

MARIN COUNTY CULTURAL SERVICES COMMISSION

Via Zoom, Marin Center, San Rafael, California
Minutes of Meeting of Wednesday, April 28, 2021

ROLE CALL

PRESENT: Chair Lauren Howard, Commissioners Marge Bartolini, Ann Dickson, Ernie Bergman, Helen Willms, Chris Owen, Oshalla Marcus. Director Gabriella Calicchio, Admin Assistant Elisa Seppa

ABSENT: Commissioners Al Boro, Madeline Nieto Hope, Jennifer Wechsler, Marketing Manager Libby Garrison

CALL TO ORDER

The Cultural Services Commission convened via Zoom Videoconference at 9:49 am.

REVIEW AGENDA

The agenda was approved with the addition of the mural concept painting as an action item under Committee Reports – Exhibits & Programs.

AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the March 24, 2021 Commission Meeting were approved.

AYES: ALL

PUBLIC COMMENT

Member of the public (Lawrence Ewing of Marin Ballet) in attendance to speak during Chair's report.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Howard invited Lawrence Ewing, Executive Director of Marin Ballet, to speak on the status of their company during the pandemic. Marin Ballet has adopted the attitude of 'one step at a time' and 'ever forward.' Significant factors that benefited the company over the pandemic were owning their building and receiving two PPP loans. The funding allowed Marin Ballet to adjust and expand programming and continue to increase standards without necessitating changes to staffing or tuition. Honest and transparent communication kept staff, parents, and students informed and engaged. Exploration of choreography work in limited spaces, including the study of active vs passive time, was a positive element that transpired. Director Ewing will be stepping down after 17 years, feeling it is a good time to transition. Going forward Marin Ballet's focus is to 'retain, recruit, rebuild.'

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

WELCOMING & SWEARING IN OF OSHALLA MARCUS

- New Commissioner Marcus was sworn in.
- Commissioner Marcus, a multidisciplinary artist and founder of the Marin City Arts Gallery, will be the representative for District 3. The upcoming edition of Marin Living Magazine will feature an article expanding on Commissioner Marcus' extensive background and critical involvement in local communities and arts programming.

SF OPERA UPDATE

- The San Francisco Opera has been exceptional to work with and host at Marin Center.
- Ticket sales have been lower than anticipated thus far.

- Throughout their 14-performance run, the SF Opera is offering access tickets to health care workers, educators, first responders, and non-profit groups across the bay area.
- The Opera is funded in large part by donations.

VMA COST ESTIMATE ARCHITECT UPDATE – GABRIELLA CALICCHIO & CHRIS OWEN

- The MCA Board is working with Marin County DPW, County Planning, and the CAO to research options for renovation of the Veterans’ Memorial Auditorium. Three proposals from architectural firms for conceptual design / cost estimates were considered. The firm CAW was awarded the contract.
- Polling will take place to gauge community interest in funding renovations. If the response is positive, a bond measure will be placed on the November 2022 ballot for a larger scale renovation during seismic retrofitting of the building (scheduled for August 2022 – May 2023). If not, the renovation plan will occur with a much smaller focus during retrofitting, and larger renovation plans will be pursued in the future.

2021 & 2022 MARIN COUNTY FAIR

- The 2021 Marin County Fair will be exclusively virtual due to timing, staffing, and the uncertainty of capacity and safety standards of gatherings by that time.
- It has not yet been determined if there will be a fair food drive-through, fireworks, or a smaller celebration later in the year.
- The focus will shift to creating an exceptional / full-fledged 2022 Fair.
- Drone shows will be considered as an option for future events.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

EXHIBITS / PROGRAMS – GABRIELLA CALICCHIO

- A collaboration by California / Lomita Park’s community neighborhood group and Lynn Sondag, an art instructor at Dominican University is underway to implement a permanent art installation in response to ongoing defacing of the walkway / retaining wall in the neighborhood area. This would be the first county public art project in Marin.
- There is hope that this project will spur future public art and ‘beautification’ efforts across Marin including Marin Center campus.
- Discussion about future social activation murals, the need for culturally relevant and mindful placement, and implementation followed.
- The project members requested Cultural Services Commission’s support of the installation when they present to the Board of Supervisors for approval.

The California / Lomita Park Community Mural Project was approved.

AYES: ALL

POET LAUREATE / POETRY OUT LOUD – GABRIELLA CALICCHIO & LAUREN HOWARD

- Poet Laureate steering committee founder Richard Brown met with Director Calicchio to present a short list for the next poet laureate – which will be determined soon.
- The Marin Poetry Center has added a youth poet member. Commissioner Howard is hopeful there will be a youth poet laureate position added in the near future as well.

VETERANS’ AFFAIRS REPORT – ERNIE BERGMAN

- United Veterans Council will meet soon to finalize plans for Memorial Day event, which will likely be small due to ongoing Covid 19 restrictions.

- The Commission was invited to the Veterans of Foreign Wars reopening celebration of their newly remodeled facility in Novato.
- Final decisions are being made to determine if the 2021 Wheelchair Regatta will take place. The free annual event – an appreciation/celebration ‘day on the bay’ for veterans – typically hosts 300 veterans and involves 300 volunteers.

IDENTIFY AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

- Community arts representative presentation (Marin City Arts Gallery – Oshalla Marcus)
- California / Lomita Park Community Mural Project (Lynn Sondag)
- SF Opera overview (Possible SF Opera representative)

ADJOURN:

The meeting was adjourned at 11:26 am.

The next Commission meeting will take place on Wednesday, May 26 via Zoom, beginning at 9:30 am.



Gabriella C. Calicchio, Director