



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH CITY ARTS COMMISSION MINUTES

DRAFT

Newport Beach Central Library – Staff Conference Room
1000 Avocado Avenue, Newport Beach 92660
Teleconference Location Pursuant to GC§54953(B):
20 2nd SW, Rochester, Minnesota 55902
Thursday, October 9, 2025 – 5:00 PM

City Arts Commission Members:

Heather Ignatin, Chair
Vanessa Moore, Vice Chair
David Anastos, Commissioner
John Blom, Commissioner
Tiare Meegan, Commissioner
Laurel Tippet, Commissioner

Staff Members:

Melissa Hartson, Library Services Director
Rebecca Lightfoot, Library Services Manager
Camille Escareal-Garcia, Cultural Arts Assistant

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Heather Ignatin called the City Arts Commission Regular Meeting to order at 5:00 P.M. She joined the meeting via teleconference.

II. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Chair Heather Ignatin
Vice Chair Vanessa Moore
Commissioner David Anastos
Commissioner John Blom
Commissioner Tiare Meegan
Commissioner Laurel Tippet

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Melissa Hartson, Library Services Director
Rebecca Lightfoot, Library Services Manager
Camille Escareal-Garcia, Cultural Arts Assistant
Liz Westmoreland, Principal Planner

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Ignatin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC - Waived

V. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Consent Calendar Items

1. Minutes of the September 11, 2025, City Arts Commission Meeting

2. Financial Report

Review of financial information.

In response to Vice Chair Moore's inquiries, Cultural Arts Assistant Camille Escareal-Garcia reported that the images captured by a pair of photographers during Concerts on the Green are primarily used in promoting the following year's event. She confirmed that both expenses are for still photographers and not videographers. She clarified that the discrepancy in the two expenses for the same service by the same vendor is because the first expense includes the cost of a one-year licensing fee.

Chair Ignatin opened the item for Public Comment, and there were none.

Motion made by Vice Chair Moore seconded by Commissioner Blom, to approve the Consent Calendar, and carried 6-0-0-0.

VI. CURRENT BUSINESS

A. Items for Review and Possible Action

3. General Plan Update: Introducing Refreshed Goals and Policies in the Arts and Culture Element and the Historical Resources Element

Review the recent drafts of the Arts and Culture Element and Historical Resources Element of the General Plan Update and continue discussion from their September 11, 2025 meeting.

Principal Planner Liz Westmoreland reported that the General Plan is the State-mandated framework for City decision-making. She added that Newport Beach's General Plan was last comprehensively updated in 2006. She added that the Arts and Culture Element and Historical Resources Element are not ones mandated by the State but rather ones the City chooses to include due to their community importance. She reported on the timeline for the updating process to date, including the City Council's creation of a community-led General Plan Update Steering Committee (GPUSC) and General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC).

Principal Planner Westmoreland reported that additions to the Draft Arts and Culture Element not included in the current General Plan include support for art in public places and private development projects, enhanced support for Library services and music programming, additional focus on marketing, and an emphasis on collaboration and partnerships with other organizations. She clarified that, while the Historical Resources Element is not required by the State, many components of it are subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). She added that new to the Draft Historical Resources Element from the current General Plan includes a call to celebrate the City's historical resources with outreach and education through signage, partnerships, walking tours,

school programs, and other means. She added that the new additions also recommend the creation of a Legacy Business Program.

Principal Planner Westmoreland reported on how the Commissioners and public can get involved in the updating process through GPAC and GPUSC meetings, the City's website, upcoming community open houses, and by contacting City staff directly. She reported on the next steps in the process, adding that staff will return to the Commission in the future with a more finalized draft, seeking a formal recommendation of approval. She requested that the Commission submit its feedback on the current drafts by November 17th.

In response to Commissioner Blom's inquiry, Chair Ignatin confirmed that staff recommends the formation of an Ad Hoc Subcommittee for a more robust study of the drafts and added that she would like to appoint Vice Chair Moore, Commissioner Blom, and herself to the Subcommittee.

In response to Vice Chair Moore's inquiry, Library Services Director Melissa Hartson clarified that Commissioners providing their feedback offline to a Subcommittee member would tread into the territory of a serial meeting under the Brown Act and recommended making any comments about the drafts now.

Chair Ignatin recommended officially forming the Subcommittee after public comment and providing the full Commission an opportunity to respond to the Subcommittee's thoughts at the next meeting before sending the Commission's final response to the GPAC.

Commissioner Anastos stated that Policy No. HR-7.1.2 recommends creating a Board of specialized personnel across multiple commissions and committees. He expressed his opposition to the concept of a specialized committee due to the Commission's role. He added that forming another specialized committee would be overkill.

In response to Commissioner Meegan's inquiry, Principal Planner Westmoreland noted that the City Council will ultimately hear these community-driven recommendations and could create additional City staff positions if it feels that they will be necessary to enact the GPAC's more robust recommendations.

Commissioner Blom reported that the Draft Arts and Culture Element's publicity section states that the Newport Beach Arts Foundation is a big supporter of the Commission but added that this support has not been happening. He encouraged the Draft Element's call for a focus on soliciting public and philanthropic donations to the arts, adding that the Commission has been prevented in the past from searching for donations.

Vice Chair Moore stated that this fundraising concept could also apply in the Draft Historical Resources Element, as private funds could be raised for restorations.

Commissioner Blom reported that there are many residents interested in historical preservation and art that City staff is unaware of. He lauded the Corona del Mar Historical Resources Committee meetings and the group's volume of results without City support.

In response to Commissioner Anastos' inquiry, Commissioner Blom and others confirmed that the Commission cannot solicit funding from private sources. He added that the Commission currently relies on the Arts Foundation and stated that the relationship is not currently working.

Commissioner Meegan expressed concerns about the logistics of how the Draft Arts and Culture Element's call for the Commission to be involved in adding art to large commercial developments would function, along with what their expectations would be.

Vice Chair Moore called for the inclusion of historical tourism.

In response to Chair Ignatin's inquiries, Principal Planner Westmoreland confirmed that feedback provided at this meeting can be compiled and included with the Commission's official feedback to the GPAC at the next meeting. She added that staff can also include comments about the drafts made at the September meeting.

Commissioner Blom reported that the Commission has been allocated \$30,000 for arts grants in recent years, but the sum was originally intended to be \$50,000. He called for an increase to the full \$50,000 so that the recipients receive a more substantial grant.

The Commissioners agreed.

Chair Ignatin opened public comment.

Jim Mosher clarified that he is a member of the GPAC but is speaking here as an individual. He stated that the background reports are as important as the elements and were prepared by a consultant unfamiliar with Newport Beach. He added they will be attached as appendices to the final elements and inquired if they are subject to revision for better accuracy.

Chair Ignatin closed public comment.

Principal Planner Westmoreland reported that she will consult with Planning Manager Ben Zdeba to clarify the scope of the Commission's review and whether commentary on the existing conditions report is necessary. She added that the report is designed to provide background and technical insight about State law requirements and best practices observed in other cities. She added that the documents were vetted by the GPAC.

Chair Ignatin appointed an Ad Hoc Subcommittee consisting of Vice Chair Moore, Commissioner Blom, and herself, with a direction to provide recommended comments to the GPAC from the Commission at the next meeting.

Chair Ignatin received and filed the report.

4. Curatorial Panel Assessment of Submitted Works – Sculpture in Civic Center Park Exhibition, Phase X

Arts Orange County will present the curatorial panel rankings of the Sculpture Exhibition Phase X entries. The City Arts Commission will discuss the ranking results and approve works for inclusion in the Public Online Survey for Phase X of the Sculpture Exhibition.

Arts Orange County (ArtsOC) President Patrick Brien introduced the two guest jurors, Genevieve Williams and Virginia Arce – both recent recipients of ArtsOC's Artist of the

Year Award – and reported on the submission and scoring process. He reported on how the public polling process will work after the jury selects the works for the online survey, noting that, per the City Council's wishes, online voting will only be open to Newport Beach residents. He added that it is important to pare down the event-record list of 79 entries so that the online survey does not become so long and cumbersome that potential voters will stop short of completion.

Mr. Brien reviewed all 79 submissions in the order of how the jury ranked them. He recommended placing the cutline at an average jury grade of 4.0, with 29 pieces reaching this threshold.

Mr. Brien noted that there are potential safety concerns with submissions by Catherine Daley, Jess Glode Wise, Patrick Vogel, and Solomon Bassoff, and added that ArtsOC will reach out to each artist to discuss the piece. He added that there are also structural concerns about Sonny Behan's submission, leading to a discussion about its base. He reported that Sergey Gornushkin's submission has guide wires that are a potential tripping hazard and that the piece could be too top-heavy for Newport Beach's winds and other climate factors.

In response to Commissioner Blom's inquiry, Mr. Brien expressed his understanding that John Banks' submission exists in a physical form and not only a virtual draft. He added that ArtsOC would confirm its physical existence before opening online voting should the piece be selected for the list.

Commissioner Tippet expressed concerns about the three-year durability of Ilya Idlechik's fiberglass submission based on how surfboards weather in Newport Beach, but an ArtsOC official reported that the City has seen other similarly constructed works in the past without exhibiting durability issues aside from color changes.

Vice Chair Moore inquired about whether people will be able to sit in the car in Solomon Bassoff's submission.

ArtsOC consultant, Joseph Lewis, reported that the drafts of the General Plan call for public art to serve as a mechanism to activate public spaces. He added that many cities have commissioned interactive art installations in recent years, as opposed to just statues or sculptures that are merely admired and not designed for residents to be playful with. He stated that the public should be allowed to get in Mr. Bassoff's car and play with it just as children sit on Doug Snider's *Gecko* bench currently exhibiting in the Sculpture Exhibition in Civic Center Park.

Chair Ignatin agreed that Mr. Bassoff's submission inherently invites people to sit in the car.

In response to Chair Ignatin's inquiry, Library Services Director Hartson discussed the potential logistics of entering the car and added that it is not intended to be a playground piece like some other pieces in the Sculpture Exhibition, such as the *Gecko* bench. She pondered if the door to the car opens and if it will hold up in the elements of nature, along with whether there would be a tendency to also climb into the back seat. She added that it is likely a heavy piece and will have to be very precisely set, like *Gecko*.

Mr. Lewis reported that, at 1,600 pounds, Mr. Bassoff's submission is far lighter than *Gecko*, which required a crane for installation.

Library Services Director Hartson agreed that there are causes for concern about Mr. Bassoff's work.

Mr. Lewis reported that in Mr. Bassoff's supplemental materials submitted with the work, he indicated that it had been coated with graffiti-repellant material and had been previously installed in other locations where people climbed into the car.

Commissioner Tippet reported that she increased her rating on Mr. Bassoff's work specifically because it is interactive, agreeing with Commissioner Blom's comments.

In response to Commissioner Tippet's inquiry, Mr. Brien clarified that in the past, safety concerns have been addressed ahead of the voting, installation, and even afterward.

Library Services Director Hartson confirmed that a sculpture had to be removed during a recent phase due to damage leading to structural safety concerns.

Commissioner Tippet noted that the jury's No. 1 and No. 3 picks both have safety concerns that ArtsOC will need to address prior to opening online voting.

Mr. Brien reported that artists in the past have lost pieces of their work because the public was pulling them off. He stated that ArtsOC would want to remove such a piece from consideration if the artist expresses this concern in advance. He added that sometimes the images are deceiving, and the artist can clarify their piece's safety concerns.

In response to Commissioner Tippet's inquiry, Mr. Brien clarified that this meeting will also determine pieces to serve as alternates for the online poll if there are issues with any in the current top 29.

Commissioner Blom reported that pieces have previously been pulled prior to the exhibition for safety reasons, among others.

Chair Ignatin stated that if a piece is obviously top-heavy or dangerous, then the Commission should err on the side of caution and pull it out now.

Vice Chair Moore stated that they should first ask the artists directly before pulling their work, citing Ms. Daley's top-rated piece, which she likes but comes with safety concerns over whether the strands hang too low to the ground.

Mr. Brien stated that Ms. Daley's art has been previously exhibited by the City, but those pieces also came with questions because they look more fragile than they are.

Guest Juror Williams expressed concerns about the potential for sharp edges on Patrick Vogel's submission, sensing a potential for children to attempt to climb up its spine.

Mr. Brien stated that sharp edges and other safety concerns are a cause to contact the artists. He added that this is also why they need to have some backups ready.

Guest Juror Arce expressed safety concerns about Lee Tal's submission because of its mirrored surface, pondering if someone might walk into it or if a bird might fly into it.

Mr. Brien stated that the location of Mr. Lee's submission within Civic Center Park could alleviate safety concerns.

Mr. Brien noted that he is not on the jury but stated that Mr. Gornushkin's submission likely should be removed due to the tripping hazards presented by the guidewires.

Chair Ignatin agreed, adding concerns about it also being too top-heavy.

In response to Vice Chair Moore's inquiry, Chair Ignatin stated that the recommendation is to approve the top 29 submissions, which would be reduced to 28 without Mr. Gornushkin's submission.

Vice Chair Moore noted that they may still drop a couple of the current top 28 after discussing the submissions with their artists.

Mr. Brien added that pieces are also sometimes lost to other exhibits. He agreed with Chair Ignatin's summary of the top 28, adding that the Commission should be polled about whether any of the top 28 should be pulled or if any outside the current top 28 should be included per juror passion pleas.

Commissioner Anastos made a passion plea for Nathan Johansen's submission, lauding its elegant simplicity and hopefulness.

Commissioner Tippet commended the interactive nature of Tyler Kimball's submission.

Vice Chair Moore echoed Commissioner Anastos' call to include Mr. Johansen's work.

The Commissioners verbally agreed to include both works.

In response to Commissioner Tippet's inquiry, Mr. Brien confirmed that they are only making a list for public polling, and it the public poll will not include the jury's thoughts on each piece or its jury rating.

Chair Ignatin expressed safety concerns about Mr. Vogel's submission for being climbable.

Guest Juror Williams agreed about the combination of climbing temptation with potentially sharp edges, leading to a possible call for caution.

In response to Mr. Brien's inquiry, Mr. Lewis stated that the best tactic would be to ask the artist.

Commissioner Tippet noted that there are questions about both sharp edges and stability with Mr. Vogel's submission.

Vice Chair Moore noted that the display picture of the piece appears to be in a public park, theorizing that it is an indication that the piece is climbable and not as sharp as it looks.

Chair Ignatin stated that the artist will likely say the piece is fine and recommended seeing where this previous display in his picture is from and soliciting feedback from the exhibitor.

Mr. Lewis recommended some placement options within Civic Center Park where it would be less likely to be climbed upon.

Chair Ignatin urged erring on the side of caution with displaying the piece at all in a public park due to potential liability issues.

Mr. Brien stated that he would reach out to previous exhibitors in addition to Mr. Vogel.

Chair Ignatin lauded this concept of obtaining multiple opinions on the piece. She stated the same tactic should be used for Mr. Bassoff's work due to its ability to be climbed.

In response to Chair Ignatin's inquiry, Mr. Brien clarified that the current list being discussed includes the top 28, with a need to reach out to Ms. Daley, Ms. Wise, Mr. Vogel (including past exhibitors), Mr. Bassoff, Ms. Reibertson (for installation questions), and Mr. Behan, plus the inclusion of Mr. Johansen and Mr. Kimball's works.

In response to Mr. Brien's inquiry, a passion plea was made to include Eric Saint Georges' submission for its contemplative nature. The Commissioners agreed to use it as an alternate.

Mr. Lewis expressed concerns about the three-year durability of Mr. Kimball's work because it is made of stained glass.

Chair Ignatin expressed concerns about heavy winds and potential downed tree limbs impacting Clark Martinek's submission and requested its removal.

The Commissioners disagreed, adding that it is made from steel and has been displayed outdoors elsewhere.

Chair Ignatin requested that Mr. Martinek be added to the call list for Mr. Brien. He agreed.

Motion made by Chair Ignatin, seconded by Vice Chair Moore, to approve the 28 highest rated submissions for the public poll, add Nathan Johansen and Tyler Kimball's submissions to the public poll list, and include Eric Saint Georges' submission as an alternate for the list, pending follow-up due diligence from artists to be contacted by ArtsOC for more information about their pieces, and carried 6-0-0-0

Commissioner Blom commended the professional assistance received from ArtsOC Program Coordinator Nicholas Thurkettle.

Mr. Brien reported that Mr. Thurkettle regrets being unable to attend the meeting while attending to a family emergency.

Chair Ignatin also commended Mr. Thurkettle's work in making the selection process easier.

5. Central Library Gallery Exhibit Recommendations

The Art in Public Places Library Gallery Ad Hoc Subcommittee recommends that the City Arts Commission approve exhibitions by Soung won Park and Dennis Carrie in the Central Library lobby gallery space.

Library Services Manager Lightfoot reported that the Art in Public Places Ad Hoc Subcommittee met and recommended approval of works by Soung won Park and Dennis Carrie at the Central Library's gallery.

Chair Ignatin opened public comment, and there was none.

Motion made by Chair Ignatin, seconded by Commissioner Anastos, to approve displaying the works of Soung won Park and Dennis Carrie in the Central Library's gallery, and carried 6-0-0-0.

6. Cultural Arts Activities

Monthly review of cultural arts activities from the Library Administrative Office for upcoming Library and City arts events and services.

Library Services Manager Lightfoot reported that the September Concert on the Green, featuring the Tijuana Dogs, was successful. She stated that the next Concert at Marina Park is set for Sunday October 12 at 4:00 p.m. on the peninsula. She added that the annual Spooktacular will be at Mariners' Park on October 25 from 3-6:00 p.m., with the Commission hosting a booth. She encouraged all Commissioners to participate at the booth and enjoy the event.

In response to Vice Chair Moore's inquiries, Library Services Manager Lightfoot stated that set up assistance would be appreciated after 1:00 p.m. She confirmed that Halloween costumes are encouraged.

Chair Ignatin opened public comment, and there was none.

Chair Ignatin received and filed the report.

B. Monthly Reports

7. Art in Public Places Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Commissioner Anastos, Commissioner Meegan

Commissioner Anastos reported that they met to discuss the sculptures discussed and approved in Item No. VI.A.5.

8. Art Week Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Chair Ignatin, Vice Chair Moore, Commissioner Tippet

Vice Chair Moore reported that they met and drafted potential event ideas for the week, along with discussing some of the organizations and businesses that have expressed an interest in being involved.

9. Music and Live Entertainment Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Chair Ignatin, Vice Chair Moore

Vice Chair Moore reported that there was no meeting. She inquired if staff could provide a list of bands requesting the City's November concert submission deadline.

Cultural Arts Assistant Escareal-Garcia stated that she can provide the list.

10. Cultural Arts Grants Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Vice Chair Moore, Commissioner Meegan

Vice Chair Moore reported that there was no meeting, but they did attend a Backhausdance event. She commended the positive results of the Commission's grant funding. She added that she also attended the Baroque Music Festival, commending the Commission grant-funded event.

11. Newport Beach Art Exhibition Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Chair Ignatin, Vice Chair Moore

Vice Chair Moore reported that there was no meeting.

12. Public Relations and Marketing Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Chair Ignatin, Vice Chair Moore

Vice Chair Moore reported that there was no meeting.

13. Sculpture Exhibition Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Chair Ignatin, Commissioner Blom

Commissioner Blom reported that there was no meeting but noted that most of this meeting was focused on their work.

14. Student Art Exhibition Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Commissioner Anastos, Commissioner Meegan, Commissioner Tippet

Commissioner Anastos reported that they will meet following this meeting.

15. Newport Beach Arts Foundation Liaison

Vice Chair Moore

Vice Chair Moore reported that they canceled their October meeting.

16. Historical Resources Liaison

Commissioner Blom

Commissioner Blom reported that their monthly meeting was held yesterday, and they are planning a meet-and-greet event in two weeks at a private home to increase awareness of fellow residents interested in the history of Newport Beach who may be unaware of each other's efforts. He reported on a Corona del Mar resident who has self-created a walking tour of all of Corona del Mar's commemorative plaques.

Chair Ignatin opened public comment, and there was none.

VII. CITY ARTS COMMISSION ANNOUNCEMENTS OR MATTERS WHICH MEMBERS WOULD LIKE PLACED ON A FUTURE AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, OR REPORT (NON-DISCUSSION ITEM)

Commissioner Blom requested a report from Public Works staff on needed repairs to the trails and paths in Civic Center Park.

In response to Library Services Director Hartson's inquiry, Commission Blom did not cite any specific concerns.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None

IX. ADJOURNMENT – 6:42 P.M.

Chair Ignatin adjourned the meeting.