellent job.”

**Comment:** This may be what was said, but it does not appear to be entirely correct.

[CAC agendas and minutes](#) are posted in the City’s records only back to 2010. From the Council records, Ms. Grant’s first appointment to the CAC started in July 2005. From the available CAC minutes, it is unclear when she first became Chair, but they show she was Chair in the latter part of 2009, re-selected in July 2010 and again in July 2011 (the year I started attending CAC meetings). With one year remaining on her second CAC term, Ms. Grant [left the CAC to join the Board of Library Trustees](#) starting in July 2012. Robert Smith was selected to succeed her as CAC Chair at that time. Ms. Greer, herself, was first selected CAC Chair in July 2015, taking over from Rita Goldberg, who had by then served as Chair for two years.

As to the substance of the matter that was being discussed on July 14, I would suggest the CAC consider adopting a policy to rotate its officers on strict seniority basis, such that each July the longest-standing appointee who has not previously served in a particular position be strongly encouraged to take that position during the coming year. That not only avoids the possibility individual members will feel slighted, but it ensures the organization will be exposed to a healthy variety of interests and styles and challenges everyone to accept increasing responsibility.

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

**First**, in reviewing the old CAC minutes referred to above, I was reminded, once again, that **museum tours** were once one of the CAC’s marquee activities. Despite their former popularity, organizing museum tours for our public seems to have fallen off the CAC’s radar.

**Second**, in a routine staff activities report presented to the Parks, Beaches and Recreation Commission on [page 21](#) of their August 2 agenda packet, there was mention of the (undoubtedly well-deserved) dedication of the Rae A. Cohen Theater in the City’s Newport Theatre Arts Center building on Cliff Drive (something that would normally, under City Council [Policy B-9](#), seem to have required a PB&R recommendation and Council approval).

The following is part of the written comment I provided to PB&R.

The key point that may be of interest to the CAC, is: since it much more an arts and cultural facility than a recreational one, shouldn’t the CAC be more involved in the programming at the NTAC in the **three** (*not two*) periods of the year in which the NTAC is supposed to be reserved for use by groups other than the Friends of the NTAC?

Note: the City Clerk has since updated the agreement posting to indicate it is still active.

**Comment to PB&R (August 2, 2022):**

The NTAC is a bit unusual, in that although it is a City-owned and largely City-maintained facility, it is managed and operated most of the year by the Friends of NTAC under an Agreement ([C-3409](#)) signed in 2001 and now continuing under automatic annual extensions.<sup>1</sup> The Agreement includes *three* two-week periods each year during which the Friends must make it available for use by others. A bit oddly, although it is a cultural/arts facility, under its own City Council [Policy B-6](#), the scheduling of those “Reserved Periods”<sup>2</sup> seems to be handled by the Recreation and Senior Services Department, rather than the Library Department or City Arts Commission (which arranges other events, such as the Concerts on the Green).

The NTAC is also required (under [Clause 8.2](#) of C-3409) to be made available for short-duration meetings and community events that would not interfere with the Friends productions. Yet, RSS does not list it as a potentially available [facility rental](#), even though the City Council has established a daily rental rate of \$450, under “Meeting Rooms,” in its [Schedule of Rents, Fines, and Fees](#).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The City Clerk currently shows C-3409 as having been “inactive” (expired) since 2021. She may have missed the annual renewal provision in [Clause 4.3](#).

<sup>2</sup> Also oddly, Policy B-6 refers to its availability for third-party “*stage plays or artistic events during no less than **two** (2) two-week periods each year (Reserved Periods)*,” [Clause 8.3.1](#) of Agreement (C-3409) calls for a minimum of **three** (and the **three** is reiterated in [Clause 1.6](#)).

<sup>3</sup> The Council Chamber is similarly listed on the SRFF, but not shown as a rental facility on the RSS page.