



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH CITY ARTS COMMISSION MINUTES

DRAFT

Newport Beach Public Library
1000 Avocado Avenue, Newport Beach, CA 92660
Thursday, June 12, 2025 – Regular Meeting

City Arts Commission Members:

Melissa Kandel, Chair
John Blom, Vice Chair
Heather Ignatin, Secretary
Maureen Flanagan, Commissioner
Barbara George, Commissioner
Vanessa Moore, Commissioner

Staff Members:

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

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Melissa Kandel called the City Arts Commission Regular Meeting to order at 5:01 P.M.

II. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Chair Melissa Kandel
Vice Chair John Blom
Secretary Heather Ignatin
Commissioner Maureen Flanagan

Commissioners Absent: Commissioner Barbara George (excused)
Commissioner Vanessa Moore (excused)

Staff Present: Rebecca Lightfoot, Library Services Manager
Camille Escareal-Garcia, Cultural Arts Assistant

Staff Absent: Melissa Hartson, Library Services Director

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Kandel led the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. PRESENTATION

1. Presentation of the FY 2024-25 Cultural Arts Grants

The City Arts Commission presents the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25 Cultural Arts Grant awards:

- Backhausdance (\$4000)

- Balboa Island Improvement Association (BIIA) (\$3,000)
- Baroque Music Festival, Corona del Mar (CdM) (\$4,000)
- Emerald Magic Events, Inc. (\$2,000)
- Friends of the Newport Theatre Arts Center (\$5,000)
- Pacific Chorale (\$3,500)
- Pacific Symphony (\$5,000)
- South Coast Repertory (\$3,500)

Library Services Manager Rebecca Lightfoot presented the City Arts Commission FY 2024-25 Cultural Arts Grant awards. All recipients in attendance briefly thanked the Commission for its support.

V. NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC - Waived

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

VII. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Approval of Minutes of May 8, 2025, City Arts Commission Meeting

2. Draft of 05/08/2025 Minutes

Chair Kandel requested edits, changes, or deletions of the minutes. There were none.

B. Consent Calendar Items

3. Financial Report

Review of financial information.

4. Cultural Arts Activities

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

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

Motion made by Secretary Ignatin, seconded by Vice Chair Blom, to accept the Consent Calendar and carried 4-0-0-2 (with Commissioners George and Moore absent)

VIII. CURRENT BUSINESS

A. Items for Review and Possible Action

5. Student Poetry Contest

Review and discuss the Music and Live Entertainment Ad Hoc Subcommittee suggestions for creating a student poetry contest.

Library Services Manager Lightfoot reported the item is requesting guidance on the creation of a Student Poetry Contest. She added there would be four categories

depending on the respective students' grade levels with poems to be submitted to staff and distributed to a judge selected by the Music and Live Entertainment Ad Hoc Subcommittee prior to ultimate approval by the Commission. She stated the winners would receive a ribbon and the opportunity to read their poems at a Commission meeting. She added the Subcommittee is looking for input from the full Commission on the timeline, guidelines for entry, and potential themes, before bringing it back as a more formalized proposal for approval.

Secretary Ignatin agreed with the concept of having a predetermined theme and recommended the first year's theme could be oceanic and/or nautical.

Library Services Manager Lightfoot reported the discussions for this proposal began around inquiries about how to incorporate poetry into a community event involving the Commission. She added this would be an opportunity for students to get involved and create a cultural impact without also creating a large budget expenditure.

In response to Vice Chair Blom's inquiry, Chair Kandel reported the Subcommittee was thinking of ribbons for rewards as opposed to cash prizes. She added, if the event could coincide with a larger event like the Newport Beach Arts Exhibition or Sculpture Exhibition, there could be an opportunity for the winners to receive a more public commendation. She expressed support for the idea of students reading their poems but lamented some may not feel comfortable doing it. She clarified the Subcommittee was thinking the reward was more the recognition than a potential cash prize.

Secretary Ignatin noted the element of reciting a poem at a future Commission meeting brings forward a timeline issue as the current school year has just ended. She encouraged looking towards a Commission meeting around the same time in 2026 for a potential recognition of the winners.

Secretary Ignatin reported these discussions started as a response to a request a couple months ago, noting poetry is not something the Commission has historically highlighted. She added this literary arts form could be of interest to students. She added providing the students with a theme, such as nautical, might make the contest seem less intimidating since students will not have to come up with a topic for their poems.

In response to Commissioner Flanagan's inquiry, Chair Kandel confirmed this contest would be in lieu of having a designated Poet Laureate.

In response to Vice Chair Blom's inquiry, Chair Kandel stated the Subcommittee was thinking they would start the contest with only students and see how large of a response is received. She added an adult category could potentially be added in the future if the contest proves to be popular. She stated they could also choose to have a contest for adults first and then potentially expand it to students. She noted by using students the contest can have four categorical winners based on their grade level. She acknowledged there can be subcategories for adult poetry such as the most creative.

Commissioner Flanagan agreed with the idea of starting the contest with students.

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

Chair Kandel received and filed the report.

6. Ben Did Go 10.0 Paddle Event Concert

Review, discuss, and approve the Music and Live Entertainment Ad Hoc Subcommittee suggestion for selecting a band to perform at the Ben Did Go 10.0 paddle event on Saturday, September 13, 2025.

Library Services Manager Lightfoot reported the Music and Live Entertainment Ad Hoc Subcommittee has recommended having live music at the 10th annual Ben Did Go Paddle Event. She stated staff is looking for approval from the Commission so they can move forward in working with the Ben Carlson Memorial & Scholarship Foundation to choose a band for the September event.

Chair Kandel stated this is a great opportunity for the Commission to be more involved in the community by providing a benefit to an amazing cause helping residents.

Secretary Ignatin expressed her full support of the item. She noted Ben Carlson is the only Newport Beach lifeguard to die in the line of duty since the department was formed in 1923. She added the paddle event is done for the entire community and not only the City's lifeguards. She noted the Ben Carlson Memorial Statue is part of the City's permanent collection.

In response to Commissioner Flanagan's inquiry, Library Services Manager Lightfoot confirmed there are funds available in the budget for a band.

In response to Chair Kandel's inquiry, Library Services Manager Lightfoot confirmed the idea would be to have the band on the beach at the annual paddle event.

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

Motion made by Secretary Ignatin, seconded by Chair Kandel, to approve continued discussions with the Ben Carlson Memorial & Scholarship Foundation to select a band to perform at the Ben Did Go 10.0 Paddle Event on September 13th and carried 4-0-0-2 (with Commissioners George and Moore absent)

B. Monthly Reports

7. Art in Public Places Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Vice Chair Blom, Commissioner Flanagan, Commissioner Moore

Vice Chair Blom stated there is nothing to report.

8. Art Week Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Chair Kandel, Secretary Ignatin, Commissioner Moore

Secretary Ignatin reported the Subcommittee met and continued discussions about the Art Week idea.

9. Music and Live Entertainment Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Chair Kandel, Secretary Ignatin, Commissioner Flanagan

Secretary Ignatin reported there was no meeting.

10. Newport Beach Art Exhibition Ad Hoc Subcommittee
Vice Chair Blom, Commissioner George, Commissioner Moore

Vice Chair Blom stated there was nothing to report.

Cultural Arts Assistant Camille Escareal-Garcia reported volunteers are being sought.

11. Public Relations and Marketing Ad Hoc Subcommittee
Chair Kandel, Vice Chair Blom, Secretary Ignatin

Secretary Ignatin reported there was a meeting.

12. Sculpture Exhibition Ad Hoc Subcommittee
Chair Kandel, Vice Chair Blom, Secretary Ignatin

Secretary Ignatin stated there was nothing to report.

13. Student Art Exhibition Ad Hoc Subcommittee
None

Chair Kandel reported there are no updates.

14. Newport Beach Arts Foundation Liaison
Commissioner Moore

Chair Kandel reported attending their June meeting the day prior, and the Newport Beach Arts Foundation is continuing to plan its Art in the Park event in September. She added she provided a volunteer sign-up sheet and noted Cultural Arts Assistant Escareal-Garcia had emailed the Commissioners about their own volunteering availability. She encouraged the Commissioners to pass their availability for both Friday and Saturday along to Cultural Arts Assistant Escareal-Garcia if they have not already.

Cultural Arts Assistant Escareal-Garcia reported on the variety of times and roles for which staff is seeking volunteers during the event, adding the largest needs are with the event-closing art pick-up.

Chair Kandel reported the Foundation kept the sign-up sheet to use in canvassing members and others who were not present at the meeting, but noted she did take a picture of the sheet and offered to pass its partial information along to Cultural Arts Assistant Escareal-Garcia.

In response to Chair Kandel's inquiry, Cultural Arts Assistant Escareal-Garcia confirmed the art pick-up at the end of the event is when the most volunteers will be needed. She added she has also reached out to the Youth Council and City staff team leaders for potential volunteers with a focus on the artwork delivery window.

Chair Kandel requested Cultural Arts Assistant Escareal-Garcia keep her updated about how the volunteer levels fill in. Cultural Arts Assistant Escareal-Garcia agreed.

15. Historical Resources Liaison
Vice Chair Blom

Vice Chair Blom reported there was no meeting last month.

Library Service Manager Lightfoot reported the City Council approved the creation of a Historian Laureate on May 27th and is forming an Ad Hoc Subcommittee to identify a candidate for the role. She reported the Subcommittee's choice will be invited to a Commission meeting to discuss potential events and other ways to promote the City's history.

In response to Chair Kandel's inquiry, Library Services Manager Lightfoot clarified the Historian Laureate would work with the Commission as a whole and not only the Historical Resources Liaison.

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

Cultural Arts Assistant Escareal-Garcia thanked Commissioner Flanagan for serving on the Commission and being so involved, noting this is Commissioner Flanagan's last meeting.

Commissioner Flanagan stated it has been her pleasure to serve on the Commission.

Chair Kandel thanked Commissioner Flanagan for her years of service and support when she became Chair.

Secretary Ignatin thanked Commissioner Flanagan for her input and enthusiasm.

X. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

In response to resident David Anastos' inquiries, Commissioner Flanagan stated it has been an interesting few years on the Commission. She added the greatest challenge facing the Commission in the future will be getting a budget able to accommodate all the great things it wants to do for the City.

XI. ADJOURNMENT – 5:25 P.M.

Chair Kandel adjourned the meeting.