

**RICHMOND ARTS AND CULTURE COMMISSION (RACC)  
PUBLIC ART ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAAC)  
Special Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, January 26, 2023  
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. via Zoom**

Present: Chair Lynson Beaulieu, Vice Chair Melissa Kirk; and Commissioners Tom Herriman\*, Emily Leighton and Phillip Mehas  
\*Arrived after Roll Call

Absent: Council Liaison Melvin Willis

Staff Present: Arts & Culture Manager Winifred Day; Administrative Analyst Shané Johnson; and Stephanie Ny, Community Services Department – Recreation Division

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

The RACC/PAAC meeting was called to order by Chair Beaulieu at 7:04 p.m.

**II. ACTION ITEMS:**

**a. APPROVE January 26, 2023 RACC/PAAC Meeting Agenda**

Commissioner Mehas requested that Item VI. Committee Reports, sub Item a, be expanded to allow a discussion of eligibility related to the NPA Mini Grants, which the Chair stated could be discussed as part of the item as amended.

Commissioner Leighton reported she had been contacted by the Arts & Culture Manager regarding the budget for social media advertisements, which she asked be included as sub Item c, under Item VII. Discussion Items.

Motion by Commissioner Mehas, seconded by Commissioner Leighton to approve the January 26, 2023 RACC/PAAC Meeting Agenda, as modified, carried unanimously by a Roll Call vote.

**b. APPROVE December 8, 2022 RACC Meeting Minutes**

Motion by Commissioner Leighton, seconded by Vice Chair Kirk to approve the December 8, 2022 RACC meeting minutes, as submitted, carried unanimously by a Roll Call vote.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

Chair Beaulieu recognized attendees present via Zoom who were potentially new RACC/PAAC Commissioners including: Melody Kozma-Kennedy, Ted Bell II, Kaelen Van Cura, Mala Mahlebshian, Carole Porter and Kyanna Williams who introduced themselves.

#### **IV. PRESENTATION**

##### **a. Regina Gilligan – Bridgemakers**

Regina Gilligan described Bridgemakers Art (BMA), a 501c non-profit operating in the City of Richmond, whose mission was to serve and enrich community culture, pride and involvement by providing public exposure to art and a means for participation in creative arts, crafts and maker fabrication technologies. She identified the intent to pass the non-profit with its website, You Tube Channel and other media connections to a new group with a new vision for arts in the City of Richmond. While she was interested in helping in that regard, she was not interested in a leadership position.

Ms. Gilligan reported that BMA had been formed by a group of artists, curators, an accountant, a lawyer and a grant writer at the Bridge Storage Gallery in 2014. BMA had received gallery space and publicity from the owner of Bridge Storage and for the next three years had presented exhibitions and community arts programs and had provided successful grants for community projects; however, the Ghost Ship Fire in Oakland in 2016 had led to the closure of many art spaces and had ended BMA's relationship with Bridge Storage. In 2020, an on-line political exhibit had been planned titled *Holding the Line* in honor of an individual who was a driving force of BMA. In 2012, BMA organized *One Bay*, an environmental show reflecting the beauty, history and environmental challenges facing the San Francisco Bay, with community events at Point Molate, which had been hoped to become an annual event with assistance from the City of Richmond.

Ms. Gilligan stated she could use help to provide a connection with artists and art supporters to create a new vision for BMA. The current network of BMA artists was small and aging with little support to continue. She hoped the RACC database could reach a larger audience or could offer other ideas. She had reached out to artists in Oakland, which had a more ambitious program and something along those lines would be a wonderful asset for the arts community in Richmond. She suggested a collective approach between BMA and the City of Richmond would cut costs and streamline paperwork and she identified potential options.

Ms. Gilligan added that as a young artist in San Francisco, that city had rented several city-owned buildings slated for redevelopment at low cost to artists and galleries. The City of Richmond owned buildings that were unoccupied which could be a possibility for a non-profit such as BMA that could have a place for California Arts Commission Grants for youth development or technical assistance to assist the entire community. She had attended an artists' meeting at the Richmond Arts Center (RAC) with the Arts Build Community, and had been inspired by what had been happening in Richmond, which meeting included a graffiti artist who was looking for access to walls for artwork. She suggested there were several sites near the Miller Knox Regional Shoreline that could be considered for such an endeavor, or an art common support group could help navigate those hurdles for artists.

Chair Beaulieu thanked Ms. Gilligan for the information but she was uncertain the request being made of the RACC was the role of the RACC. There could be a way to provide information on the RACC Facebook page to notify the community of the need to organize and sustain an art collective for the City of Richmond. She added that some of the activities described were already being provided in the community.

Commissioner Leighton thanked Ms. Gilligan for her work in the community but agreed it was not the role of the RACC to take over the BMA. There were ways to support or assist artists in the future, and there was a goal for the next year to fill the RACC's artists' roster when grants were available. If BMA could provide its artist roster it could be added to the RACC artist list. There were also mini grant opportunities with some crossover available.

Commissioner Mehas also thanked Ms. Gilligan for the presentation and agreed that recognizing many of BMA's accomplishments could be part of the grants the RACC awarded each year, such as the NPA Mini Grants.

Ms. Gilligan explained she was looking for names or organizations that the RACC had access to that she did not. She was aware of the NPA Mini Grant program but there was no place in the City where artists were listed.

Chair Beaulieu reported that a list of artists was currently under development and the City was also developing some opportunities for artists to do some capacity building work. There was also a Public Art Master Plan under development, with group discussions on what was needed in the City of Richmond in terms of arts and artists, all intended to be more responsive to the broader artist community in the City. There could be aspects Ms. Gilligan had identified which the RACC was trying to develop within the City and within the work of the Richmond Arts & Culture Department. She encouraged Ms. Gilligan to share her list of artists with the Arts & Culture Manager and share the resources BMA had developed to ensure the RACC was integrating resources BMA had developed into the work it had been doing as a Commission and as the Arts & Culture Department.

## **V. DISCUSSION and ACTION ITEM**

- a. Approve Recommendation to Accept Shields Reid Five Finalists for Five Art Sites, Semi-Finalist Stipends, Art Selection Panel Stipends

Stephanie Ny, Community Services Department – Recreation Division, presented the staff report and reported the City of Richmond had been awarded \$8 million from the State of California to renovate Shields Reid Park, with a major part of the project to be new art work at five sites at the Community Center and the park. A concept plan of the park was provided, which identified the five art sites, some of which had multiple components.

Site 1 consisted of mosaic tile art at the front of the Community Center; Site 2 proposed four pieces at the back of the Community Center to consist of four panels of mural artwork; and Site 3 near and around the new habitat garden would consist of three-dimensional art; Site 4 proposed the construction of a new stage and performance area with two photographic pieces of artwork on either side of the stage; and Site 5 would be a final piece of artwork at the gateway park entrance.

Ms. Ny described the Request for Proposal (RFP) process for artists and reported there had been 17 respondents, 12 of whom had been invited to participate as part of Phase Two of the project. Five finalists had been chosen and samples of the concept artwork had been provided in the staff report. Panelists would be paid a design fee and stipend.

The RACC was asked to approve the recommendation to accept the Shields Reid five finalists for the five art sites, semi-finalists stipends and art selection and panel stipends.

Motion by Commissioner Mehas, seconded by Vice Chair Kirk to approve the recommendation to accept the Shields Reid five finalists for the five art sites, semi-finalists stipends and art selection and panel stipends, passed unanimously by a Roll Call vote.

Chair Beaulieu reported she had participated as a panelist, the process had been amazing, and she encouraged everyone to view the setup presentation at City Hall for what would be an exciting project for North Richmond.

Commissioner Herriman reported he had viewed the models displayed at the Community Center and had been impressed with the outstanding quality entries and display of talent.

## **VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- a. NPA Mini Grant Committee Report – RFP Results (Kirk, Mehas)  
PAAC December Report (Chair Beaulieu)

Commissioner Mehas reported they were reaching the end of difficult, complicated and unnecessary requirements for the applicants with the final contracts to be approved by the City. He emphasized that RACC Commissioners had clearly stated, with feedback during public meetings, that the mini grant process was too difficult and cumbersome and should be streamlined. He suggested there had been unnecessary questions on the application and he had received complaints from those trying to get through the process. He asked that this issue be agendaized for the next RACC/PAAC meeting, with the Arts & Culture Manager to review the situation.

Chair Beaulieu understood most of the contracts had been completed and that the Arts & Culture Manager had been constrained by the City's requirements, and while the RACC could continue to look at the application process and provide feedback to streamline the process, many of the items were not under the RACC's purview. She was confident applicants would get through the process with staff support but agreed anything that could be done to make the process easier should be considered.

Commissioner Leighton asked that a review of the existing application be considered as an action item for the February 2023 RACC meeting to allow staff to review and note any items that could be removed for discussion by the RACC.

Administrative Analyst Shané Johnson agreed that the contract process for the City of Richmond was challenging and frustrating and that staff was aware of the concerns.

The process had recently been changed and staff had pushed back internally. Future discussions could potentially make the process easier.

Chair Beaulieu wanted it to be clear it was not the Arts & Culture Manager making the process difficult for applicants, it was the City's way of doing business. She was pleased staff was aware of the concerns and would be making an effort to refine the process.

Commissioner Mehas pointed out the mini grant application process involved six pages, which was a concern and he looked forward to a future discussion, and Chair Beaulieu asked that Commissioner Mehas review the application, mark it up with suggested revisions and submit it to staff prior to the next RACC meeting.

Commissioner Mehas preferred to verbalize his concerns as part of a future discussion.

Chair Beaulieu encouraged Commissioners to review the application, if possible, and submit any comments to staff for potential modifications to allow the RACC to be prepared for a discussion at its next meeting.

At this time, Chair Beaulieu provided the PAAC December Report and reiterated that work was progressing with the contracts for the mini grants; work was also progressing on the Richmond Country Club Parchester Village Project; the repair of the Fish sculpture on the Richmond Art Center (RAC); and contract amendments for the Mark Metz sculpture for the West Contra Costa Family Justice Center (WCCFJC). The Osprey sculpture installation had been completed; work continues to update the RACC website; and staff continued work on signage contracts for the Osprey sculpture and Ookwe Park. The Public Art Program brochure involved multiple rounds of edits, staff had administrated the five art awards competition for Shields Reid Park and the large art commissions Semi-Finalists have been selected by a Selection Panel. Restoration and maintenance activities continued with the Archie Held Sculpture, the RAC fish sculpture repair, Ferry Building and Eel Grass sculpture, and job descriptions for the new administrative hire had been prepared and work continued with Barbara Goldstein for the Public Art Master Plan, and more.

Chair Beaulieu reported that Ms. Goldstein had submitted a progress summary in December 2022 and had recently sent another update on the Public Art Master Plan. She briefed the RACC on the numerous activities Ms. Goldstein and her group had performed since November 2022, and reported that community outreach would continue through February 2023, to include business owners' focus groups, other focus groups and a pop-up event at RYSE, and with the survey to close at the end of January.

Commissioner Mehas asked the status of the WCCFJC and Ookwe Park signage and was informed by Chair Beaulieu the artist for the WCCFJC sculpture had been provided an extension of his contract, with the project to be completed by June if not sooner.

Arts & Culture Manager Winifred Day clarified that Mark Metz, the artist for the WCCFJC had health challenges which had caused a delay, although there should be an inspection prior to installation which was expected in the next 30-days. The Ookwe Park signage fabrication was underway and expected to be installed in the next 30-days.

Final edits to the Public Art brochure is underway with printing and posting on the City website also expected in the next 30-days. Ms. Goldstein was in the process of scheduling meetings with the new Mayor and Councilmembers with comments to be included in the Five-Year Master Plan process and RACC input would be included.

Chair Beaulieu reported she had tried to submit an email to the new Mayor advising of the challenges appointing new RACC members and asking that appointments be made as soon as possible to allow the RACC to be complete. While the email had not gone through, she had been speaking with staff to get that communication challenge resolved.

b. Richmond Commission Art Site RFQ – (Herriman, Leighton)

Ms. Day reported there had been a point-based scoring process since the last RACC meeting with four semi-finalists chosen with a deadline of February 7, 2023. An update would be provided at the March RACC meeting. The project involved a \$100,000 commission with three possible sites. Commissioners Herriman and Leighton had taken the lead for this project. The next selection panel will be held on February 15.

Commissioners Herriman and Leighton had nothing further to add to the report.

## VII. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. FY 2023-24 Budget Wish List

Commissioner Leighton reported the RACC had been provided a link to the FY 2023-24 Budget Wish List, which had not been finalized but which included possible priorities for the next year. She highlighted those priorities as website upgrades; increase Poet Laureate stipend and funding for event participants; increasing the mini grants from \$65,000 up to \$100,000; a small fund for individual culturally relevant days such as Pride, Juneteenth, and Cinco de Mayo; and the San Francisco Mime Troupe to be supplemented from \$3,000 to \$5,000 for special events.

Larger projects had been identified as Art on 23<sup>rd</sup> Street where artists could be invited to paint utility boxes or paint some functional art such as benches or planters, with Urban Tilth contacted regarding the cost for the maintenance of possible plantings; artist workshops and resources; and a contract with RAC to provide artists workshops and to gather resources. And as a major art piece, the start of a sculpture garden with possible cost estimates provided.

Commissioner Leighton asked the RACC to discuss the items with staff to refine the numbers to get the budget prepared for City Council approval.

Chair Beaulieu reported she had been in contact with Richmond resident Tamara Shiloh, the owner of Multicultural Children’s Bookstore, who did a lot of outreach in the community related to literacy and she had spoken to her about an art and literacy project to combine cultural literacy and art focused on young men of color with a national initiative, *Passing the Baton* about communities coming together working with young people to know and understand their culture and history.

Combining that with art and artists in the community would be a great project, which Chair Beaulieu asked be included in the FY 2023-24 Budget Wish List at the \$100,000 mark. She noted that project could be connected with local schools.

Chair Beaulieu suggested individuals from the community connecting with different cultural groups, talking and learning about their history and producing art projects could be considered in partnership with the RAC, where an exhibit could be displayed with art created using artists in the community to bring in culture, history and literacy.

Ms. Day explained that there were certain items on the FY 2023-24 Budget Wish List that were General Fund items and new items would be separate.

Commissioner Leighton understood that a project as described by the Chair would be in addition to funds received for some of the other projects identified such as the mini grants and Poet Laureate programs.

Commissioner Mehas liked the idea offered by the Chair which could fit into the cultural aspect of the RACC. He commented with respect to Art on 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and the painting of utility boxes that he had taken photographs of several utility boxes and had forwarded them to the Chair. Banners to add more color could be considered as well. Artist workshops was a good idea, with possible partnership with the RAC to teach classes and with grants issued by the RACC for Richmond artists.

Commissioner Leighton asked staff if a Literary Art Project line item for \$100,000 was added, as suggested, whether that would be sufficient to pass onto staff to finalize the FY 2023-24 Budget Wish List. She asked whether anything else was needed from the RACC before the list was presented to the City Council for consideration.

Commissioner Mehas asked for a spreadsheet of the current budget with the proposed items to be added or subtracted from the existing budget for the next RACC meeting.

In response to the Chair as to what items required City Council approval, Ms. Johnson advised the entire budget would require City Council approval. She reported that a budget kick-off meeting would start on January 31 and would run to February 17, 2023. If the RACC wanted to discuss the FY 2023-24 Budget Wish List again, it would have to hold a Special Meeting prior to its next regularly scheduled meeting. While there were available funds, even with the rough estimates, she could include those figures in the budget with the project details to be refined at a later date.

Given the funds were available for RACC use, Ms. Johnson did not anticipate there would be any requirement to reduce the budget for the RACC since once staff knew the intent of the funds it could be placed into the budget for City Council consideration. She also clarified the purpose of the one percent developer funds, which would roll over each year if not used and which would not be lost. She clarified that the City Council would not approve the budget until the May/June timeframe. Any concerns with the budget would be identified prior to that time.

Commissioner Leighton expressed the willingness to revise the FY 2023-24 Budget Wish List by adding the new line item for the Literary Art Project at \$100,000, with staff to do what needed to be done to get the budget request in prior to February 17.

Chair Beaulieu also suggested staff review the community wish list that Ms. Goldstein had submitted to see if there was anything on that list that could be added to the budget.

Commissioner Leighton referred to the comments provided by Ms. Goldstein during previous meetings and the request for functional art on the streets, which had inspired the recommendation for Art on 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, and if moving forward with another large project she hoped the locations and other details would be identified by Ms. Goldstein. She wanted to see the wish list be completed in the next two years but recognized there would be a lot of work required by the RACC, which could be a struggle.

Ms. Johnson suggested there would be flexibility to move things around and the option to take something to the City Council and request the appropriation of more funds.

Commissioner Mehas spoke to the differences between public art owned by the City or gifted to the City and public art owned by a corporation that would be responsible for its own maintenance and upkeep.

Ms. Day cited the Osprey sculpture as an example of artwork, once installed, which must be accepted by the City, and once accepted was owned by the City not the developer where the City was responsible for maintenance. She clarified the fiscal year started July 1 each year. If the RACC wanted a Special Meeting to discuss the Budget Wish list further it could be a virtual meeting but would have to happen in the next two weeks before a proposal was written to support the ideas to move forward, and to allow all items to be confirmed and ready to go with all details by April. She was working on an outline for technical workshops so that within the next week it could be forwarded to the RACC and as new projects came up there would be a technical assistance workshop so that artists were aware of all the moving parts of a project.

As an example, Ms. Day stated she was working on editing for new applications with new deadline dates for the NPA mini grants, had captured information from past NPA mini grant applications, and if the RACC wanted that process streamlined, it should be edited and streamlined within the next 30-days to allow staff to put it out by May for interviews, and approvals by July 1, 2023. She could distribute her edits to the RACC so that by the February RACC meeting the RACC could consider a final draft of the new applications to be ready for distribution to artists.

Chair Beaulieu again asked RACC Commissioners to provide their feedback to staff on streamlining the applications. She also asked Commissioner Leighton to finalize the FY 2023-24 Budget Wish List and email it to the RACC for final input. She also suggested the artists' workshop and resources line item be increased to \$50,000, which could be used to partner with RAC. She thanked Commissioner Leighton for her work and Ms. Johnson for her input on the budget process.



b. Bloomberg Grant for Temporary Public Art Projects

Chair Beaulieu reported she and Ms. Day had participated in a meeting call for the Bloomberg Grant. Ms. Day had decided the City did not have enough time to participate this go around but it could be considered as part of the next go around.

Ms. Day stated the Bloomberg Grant was a \$1 million grant that would have required more time to participate for this go around.

c. Social Media Budget

Vice Chair Kirk reported that Ms. Day had provided an email to her about a \$1,000 budget for social media advertising and suggested the RACC discuss the use of those funds, and Ms. Day clarified that \$1,000 was available for Facebook advertisements and she asked the Vice Chair to clarify, in writing, the items they could spend the funds on.

Vice Chair Kirk suggested the RACC discuss tying into a new website, and suggested someone be hired to do the actual work since she could write advertisements but was not an expert.

Commissioner Leighton commented that an administrative assistant could be someone who could provide assistance with social media advertising as part of the job description, and who could assist staff in creating some of that content.

Vice Chair Kirk suggested there could be advertisements on particular events, art projects, artists, Poet Laureate events and other options. She suggested the RACC should identify its priorities for such outreach, who it wanted to reach with the advertisements and what it wanted to accomplish.

Commissioner Leighton suggested the budget priorities could be evaluated as to what made sense to advertise, such as artists' workshops and resources, and the mini grants and how to provide outreach for those resources to let people know the types of services the RACC was providing.

Vice Chair Kirk explained that social media advertising was based on the number of clicks and the number of people that visit a website, among other things. She was not confident to be the only person to put something together, but Ms. Day expressed the willingness to work with her to craft a list of options that the \$1,000 could fund, to be identified for the next RACC meeting.

Chair Beaulieu commented that the FY 2023-24 Budget Wish List included an item for culturally specific events and could include a link to a calendar that could be used to advertise specific events or projects.

On a separate topic, Ms. Day commented that the Mayor had asked her for a list of potential RACC Commissioners and she expected someone from the Mayor's Office to reach out to RACC Commissioners to discuss the makeup of the RACC. She hoped new RACC Commissioners would be brought on-board in the next 30-days.

Commissioner Mehas emphasized the challenges bringing on new RACC Commissioners, pointed out RACC Commissioners were not required to be Richmond residents, and he was not a Richmond resident but had been a RACC Commissioner for years. As to the use of social media, he emphasized that staff had contacts and should contact those people to see how social media was being used in other jurisdictions.

Vice Chair Kirk suggested the RACC should discuss how to use social media whether it was intended to encourage people to attend the events the RACC supported, recruitment for more RACC Commissioners, more applicants or advertisement of events such as the art walk. She would prepare some ideas.

Chair Beaulieu asked the Vice Chair to kick-start the effort, as discussed, with the RACC to have further discussions at its next meeting.

### **VIII. December STAFF REPORT (Day)**

Ms. Day reported the items she had been working on had previously been discussed and identified. She asked that the attendees and potential new RACC Commissioners provide input on their backgrounds and interests.

### **IX. ANNOUNCEMENT: UPCOMING EVENTS**

#### **a. Members Share Art Related Events**

Chair Beaulieu reported the Art of the African Diaspora had opened a recent exhibit with a reception and a new group of artists' award winners for 2023-24, and she had been a juror who had helped to pick the winners. She had been impressed with the quality of the artwork and the number of attendees.

Ms. Day reported Americans for the Arts, a national art organization for art administrators and artists' conference would be held in the City of San Francisco June 16 through 17, 2023. At least five RACC Commissioners could be funded to attend the conference. More information would be provided at the next RACC meeting.

At this time, each Zoom attendee provided comments.

Kaelen Van Cura, a Richmond resident, spoke to her background as an artist with a full-time on-line jewelry business. She looked forward to having a say on what was occurring in the City of Richmond, had experience with social media advertisements and could help with that effort.

Mala Mahlebshian, commented on her experience with Facebook advertisements and suggested that \$1,000 was not enough in social media funding to reach a target audience. A long-time resident of the Bay Area and a fairly new resident of Richmond, she was unaware of City events, would like to see Richmond neighborhoods promoted and urged the use of art to promote the City of Richmond, which was something young residents connected with.

Melody Kozma-Kennedy, a current resident of Richmond and a former member of the Public Art Committee in the City of Emeryville, spoke to her work in the community and with emerging artists, and advised she was one of the main committee members who had worked on the mural program for the City of Emeryville and public and private partnerships, which had been a great way for local business owners to participate in the arts. She also commented on her sculpture and fine arts background and broad background for artwork having worked at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) for a number of years, and now served as the Project Manager for Facilities and Artists Programs for Headlands Center for the Arts in Sausalito.

Ted Bell II, detailed his background as a Berkeley and Richmond resident who loved the Bay Area, and his education in diverse cultures. As an Art Major and a person who used creativity through painting, drawing and poetry, he found the RACC would be an incredible opportunity for children who looked like him to have the opportunity to express themselves in a creative way and give back to the next generation.

Carole Porter, spoke to her interest in the Berkeley/Oakland/Richmond communities and commented on the current gentrification and desire to preserve the diversity of the Bay Area and get young people involved. She understood the importance of preservation, art and culture. She also spoke to her work with Kaiser Permanente in information technology, involvement in diversity and inclusion and her background in journalism, in local media and organizational and behavioral development, and her desire to share with a diverse group of people and integrate young people into this to teach and train them to continue that effort into the future.

Kyanna Williams, a lawyer and legal designer, spoke to her experience in user center design and taking complicated things and making them user friendly. She looked forward to simplifying and streamlining the applications for mini grants. A long-time Richmond resident, she was looking for ways to get more involved in the community, and as the parent of a young child she wanted to see more arts and fund artistic things for children.

Chair Beaulieu reported the RACC looked forward to new members and the public being engaged in the initiatives the RACC supported. She thanked Ms. Johnson for serving as the Staff Liaison.

Ms. Johnson reported the City of Richmond would be holding different Department presentations regarding the budget and on February 7, 2023 the City Manager and Economic Development Department would have its turn with Ms. Day to provide a presentation on the Arts & Culture Department. The meeting would be available via Zoom.

## **X. ADJOURN until February 9, 2023**

On motion by Commissioner Mehas, seconded by Commissioner Leighton, and carried unanimously by voice vote to adjourn the meeting at 9:07 p.m. to a Regular Meeting of the RACC/PAAC on February 9, 2023.