



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH CITY ARTS COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

December 11, 2025
Agenda Item No. 3

TO: CITY ARTS COMMISSION

FROM: Library Services Department
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PREPARED BY: Rebecca Lightfoot, Library Services Manager

TITLE: Historian Laureate William Lobdell

ABSTRACT:

The position of Historian Laureate was created by Resolution No. 2025-24 at the May 27, 2025, Council meeting. On the August 26, 2025, Council meeting, the Council unanimously appointed William (Bill) Lobdell as the first Newport Beach Historian Laureate.

DISCUSSION:

Bill Lobdell has resided in Newport Beach since 2015. Lobdell worked as a writer and editor for both the Daily Pilot and the Los Angeles Times. Lobdell launched the podcast "Newport Beach in the Rearview Mirror" in 2021 and has dedicated his time to preserving the unique stories and rich history of the City of Newport Beach.

As Historian Laureate, Lobdell will interpret past events in the City and provide thoughtful, educational, and enjoyable narratives and presentations when required. Lobdell will also carefully document current events for the benefit of future generations.

This position is a volunteer position, appointed by the City Council to a four (4) year term with no term limits. Suggested responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Acquire, prepare, record, and report facts of historical significance to the City of Newport Beach;
- Collaborate with the City's historical societies;
- Collaborate with City departments, including Cultural Arts, to identify meaningful event opportunities;
- Provide presentations to organizations;
- Develop activities to help raise awareness of the City's history;
- Responds to inquiries regarding the City's history;
- Participate in civic and patriotic events;
- Coordinate historical research;
- Report to the City Council annually and as required on history-related issues.

NOTICING:

This agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the City Arts Commission considers the item).