

**RICHMOND ARTS AND CULTURE COMMISSION (RACC)**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, February 24, 2022**  
**7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Zoom Invitation**

Present: Commission Chair Florene Wiley; Vice Chair Melissa Kirk\*; and Commissioners Lynson Beaulieu, Deb Dyer, Tom Herriman, and Phillip Mehas  
\*Arrived after Roll Call

Absent: Commissioner Emily Leighton (Excused), Council Liaison Melvin Willis

Staff Present: Arts & Culture Manager Winifred Day

Chair Wiley reported that Tom Lyons had resigned from the Commission.

**I. WELCOME / CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL**

The RACC meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

**II. ACTION ITEMS:**

**a. APPROVE February 24, 2022 Meeting Agenda**

Commissioner Mehas requested an addition to the agenda to discuss the fact that given the lack of appointments to the Commission there was a need, at least temporarily, to avoid taking on any new projects. The new item would be considered under the Discussion portion of the agenda.

Chair Wiley corrected the agenda format to show only Action Items under Item IV given that Information Items were shown under Item V.

Motion by Commissioner Dyer, seconded by Commissioner Beaulieu to approve the February 24, 2022 meeting agenda, as modified, carried unanimously by a Roll Call vote.

**b. APPROVE January 27, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

Chair Wiley requested the following corrections to the January 27, 2022 minutes:

- To the last sentence before Item VIII on Page 4: *Commissioner Herriman left the meeting for a previous engagement as he had previously stated.*
- To the fourth paragraph on Page 5, to correct the spelling of *DeJeana* Burkes throughout that paragraph, and to correct the spelling of John *Gioia* and to include the correct name of the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts in that paragraph.
- To the fifth paragraph on Page 5, to correct the spelling of Vicky *Siegal*.

Motion by Commissioner Herriman, seconded by Commissioner Mehas to approve the minutes of the January 27, 2022 meeting, as corrected, carried unanimously by a Roll Call vote.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ms. Day read public comments from Cordell Hinder which had been received on February 24, 2022, as follows: *Hello Winifred, I have one comment. The Mayor did mention the Public Art Advisory Committee at the Council meeting last month. Sincerely, Cordell.*

#### **IV. ACTION ITEMS**

a. NPA (Neighborhood Public Art) and COVID Relief Mini Grant Liaison Assignments

When asked the reason for the item, Ms. Day clarified that there had been no quorum in December to officially accept all the assignments for the NPA and COVID Relief Mini Grants. As such, the item was on the agenda for a vote to officially approve the assignments.

The RACC questioned the need for a vote on an item that had already been implemented.

Motion by Commissioner Mehas, seconded by Commissioner Dyer to call the orders of the day and move on to the next agenda item, carried unanimously by a Roll Call vote.

b. Love Your Block Panhandle Mural Project PAAC Recommendation

Commissioner Dyer reported that the Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) had approved the item when a lengthy presentation had been made and an extensive description of the project had been distributed.

Motion by Commissioner Mehas, seconded by Commissioner Dyer to accept the PAAC's recommendation regarding the Love Your Block Panhandle Mural Project, carried unanimously by a voice vote.

#### **V. INFORMATION ITEM**

a. Outreach to Councilmember Willis

As a follow-up to the discussion of the last meeting regarding membership and outreach to Councilmember Willis, Commissioner Mehas described his conversations with Councilmember McLaughlin who had reminded him that the Mayor had a history of withholding appointments to commissions in the past. In what was a Commission-only effort that did not involve staff, he described his concerns that without appointments to fill RACC vacancies, the Commission did not have enough members to do what needed to be done and he had recommended that no new projects be pursued until more members had been appointed.

The RACC expressed concern that Councilmember Willis, the Council Liaison to the RACC, had never attended RACC meetings and that Commissioner Mehas' letter to Councilmember Willis to identify the RACC's concerns had gone unheeded. It was clarified that the RACC at its last meeting had determined to approach Councilmember Willis to request 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. It had also been suggested that with five to seven candidates interested in the RACC, those interested could be contacted to assess their willingness to voluntarily work with RACC members on projects without being official voting members of the RACC.

As to next steps, Chair Wiley and Commissioners Mehas and Dyer were to identify a potential date to meet with Council staff to facilitate a meeting with Councilmember Willis.

## VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

### a. Mini Grant Liaison Report Updates

Commissioner Beaulieu noted that Stephen Bruce would start work with the Making Waves Academy on March 7, and she had been invited to that meeting. The in-class portion of the project would end at the end of March or early April. Mr. Bruce was doing his prep work for each of the classes, had gotten his first payment from the City, had completed a first portion at Manzanita Middle School, and had worked with 81 kids and was now following up with the teachers for the outcome. She explained that he had not yet raised additional funds but was doing okay and would use the RACC resources for supplies and then raise money for the payment of his own time and services. He expected to do a fundraiser on Facebook and his little brother was helping him out. She clarified that the need to fundraise was due to the fact that he would be serving more students than originally proposed. She added that she had been unable to reach Doug Harris to learn the status of his documentary film project and was unaware whether or not he and Janet Johnson had been able to connect to discuss their similar projects.

Commissioner Dyer did not have much to report other than Deonta Allen wanted to know when he would get his money for the Little Libraries project. She explained that he had submitted his invoice, and suggested in the future it would be good to advise grantees that it would take six weeks from submitting an invoice to get a payment or that there be more front time to allow a full six months for the grantees to complete their projects.

On the discussion of the payment process for the grants and the difficulties that some grantees had experienced getting paid to be able to proceed with their projects, the Chair referred to the efforts undertaken to make the process easier but noted that the grantees had to do their part to submit their invoices in a timely manner.

Arts & Culture Manager Winifred Day explained that she had informed grantees to get their invoices in by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month at which point payment would normally take ten days as opposed to the usual 30-day turnaround. She added that as soon as the contracts were fully executed invoices could be submitted and everyone had received that information and several people had been paid to date. She noted that direct deposits were paid faster.

Commissioner Herriman reported that both of his grantees had expressed problems assembling the groups of young people they were working with because of COVID. He stated that Mark Anthony James through his music program had held one drum workshop and was planning more musical instrument activities with the young people, and would invite him to the next event. Robin Lopez through his mini-documentary project was working with young people and was making videos around the City of Richmond, although he had also experienced restrictions given COVID and had nothing to report. Neither of his grantees had reported problems with payments.

Commissioner Kirk reported that she had spoken with Tony Edwards about his trails article and Mr. Edwards had been attempting unsuccessfully to speak with someone at the East Bay Regional Parks District (EBRPD) to be able to make arrangements to work in the parks. While he had ultimately been able to schedule a meeting with an EBRPD representative, that person did not show up for the meeting. With respect to her second grantee, Fred Franklin with the veggie exhibition/festival project, she explained that he did not seem to need or want any help from her. She understood that both grantees had gotten their money but she would double check.

As to what would occur if the grantees did not finish their projects because of unforeseen circumstances and yet got paid, the RACC recommended a written policy to address that potential.

Chair Wiley stated she would take that policy question on and would share what she found out. Commissioner Kirk expressed a willingness to help in that regard.

Commissioner Dyer noted that some of that was in the contract and if a project could not be completed the recipient was to send the money back.

Commissioner Kirk recommended that liaisons should have documentation about how to serve as a liaison in a step-by-step process with timelines and benchmarks.

Chair Wiley reported she had met with all three of her grantees, none of whom had received their money. None of her grantees had the RACC's logo or the credit line information even though that was a requirement where the RACC must be credited on any promotional material or press release.

Ms. Day stated she had provided examples of logos and language to use and she would resend the logo and the example of the credit language again to the grantees.

Chair Wiley emphasized that information should be included and she requested that everyone involved receive the logo and the example of the credit language. Going forward the credit line should be part of the contract since the grantees were obligated to give the Commission credit.

Chair Wiley reported that Hanna Hamilton and her annex book project had gotten off to a slow start with their insurance and contract given the Omicron hit, but the survey was out, five youths had signed up, and each would do five interviews and choose who to interview for the Panhandle project, and they had until March 5 to get that done. A treasure hunt had been scheduled for April 9 as a precursor to the art classes for children and their families. She explained that Ms. Hamilton was the Vice President of the neighborhood council, which had been mandated to conduct outreach in the community to get children signed up for the free art and bookmaking classes. Ms. Hamilton had been holding off on the flyer pending receipt of the logo and credit line information.

Vicky Siegal of Masquers was also moving along and making progress, had hired a production manager, was using rehearsal space at the local church and Temple Beth Hillel, and needed two more people for the Knights of the Round Table. There was a stage manager and she was using a postcard for their email and social media marketing, which would launch mid-April because June 18 and June 19 were the performance dates.

Chair Wiley wanted to make sure there was a proper outreach to have a good turnout from the Richmond community at those performances and she asked Commissioners to put June 18 in the afternoon and June 19 in the evening on their calendars to attend and show support for the workshop presentation.

Chair Wiley reported that DeJeana Burkes had 70 people come out for an event on the 13<sup>th</sup> to promote the upcoming walk and had gotten four people to volunteer their services to work with her on the festival/video project. A graphic artist was creating a promo piece suitable for posting on Facebook, the project would get its own Facebook page, and there would be a March launch of a GoFundMe fundraiser and volunteer recruitment. Ms. Burkes was working with the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts for the music, and an idea had evolved to create a Richmond blues band.

Chair Wiley also reported that Ms. Burkes had hoped to work with Doug Harris but might have to work with someone else to edit the video, probably Stephanie Slade, also a graphic artist and an Emmy winner. She commented that while an invoice had been submitted, it had yet to be paid. She cautioned that grantees should not spend their own money in the expectation of being repaid because that usually created other difficulties.

b. Social Media Committee/Facebook

Commissioner Kirk had written up a potential scope of work and expectation of someone who could handle social media but recommended that a better process be considered.

c. NPA and COVID Relief Mini Grant Applications 2022-23

Ms. Day wanted to advance the process to be able to start sooner and allow grantees more than six months' time to complete their projects. She was working on the draft so that within another month she would have something available for review. She asked Commissioners to read the drafts and provide input prior to moving forward. By the end of March, the application should be ready to go out for at least two months so that by June the RACC could begin the process of selection, with a discussion of the process to include how interviews would be conducted so that the awards could be made by July.

Chair Wiley asked Ms. Day to craft a proposed timeline for RACC consideration to make sure the benchmarks could be achieved.

Commissioner Dyer was unsure that the PAAC had decided to do the COVID Relief Mini Grant and was looking at commissioning some permanent installations, which she requested be on the agenda for the next PAAC meeting. As a volunteer on the Love Your Block grant panel, she described the process where each person on the panel had two weeks to go through all the applications and score them and there were no interviews.

Chair Wiley noted that usually there would be a mini grant committee to work on the applications, the process and the timeline, although there were too few RACC members available to do that. She asked Ms. Day to start with the timeline, did not want to wait until the March RACC meeting to allow the Commission to begin to make decisions at that meeting given the desire that the process begin as soon as possible. She commented there were a number of ways to evaluate grant applications and applicants.

Commissioner Mehas referred to the problems of grantees getting their money and he clarified that at the required orientation a handout could be distributed with all the relevant information that had been discussed by the RACC as an issue. He expressed a preference for personal interviews, although Commissioner Dyer noted that not all members of the Commission had attended the previous presentations/interviews which had impacted the scoring process.

Chair Wiley stated that once the Commission was fully constituted there would have to be a subcommittee to address the mini grant applications.

## **VII. STAFF REPORT / Cultural Arts Manager Day**

a. PACC Master Plan Candidate Solicitation

Ms. Day stated she was still working on the Public Art Master Plan Request for Proposal (RFP) using a comprehensive model from the City of Alameda.

Within the next week Ms. Day would have another draft for review and by the next PAAC meeting there would be something to review and discuss with action expected at that meeting.

b. Volunteer Recruitment from Commissioner Applicants

Ms. Day described her conversation with the Legal Department and the discussion related to what volunteers could and could not do. She was waiting to hear from Human Resources.

Chair Wiley wanted to learn what volunteers were not allowed to do since she wanted to make sure that the members of the Commission were not overstepping their bounds.

Ms. Day confirmed that staff had reached out to prospective Commissioners to see if they were interested in volunteering to the Commission and some of those candidates no longer complied with the requirements because they were doing something else with the City that conflicted with the membership requirements making them ineligible. It had been brought to her attention that there was a difference between being appointed and volunteering and not being appointed.

The RACC sought clarification of the role of Commissioners as liaison if they were allowed to do that work as Commissioners versus as volunteers. Ms. Day clarified that she would double check on the number of candidates who had previously been interested in being a member of the Commission who might still be interested, and report back to the Commission.

c. Scope of Services for Social Media Coordinator

Ms. Day stated that Commissioner Kirk had provided the description of the scope of services. For every project there had to be three vendor candidates for consideration, which would be her next step. There were some funds available but she had to figure out the going rate to be able to verify the available funding.

Chair Wiley asked Ms. Day to provide a definitive answer to how much money was available for a Social Media Coordinator and whether or not the scope of services was at the point of seeking three bids, with a report back at the next meeting.

## **VIII. DISCUSSION**

a. Commission – New Projects

Commissioner Mehas reiterated that the RACC membership was already overburdened and with no new members and the prospect that he and Commissioner Dyer would leave in the near future, he did not see that the RACC could take on new projects.

Chair Wiley noted that the RACC did not have any projects other than the mini grants. She otherwise agreed that there was no need to add anything more to the agenda until more members had been appointed.

- b. RACC Strategic Plan – Next Steps

Chair Wiley recommended deferring the next steps for the RACC Strategic Plan pending the availability of a full Commission.

**IX. ANNOUNCEMENT: UPCOMING EVENTS**

- a. Grantee Events
- b. Community Partner Events
- c. Other Events

Chair Wiley announced the opening of the Art of the African Diaspora on March 6 between 12:00 and 4:30 p.m., with details on the Richmond Art Center Website to sign up for one of three time slots. She also announced that on February 25, there would be a dance party at Bridge Art Center from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.; and on February 26 from 10:30 a.m. to Noon the Nicholl Park Mural would be revealed and she urged Commissioners to attend and identify their affiliation with the RACC. She explained that the Richmond Art Salon reception tentatively scheduled with NIAD Art Center in April would have to be verified. She noted that April was National Poetry Month and the Poet Laureate and Youth Poet Laureate should be asked to read at a City Council meeting to honor that month.

Chair Wiley recommended that Richmond’s Poet Laureate and Youth Poet Laureate be allowed 10 minutes each to read at a RACC meeting and that both be scheduled to read to the City Council, together or separately during the month of April.

When asked, Commissioner Kirk stated she would post the liaison notes about the NPA Mini Grants on social media.

Chair Wiley asked if money could be made available not only to fund the Social Media Coordinator but also for social media advertising. She recommended the use of Constant Contact (\$195/month); Facebook (\$200/month); and potentially the use of Instagram. With respect to the Arts Committee page on the City’s website, it was noted that was part of KCRT’s job, which would be a good place to put the RACC logo in downloadable format acceptable to grantees only.

Commissioner Kirk stated that there had to be a plan for the specific platforms to advertise on social media.

Commissioner Kirk recommended thinking more about the RACC Strategic Plan given the need to talk about the plan to be able to hire someone to help decide what the RACC wanted to accomplish. As a result, the Strategic Plan was recommended to be placed on the next meeting agenda for discussion.

**X. ADJOURN until March 24, 2022**

On motion by Commissioner Mehas, seconded by Commissioner Beaulieu, and carried unanimously the meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m. to a Regular Meeting of the RACC on March 24, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.