

RICHMOND ARTS AND CULTURE COMMISSION (RACC)
Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday October 28, 2021
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Zoom Invitation

Present: Commission Chair Florene Wiley; Commission Co-Chair Michael Cohen; Commissioners Lynson Beaulieu, Tom Herriman, Melissa Kirk, and Phillip Mehas

Absent: Commissioners Deb Dyer, Siobhan Hayes, Emily Leighton, Tom Lyons, and 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 7:07 p.m.

II. Approve October 28, 2021 Meeting Agenda

Chair Wiley advised that Co-Chair Cohen had requested an addition to the agenda to discuss Commission participation, and Commissioner Mehas had advised of the need to make a statement. Both requests would be added under Information Items. She also clarified that while the next regular meeting of the Commission would have been on Thursday, November 25, 2021 (Thanksgiving Day), it was now scheduled for Thursday, November 18, 2021.

Motion by Co-Chair Cohen, seconded by Commissioner Mehas to approve the October 28, 2021 meeting agenda, as amended, carried unanimously by a voice vote.

III. Approve September 23, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Herriman, seconded by Commissioner Beaulieu to approve the September 23, 2021 meeting minutes, as submitted, carried unanimously by a voice vote.

IV. Public Comments

Arts & Culture Manager Winifred Day read a written message from Cordell Hindler, Richmond, into the record. "Hello Winifred, I have a couple of comments for the record. 1. The Mayor did mention the Arts & Culture Commission at the Council meeting on Tuesday and I will mention to the Youth Council about applying to fill the vacancies. 2. The update is that my joint project will be on the Council agenda for November 2nd. Sincerely, Cordell."

V. Information Items

a. Commission Participation (Co-Chair Cohen)

Co-Chair Cohen regrettably announced his resignation given a lack of time to devote to the Commission and due to the fact that he was heavily involved with the theater and could not participate with the theater without creating a conflict of interest with the RACC.

RACC Members were sorry to lose Co-Chair Cohen and wished him well in all his future endeavors.

Ms. Day advised that she would include an item on the November agenda to select a Co-Chair to replace Co-Chair Cohen.

b. Statement (Commissioner Mehas)

Commissioner Mehas took this opportunity to apologize for an outburst he had with Chair Wiley at the last RACC meeting. Chair Wiley accepted the apology.

c. NPA Mini Grant Summary: 13 grantees not to exceed \$65,000

Chair Wiley stated that the RACC had been able to work with the Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) and had been able to give 100 percent allocation to those who had applied for the Neighborhood Public Art (NPA) Mini-Grants. She explained that the RACC liaisons for NPA grantees had yet to be identified and she urged those able to serve to choose at least one grantee in the next week. She added that the issue of liaison assignments for the NPA Mini Grants would have to be discussed at the November meeting.

Ms. Day provided a summary of the NPA Mini Grants where 13 grantees had been selected for grants not to exceed \$65,000. She explained for the two mural projects \$16,000 would be transferred from the One Percent Art Fund for two \$8,000 projects. With respect to the two mural projects, the grantees would be required to have written permission from the property owners. In the case of the Urban Tilt project, all the information required had to be provided before preparing a contract. The permission letter in that case offered support only, which had not been sufficient, and she had asked the grantee to provide a mock-up to identify where the mural would be placed and the size of the mural. She noted that all the other grantees were in a position to award.

d. COVID Relief Mini Grant Summary: 6 grantees not to exceed \$50,000

Ms. Day reported there were seven applicants, one of whom had declined, which would allow some flexibility in the funds to be distributed to those receiving the COVID Relief Mini Grants, who had requested a bit more in the way of funds.

e. WCCCFJC Art Rain Drain: 3 Semi-finalists not to exceed \$10,000

Ms. Day reported that the three semi-finalists in the WCCCFJC Art Rain Drain would receive short-form contracts soon to be able to move into the next stage.

VI. Discussion: Two Year Budget Planning Items

Chair Wiley noted the discussion of what to fund in 2022 and 2023 with funds to be raised through a fundraising committee to raise money for the RACC's projects. She asked the membership to identify items that might need to be done.

Commissioner Kirk emphasized the need for more, younger people on the Commission and suggested that recruitment would be a good project.

Chair Wiley proposed a social media campaign to recruit more Commissioners with in-person outreach.

Ms. Day reported that KCRT had agreed to produce a video for the RACC and she had been asked to do a presentation to the Rotary Club. She suggested a short video could be created to serve multiple purposes about projects, recruitment, or other topics.

On the discussion of a budget for a social media ad campaign, Commissioner Kirk volunteered to research cost and process.

Chair Wiley recommended consideration of using Constant Contact or Mail Check. Referring to events, she noted an email from NIAD Art Center, requesting another Arts Salon. She recommended continuing the Arts Salon in the next year or two and noted the low cost involved with those events. She also noted that in the future there might be some consideration of making a donation to the hosts of the Arts Salons.

Commissioner Mehas requested that the RACC sponsor or co-sponsor more cultural events other than just art, such as theater performances through the East Bay Center, and the support of cultural activities.

On the discussion of supporting cultural activities and with a lack of Commissioners, Chair Wiley suggested that with some of the constraints imposed by the Mayor the recruitment campaign should designate a tenure that would begin in 2023 after the Mayor had termed out.

Ms. Day clarified there was a floating quorum and the RACC could still meet depending upon the number of Commissioners who were active. She added that Dominique Roache-Green of the City Manager's Office had reported that new applications had been received for the RACC Commission.

Chair Wiley referred to the recommendation to co-sponsor events as a budget item which would include cultural events. She referred specifically to the RACC's partnership with Sisters in Solidarity, which involved no expenditure of funds but which was an active community partnership. She recommended raising the RACC's visibility with a greater presence at some community events, such as Sisters in Solidarity or the upcoming Art of the African Diaspora, where the RACC could identify its support of those and other groups. She sought specific recommendations from the RACC as part of the budget discussion.

Ms. Day referred to the COVID Relief Mini Grant, noted it had sparked interest, and while it had been planned for only one year, suggested that the name of the fund could be changed to potentially continue beyond one year with the \$50,000 that had been reserved for the two-year cycle. There was a suggestion that the name of the fund could simply be Relief Mini Grant Fund.

Ms. Day added that a part-time employee or contract employee position could be funded with a designated responsibility for arts and culture. She recommended a \$50,000 allocation towards extra staff and she could return in November with more details.

Chair Wiley recognized that with or without other means of funding extra staff that the Commission (RACC) budget include contract administrative staff and that all items recommended for inclusion be identified with dollar amounts.

Ms. Day asked if the RACC wanted to continue the Richmond Writes! Program and the Youth Poet Laureate program.

The RACC supported the continuation of the Youth Poet Laureate program and Chair Wiley offered to conduct some research to ensure the Richmond program would be competitive with adjacent jurisdictions. With respect to Richmond Writes! which was a more labor-intensive program, some coordination with the Richmond Library was recommended. If continuing Richmond Writes! a higher quality process and product was recommended along with rethinking the process entirely and potentially skipping a year to allow that process to occur.

On the proposed Commission budget, Chair Wiley explained she would work on the Poet Laureate numbers and would come up with numbers for continued arts salons, while Commissioner Mehas would bring back numbers to co-sponsor events, and Commissioner Kirk would provide expenses for a social media ad campaign. All information would be brought to the November meeting.

Commissioners Herriman and Beaulieu had nothing to add other than Commissioner Beaulieu recommended that Commissioner Kirk be designated as the next Co-Chair.

VII. Committee Reports

a. Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC)

The minutes from the last meeting of the PACC dated October 8, 2021 had been provided as the PAAC update.

b. Poet Laureate

Chair Wiley reported that she and Commissioners Kirk and Cohen, and Ms. Day had met with David Flores, the Richmond Poet Laureate and the first event on his scope of work would be on Friday, November 19, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at CoBiz. She confirmed that the event would also include participation by the Poets Laureate of El Cerrito, Oakland, Vallejo and San Francisco, to be incorporated with CoBiz open mic night, and would be the official introduction of the current Richmond Poet Laureate. An invitation to and introduction of former Richmond Poets Laureate was recommended.

Chair Wiley recommended that former Poets Laureate identify the years of service after their names to differentiate them from the current Poet Laureate.

Commissioner Mehas recommended a series of plaques at City Hall to recognize all Richmond Poets Laureate with their years of service listed after their names. He also recommended that public comment at City Council meetings identify the current Poet Laureate with a potential reading, to be scheduled before the City Council as a way of announcing the event.

Ms. Day noted the request from the sculptors who had received COVID Relief Mini-Grants to consider a sculpture garden in the Civic Center Plaza, and although that was a good idea she described the need for permission letters from the property owner(s) involved along with a number of challenging logistics that would make a sculpture garden difficult, but not impossible, to produce.

c. Public Art Financial Summary

The Public Art Financial Summary had been included in the minutes of the October 8, 2021 PAAC meeting.

VIII. Adjourn until November 18, 2021

The meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m. to a Regular Meeting of the RACC on November 18, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.