

RICHMOND ARTS AND CULTURE COMMISSION (RACC)
Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 27, 2022
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Zoom Invitation

Present: Commission Chair Florene Wiley; Commissioners Lynson Beaulieu, Deb Dyer, Tom Herriman, Melissa Kirk, Emily Leighton, and Phillip Mehas

Absent: Commissioner Tom Lyons (ON LEAVE OF ABSENCE SINCE NOVEMBER 2021), Council Liaison Melvin Willis

Staff Present: Arts & Culture Manager Winifred Day

I. Welcome/Call to Order/Roll Call

The RACC meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

II. Approve January 27, 2022 Meeting Agenda

Commissioner Mehas requested the addition of a Membership Discussion under Information/Action Items.

Chair Wiley requested that in the future the agenda separate Information and Action Items. She requested additional agenda items under Committee Reports for Social Media Committee, and separate items for RACC NPA Liaison Reports and Staff Reports.

Arts & Culture Manager Winifred Day asked that the meeting agenda also be modified under Information/Action Items, as shown on the current agenda to eliminate the item shown as COVID Relief Temporary Sculpture Placement Approval for Public Works.

The agenda was modified after Item IV, as follows:

- V. Action Item
 - a. WCCFJC Final Artist Selection PAAC Recommendation
- VI. Information Items
 - a. Membership Discussion
- VII. Committee Reports
 - a. Public Art Advisory Committee
 - b. Social Media Committee
- VIII. RACC NPA Liaison Reports
- IX. Staff Reports
- X. Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Dyer, seconded by Commissioner Mehas to approve the January 27, 2022 meeting agenda, as modified, carried unanimously by a show of hands.

III. Approve December 16, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Chair Wiley requested an amendment to Item 2 to add *agenda* to the end of that sentence as follows: *Action Item #1 Approve December 16, 2021 agenda.*

Chair Wiley noted there had been no quorum at that meeting and no votes had been taken other than to approve the Liaison List and the minutes.

Ms. Day explained that only four members had attended that meeting and there had been a quorum, although Commissioner Dyer stated that out of eight members there should have been five present to create a quorum. It was clarified that a quorum was “one over half,” the minimum to establish a quorum.

Commissioner Mehas suggested it would be important to identify a quorum, if there was one, at the beginning of each meeting.

Chair Wiley verified that there was a quorum for the current meeting. Having not been present at the December meeting, nor were Commissioners Dyer and Leighton, there was currently no quorum at this time to approve the minutes. The minutes were therefore continued to the February meeting for approval.

On the discussion, it was clarified there would never be a quorum of members to vote on the meeting minutes given that four members had been absent, and without a quorum the December 16, 2021 meeting should not have occurred and minutes should not have been prepared. Ms. Day stated she would seek direction from the City Attorney’s office and report back.

IV. Public Comments

Ms. Day read public comments from Cordell Hinder which had been received on January 20, 2021.

CORDELL HINDLER: Hello Winifred, I have a couple of comments for the record. 1. The Mayor had mentioned the Public Art Advisory Committee at the December 7th Council meeting; 2. I will mention at the Youth Council at their meeting to fill vacancies. Sincerely, Cordell.

V. Action Item

a. WCCFJC Final Artist Selection PAAC Recommendation

Commissioner Dyer reported that the Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) had approved the recommendation from the panel to give Mark Metz a contract to proceed on his sculpture. She requested that the RACC approve that recommendation.

Motion by Commissioner Beaulieu, seconded by Commissioner Mehas to approve the recommendation from the Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) to give Mark Metz a contract to proceed on his sculpture for the WCCFJC, the Drain Pipe project. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kirk and carried unanimously by a show of hands.

VI. Information Items

a. Membership Discussion

Commissioner Mehas advised that he had requested the item to emphasize that more people were needed on the RACC and the PAAC given that he and Commissioner Dyer would soon be resigning and there would then be no quorum to accomplish anything. He urged staff and the Commission to pursue some relief soon to address that eventuality.

Chair Wiley explained that the matter had previously been discussed when Mayor Butt had stated he would not appoint any new members to the RACC until and unless his request for changes to the public ordinances, policies and procedures had been made. As a result, the RACC had voted to defer action until the Mayor's term had expired before considering new membership because the changes that he had requested were not changes the RACC had supported. She asked for a clarification of the direction of the discussion given that there were individuals interested in joining the RACC who could not do so until appointed by the Mayor.

Commissioner Mehas suggested one option could be to work with Melvin Willis, the City Council representative to the RACC, to make a minor change to the ordinance to state that if the Mayor failed to appoint qualified applicants that task would be transferred to the City Manager or the City Council. He also suggested that with five to seven applicants involved, the Commission could contact those individuals and ask them to voluntarily work along with one RACC member on projects without being an official voting member.

Chair Wiley asked if Commissioner Mehas would be willing to reach out to Councilmember Willis to discuss his recommendations, and Commissioner Mehas expressed his willingness to do so. The Chair also asked Ms. Day if she would be willing to call to see if some of those individuals would be willing to make a commitment without an actual appointment at this time.

Ms. Day noted that there would have to be a scope of services, in writing, to identify what those individuals would be asked to do, and she commented that while there had been four to five people who had applied for RACC Membership, there may be others who had not applied who might also be interested.

Chair Wiley stated that liaison responsibilities would be the scope of services, which was where the RACC needed the help, from February through June. She did not want to pursue a long, drawn out procedure and wanted to limit the outreach at this point to those who had applied.

Commissioner Dyer supported the proposals recommended by Commissioner Mehas for consideration. She also noted that she would be tendering her resignation at the end of March 2022 and could work with a volunteer until that time.

Commissioner Leighton explained that at the end of March there would be three people leaving the PAAC, including the Chair, and there was an urgency in terms of finding a way to fill the gaps in both groups.

When asked, Commissioner Mehas stated he would not likely leave before June 2022. He also verified with Ms. Day that Commissioner Lyons was currently on a leave of absence but was expected to return in February 2022.

VII. Committee Reports

a. Public Art Advisory Committee

Commissioner Dyer suggested that the PAAC minutes be forwarded to the RACC each month to advise the RACC of its activities. She stressed the importance of separating the actions of the RACC and the PAAC along with the importance of working together given the numerous tasks involved with each.

b. Social Media Committee

Chair Wiley expressed the need to find a way to get more information about the arts out to the public and acknowledged that social media was the way people currently engaged. She noted, for instance, that she had been unaware there had been a live opening of the Art of the African Diaspora at the Richmond Art Museum, something that she as the Chair of the RACC should have known. She wanted to commit to being greater advocates for the arts to let residents know what was going on.

Commissioner Kirk emphasized the need to have a greater number of people involved given that most people were heavily involved in their lives, jobs and volunteer activities.

Commissioner Mehas stated that he received a lot of information from the Richmond Art Center, was on their mailing list, and he also had not known about the opening. He referred to agencies that used evite to identify upcoming activities and referred to media outlets and others that offered notifications.

Chair Wiley opened the discussion of the Social Media Committee, noted there was no budget to hire someone to help in that regard and referred to Tony Tomayo, a former Commissioner who had the technical skills to help fulfil the Commission's mandate if there was a budget to hire him to do so.

Ms. Day stated the budget had been submitted in January, line items had been included for purchasing ads, and the Community Services Department had to wait for the approval of the budget to do that. Also with respect to the opening at the Richmond Art Center, she stated there had been limitations on the live opening due to COVID-19.

Commissioner Dyer asked Commissioner Kirk to draft a short summary of what the RACC needed to tie into social media to be able to help with postings for the RACC, and Commissioner Kirk expressed the willingness to do that.

Commissioner Herriman left the meeting.

VIII. RACC NPA Liaison Reports

Commissioner Beaulieu reported on the SkidMore Project with Stephen Bruce and the Macdonald Avenue Short Film Project with Doug Harris, both of whom had completed their processes and neither had yet requested their 50 percent payment. The SkidMore project had started late in the fall given some preliminary work that needed to be done, and would be expanded to work with all Fifth Graders at Making Waves Middle School. Some additional funding would be secured for supplies and to pay for teaching time. Doug Harris was working on another project he was involved in and had received a grant from the RACC. He was looking for Janet Johnson and asked the RACC for help with contact information given her long history with respect to Macdonald Avenue.

Commissioner Dyer reported on her work with the mural for Verde School, which had gotten a slow start due to COVID-19. She had some dates for meetings and would speak to them soon. She had spoken with Deonta Allen about the Little Libraries, who was ready to seek the 50 percent down, and who had contacted five elementary schools and had volunteers in line. Once there was a Social Media Committee he wanted to get the information out to get donations of books about arts for kids and using his email as contact.

Chair Wiley recommended that Mr. Allen contact the cabinet factories in Richmond that might have scrap wood that could be used to make the little libraries.

Commissioner Kirk stated she would facilitate a call for books through social media.

Commissioner Mehas referred to the Urban Tilth project and had met with Andres Serrano for the second time, who was identifying the kids who would be involved in the mural. After consideration, Andres had asked to move the mural farther down on the fence, which would actually be in a higher visibility area but still within the park structure. His second liaison group involved a COVID Relief Mini Grant for the Main Street Project where the artist would essentially take four merchants from Main Street, paint their portraits, and put them on large murals to hang from poles, two by four feet in size. He suggested that would be too small and had asked that they be enlarged. His third project was the Youth Poet Laureate, Sheila McKinney, and he had five meetings set up five months in a row. He added that CeCe Gordon had already started working on a program where there would be a poetry jam, potentially in conjunction with Richmond's adult poet laureate.

Commissioner Kirk reported that she had spoken with Anthony (Tony) Edwards who wanted to do a writing project on several specific trails in Richmond about how people were doing getting outside and whether trail use had changed since COVID-19. She had two phone calls with Tony to date. The goal was to have a serialization or multiple articles like a *Diablo Magazine* sort of publication. Tony was currently taking drone shots of trails and had five or six specific trails to focus on, and would talk to trail users to get stories about the hiking trails in Richmond. He had been attempting without success to contact the East Bay Regional Parks District (EBRPD) to get permission to avoid being disruptive in the park. He was eager to proceed.

Commissioner Kirk had also talked to Fred Franklin and he wanted to submit graphics about figures that were made out of vegetables, about being vegan and about healthy eating, and he was in touch with those he needed to be in touch with and was on track, although some supply issues had been identified with respect to the material for the artwork he wanted to do.

Chair Wiley reported that she was liaison to three projects and had only reached out to two in that she had yet to reach out to Hannah Hamilton. She had reached out to Degina Burkes of the Richmond Walk project and Vicky Segal. She recommended that Degina talk to Tony Edwards since her project related to hiking trails and the two might be able to help each other. She noted that Degina was still waiting to receive her funds and was working to get signatures for the street naming for Jimmy McCracklin, working with John Goia's office and with the East Bay Center for the Arts on the video related to walking in Richmond. She had hired a social media agency to handle the social media outreach for her project, was pursuing some crowd funding, and had also hired a designer who had created a flyer. The main event would be in September but for purposes of the grant the street signing would be done in May. Degina was seeking groups of people who walked in Richmond and sought information about walking groups that could be forwarded to her.

Chair Wiley had then met with Vicky Segal of the Master's Project who was happy about her timeline and who reported that the composer had agreed to be their music director, the workshop would be in an 85-seat house, she had hired a production manager, had auditions on the 22nd of January and had another last night, and would have a third if more time was needed. She wanted to move some things around in the budget to find an audition pianist and she had gotten the lead person she wanted. Everything was looking good in that regard.

IX. Staff Reports

Ms. Day reported that Lilia Corral, Executive Secretary for the Community Services Division (CSD) would spend 10 percent of her time supporting the RACC and splitting her time with the City Manager's Office.

The majority of her work had to do with the NPA and COVID Relief Mini Grants. She explained that this was the way the CSD was receiving the extra support it had requested some time ago.

Because there were so many different projects, Ms. Day had provided a list of the projects in the staff report broken down by RACC projects, which were separate from the Public Art projects, Other Projects and Developer Projects. The main effort at this point were the grants and encouraging people to submit the 50 percent invoice as soon as possible given that it took a few weeks to receive payment. She emphasized the need for the artists to keep records and secure insurance. She was working on media releases and working with KCRT to come up with a link for press releases.

Ms. Day identified the many challenges with respect to public art projects, the need for new language for future applications, and explained that without necessary language with respect to permission at the time of application submittal a project could not proceed to a contract. She used the vinyl wrapped mural AC Transit project in Richmond as an example. She also referred to the John Toki temporary mural project as another example of a project that would require a whole new process to allow approval.

Commissioner Dyer recommended that Mr. Toki pursue private property for his project as opposed to city property to avoid the need to get City permission, particularly since the project related to a temporary sculpture exhibit.

Chair Wiley agreed with the need for Mr. Toki to pursue a private venue.

Ms. Day had no problem with that recommendation but noted that the project was in the middle of the process, although it had been extended. When asked, she had no problem with Mr. Toki being approached to place the project on private property to avoid the unnecessary delays related to placement on City property.

Commissioner Dyer expressed the willingness to speak to Mr. Toki about the recommendation to place the sculpture elsewhere off of City property.

Chair Wiley commended the staff summary that had gone out with the press release, the capsule descriptions of each project, and the staff update that was valuable to the Commission.

The RACC and staff discussed items to be added to the next meeting agenda, to include the following:

- RACC Strategic Plan
- Liaison Update Reports
- Budget for Social Media Coordinator
- Report on Meeting w/Councilmember Willis (Mehas)
- Update on the Public Art Master Plan Candidate Solicitation
- Response to Outreach for Volunteers for Project Liaisons Among Commission Applicants

X. Adjourn until February 24, 2022

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m. to a Regular Meeting of the RACC on February 24, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.