

**RICHMOND ARTS AND CULTURE COMMISSION (RACC)
PUBLIC ART ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAAC)
In-Person Meeting
450 Civic Center Plaza – City Hall Building – Richmond Room
Richmond, California
Regular Meeting Minutes
October 9, 2025
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.**

Present: Vice-Chair Kiara Kempfski, Commissioner Ted Bell and Council Liaison Claudia Jimenez

Absent: Chair Arleide Santos and Commissioner Carole Porter

Staff Present: Arts & Culture Manager Winifred Day; Economic Development Director Nannette Beacham and Administrative Assistant, Arts & Culture Division Jordon Nesbitt

Arts & Culture Manager Winifred Day announced that given the lack of a quorum of RACC members, no action could be taken on the listed action items on the agenda.

I. WELCOME / CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

The RACC/PAAC Regular Meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Kempfski at 7:07 p.m.

Vice-Chair Kempfski read into the record the following Land Acknowledgement Statement:

This is an open session meeting, and before I call the meeting to order, I want to acknowledge that we are gathered on the ancestral and traditional land of the Ohlone people, who have cared for this land for generations. We stand by equity, inclusion, and justice in the arts, ensuring all voices are heard and respected. This Commission keeps Richmond residents informed, engages public participation in the arts, advises city leaders on arts policies and funding, and oversees public art projects. It works to make arts and culture more accessible and impactful for the Richmond community.

2. ACTION ITEMS

No action was taken due to the lack of a quorum with the items held over to the next RACC meeting.

- a. **APPROVE October 9, 2025 RACC/PAAC Meeting Agenda**
- b. **APPROVE September 11, 2025 RACC/PAAC Meeting Minutes**

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Cordell Hindler, Richmond, reported the City Council would consider appointments to City Commissions at a meeting in October, date to be determined; he planned to attend the October 30, 2025 Youth Council meeting to encourage interest in filling the remaining vacancies on the RACC; and the Contra Costa Mayors Conference would be held on December 4, 2025, in the City of Pinole, R.V.S.P. required, cost \$70 per person.

4. MAYOR'S OFFICE – City Council Liaison Report (Tamayo)

Council Liaison Jimenez reported the California State Auditor had removed the City of Richmond from its list of cities considered to be financially high-risk, which was great news, and she thanked the City Manager and staff who worked hard to ensure the City was not at a high risk financially.

5. VOTING ITEM – Accept Main Library Finalists (2 art contracts)

Ms. Day reported the RACC had been provided information on the Richmond Main Library Renovation Project, Public Art Commission, Phase 1 Summary, which detailed the Request for Proposal (RFP) and scoring procedure for the project. Two locations had been identified for the artwork; the main adult reading area and the children's reading area. A total of eight applications were received, six made the shortlist. No action could be taken due to the lack of a quorum, but the RACC was asked to consider the recommendation from the Selection Panel which included participation from Commissioner Bell along with representatives from the Library Commission, Library staff and Poet Laureate Stephen Sharpe.

Commissioner Bell found all of the artists to be talented and he was glad to see their gifts and how they wanted to represent the City of Richmond. He was pleased they were able to recommend two artists versus one to provide two different artistic approaches, with the Selection Panel and all those involved having embraced the process.

Ms. Day reported there had been feedback from other City staff who had been informally watching the project and who had shared the same positive comments.

Economic Development Director Nannette Beacham suggested the RACC take the opportunity to review the displays of the artwork with the knowledge there would be another opportunity for input given the lack of a quorum. If Commissioners had any questions, they should be able to be answered by the next meeting when the RACC would be asked to take a vote.

At this time, the RACC members present took the opportunity to review the displays of the artwork.

The two finalists were identified as Rachel Wolfe-Goldsmith for the Interior Main Reading Room and Debra Koppman for the Interior Children's Reading Room.

Ms. Day and Administrative Assistant, Arts & Culture Division, Jordon Nesbitt walked through the scoring process, the feedback from the Selection Panel and why the Selection Panel had selected the top artists. It was clarified that none of the murals would be painted directly on the walls given that the entire building was undergoing renovation, with the work to be done in the artist's studio and to be applied like wallpaper consisting of polytab material. One of the pieces would include mosaic tiles to be applied to the wall. In terms of maintenance, the mosaic tiles would involve minimal maintenance since the tiles would be color fast and would not fade.

Commissioner Bell reported the Library had an Interior Designer on the team, who met with some of the artists. He understood the Interior Designer liked the approach proposed for the children's reading area, which carried a lot of weight in the Selection Panel's voting decision.

Vice-Chair Kempski understood modifications had been requested to the proposal for the adult reading area in terms of the animal placement. She asked if there had been any other requested changes to the artwork.

Ms. Day explained that the requested changes had to do with animals that were not native to the City of Richmond, with a request for no camels or alligators. Such modifications were part of the typical process in that once the artist was selected, another meeting would be held to discuss certain adjustments based on additional feedback, and once the artist was under contract those adjustments would be made. The installation would be separate from the art itself in that California State Licensed Contractors had to be hired for the installation since the artists were not expected to provide that service.

Vice-Chair Kempfski asked about the timeline for completion of the artwork.

Ms. Day advised it would be another year before the Main Library renovations were complete but the design decisions had to be made as soon as possible to allow the design team to do its work and factor in other decisions. She added, when asked, there would be individual pieces of artwork to be purchased as part of the second phase of the project, with another opportunity for artists. For the children's area, the project scope was \$150,000 and for the adult reading area the project scope was \$75,000, with an additional amount for installation. There would be separate funds for individual pieces of artwork, likely in the range of \$5,000 each, using the same approach that had been used for the Civic Center Plaza Renovation. Those pieces would not be selected until 2026.

Council Liaison Jimenez again clarified the artwork being proposed by the two main finalists and it was clarified the children's reading area had a larger area than the adult reading area.

6. RACC PROJECTS (Day)

a. NPA Mini Grants RFP Mandatory Meetings Update

Ms. Day reported that \$110,000 was the total this year for NPA Mini Grants. There had been two mandatory sessions for the potential applicants, one held on September 17, 2025 and the other on October 1, 2025. A total of 40 people attended the September 17 session and 30 people attended the October 1 in-person session. There had been a request for in-scope drafting sessions to help people fill out the NPA Mini Grant applications. The RACC was provided the presentation slides from the mandatory sessions that had been prepared in collaboration with other City departments.

The deadline for the NPA Mini Grant applications was Friday, October 17, 2025. Scoring sheets and all documents would be provided to the RACC on October 23, 2025, with the top candidates to be interviewed prior to the November 13, 2025 RACC meeting and subsequently be considered by the City Council at its December 16, 2025 meeting. If the RACC had to wait to take action at its December 2025 meeting, City Council consideration would not occur until January 2026.

Vice-Chair Kempfski suggested staff coordinate with the RACC via email to hold time for the interviews of the NPA Mini Grant applicants to ensure that work was done prior to the November RACC meeting.

Council Liaison Jimenez reported she had spoken to some people who had complained about the cumbersome application process including the insurance requirements. She asked why the City was imposing such requirements rather than supporting the artists. There was also concern with the 50 percent payment at the beginning and the end of the process, which was a challenge for the artists as compared to other cities that provided payments based on completion of the artwork. She would like to have a larger conversation about these issues, particularly given that the grants were so small.

Ms. Beacham acknowledged those concerns had been discussed before and suggested the perception of the process had changed from 2024 to 2025, with staff having spent time to educate applicants before they got to the point of having to adhere to the requirements. She acknowledged the NPA Mini Grants were small grants to include such stringent requirements, which seemed overwhelming in terms of the insurance requirements in particular, but those regulations had been imposed by risk management. She added the change from the total NPA Mini Grant allocation from \$65,000 to \$110,000 was an attempt to try to respond to some of the concerns and allow the artists the ability to incorporate those additional costs in the bid proposals. This was also an attempt by the City Manager to make it more profitable for artists and less of a burden.

Council Liaison Jimenez did not want to burden the artist and possibly more flexibility could be considered. She again questioned why Richmond was asking for such stringent requirements, whereas other cities like San Francisco did not. She noted many of the artists who attended the workshops were really concerned and these requirements discouraged artists from making application. She suggested it should not be made so difficult, cumbersome and costly for the artist since that was contrary to promoting more artists in Richmond. She would like to see the RACC advocate for a change in the requirements and asked for feedback on what policies were making it more difficult for artists.

Ms. Beacham explained that she had not attended the mandatory sessions, but risk management had and they had done a really good job explaining the why but it still didn't help the applicants financially.

Ms. Day stated in the past the NPA Mini Grants involved a four-page application and subsequently legal and others encouraged that more information be provided and the workshops be mandatory. Given the number of participants in the recent workshops, it was possible that more applicants would apply. She asked whether the City Council could work with risk management to reduce the insurance requirements.

Council Liaison Jimenez suggested the RACC could recommend policy changes to the City Council for consideration.

Staff and the RACC provided feedback on the challenges making it more difficult for artists including state and federal regulations (noting some cities turned a blind eye to those regulations), State Contract Licensing Board requirements and insurance requirements.

Vice-Chair Kempinski spoke to her experience volunteering with the San Francisco Arts Commission and the fact that some wealthier cities had a higher tolerance for insurance premiums versus others, which could be a factor in this case, but there was the opportunity to research this topic more.

Council Liaison Jimenez again suggested that a policy change could be recommended to the City Council for consideration. She emphasized the need to support artists. She would like to start that conversation at the next meeting and see whether there was interest to make such a recommendation to the City Council.

Ms. Day suggested risk management and all stakeholders that would be impacted should be at the same table.

Vice-Chair Kempinski suggested if the topic was on the next agenda, risk management should be invited to attend.

Ms. Day suggested between now and the next RACC meeting, the members could brainstorm and come up with something. She noted there were some state regulations that could not be ignored. She reiterated there had been 70 participants for the two mandatory sessions, which told her those people all got the same information and understood the rules and regulations. She was confident they would have as many people as possible apply for the NPA Mini Grants.

Council Liaison Jimenez wanted to see the RACC be as accessible as possible to new artists.

b. Monuments & Memorials Parks and Rec Policy/Form Update

There was no report.

7. Arts Corridor Project Update

Ratha Lai, Critical Impact Consulting, representing Richmond Renaissance, an artist collective, provided a PowerPoint presentation and progress report on the Richmond Arts Corridor, which highlighted the status of work over the summer, including a built-in environment site visit analysis, completion and launch of the #Imagine Richmond Survey, an online information session scheduled for October 22, 2025 from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Zoom, and the submittal of a California Cultural District Application, although the City had not advanced to the next round and expanded outreach proposal. Expanded outreach strategies included direct outreach and canvassing, targeted focus groups and public information session/celebration of the arts with all strategies recommended for consideration.

Mr. Lai also highlighted the resource contributions to the Arts Corridor Project, deliverables checklist on what tasks had been completed as part of Phases One and Two, and the tasks planned for Phases Three and Four. He welcomed any questions.

Ms. Beacham asked where more outreach was needed.

Mr. Lai commented that direct outreach and canvassing was the top priority to reach businesses and residents and while door knocking was ideal that was not always feasible. The use of flyers and QR codes was the goal.

Council Liaison Jimenez reported the City Council had approved \$250,000 for the Arts Corridor Project and she asked the status of the funds, particularly since she understood the plan would likely cost far more than allocated.

Ms. Beacham clarified \$50,000 was for the creation of the Strategic Plan, with the remaining \$200,000 for its execution. She confirmed the Strategic Plan would cost far more than \$200,000.

Mr. Lai explained they were fundraising to raise more funds for the project, and possibly the City Council may allocate more funds for the implementation and planning phases.

Vice-Chair Kempski commented she had seen the outreach and asked how it was being captured and whether there was volume on the feedback being received.

Mr. Lai advised around 400 people had participated in the listening sessions and he hoped to have that amount of participation for the survey. There was a website that had information on the key themes received, which included intergenerational connections and beautification.

Ms. Day understood \$50,000 had been allocated for the Strategic Plan with the next step implementation. She understood Mr. Lai was soliciting for an additional \$40,000 to complete the Strategic Plan and she asked for clarification.

Mr. Lai explained that the additional \$40,000 would be for the expanded outreach given the community feedback for more outreach efforts. He offered example scenarios on the proposed outreach strategies including the visual beautification of the Arts Corridor as part of Phase One, such as looking at art murals, art installations and possible events. The Policy Review Report for the project included information on how other cities had been able to encourage more arts and culture, identify different barriers to participation and how to reduce those barriers, and in some instances, some cities participated in cultural events by offering fee waivers. Those were the types of things he would like to see in the implementation process along with the expanded outreach in the community. The reason he would recommend doing that now, as part of the planning process, was that people were ready and they could have the first touch of the Arts Corridor and get more people involved.

Mr. Lai further clarified that while there were continued efforts to solicit funds from other foundations that had been able to contribute funds to the existing planning process, those groups were currently unable to cover the additional \$40,000 being requested. He again explained the expanded outreach strategies and clarified they were unable to canvas the entire Arts Corridor due to limited resources, but work with key stakeholders and canvas the neighborhoods around the stakeholders. As an example, they had been able to canvas the entire neighborhood around the Richmond Museum of History and Culture but not the entire Arts Corridor to reach out to all businesses and residents of the area, which was a strong recommendation to be done in an effort to prevent misunderstandings and provide clarification around the intent of the Arts Corridor. To date, close to 50 to 60 percent of the Arts Corridor had been canvassed. The recommendation for targeted focus groups was in response to requests from community groups to hold listening sessions. The public information session recommendation had been a request of City staff.

Ms. Day asked if the additional \$40,000 in funds was provided, how much more time would be needed to execute the strategies.

Mr. Lai stated without the additional funds they would be looking at a completion date of February 2026. If they had the additional funds for expanded outreach, they would look at a completion date of June 2026. If approved by the City Council, the expanded outreach efforts would not occur until the beginning of 2026, January through March, with all data to be compiled by June 2026.

Ms. Day thanked Mr. Lai for the updates and commented that the RACC would be discussing at its next meeting the appointment of a Liaison to serve on the Arts Corridor Committee who would be able to provide regular updates to the RACC.

Council Liaison Jimenez acknowledged a request for additional funds from the City would require a vote from the City Council.

Mr. Lai advised City staff had been super helpful to map this out and he thanked staff for the assistance.

Ms. Beacham clarified the survey could run concurrently at the same time as the expanded outreach efforts, and Mr. Lai suggested that would make the most sense to have those efforts run concurrently and was an option they would likely want to pursue. He also clarified an extensive mailing list would be used for the survey.

As to whether there were potential funders for the additional \$40,000 that had already been solicited, and in response to Ms. Day, Mr. Lai advised they had not solicited anyone yet but would consider soliciting additional funds for the Arts Corridor in general, not just for the expanded outreach. There were active fundraising efforts for his organization and for the Richmond Arts Corridor. The intent of the Strategic Plan was how to best use funds to get the best return on investment and elevate the City of Richmond as other cities that had Art Districts.

Mr. Lai also confirmed his organization had unsuccessfully applied for receipt of the Bloomberg Grant in the amount of \$100,000. The grant focused on traffic calming measures, with the challenge being the Richmond Arts Corridor project did not yet have enough foot traffic. Given application had been made and the grant language already set up, he was confident they would be competitive in a year or so when there was more foot traffic.

Council Liaison Jimenez asked whether the organization would reapply for the California Cultural District Application.

Mr. Lai was uncertain when the application would be released again since it had been ten years since the application had last been released. He reported the panelists' feedback for the City's application was good, with four out of five finding the City of Richmond very good and one out of five finding the City needed more description and clarity for the plan.

Ms. Day understood the California Cultural District Application was a two-year grant in the amount of \$10,000, \$5,000 each year. She recognized the time spent on the grant application and asked whether they could be more strategic in the next round and request a larger amount.

Mr. Lai acknowledged that while the grant amount was only \$10,000 it was more about getting into the circle of being designated a Cultural District.

8. FY 2025-26 Budget Review – Wish List

Ms. Day asked that the RACC discuss its Wish List items to be presented to the City Council in December for consideration in the budget for the following year.

Vice-Chair Kempski commented that in 2024, the RACC had four meetings where they had discussed Budget Wish List items but no action was taken. Since 50 percent of the RACC was not present, she hoped they could get to a Wish List digitally that could be brought forward for discussion at the next RACC meeting.

Mr. Nesbitt commented that one of the items that had been discussed during the prior RACC meeting was the use of tablets for RACC members to review documents.

Vice-Chair Kempski suggested Commissioners use their own devices to view digital documents. She clarified she was not advocating for budgeting for digital devices to be provided to the RACC, but the use of one's own digital device and that there be a move towards digital communication and not the use of paper.

Ms. Day and Mr. Nesbitt also identified prior requests for additional swag items and initiatives the RACC was looking to start or do, with the costs and reasoning needing to be identified to allow staff to map it out.

Vice-Chair Kempski advised she could research last year's discussion as a starting point.

9. RACC COMMUNICATION UPDATE

a. Arts and Cultural Calendar

Mr. Nesbitt reported no events had been scheduled as yet for the Arts and Cultural Calendar other than the NPA Mini Grant application deadline date. He reported that the RACC's Biannual Report, the request to approve the Allen Brothers mosaic tabletop contract, the contract for artwork to install the Alexander Bowman Mural at the Shields-Reid Community Center and the installation contract for the IMTT sculpture project, would be considered by the City Council at a meeting in November. The RACC was asked to provide information on any City-sponsored events that could be posted on the Arts and Cultural Calendar to be posted on the RACC website.

Ms. Beacham reported the deadline for the submittal of information that could be included in the City Manager's Weekly Newsletter was every Wednesday at 12:00 p.m.

Ms. Day asked that any information to be considered for the City Manager's Newsletter be provided to Mr. Nesbitt the Monday before the Wednesday deadline.

b. Website Updates

Mr. Nesbitt reported the RACC website was in need of a complete overhaul and he planned to work on that over the next month as much as possible.

c. Other

Vice-Chair Kempinski reported the Marketing/Communications Committee had not met due to the lack of available members.

9. ADJOURNMENT until November 13, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m. to the November 13, 2025 Regular Meeting at 7:00 p.m.