

**RICHMOND ARTS AND CULTURE COMMISSION (RACC)
PUBLIC ART ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAAC)
Special Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 16, 2023
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. via Zoom**

Present: Chair Lynson Beaulieu, Vice Chair Melissa Kirk; and Commissioners Ted Bell, Melody Kozma-Kennedy, Phillip Mehas and Council Liaison Sohelia Bana

Absent: Council Liaison Doria Robinson

Staff Present: Arts & Culture Manager Winifred Day
Economic Development Director Nannette Beacham

I. WELCOME / CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

The RACC/PAAC Special Meeting was called to order by Chair Beaulieu at 7:01 p.m.

Chair Beaulieu reported that Commissioners Tom Herriman and Emily Leighton had resigned from the RACC/PAAC and she thanked them both for their service to the City of Richmond. She also recognized Carole Porter and Kaelen Van Cura, who were both present as attendees but who had not yet been appointed by the City Council to the RACC/PAAC as Commissioners, which appointments were expected to be made soon.

Arts & Culture Manager Winifred Day also recognized Commissioners Herriman and Leighton for their service and for serving the City of Richmond on the RACC/PAAC as long as they had to ensure there was a quorum. She hoped the RACC/PAAC would eventually be expanded in the future to eleven fulltime members.

II. ACTION ITEMS:

a. APPROVE February 16, 2023 RACC/PAAC Meeting Agenda

Commissioner Mehas requested that the meeting agenda be modified to include a status update on the public art inventory as part of Item VII, January Staff Report.

Motion by Commissioner Kozma-Kennedy, seconded by Vice Chair Kirk to approve the February 16, 2023 RACC/PAAC Meeting Agenda, as modified, carried unanimously by a Roll Call vote

b. APPROVE January 26, 2023 RACC Meeting Minutes

Motion by Vice Chair Kirk, seconded by Commissioner Mehas to approve the January 26, 2023 RACC meeting minutes, as submitted, carried by a Roll Call vote with abstentions from Commissioners Kozma-Kennedy and Bell.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Beaulieu read into the record the following comments: *Hello Winifred. I do have some comments for the record. 1) The Council will approve the folks on the Consent Calendar. 2) Also the update is at that I will share my surprise project at a later date. Sincerely, Cordell.*

IV. INTRODUCTION NEW COUNCILMEMBERS and NEW COMMISSIONERS

Chair Beaulieu recognized Commissioners Bell and Kozma-Kennedy who had both been officially appointed by the City Council to serve on the RACC/PAAC. The City Council had also appointed Sohelia Bana to serve as Council Liaison to the RACC, and Doria Robinson to serve as Council Liaison to the PAAC. She reported as part of Item IX, New Commissioners and Guests would be asked to introduce themselves, describe their backgrounds and identify why they were interested in serving on the RACC/PAAC.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. FY 2022-23 NPA Mini Grant Commissioner Liaison Reports

Vice Chair Kirk reported she had spoken with her two artists. Jed Lee, who was preparing a documentary, had requested more time for screening and an August timeframe for completion of the project.

Ms. Day advised that June 30, 2023 was the deadline for the completion of the project and she would work with Mr. Lee to meet the deadline.

Vice Chair Kirk added the artist for the dance performance was doing fine and the performance had been planned to be held at the East Bay Performing Arts facility. The project had expected performers from the East Bay Performing Arts to provide mentoring to students, but Evy Ibarra let her know that this was no longer going to be happening, and asked whether this change would affect the project's grant.

Ms. Day stated she would reach out to the grantee to discuss the matter.

Chair Beaulieu and Commissioner Mehas both highlighted and describe the NPA Mini Grant application process and artist eligibility requirements for the benefit of new Commissioners and guests.

Commissioner Mehas reported on the status of the NIAD Art Center and Rebecca Teague project and the difficulty getting consistent participation. The Richmond Museum project was going well and involved a huge collection of children's art recognizing the relationship between the history of child care centers in Richmond and how the art was a vibrant artifact that could bring it alive and bring people's interest to it. Approximately 50 pieces had been digitized to reprint, frame and hang in seven locations in the City of Richmond. For the Pogo Park project, Commissioner Mehas identified some difficulty in communicating with the artist.

Chair Beaulieu reported on her projects, which included an art banner project with children at Washington Elementary School with a theme about family and home. There had been a couple of sessions painting with children, the purchase of a second art cart filled with art supplies, and the Principal of the school had been excited about the art activities. A dedicated art room would be provided moving forward and with some art training for the teacher to also be provided. Once the children had produced the art work and were done painting the pictures, the pictures would be printed on a banner to be hung on the fence at Point Richmond. For the Phil Rosenthal Project, Mr. Rosenthal had received a grant to refurbish the mural on the tunnel leading to Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline Park. She hoped to have a better update at the next RACC/PAAC meeting.

Ms. Day explained that new Commissioners and those who were expected to be appointed in the near future to the RACC/PAAC would be provided with information on the remaining NPA Mini Grant projects that needed liaisons, and Commissioners could choose whom to support and would be informed on what was expected of them to serve as the project liaison. She added that solicitation was now commencing for next year's NPA Mini Grant projects, with the goal that by the time the new fiscal year began the new projects would be ready to go into contract.

Commissioner Kozma-Kennedy reported a good friend of hers was on the board of NIAD and she would be attending the NIAD Win Win 11: NIAD's Art Center's Annual Benefit Art Auction scheduled for March 11, 2023 from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m., and could collect any information on the status of the organization and fundraising capacities if that would help Commissioner Mehas' project.

Ms. Day suggested Commissioner Kozma-Kennedy shadow/partner with Commissioner Mehas to learn what was going on and she would provide a copy of NIAD's proposal to be able to see what they were trying to accomplish.

b. PAAC January Report (Chair Beaulieu)

Chair Beaulieu reported the RACC had approved the recommendation for five artists for the Shields-Reid Park project and staff was preparing a comprehensive package of information to be presented to the City Council. Final approval was anticipated in March with contracts to be initiated at that time and artists to be engaged within 30-days. The Draft Public Art Master Plan outline had been submitted and reviewed and distributed to the RACC/PAAC in an email on February 8, 2023 and new Commissioners would also be provided that information. She added that the Final Public Arts Information Brochure had been emailed to Commissioners and unless there were questions, comments or corrections the document would be forwarded for printing to be translated into Spanish and other languages, if possible. The Richmond Country Club/Parchester Village Mural Project had been forwarded to risk management for further review; and the Ookwe Park directional signage was ready with staff waiting on the fabrication of the didactic signage to allow two parts of the signage to be installed at the same time.

A Draft Mini Grant application had also been distributed to Commissioners with feedback to be submitted to staff as soon as possible. There had been some pushback on the length of the application but other than the instructions, it was only four pages long.

Commissioners had also been provided an outline for the proposed Artist Technical Assistance (ATA) Workshop and staff had reached out to Barbara Goldstein and her team who were preparing the Public Art Master Plan to see whether they would be able to provide the ATA workshop, subject to a separate budget and contract from the Public Art Master Plan and with a target date for the workshop of March 15, 2023.

Commissioner Kozma-Kennedy suggested two phases for the workshop; one for new artists and another a refresher tutorial style for artists who had applied in the past.

Chair Beaulieu added that Commissioners were also working on the large art commission project, a \$100,000 grant project where three parks had been identified in the City of Richmond including John F. Kennedy Park, Hilltop Green Park and Hilltop Park. Applicants may visit and decide about the type of art project to be presented at those locations, with seven applicants now narrowed down to four semi-finalists. The semi-finalists had been interviewed on February 15 and the scoring for the proposals were due by the end of day on February 17, 2023. The recommendations for the semi-finalists would be considered at the March 9, 2023 RACC/PAAC meeting with the approved recommendations thereafter to be forwarded to the City Council.

- c. Richmond Commission Art Site RFQ – (Herriman/Leighton)

The report had been provided as part of the previous agenda item.

VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. FY 2023/24 Budget Wish List

Ms. Day reported that February 17, 2023 was the close of the window to provide comments on the FY 2023/24 Budget Wish List. She and the Chair had highlighted each of the items on the Budget Wish List at this time. She stated she had reached out to the Public Works Department to obtain cost estimates for some of the items. Several projects could be included in the next year's fiscal budget and others may finish out this year. Longer term projects would require more flushing out and further conversations.

Commissioner Kozma-Kennedy detailed how the City may consider spreading funds by cross departments. As an example, the Parks and Recreation Department in the City of Emeryville had a budget for playgrounds, and there could be ways to consider climbable or functional art/sculptures or functional art work created for use by children.

Commissioners discussed different art projects in the City of Richmond that involved some collaboration with other City departments such as projects at Pogo Park and Shields-Reid Park.

VII. January STAFF REPORT (Day)

Ms. Day reported the Richmond Arts Center large fish sculpture located at the exterior of the building was in need of restoration and the City was in the process of repairing the sculpture with the funds to come from public art fund dollars.

Ms. Day stated repairs should be complete by the end of March. She had sent a notice to all Commissioners about the Contra Costa County Art Visioning session which would be held in five different locations. For the City of Richmond, the in-person session would be held on Saturday, February 25, 2023 at the Richmond Arts Center at 10:00 a.m. in collaboration with the California Arts Council. In addition, the Art Inventory continued to progress with a City intern conducting the mapping of each piece of artwork, although the photographs had been taking longer than anticipated given challenges faced by the Information Technology (IT) Department.

Commissioner Mehas commented the project had started over two years ago and although an historian was to have taken over the project interns had assumed that role and no one had taken responsibility. As a result, the project had been going on and on. He was disappointed with the time involved given the potential for the City's art collection and it needed to be archived to allow the City to get the word out. He was not confident given the way the project had been assigned that it would be completed in the next year.

Ms. Day commented the project would be ongoing and would include the addition of new artwork and she described it as an insurance asset management document.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENT: UPCOMING EVENTS

a. Members Share Art Related Events

Commissioner Mehas commented on the number of resignations from the RACC/PAAC and recommended exit interviews as a future agenda item. He also asked about plans for orientation for new Commissioners.

Chair Beaulieu reported that new Commissioners would receive training from City Departments and she recommended current Commissioners also take advantage of any training opportunities. Orientation for new Commissioners would be provided but another new Commissioner was anticipated to be appointed before that would be done. She also commented that Ms. Day was great about speaking with Commissioners about any ideas and was great about letting Commissioners know what additional information was needed to consider a project. She highlighted how the RACC/PAAC could move its ideas forward.

Commissioner Mehas spoke to the advantages of brainstorming sessions and hoped to share ideas and then consider what direction to take on new projects.

Chair Beaulieu suggested that brainstorming time could be added to future agendas.

Ms. Day introduced Nannette Beacham, the City's new Economic Development Director who could provide more information about on-boarding for new Commissioners.

Nannette Beacham, Economic Development Director, confirmed that there were training opportunities for new City Councilmembers and new members of the City's Boards/Commissions/Committees, with information to be provided when available.

Commissioner Mehas asked about the current chain of command and was informed by Ms. Beacham that as the new Economic Development Director, she was responsible for the Richmond Port, real estate, environmental initiatives, the Richmond Housing Authority and the RACC. She emphasized the City remained short staffed and it helped to be involved with a number of departments with everyone supporting one-another.

Vice Chair Kirk reported she had been a member of the RACC/PAAC longer than the normal term. She was no longer a resident of the City of Richmond, was now a resident of the City of Berkeley, and while she would like to help on-board new Commissioners, she would likely leave the RACC/PAAC at the end of March.

Chair Beaulieu thanked Vice Chair Kirk for her tenure on the RACC/PAAC.

Ms. Day explained for the benefit of new Commissioners that many Commissioners had remained on the RACC/PAAC beyond their terms given the challenges with the former Mayor appointing new Commissioners. With a new Mayor, she looked forward to a full complement of the RACC/PAAC, and Chair Beaulieu concurred.

IX. DISCUSSION WITH NEW COUNCILMEMBERS, NEW COMMISSIONERS and GUESTS

Chair Beaulieu asked the new Commissioners and the Council Liaison to introduce themselves and provide details on their desire to be a member of the RACC/PAAC and what they hoped to accomplish.

Council Liaison Sohelia Bana was honored to be present and listen to the comments from the RACC/PAAC. She explained that she wrote poetry and short stories and was willing to participate in any workshops. She provided an overview of her family, education and professional background and her immigration from Iran.

Council Liaison Bana also spoke to her interest in art that validated people like herself, and described what she envisioned as a dissent project and having something in the community that expressed a portion of what she had gone through in her past, which validated and connected people to others and brought the community together, and while she was uncertain how it could be done, she envisioned a modular piece of artwork. She commented on the fact that a large percentage of Richmond residents were foreign born like herself, and she hoped to work with the Economic Development Department to make the City of Richmond a destination location. She also hoped the RACC/PAAC would be able to help her find a project and she referenced a Request for Proposal (RFP) from the Coastal Conservancy she had shared with staff, which was what she had in mind but which she needed help to consider.

Chair Beaulieu suggested the RACC/PAAC could brainstorm the idea to create a space or way to illuminate Council Liaison Bana's ideas in the immigrant community through art installations but she was uncertain the RFP with the Coastal Conservancy was an appropriate option given the restriction criteria for such grants.

Commissioner Kozma-Kennedy referred to an Iranian artist who was involved in the Green Movement who Council Liaison Bana could contact for more information.

Carole Porter commented that she had shared her background at the last RACC/PAAC meeting. She was interested in various layers of art and she loved mentoring young people and working with Generation Z and millennials to keep them informed and engaged holistically in the hopes that they would continue the important work being done. She looked forward to being on board with the RACC/PAAC as soon as possible.

Commissioner Bell commented on the challenges in finding employment in 2007, which had led him to volunteer for the Writer's Connection, a program for middle and high school students to write essays and where he had worked with Berkeley students. He emphasized that giving back and helping unrepresented youth to be seen and shine was an important focus for him and his goal was to learn and have great conversations as a member of the RACC/PAAC. He looked forward to working with everyone and giving back so the next generation of the underprivileged child could shine, glow and be positive about their own work and being represented in the City of Richmond.

Commissioner Kozma-Kennedy had been struck by the RACC/PAAC's passion and love for the community and working with youth and establishing a new generation mentality, which was much like the teacher in everyone, with Commissioners serving as facilitators, teachers and artists and which brought their life experiences with them to offer new perspectives. Given the end of the pandemic officially on February 28, 2023, she suggested the last two years had been hard on people, and she thanked everyone who had served and who was now ready to pick up and move ahead.

Commissioner Kozma-Kennedy also detailed her family and education, stated her wife was also very involved in the arts and had grown up in Richmond, and as a new resident of Richmond herself, she was glad to be back in the East Bay. Art education was her passion. She highlighted her background as a sculpture installation artist and other side projects with background in welding, foundry casting, work with the Public Art Committee in the City of Emeryville pre-pandemic, work with SF MOMA, and who taught artists how to present themselves. She suggested that city art was the next big step for many artists and she was interesting in helping with workshops and getting people acclimated with City procedures.

Kaelen Van Cura, stated she too had provided comments at the prior RACC/PAAC meeting about her background in fine art and her online fashion jewelry business and also highlighted her educational and professional background. She was interested in giving back to the community, wanted to be more involved in City of Richmond events, and was excited to get the word out that Richmond had an arts program. She wanted to work with emerging artists and had experience in bureaucracy and getting things done. She emphasized the importance of young artists seeing themselves in their community and having civic pride and a stake in the community.

Chair Beaulieu welcomed the new Commissioners and encouraged communication with her and staff to partner on some of the work of the RACC/PAAC. She was grateful for everyone's enthusiasm and background and looked forward to working with everyone.

Council Liaison Bana invited all Commissioners to visit and tour her office.

Commissioner Mehas spoke to the overwhelming amount of talent on the RACC/PAAC and he looked forward to working as a team. He otherwise requested a list of all Commissioners with their name and email and Ms. Day confirmed that could be provided.

Ms. Day reiterated the City Council should appoint two additional Commissioners to the RACC/PAAC at its next meeting. She otherwise commented that after March 1, 2023, the RACC/PAAC would transition to live meetings with the March 9, 2023 meeting to be in-person at City Hall, Civic Center Plaza.

Ms. Beacham clarified an opinion was still being sought from the City Attorney but confirmed the likelihood that the City would return to in-person meetings based on the Governor's ruling to end the State of Emergency related to the pandemic on February 28, 2023 and the rules that governed attendance. While there would be some exceptions, she suggested they would not apply to a small Commission such as the RACC/PAAC.

Ms. Porter suggested there was a necessity to meet in person but if one was sick or traveling that individual should be allowed to participate remotely. Being able to meet remotely offered flexibility and was a big benefit to the RACC/PAAC and to the success of the projects being considered.

Chair Beaulieu was disappointed with the need to return to in-person meetings since she found the Zoom system had worked well. She suggested they were not out of the pandemic and there were other illnesses that may impact people such as the elderly who would be at risk in group settings.

Commissioner Mehas commented he had been sick with COVID and had this meeting been in-person he would have been absent.

Ms. Day advised that staff would keep the RACC/PAAC apprised of the status of the meetings once staff had more information.

Chair Beaulieu asked that staff forward the RACC/PAAC comments on the meeting format to the appropriate staff and Ms. Beacham confirmed the comments would be passed along.

Ms. Porter thanked the Chair and Ms. Day for the information provided to new Commissioners and recognized and thanked them for their dedication and hard work.

X. ADJOURN until March 9, 2023

On motion by Commissioner Mehas, seconded by Commissioner Bell, and carried unanimously by voice vote to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m. to a Regular Meeting of the RACC/PAAC on March 9, 2023.