



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH CITY ARTS COMMISSION MINUTES

DRAFT

Newport Beach Public Library
1000 Avocado Avenue, Newport Beach, CA 92660
Thursday, August 14, 2025 – Regular Meeting

City Arts Commission Members:

Heather Ignatin, Chair
Vanessa Moore, Vice Chair
Melissa Kandel, Secretary
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.

II. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Chair Heather Ignatin
Secretary Melissa Kandel
Commissioner John Blom
Commissioner Tiare Meegan
Commissioner Laurel Tippet

Commissioners Absent: Vice Chair Vanessa Moore (excused)
Commissioner David Anastos (excused)

Staff Present: Melissa Hartson, Library Services Director
Camille Escareal-Garcia, Cultural Arts Assistant

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Ignatin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC - Waived

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jim Mosher reported that the July 10th minutes should be revised to reflect that the speaker on Page 7's first name is spelled Jatin.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Approval of Minutes of July 10, 2025, City Arts Commission Meeting

1. Draft of 07/10/2025 Minutes

B. Consent Calendar Items

2. Financial Report

Review of financial information.

3. Cultural Arts Activities

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

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

Chair Ignatin requested that staff correct the spelling of the speaker's name in the July 10th minutes, as mentioned by Mr. Mosher.

Motion made by Secretary Kandel, seconded by Chair Ignatin, to approve the Consent Calendar, including Mr. Mosher's edit to the minutes, and carried 5-0-0-2 (with Vice Chair Moore and Commissioner Anastos absent)

VII. CURRENT BUSINESS

A. Items for Review and Possible Action

4. Annual Budget Overview

Staff will present an overall view of the Cultural Arts Division's annual budget and anticipated spending based on trends from the previous two years for a receive and file.

Library Services Director Melissa Hartson presented an overview of the Fiscal Year 2024-25 and FY 2025-26 budgets. She reported that the Cultural Arts Division came in under budget last year, primarily due to changes to Phase X of the Sculpture Exhibition. She noted that the budget has increased for FY 2025-26, its first increase in several years, adding that it is primarily due to the Sculpture Exhibition's installation now reflecting the new three-year display period approved by City Council, creating \$90,000 in savings every third year.

Library Services Director Hartson reported that beyond the Sculpture Exhibition changes, funding remains flat, so the programming is anticipated to be at the same levels as FY 24-25. She noted that there is potential for the Art Exhibition to be included in the proposed Art Week event, which will impact budgeting as funding needs shift between several events and move forward to FY 26-27.

In response to Chair Ignatin's inquiry, Library Services Director Hartson clarified that funds do not ordinarily carry over automatically, and they can draft a proposal for the City Council.

In response to Commissioner Meegan's inquiry, Library Services Director Hartson confirmed that the saved Art Exhibition funds could be applied to the Pacific Symphony's future performances but cautioned that the change would have to go through an approval process by the City.

Chair Ignatin commended staff and the Commission for coming in under budget in a year where they added new programs, including the Pacific Symphony, while also performing extensive cleaning on permanent art pieces.

Chair Ignatin opened public comment.

Mr. Mosher clarified that the Commission's budget does not constitute the City's entire budget for arts and cultural activities, citing examples such as the Newport Beach Public Library's Sunday musicales and other civic arts investments. He added that the City also provides special event grants, with recommendations coming from a City staff committee that includes Library Services Director Hartson. He added that the list of approved grants by the City Council includes a mural program in Corona del Mar, where there may be a need for artists. He lamented how some of these funding allocations are being made by a City staff committee and not by the Commission, encouraging the Commission to be more assertive with its authority.

Chair Ignatin closed public comment.

Chair Ignatin received and filed the report.

5. Marina Park Family Fun Night Holiday Ornament Design

Review and approve the Music and Live Entertainment Ad Hoc Subcommittee's design idea for a holiday ornament and have it produced for the City of Newport Beach Family Fun Night to be held in December 2025. The ornament will be given, one per household, at the Family Fun Night event.

Library Services Director Hartson reported that the Music and Live Entertainment Ad Hoc Subcommittee met to follow up the July meeting discussion of potential design processes for the holiday ornament the Commission wishes to give out at the annual Marina Park Family Fun Night. She reported that the Subcommittee determined that it would not be feasible this year to run a public design contest given the time constraints and selected the City Sail logo as the design's focus.

Chair Ignatin stated that, as a member of the Subcommittee, she agrees with using the City Sail logo, particularly considering the timing and logistics.

Chair Ignatin opened public comment. There was none.

Motion made by Chair Ignatin, seconded by Commissioner Meegan, to approve the Music and Live Entertainment Ad Hoc Subcommittee's ornament design for Newport Beach's Family Fun Night during the Christmas Boat Parade at Marina Park and carried 5-0-0-2 (with Vice Chair Moore and Commissioner Anastos absent)

6. Proposed Art Week August 9-15, 2026

The Music and Live Entertainment Ad Hoc Subcommittee is recommending the City Arts Commission approve plans to host an Art Week from August 9-15, 2026.

Library Services Director Hartson clarified the agenda item's listing by noting that the Art Week Ad Hoc Subcommittee is making this recommendation and not the Music and Live Entertainment Ad Hoc Subcommittee. She reported that the Subcommittee recommends having a week-long celebration of art in Newport Beach from August 9-15, 2026, beginning with a concert on August 9th and culminating with the Art Exhibition on August 15th.

Commissioner Blom cautioned the Commission about the cost of having the Pacific Symphony perform at this event in 2026, anticipating that the costs for their performances will rise significantly from this year.

Secretary Kandel reported on the negotiations with the Pacific Symphony for this year's concert and added that she would expect some leeway in 2026.

In response to Secretary Kandel's inquiry, Library Services Director Hartson confirmed that the Pacific Symphony provided cost figures for a three-year period.

Secretary Kandel recommended engaging with the Pacific Symphony after their concert on Sunday to confirm what the price would be for a 2026 return to Newport Beach.

Chair Ignatin agreed.

Chair Ignatin opened public comment.

Mr. Mosher echoed Commissioner Blom's concerns about insufficient funding for the Pacific Symphony concert and recommended that approval of the item be conditional based on being able to pay for it.

Chair Ignatin closed public comment.

In response to Chair Ignatin's inquiry, Library Services Director Hartson clarified that the Commission could move to approve Art Week with direction for staff and the Subcommittee to continue to report on the event as details such as a budget and proposed event schedule come together. She cautioned that the FY 2026-27 budget will not be approved until June, with discussions beginning in December, so there will be some work to do. She recommended approving the Art Week and having the Subcommittee continue to work on the details.

The Commission discussed potential motion language keeping the matter sufficiently vague aside from Art Week's conceptual approval, including how the Pacific Symphony could fit into Art Week, holding other concerts, and the opening of Phase X of the Sculpture Exhibition.

In response to Commissioner Tippet's inquiry, Chair Ignatin clarified that the Commission is realigning multiple currently planned events into a singular Art Week, including moving the Art Exhibition from June to August, while also encouraging other stakeholders to move cultural events to Art Week.

Chair Ignatin moved to approve the Art Week Ad Hoc Subcommittee's recommendation to host Art Week from August 9-15, 2026, and to move the annual Art Exhibition and other events funded at that time into Art Week.

Commissioner Blom expressed concerns that the motion is too broad because of the inclusion of "other events" and the timing of funding confirmation.

Commissioner Tippet noted that the Concerts on the Green series and the Grand Opening of the Sculpture Exhibition would fall into Art Week.

Motion made by Chair Ignatin, seconded by Commissioner Tippet, to approve the Art Week Ad Hoc Subcommittee's recommendation to host an Art Week from August 9-15, 2026, and to move the annual Art Exhibition and Grand Opening of Phase X of the Sculpture Exhibition into Art Week, and carried 5-0-0-2 (with Vice Chair Moore and Commissioner Anastos absent)

B. Monthly Reports

7. Art in Public Places Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Vice Chair Moore, Commissioner Blom

Commissioner Blom expressed concerns that the art displayed in public places is not always the art that the Subcommittee approved. He reported that he received as an explanation that sometimes the approved piece has been sold, and the artist has substituted a new piece, but lamented that there was no judgment made pertaining to the acceptability of the replacement piece.

8. Art Week Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Chair Ignatin, Vice Chair Moore, Secretary Kandel

Secretary Kandel reported that their discussions were covered earlier in the meeting.

9. Music and Live Entertainment Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Chair Ignatin, Secretary Kandel

Secretary Kandel reported that they met. She encouraged the Commissioners to attend the Pacific Symphony concert on Sunday at 6:00 p.m., with family events scheduled for 5:00 p.m. She added that the concert has been widely advertised, and a good turnout is expected.

10. Newport Beach Art Exhibition Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Vice Chair Moore, Commissioner Blom

Commissioner Blom stated that there was nothing to report.

11. Public Relations and Marketing Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Chair Ignatin, Secretary Kandel, Commissioner Blom

Secretary Kandel reported that they met to discuss the Pacific Symphony concert.

12. Sculpture Exhibition Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Chair Ignatin, Secretary Kandel, Commissioner Blom

Chair Ignatin stated that there was no meeting.

13. Student Art Exhibition Ad Hoc Subcommittee
None

Chair Ignatin stated that there was no report.

14. Newport Beach Arts Foundation Liaison
Vice Chair Moore

There was no update due to Vice Chair Moore's absence.

15. Historical Resources Liaison
Commissioner Blom

Commissioner Blom stated that there was no meeting.

Chair Ignatin opened public comment. There was none.

Chair Ignatin requested that each Ad Hoc Subcommittee appoint a chair to provide an update at each Commission meeting. She added that the meetings can be conducted either in person, over the telephone, or by using Zoom.

Chair Ignatin assigned the following:

- Art in Public Places Subcommittee – Commissioners Meegan and Anastos
- Art Week Subcommittee – Chair Ignatin, Vice Chair Moore, Commissioner Tippet
- Music and Live Entertainment Subcommittee – Chair Ignatin, Vice Chair Moore, Secretary Kandel
- Newport Beach Art Exhibition Subcommittee – Chair Ignatin, Vice Chair Moore, Secretary Kandel
- Cultural Arts Grant Subcommittee – Vice Chair Moore, Commissioner Meegan
- Public Relations & Marketing Subcommittee – Chair Ignatin, Vice Chair Moore, Secretary Kandel
- Sculpture Exhibition Subcommittee – Chair Ignatin, Commissioner Blom, Secretary Kandel
- Student Art Exhibition Subcommittee – Commissioners Anastos, Tippet, and Meegan
- Arts Foundation Liaison – Vice Chair Moore
- Historical Resources Liaison – Commissioner Blom

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

None.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Mosher, clarifying that he is a member of the General Plan Advisory Committee but is speaking here as an individual, reported that the City's General Plan is being updated. He reported that drafts of the Arts and Culture Element and Historical Resources Element will be presented to the Commission for comment at their next meeting. He noted that other Commissions have chosen to form an Ad Hoc Committee to discuss the draft elements more deeply and added that the Commissioners can preview the two drafts on the City's website as presented at the General Plan Update Steering Committee's June 23rd meeting. He added that there is also a Technical Background Report prepared by City consultants and available in the documents section on the City's "Newport Together" web page.

X. **ADJOURNMENT** – 5:37 P.M.

Chair Ignatin adjourned the meeting.