



Harini Krishnan, District 1  
Stephen Seymour, District 1  
Kimberly Gordon, District 2  
Elizabeth Stone, District 2  
Belinda Hernandez Arriaga, Dist. 3  
Laura McHugh, District 3  
Jeanne Heise, District 4  
Edward Sweeney, District 4  
VACANT: (2 seats), Dist. 5

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**REGULAR MEETING OF THE ARTS COMMISSION**  
**Wednesday, March 16, 2022 — 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.**  
Location: Zoom meeting

**MINUTES**

**1. Roll Call – Vice Chair Kimberly Gordon called the meeting to order at 3:03 with roll call and introduction of guests**

In Attendance: Commissioners Krishnan, Gordon, Stone, Hernandez Arriaga, McHugh, Heise, and Sweeney

Absent: Commissioners Liaiga-Anoa'i and Seymour

Staff: Robin Rodricks, Mara Grimes, Shawna Vesco, Juda Tolmasoff

Guest: Anne Matthew, Commission on Disabilities

**2. AB361 Remote Meeting Requirement – Action Item**

Review and vote on AB361 Remote Meeting Requirements: in keeping with the recently enacted California AB361 and Governor Newsom's suspension of Brown Act Open Meetings law. Commissioner Heise moved to approve continuation of virtual Commission meetings; Commissioner Sweeney seconded the motion. Roll call vote: approved unanimously.

**3. Agenda Amendments**

None

**4. Oral Communications**

The Director stated that this meeting was publicly posted and announced. Anne Matthew of the Commission on Disabilities was in attendance and Director asked her to give an update. She stated that this Commission was working on an Inclusion Festival at the Magical Bridge Playground in Redwood City. They are collaborating with Shawna Vesco on a call for artists with disabilities. Director noted that the Commission had participated in this event in the past hosting a booth and that Commissioners consider attending this event too.

**5. Consideration of Minutes of January 19, 2022 and February 16, 2022 meetings**

Motion made by Commissioner Krishnan to accept the January 19, 2022 minutes and seconded by Commissioner McHugh. Roll Call Vote: approved unanimously. Motion made by Commissioner Heise to accept the February 16, 2022 minutes and seconded by Commissioner Sweeney. Roll Call Vote: approved unanimously.

## 6. Reports

### A. Staff Reports

- **Juda Tolmasoff:** Ms. Tolmasoff noted that she was working on a Proclamation for April 5, 2022 signifying that April was Arts, Culture, and Creativity Month.
- **Robin Rodricks:** Director attended a congressional small business meeting. She also stated that the Equity Workshop held on January 16, 2022 was successful and participants were interested in attending future equity workshops with topics such as BIAS trainings or Diversifying Boards and Staff for nonprofits. Met with Municipal Colleagues on March 9, 2022 and Commissioner Gordon will share the outcomes. Met with the San Mateo County Convention and Visitors Bureau to discuss membership for artists and arts/culture organizations. This would allow them to post and advertise their events on a public calendar. Attended a meeting of the NorCal PAAN and five CA Arts Council meetings. Will be meeting with Filoli to discuss ways to provide programming and access to the underserved.
- **Mara Grimes:** She attended *Arts as LIFE!* Workshop for educators on February 2; the workshop had over 25 sessions, including a panel facilitated by Aileen Cassinetta with Youth Poet Laureates from San Mateo, Alameda, and Santa Clara Counties. Poetry Out Loud Competition is February 7<sup>th</sup>, and all Commissioners are welcome to attend. She thanked Commissioner Krishnan for offering to be the IT person for the event. She is working with SamTrans and San Mateo County Office of Education on Art Takes a Bus Ride program; she requested 4 to 5 Arts Commissioners to volunteer to judge the contest. She reported Yerba Buena Center has requested the OAC promote an “Artists Convening Grant” program to our County’s artists. The art microgrants for educators to August, funded by Dragonfly Community Art, will launch at the start of the school year; promotion of the grants will begin in May.
- **Shawna Vesco:** Curator stated that the Women’s View 20200 was very successful – 84 artists applied, 74 were included in the show and the first piece was sold today. She sent an email with press materials and survey related to the show to all of the artists to capture demographics and solicit feedback for future exhibitions. It was sad that there is no reception, and the winners will be announced in April. She stated that she had a background in community engagement and that she is looking at who we are promoting to currently - white women 50+. Our Instagram account has 530 followers, and we are attracting new and diverse artists – emerging, BIPOC, transgender. She asked that the Commissioners please share our posts when possible. Commissioner Krishnan announced that she has been sharing the posts. The Director also added that she forgot in her report to give a shout out to the Admin-Manager and Curator for their work on the CA Arts Council grant.

### B. Commissioner Reports:

- **Commissioner Gordon:** She reported that she attended the Countywide Celebration for the Arts meetings, the art show at Tanforan, the Poetry Out Loud Competition, and the County training for Boards and Commissions.
- **Commissioner Stone:** She met with director at Filoli Gardens and discussed ways to make the gardens more accessible, especially for youth that do not have the opportunities to visit. She will reach out to CASA volunteers who advocates for under-resourced children in the County and that they are already working with Cal Fresh. She is looking at for other potential to connect to Filoli too. She noted that the Countywide Discover and Go program through the libraries provides free access to many museums, gardens, and cultural institutions. She will work with the Director on next steps.
- **Commissioner Hernandez Arriaga:** She shared that she met with Commissioner Seymour in San Bruno to view to his work and vision. She also met with a community artist who is bringing an art program to Coastside schools at the district level. On March 19<sup>th</sup> the Women in Strength show at ALAS in Half Moon Bay will feature 30 artists sharing their stories of struggle and triumphs as women. She also met with Commissioner McHugh to discuss Art Cohorts, part of Silicon Valley Community Fund and attended the training on Boards and Commissions.

- **Commissioner Krishnan:** Acknowledged the Director, Admin-Manager, and Ms. Tolmasoff for their work on the Poetry Out Loud Competition. It is testament to the healing power of the arts. She noted that Pied Piper Players lost their space due to high cost. She suggested that they work to advocate for themselves and to use our San Mateo Arts Toolkit. She has been working on advocacy this month, attending webinars hosted by the Californians for the Arts. The subject matter included how to advocate the arts and how to help ensure that the arts are not pushed out. She participated in the Countywide Celebration of the Arts meeting.
- **Commissioner McHugh:** She served as a judge for the Art Takes A Bus Ride competition. Lots of great artwork by students. She has been promoting art events on Instagram and Facebook, especially the posts from the Office of Arts and Culture. She visited the Art Zone in San Bruno and ALAS in Half Moon Bay, again lots of great work. She will be serving at the Department Supervisor for the San Mateo County Fair and will oversee the textiles, bookmaking, etc. Commissioner Seymour will head up the Fine Arts area. New this year will be a section on the farmworkers – lots of photos and lots more focus on DEI issues. Commissioner Hernandez Arriaga stated tha she would love to share some of their photos that relate to this topic. She noted that the Silicon Valley Open Studios were returning in-person the first weekend in May and her studio would be open.
- **Commissioner Heise:** She noted that the Poetry Out Loud Competition was inspiring. She attended the Countywide Celebration of the Arts meeting on February 16<sup>th</sup> and also served as a judge for the Art Takes A Bus Ride Competition. She shared that two artists were making presentations today (March 16) for the Redwood City Mural project. As a docent for museums, she mentioned that the De Young Museum had a show on artist, Alice Neal, a white woman and communist that is well-known for her very diverse portraits. The Cantor Museum at Stanford has a show featuring the work of Gordon Parks, the first Black photographer to have his work on the cover of Life Magazine.
- **Commissioner Sweeney:** Redwood City is making progress towards the art center they have been advocating for as it they voted at a recent council retreat to support the center. They determined that the center would be considered a community benefit. They are working with a private developer and the group would like to present their plan to the Arts Commission in the near future.

## 7. Discussion Items

### A. Update on Arts Celebration

**Committee Meeting of February 16, 2022:** Commissioner Gordon stated that the concept of the overarching goals of the event were discussed and the theme of Building Community through the Arts emerged. Commissioner Krishnan described similar events that occurred in Orange County every year celebrating the arts and sent examples of these events via email. There was further discussing regarding timing and it was agreed, sometime in August would be preferable although the length of the event weekend, week, or several weeks was undetermined. She stated that we want to keep accessibility top of mind, noting that everyone has weekends off. The local art component is essential as is finding the right partners to ensure success of the event. Commissioner Gordon reported on the **Municipal Convening Meeting of March 9, 2022** where she presented information on the Celebration; in attendance were representatives from SSF, Millbrae, San Mateo, Daly City, San Bruno, and Burlingame:

- South SF, San Mateo, and Millbrae were all positive in wanting to participate. San Bruno and Daly City initially said no as the timing would not work but as we discussed more ways to participate, they realized that maybe they could be part of it.
- San Bruno has concerts in the park in August and artwork in the library complete with artist talks. Daly City noted that they have been doing virtual artist talks and could make them more available during the event through YouTube.

During Labor Day weekend there are two art fairs, Kings Mountain and Millbrae Art & Wine.

San Mateo wanted to confirm that we are looking to collaborate and help promote existing events rather than create new ones.

OAC reiterated that we want to be inclusive and accessible spotlighting events that were already happening in the cities. The countywide event provides added value.

Director offered to contact the municipalities that did not attend the meeting to see if they are interested. especially RWC and HMB.

Commissioner Gordon went on suggest that she sees this as the “Stone Soup Model” where all the key players add something of value to the pot to make one big, delicious soup. She reminded us that we needed something for all ages and abilities, and that August would allow for activities to be outdoors. Commissioner Sweeney added that the Music@Menlo Music Festival is 7/14-8/6 and he hoped that it could be included.

Commissioner Gordon stated that we are flexible about dates and that we should hold another subcommittee meeting to pin down the date. She also noted that it would be important for the Commissioners to attend the events, especially in their district.

Commissioner Stone raised the question as to the best use of the funds that were specified for this event in our budget. Commissioner Gordon suggested that she would like to have a component such as a “experiential goody-bag” that participants could take home with them. The \$2,500 could also be used for outreach or we could give each district \$500. Commissioner Stone asked if we were looking for corporate sponsors and Commissioner Gordon stated not at this time. Commissioner Heise indicated that Menlo Park had a new arts commission and was working to bring more public art to their city. It was suggested that we meet next on April 13, from 3:00-4:00 and that all were welcome. The Director to follow up with municipalities that did not attend the meeting.

## **B. Recap on County Commissions Training**

Commissioner Gordon remarked that this was the first training for Commissioners that she had been invited to in years. The Director explained that was a pet project of the County Manager. Commissioner McHugh observed that it appeared that there were a lot of younger people joining boards and commissions. Commissioner Sweeney said that the training was useful although ne already knew most of what was presented, but it was a good reminder. The Director indicated that she had her from others that they had hoped for more time with Shireen Malekafzali, the Chief Equity Officer. Commissioner McHugh noted that we that she felt as if the Arts Commission already had time a fair amount of time with her and that was a good idea for others. Ms. Tolmasoff wondered if the training would have been better to have been done in two parts. She asked if there was anything else that would be helpful to the Commissioners in the future and that she would be interested in hearing those ideas.

Commissioner Gordon asked the group what else they would be working on including the status of the strategic plan initiatives. The Director reminded the Commissioners that at the January meeting she asked them to revisit their availability and to look at where they were on the completion of their tasks. She indicated that Commissioners Heise and Krishnan had completed their tasks, and that Commissioner Stone had completed one task and was working on another. Commissioner Gordon stated that she was excited that some tasks were completed and that the Commission was making progress moving forward.

### **Announcement:**

- The Director announced that Commissioner Liaiga-Anoa’l had resigned from the Commission and that there were now two vacancies in District 5 which Supervisor Canepa is working to fill.
- Commissioner Sweeney suggested that we review the strategic plan twice a year and that we discuss next steps. The Director stated that the tasks could be reshared and that she would discuss further with the Chair and Vice-Chair.
- Commissioner Gordon asked that we hold the date of April 20 from 3:00-4:00 pm for the next subcommittee meeting.

8. **Action Item:** None

9. **Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 4:33 pm.

**NEXT REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING: Wednesday, March 16, 2022 3:00-5:00 pm**

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