CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH
CITY ARTS COMMISSION MINUTES

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Newport Beach Civic Center – Council Chambers
100 Civic Center Drive, Newport Beach 92660
Thursday, February 12, 2026 – 5:00 PM

City Arts Commission Members:
Heather Ignatin, Chair
Vanessa Moore, Vice Chair
David Anastos, Commissioner
John Blom, Commissioner
Cory Glass, Commissioner
Tiare Meegan, Commissioner
Laurel Tippett, 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.

II. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present:	Chair Heather Ignatin Vice Chair Vanessa Moore Commissioner David Anastos Commissioner John Blom Commissioner Cory Glass Commissioner Tiare Meegan Commissioner Laurel Tippett
Commissioners Absent:	None
Staff Present:	Melissa Hartson, Library Services Director Rebecca Lightfoot, Library Services Manager Camille Escareal-Garcia, Cultural Arts Assistant

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Ignatin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

The Notice to the Public was read, explaining the public comment procedures and requesting that cell phones be turned off or set to silent mode.

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V. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Consent Calendar Items

1. Minutes of the January 8, 2026, City Arts Commission Meeting

2. Financial Report

Review of financial information.

Chair Ignatin asked for commissioner comments on the consent calendar, which included the minutes from the January 8th meeting and the financial report. Seeing none, she opened public comment on the consent calendar items. With no public speakers, she closed public comment and called for a motion.

Motion by Commissioner Glass, seconded by Vice Chair Moore, to approve the consent calendar. Motion carried unanimously (7-0-0-0).

VI. CURRENT BUSINESS

A. Items for Review and Possible Action

3. General Plan Update

Staff recommends that the City Arts Commission review the Final GPUSC/GPAC Draft Arts and Culture Element and Historical Resources Element, which have been revised to incorporate the Commission's input from November 2025. The Commission should conduct a vote to consider recommending the City Council adopt them as part of the comprehensive General Plan Update later this year

During Public Comments, Newport Beach resident Jim Mosher spoke extensively about his concerns regarding the adequacy of the General Plan elements, questioning whether there was sufficient commitment to preserving arts and culture resources over the required 25-year period.

Newport Beach resident Laura Curran spoke during public comment focusing on the Civic Center Park and its role as a demonstration garden and sculpture venue. She expressed concern about a proposal to build a police station in the park, which she argued would conflict with General Plan Goal AC-1 that calls for incorporating art in public places. Curran emphasized that the park has been developed for over 20 years as one of the premier sculpture gardens in Orange County and serves as a site for native plant landscaping. She argued that building a police station there for $162 million would destroy valuable artistic and educational resources, estimating the park's value at $40 million when considering 20 years of public enjoyment and artistic contributions.

Commissioner Tiare Meegan asked about funding sources for arts programming in the general plan. Ben Zdeba from the Community Development Department explained that the general plan would not contain that level of specificity regarding funding sources from the City's general fund or otherwise.

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Motion by Chair Ignatin, seconded by Commissioner Tippett, to recommend City Council adopt the final drafts for the Cultural Arts Element and Historical Resources Element. The motion carried with Commissioner Blom abstaining (6-0-1-0).

4. Fiscal Year 2025-26 Cultural Arts Grants

Staff recommend the City Arts Commission review grant applications and approve the recipients for recommendation to City Council for the FY 2025-26 Cultural Arts Grants in accordance with City Council Policy I-10 – *Culture and Arts Grants*.

Library Services Manager Rebecca Lightfoot explained that $30,000 is provided annually for cultural or artistic programs, with the Arts Commission responsible for reviewing applications and making recommendations to City Council for final approval. She presented the recommendations from the Cultural Arts Grants Ad Hoc Subcommittee for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26 grants.

Commissioner John Blom raised concerns about the application submitted by Wildlife Jewels, noting that their proposed performance dates were listed only by month without specific dates. He felt this showed inadequate planning. He questioned whether this application represented good planning and suggested the $1,500 allocated to them could be better used by other organizations like Backhaus Dance.

Vice Chair Moore explained that the Subcommittee had reduced Wildlife Jewels' requested amount by $1,200 because they were a first-time applicant and the Subcommittee wanted to see what they would accomplish. She noted the organization planned to coordinate their event with the Arts Commission's planned Art Week for their painting activities, though specific dates were to be determined.

Further discussion revealed that organizations can only receive what they request in their applications - the Commission cannot arbitrarily increase funding beyond what was requested. Staff explained that if the full $30,000 isn't allocated, the remainder is returned to the general fund.

Commissioners discussed grant completion reporting requirements and the consequences for not fulfilling promised programs. Cultural Arts Assistant Camille Escareal-Garcia confirmed that all funded organizations from the previous fiscal year must submit completion reports in early January, and the Subcommittee verifies compliance before considering granting them funding.

Commissioner Laurel Tippett noted that Wildlife Jewels' application at least specified that all events would be held in Newport Beach and addressed Newport Beach-related themes, distinguishing it from a previous case where an organization was disqualified for not serving Newport Beach residents.

Motion by Chair Ignatin, seconded by Commissioner Meegan, to approve the Cultural Arts Grants Ad Hoc Subcommittee's recommendations for the FY 2025-26 Cultural Arts Grants, with the caveat that Wildlife Jewels must submit additional clarification of the dates in June and July to receive funding. Motion carried unanimously (7-0-0-0).

5. Cultural Arts Activities

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

Manager Lightfoot reported that a new digital photography art exhibit had been installed at the Central Library Gallery by artist Soung Park and encouraged commissioners to view it. She announced that the Cultural Arts Grants recommendation would go to the February 24, 2026 City Council meeting at 4:00 PM, inviting commissioners to attend.

Manager Lightfoot also reported vandalism to the "Natural Wonders" sculpture in the Civic Center Park located near the dog park. The sculpture itself wasn't damaged, but its plaster base was tipped over and lightly graffitied. ArtsOC quickly remediated the damage, cleaning the graffiti and resetting the base. They are exploring ways to better secure the sculpture to prevent future incidents.

B. <u>Monthly Reports</u>

6. Art in Public Places Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Commissioner Anastos, Commissioner Meegan

Commissioner Tiare Meegan reported ongoing discussions with Sherman Library Gardens about potential touring opportunities, noting they are under construction, but their docents are knowledgeable about gardening and could provide partnership opportunities to increase arts accessibility in the community.

7. Art Week Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Chair Ignatin, Vice Chair Moore, Commissioner Tippett

Vice Chair Moore provided updates on submitted events for Art Week, including Tim Burnham's proposal for a 10th anniversary event for "Dirty Old Wedge" at the Lido Theater featuring live music with scenes from the film and discussions about body boarding, surfing, and skimming at the Wedge. The Newport Beach Historical Society is considering either a historical photo exhibit or a lecture series with local artists. The Library Foundation of Newport Beach confirmed Tim Greiving would give a lecture about his book on John Williams. Backhaus Dance and Sherman Library Gardens plan to partner on a dance performance, and the Film Festival has submitted an interest form with flexible dates. An art therapy group is looking at weekday programming. Commissioner Moore encouraged other commissioners to connect organizations with daytime programming, especially for children, to her for consideration.

8. Music and Live Entertainment Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Chair Ignatin, Vice Chair Moore

The subcommittee did not meet.

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9. Cultural Arts Grants Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Vice Chair Moore, Commissioner Meegan

Vice Chair Moore noted that the Subcommittee's work was completed and questioned whether it should be removed from future agendas. Staff indicated they don't typically sunset the Cultural Arts Grants Subcommittee until grants are officially approved by Council.

10. Newport Beach Art Exhibition Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Chair Ignatin, Vice Chair Moore

Vice Chair Moore announced a meeting scheduled for February 26th with the Newport Beach Arts Foundation leadership to discuss the combined events.

11. Public Relations and Marketing Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Chair Ignatin, Vice Chair Moore

Vice Chair Moore reported that the Subcommittee met and created a memo for the Arts Foundation outlining sponsorship opportunities for the summer concerts on the Civic Green and potentially the Pacific Symphony concert. These include VIP tables, naming opportunities, logos on banners, verbal sponsor announcements, print materials, and step-and-repeat opportunities. The goal is for the Arts Foundation to handle financial sponsorships while the Arts Commission maintains responsibility for operations and programming. They will present these opportunities to Arts Foundation leadership on February 26th.

12. Sculpture Exhibition Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Chair Ignatin, Commissioner Blom

The subcommittee did not meet.

13. Student Art Exhibition Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Commissioner Anastos, Commissioner Meegan, Commissioner Tippett

Commissioner Tippett reported discussions about expanding the exhibition next year with potential kickoff and closing events featuring speakers and light refreshments for artists. The Subcommittee is also exploring adding a performance art element to complement the current two-dimensional artwork submissions.

14. Newport Beach Arts Foundation Liaison

Vice Chair Moore

Vice Chair Moore reported that the Foundation’s meeting was canceled.

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15. Historical Resources Liaison

Commissioner Blom

Commissioner Blom reported that the Historical Resources Committee operates under the Corona del Mar Residence Association. They met the previous day at Sherman Library Gardens and are planning a celebration of the 100th anniversary of Coast Highway's opening, which occurred on October 9th, 100 years ago. They are also working with Newport Beach Historian Laureate Bill Lobdell and his podcast on Newport Beach history.

16. General Plan Update Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Ignatin, Moore, Blom

No report was provided.

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 David Anastos discussed two collaborative initiatives. First, he proposed working with the Music and Live Entertainment Subcommittee and the Student Art Exhibition Subcommittees to create a student performing arts component for the Concerts in the Park series, suggesting a fourth concert in September or October featuring short student group performances.

Second, the Art in Public Places Subcommittee wants to collaborate with the Recreation and Senior Services Department regarding artwork for the Civic Center Witte Lecture Hall, whether it be donor plaques, commissioned art, or donated pieces. They seek to work with all stakeholders involved in that decision.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

There were no public comments on non-agenda items.

IX. ADJOURNMENT – 5:56 P.M.

Chair Ignatin adjourned the meeting.

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