



Stephen Seymour, District 1
Mahdad Nassiri, District 1
Deepa Nair, District 2
VACANT, District 2
Belinda Hernandez Arriaga, Dist. 3
Josephine Deciron, District 3
Jeanne Heise, District 4
Farah Yasmeen Shaikh, District 4
Victoria Magbilang, District. 5
Reno Anoa'i, District 5

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REGULAR MEETING OF THE ARTS COMMISSION
Wednesday, January 17, 2024 – 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.
455 County Center, 4th Floor, Room 405, Redwood City CA 94063

MINUTES

- 1. Roll Call** Vice Chair, Commissioner Heise called the meeting to order at 3:05 with roll call.
In Attendance: Commissioners Heise, Magbilang, Nassiri, Shaikh, Deciron, and Anoa'i
Absent: Commissioners Hernandez Arriaga, Seymour, Nair, and Youth Commission Liasion Zhao
Staff: Connie Juarez-Diroll, Mara Grimes, and Jacki Rigoni
Guest: Debbie Schechter
- 2. Agenda Amendments**
None
- 3. Oral Communications**
None
- 4. Consideration of Minutes** of July 19, 2023, September 20, 2023, and November 15, 2023, regular meetings.
Commissioner Nassiri asked to correct the November 15, 2023, minutes to include him as in attendance.
Motion made by Commissioner Deciron to accept the minutes of the July 19, 2023, September 20, 2023, and November 15, 2023 (with the correction) regular meetings; seconded by Commissioner Anoa'i.
Roll Call Vote: approved unanimously.
- 5. Reports**
 - A. Staff Reports**
Connie Juarez-Diroll:
 - She introduced Debbie Schechter who is the consultant that will be helping the Arts Commission update their strategic plan and create a work plan for the next fiscal year. Ms. Schechter stated that she had a background in meeting facilitation, strategic planning, and conflict resolution. She noted that she is a resident of San Mateo County and has worked with other County boards and Commissions.
 - She updated the Commission on the hiring of the new Executive Director, Aimee Shapiro. She stated that Ms. Shapiro is a resident of the County and has extensive experience in the artworld, especially museums, arts programming, and arts education. She went on to say that she was excited to be working with the new director who as a dynamic leader will take the Arts Commission and Office of Arts and Culture in a new direction.

Public records that relate to any item on the open session agenda for a regular Arts Commission meeting are available for public inspection. Those records that are distributed less than 72 hours prior to the meeting are available for public inspection at the same time they are distributed to all members, or a majority of the members of the Commission. The Commission has designated the Board of Supervisors Office, located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063, for the purpose of making those public records available for inspection. The documents are also available to be sent electronically by e-mailing artscommission@smcgov.org. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), auxiliary aids and services for this meeting will be provided upon request when given three days' notice. For the safety of those sensitive to airborne chemicals, please refrain from wearing chemically based products.

Mara Grimes: The activities of the Office of Arts and Culture since the last meeting included:

- The annual Poetry Out Loud high-school student competition is in full swing. There are 15 students that will participate this year, the largest number ever. She noted that Capuchino High School in San Bruno has a teacher that is very excited about the program and is holding a school competition with 22 students of which 8 will be selected to participate in the County Competition. The juvenile probation teacher confirmed they will participate again this year. The competition will be held on Zoom on February 8, 2024.
- The Veterans and First Responders Memorial public art project will launch a RFQ for the project on January 23, 2024. The \$200,000 project is open to artists around the Bay Area and will be housed in the courtyard in front of the new County building. She asked that the Commissioners share the opportunity with artists in their districts and networks. The deadline to submit is February 23, 2024, and a committee will select up to 5 artists to submit proposals. She noted that this is the first of many public art projects that will create opportunities for Arts Commissioner to provide their input on panels and review committees. Ms. Rigoni stated that Supervisor Corzo is committed to supporting the Arts Commission especially in regard to the public art projects.
- She reported that she has been working on website updates and the calendar of arts and culture events. She has gotten very positive feedback on the calendar and asked the Commissioners to share with others and to also let her know about events in the districts.

6. Discussion Items

A. Review of Results of Recent Arts Commissioner Survey

Ms. Schechter reviewed the recent Arts Commission survey results. She noted that only 70% of the commissioners responded to the survey. All of the responses indicated that the major role of the Arts Commission was to advocate for and promote the arts in the County. She went on to state the Commissioners agreed that consistent leadership for both the Arts Commission and the Office of Arts and Culture was necessary. They also wanted to have a more active role and believed that by-laws were essential. The survey reveals that only a few Commissioners were familiar with the current strategic plan. Commissioner Heise added that the majority of the current Commissioners were not on the Commission when they were developed.

Commissioner Nassiri stated that the Commission needs to have an identity; we are sandwiched between San Francisco and Silicon Valley, and we need to demonstrate the value of the County. He went on to say that 30,000 people left the County and we need to address that.

Ms. Schechter noted that this was an interesting perspective and that we could discuss it more when we talk about the strategic plan.

B. Roles/Expectations of Arts Commissioners and Development of by-laws

Ms. Schechter stated that there was some confusion in regard to what the Arts Commissioners can and want to do. She asked Ms. Rigoni to help clarify and provide some direction to the Commissioners from Supervisor Corzo's perspective. She said that the number one role of the Arts Commissioners is to advise the Board of Supervisors. She suggested that we share reports/updates on a regular basis as well as recommendations. Board advisors is where the power lies; Supervisor Corzo, who was recently selected to be the Supervisor to work with the Arts Commission, wants more art and arts programming in the County. At the beginning of year, the Board President assigns Supervisors to each of the Commissions. In the past, this was Supervisor Groom and Slocum were assigned to the Arts Commission.

Commissioner Heise declared that this was the first time she in her many years on the Arts Commission that she had heard this explanation.

Ms. Rigoni reiterated that advisors to the Supervisors have a lot of power.

Commissioner Shaikh asked if there was a timeline for recommendations and Ms. Rigoni replied that there was not a timeline. Commissioners could share reports and studies, request proclamations and/or resolutions, and to inform the board of needs around the County. She suggested that the Commission create a workplan with two goals and then report at the end of the year and make recommendations. She encouraged the Commissioners to look at other Commissions and their reports which were online.

Ms. Schechter reminded us that this is a good time for the Commission to regroup and clarify roles and asked the Commissioners to share their thoughts.

Ms. Juarez-Diroll stated that there is a public art policy in place now which specifies that there is a role for Arts Commissioners and projects will no longer progress without Arts Commission involvement. The curator has made all of the decisions regarding art shows and, in the future, and in the new building, the Commissioners will be involved.

Commissioner Shaikh recommended that the Commissioners should be liaisons to arts organizations and artists supporting them with potential funding opportunities and information on venues, performances, galleries, etc. – share resources.

Commissioner Magbilang seconded Commissioner Shaikh's suggestions. It is clear that the Commissioners can play an important role in shaping the arts and culture scene in the County which has not been supported in the past. She noted that its important that we share resources and connect people.

Commissioner Anoa'i stated that he believed that advancing equity was essential. He agreed that the Commission should consider following Ms. Rigoni's advice and do some research to support the arts and culture community. He would like to see a directory of performing spaces or venues.

Commissioner Shaik declared that there's a wide spectrum of wealth in the County. She asked. "How do we best understand the wealth and best ways to leverage that wealth?" We are surround by tech and bio-tech companies.

Ms. Rigoni replied that we tie it all back to being advisors and recommend policies such as requiring all new buildings over a certain amount of money to include public art in their building design.

Admin-Manager suggested that the Commission could also create a directory of artists and performers.

Commissioner Deciron supported the idea of creating a wok plan that is collaborative and less siloed.

Commissioner Nassiri reiterated that we should consider thinking of the Commission as a business. We need to consider how topics like AI will affect the County. It is also important to make the arts in the county an asset and use our muscle to encourage cities within the County to include more arts.

Commissioner Anoa'i reminded the group that artists need to be able to not only survive but to thrive in the County and job creation is essential.

Ms. Schechter noted that some of the comments were not only roles but goals that can be captured in the work plan as they evolve more. She asked the Commissioners to consider how the Office of Arts and Culture and the Arts Commission could support each other's work.

C. How the Office of Arts and Culture and Arts Commission support each other

The Admin-Manager reminded the Commissioners that they wanted to develop by-laws and that Commissioner Zhao had created a first-draft. She asked if maybe the Commissioners wanted to form a Committee to work on the next iteration that could be presented to the Commissioners at the retreat or next meeting. Commissioners Heise and Magbilang volunteered to work with Commissioner Zhao. Ms. Rigoni offered to review the next draft.

The Admin-Manager also stated that more collaborations would be useful, and an example of which is the online calendar of events. This is a great way to share with others what is happening in the County and to have their events promoted too.

Ms. Juarez-Diroll stated that the Arts Commission is one of the few Commissions that has an office that supports them. She added that we plan to put more effort into using social media to feature our joint work. Commissioner Deciron asked is the Brown Act would have an effect on the social media and Ms. Juarez-Diroll said it would not.

Ms. Schechter expressed that these were two good examples of support and wondered if there were others. Commissioner Shaikh revisited the issue of meeting times and frequency to which the Admin-Manager disclosed that the survey taken by the Commissioners regarding meeting times and frequency showed that the days, times, and frequency as stated for the current meetings worked best for the majority of the Commission. Commissioner Anoa'i noted that he could not previously meet in person during the 3:00-5:00 pm time due to his job but has now made it work for him. He went on to say that even though it works for him now, he wonders if this might be a barrier to others in the future.

Ms. Rigoni stated that equity was essential and asked if we should go with what the majority wants or find another way to accommodate those that cannot attend then such as virtually.

Ms. Juarez-Diroll cautioned that the Commission needs to meet in person due to the Brown Act and the lifting of the government executive order. However, she noted that the County has been advocating for a hybrid model and is working on legislation to secure this option.

Commissioner Heise mentioned that the by-laws should codify the meeting times.

Ms. Rigoni stated that Commissioner Cassinetto has resigned, and she has contacted other potential Art Commissioners.

D. Retreat Planning

Ms. Schechter advised that during the retreat the Commissioner will discuss roles, goals, and a work plan. She noted that they should come prepared not only to talk but to break out into small groups and work on issues. Commissioner Nassiri suggested that to maximize the time the Commissioners might have pre-assignments like reading the strategic plan. He asked if the County had a 2024 vision.

Ms. Juarez-Diroll agreed and said we were planning some pre-reads and that the current strategic plan was old now with priorities set from the past, pre-Covid.

Ms. Rigoni suggested that the Commissioners look at the Measure K report (online) as it lists the County's priorities for the year.

Commissioner Heise asked if we had a date picked out and how many hours were typically involved for a successful retreat.

Ms. Schechter stated that retreats could be anywhere from 3 hours to a full day, depending on the goals. She said she too liked the idea of pre-work. She suggested that maybe two meetings a month apart with work that can be done in-between the meetings. Based on the discussion she noted that the key priorities for the retreat would include getting to know each other better; setting 2-3 goals for the year; and creating a work plan to reflect the goals.

The Admin-Manager said she would send a survey to select best dates and times to help schedule the retreat date and time.

7. Adjournment

Vice Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:00 pm

NEXT REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING: January 17, 2024 – 3:00-5:00 PM