



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH CITY ARTS COMMISSION MINUTES

DRAFT

Newport Beach Civic Center – Council Chambers
100 Civic Center Drive, Newport Beach 92660
Thursday, November 13, 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
Francine Jacome, Library Administrative Support Specialist

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 Laurel Tippet

Commissioners Absent: Commissioner Tiare Meegan (excused)

Staff Present: Melissa Hartson, Library Services Director
Rebecca Lightfoot, Library Services Manager
Francine Jacome, Library Administrative Support Specialist

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 October 9, 2025, City Arts Commission Meeting

Commissioner Blom commented on the October 9, 2025, meeting minutes, noting that his request regarding the Sculpture Exhibition wasn't accurately reflected. He clarified that he had asked for "Public Works staff to address needed repair and maintenance to current trails and paths in Civic Center Park "due to "immediate safety concerns" and requested it be addressed at the next meeting. He also noted that he didn't see his request on the current meeting agenda.

Library Services Director Hartson informed Commissioner Blom that staff would provide an oral response during the monthly activities update.

Jim Mosher provided public comment regarding the Sculpture Exhibition curatorial panel assessment mentioned in the minutes. He pointed out that under the Brown Act, voting should not take place outside public view, and the results of how commissioners ranked the 79 sculptures should be public record. He expressed interest in whether jurors were unanimous or had scattered votes and mentioned he would request this information from staff.

Chair Ignatin recommended amending the minutes to include Commissioner Blom's comments that he had asked Public Works to address needed maintenance to the Civic Center paths.

2. Financial Report

Review of financial information.

There were no comments regarding the financial report.

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

Motion by Vice Chair Moore, seconded by Commissioner Blom, to approve the consent calendar with the amended change to the minutes. Motion carried unanimously (5-0-0-1).

VI. CURRENT BUSINESS

A. Items for Review and Possible Action

3. General Plan Update for Arts and Culture Element and Historical Resources Element

The General Plan Update Ad Hoc Subcommittee will present their recommendations and comments for the draft Arts and Culture Element and the Historical Resources Element of the General Plan Update.

Library Services Manager Lightfoot presented a receive and file report, recommending the City Arts Commission review the comments from the General Plan Ad Hoc Subcommittee and direct staff to forward them to the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) for

consideration. She noted there was information in the report on how to submit additional comments through the website.

There were no public comments or additional commissioner comments.

Chair Ignatin directed staff to forward the Ad Hoc Subcommittee comments to the GPAC.

Chair Ignatin received and filed the report.

4. FY 2025-26 Newport Beach Cultural Arts Grants Timeline

The Cultural Arts Grants Ad Hoc Subcommittee will present their recommended timeline for the FY 2025-26 Cultural Arts Grants.

Library Services Manager Lightfoot presented the Cultural Arts Grants timeline recommended by the Cultural Arts Grants Ad Hoc Subcommittee. She provided background on the grants program, explaining that Council Policy I-10 funds \$30,000 toward grants recommended by the City Arts Commission and approved by City Council. She outlined the priorities for awarding grants, with local groups benefiting City residents taking top priority, followed by regional groups, and then groups based in California. All programs must be offered to City residents to be eligible.

The proposed timeline would open applications on November 17, with a closing date of January 12, 2026. Completion reports from the previous fiscal year would be due January 19, 2026. The subcommittee would review applications and make recommendations for the February 12, 2026, City Arts Commission meeting, followed by City Council approval and check distribution in June.

Commissioner Anastos asked how applicants obtain the application and was informed that applications are available online through the Cultural Arts page.

Nancy Warzer-Brady from Backhausdance provided public comment, thanking the Commission for their grant support and recognizing the commissioners who attended their recent assembly at Corona del Mar High School. She highlighted the impact of contemporary dance programs on students, noting that over 700 students attended two assemblies, and that the program develops skills beyond just arts-related ones.

Commissioner Blom commented that the Backhausdance performance was spectacular, and he was impressed by the students' thoughtful questions during the Q&A session, demonstrating their engagement with the art.

Motion by Chair Ignatin, seconded by Commissioner Anastos, to approve the cultural arts grants timeline for 2025-2026. Motion carried unanimously (5-0-0-1).

5. FY 2025-26 Funding Opportunities for the Newport Beach Arts Foundation

Staff recommends the City Arts Commission approve a funding opportunity for submission to the Newport Beach Arts Foundation for FY 2025-26.

Library Services Manager Lightfoot recommended approving a funding opportunity proposed by the City Arts Commission leadership for submission to the Newport Beach Arts Foundation. She explained that the Foundation's articles of incorporation require them to request funding priorities from the City annually.

Staff proposed requesting \$50,250: \$45,000 to fund the Pacific Symphony concert in August 2026 as part of the planned inaugural Art Week celebration, and \$5,250 to increase payments for bands at Concerts on the Green and Marina Park from the current \$3,250 to \$5,000 per band. Lightfoot noted the Pacific Symphony concert had record-breaking attendance when it returned after a 7-year hiatus, and that band fees had been unchanged for many years.

Chair Ignatin confirmed that band payment rates hadn't increased in about a decade.

Vice Chair Moore noted that when reviewing the increase in band payments, they aimed to align with what other cities were offering since Newport Beach was significantly below market rate.

Jim Mosher asked whether the Foundation currently has the funds or if this is a request for them to raise the money.

Motion by Chair Ignatin, seconded by Vice Chair Moore, to approve the funding opportunity proposed by the City Arts Commission leadership for submission to the Newport Beach Arts Foundation. Motion carried unanimously (5-0-0-1).

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 on recent cultural arts activities, including the eighth annual Halloween Spooktacular event at Mariners Park, which doubled the number of pumpkins from 200 to 400 this year. Chair Ignatin commended staff for their coordination of this successful event.

Manager Lightfoot also reported on the annual fall concert at Marina Park featuring the 805 Social Club, which had approximately 1,600 attendees. She announced the upcoming Family Fun Night on December 19 at Marina Park Community Center, where the Commission would distribute holiday ornaments.

Addressing Commissioner Blom's inquiry from the previous meeting, Manager Lightfoot reported that staff had contacted Public Works Director Dave Webb regarding the Civic Center Park trails. The trails are monitored and repaired as needed and are slated for complete replacement in fiscal year 2028 as part of the Parks Maintenance Master Plan.

Commissioner Blom commented that he had received an email from Director Webb acknowledging the disrepair of the DG material on the trails and that the department would address the immediate concerns.

Commissioners discussed the Family Fun Night event, with Vice Chair Moore noting it would run from 5:30 to 8:00 PM. Chair Ignatin clarified that commissioners were welcome to attend but were not involved in setup.

B. Monthly Reports

7. Art in Public Places Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Commissioner Anastos, Commissioner Meegan

Commissioner Anastos reported that they would be requesting from staff a list of all public spaces they may not be familiar with, as well as notes from prior subcommittees on potential locations for public art.

8. Art Week Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Chair Ignatin, Vice Chair Moore, Commissioner Tippet

Vice Chair Moore reported they discussed a timeline for applications for organizations wanting to get involved. She would be sending out applications to organizations and businesses and reaching out to more organizations identified during the General Plan review. She also reported that the Newport Beach Library Foundation was working on bringing an author who wrote a book about John Williams for an event in the new lecture hall.

9. Music and Live Entertainment Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Chair Ignatin, Vice Chair Moore

Vice Chair Moore noted this was covered in the funding opportunities agenda item.

10. Cultural Arts Grants Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Vice Chair Moore, Commissioner Meegan

Vice Chair Moore noted that this was covered in the Cultural Arts Grants timeline agenda item.

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 they discussed finding better ways to utilize the photos taken by their photographer at concerts and events, suggesting they could be featured on the website rather than just using one or two on Instagram the following year.

13. Sculpture Exhibition Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Chair Ignatin, Commissioner Blom

Chair Ignatin reported that there was no meeting.

14. Student Art Exhibition Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Commissioner Anastos, Commissioner Meegan, Commissioner Tippet

Commissioner Anastos reported they were looking forward to reviewing student art in early December and wanted to explore the idea of a student performing arts exhibition.

Commissioner Tippet added that they discussed distributing applications to schools to increase visibility for the Student Art Exhibition, which has been running for four years but isn't widely known. They hope to get many applicants and are considering an opening night event for participants to see their art displayed in the library.

15. Newport Beach Arts Foundation Liaison

Vice Chair Moore

Vice Chair Moore reported that Art in the Park had about 2,000 attendees with over 110 booths. The event featured artist spotlights, 28 sponsors, a food vendor selling hot food, and a bar serving beer and wine for the first time. Teen Challenge and Lionheart volunteers helped with loading and unloading. Financial results were not available as the treasurer was absent.

16. Historical Resources Liaison

Commissioner Blom

Commissioner Blom reported attending a meeting at Sherman Gardens where they discussed a successful meet and greet with historical organizations at Walt Howald's home in Corona del Mar. The group is working to move their website to join with the CdM Residents Association website for more visibility, reprinting the historical site tour pamphlet that includes about 20-30 plaques given to cottages in Corona del Mar, and planning a lecture series by Bill Lobdell featuring people who can share historical perspectives on Newport Beach and Corona del Mar.

17. General Plan Update Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Ignatin, Moore, Blom

Chair Ignatin noted this was covered in the agenda item earlier in the meeting.

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 three items for the December meeting agenda:

- A staff report auditing donations and contributions the Arts Foundation has made to the Arts Commission in the past five years
- A request for ArtsOC to provide a detailed visual explanation of how the platform for public voting on sculpture selection for Phase X worked
- To have the meeting held in the Council Chambers to accommodate the visual presentation

Library Services Director Hartson noted that Council Chambers' availability would depend on whether another commission had already scheduled the space.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None

IX. ADJOURNMENT – 5:41 P.M.

Chair Ignatin adjourned the meeting.