

**CITY OF ALAMEDA  
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC ART COMMISSION (PAC)  
REGULAR MEETING OF DECEMBER 18, 2023  
6:00 PM**

Chairperson Adam Gillitt called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

**1 ROLL CALL**

Present: Chairperson Adam Gillitt, Vice Chairperson Liz Rush, commissioners Peter Platzgummer, Robert Ferguson, and Jennifer Hoffecker.

Lois Butler and Walker Toma present as staff to the Commission.

One participant was in attendance in person and there were two remote participants.

**2 NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Gabriel Duncan**, Founder and principal researcher of the Alameda Native History Project. He introduced himself to the Public Art Commission (PAC) and said he hopes that they'll get to work on projects together in the future, whether through a grant or open public comment.

**3 MINUTES**

**2023-3674 Review and Approve Draft Minutes of October 16, 2023 Meeting**

A motion to approve the minutes was given by Vice Chairperson Liz Rush and seconded by Commissioner Ferguson. The motion was adopted 5-0.

**4 REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS**

**2023-3675 Recommendation to Adopt Public Art Commission Meeting Calendar for 2024 that Seeks to Avoid Possible Conflicts that Inhibit Maximum Public Participation**

PAC regularly scheduled meetings are on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of every other month. Mr. Toma presented a 2024 scheduled calendar of seven (7) meetings, which reflected changes to February's meeting date (to avoid conflict with a city holiday) and an addition of a November meeting, per a Public Art Master Plan recommendation, to provide an opportunity for the PAC to develop a Biennial Work Plan. The presented 2024 calendar included the following seven (7) dates:

February 12, 2024  
April 15, 2024  
June 17, 2024  
August 19, 2024

October 21, 2024  
November 18, 2024  
December 16, 2024

No public comments

Chairperson Gillitt made a motion to accept the meeting calendar as proposed by staff and was seconded by Commissioner Ferguson. The motion was adopted 5-0.

**2023-3676 Recommendation to Review and Provide Feedback on Staff  
Proposal to Develop and Issue a Request for Proposals for Cultural Arts and**

## Arts Programming in Early 2024

At its October 17, 2023, meeting, the PAC voted to recommend that the City Council adopt the Public Art Master Plan (Plan).

Year one of the Five-Year Action Plan included in the Plan identifies the “release [of] a grant application for Cultural Arts and Arts Programming.”

Mr. Toma presented a draft Cultural Art RFP and asked the PAC and public for feedback. The draft RFP included the following:

- **Staff are proposing \$60,000 be distributed for cultural art and arts programming through a single RFP process in the first quarter of 2024.**
- Grant sizes:
  - **Four (4) \$10,000 awards**
  - **Four (4) \$5,000 awards**
- Staff recommended modifying the criteria and weights established in the 2022 Cultural Arts RFP to better reflect the Plan recommendations and goals.
  - **Greater efforts to encourage geographic and cultural equity.**

### Evaluation Criteria

Proposed Event or Program	An assessment of the proposed event or program and how it will benefit the broader community and engage local arts and culture groups and individuals.	35%
Experience/Capacity	An assessment of the organization’s <b>experience and/or capacity</b> to implement programs and projects to enhance local arts and culture.	25%
Budget	Inclusion of reasonable cost estimates within desired grant amount.	15%
Schedule	Inclusion of realistic program schedule	15%
Leveraged funds	Use of additional federal, state, philanthropic or other funds for the project.	5%
Equity and Accessibility	<b>Proposal is accessible and addresses cultural equity, diversity, and inclusiveness.</b>	5%

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Local Preference	Artist and/or arts organization based in the City of Alameda.	5%
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### Selection Process and Proposed Timeline

- Consistent with the 2022 Cultural Arts RFP, staff recommended that applications received in response to the RFP be **presented by staff and evaluated by the PAC during a PAC meeting** following the RFP application deadline. The PAC will have the opportunity to ask staff clarifying questions before scoring each application and selecting which proposals should receive grant awards.
- Proposed RFP Timeline:**

<b>RFP Release</b>	January 15, 2024
<b>Orientation &amp; Q&amp;A</b>	February 1, 2024
<b>Questions due</b>	February 15, 2024
<b>Questions released</b>	February 28, 2024
<b>Applications due</b>	March 15, 2024
<b>PAC Evaluation &amp; Grant Awards</b>	April 15, 2024

### Next Steps

- Based upon input from the PAC at this evening's meeting**, staff will finalize and issue an RFP in January 2024.
- Feedback on:
  - Grant amounts/number
  - Evaluation criteria
  - Selection process
  - Timeline
  - Other elements of the proposed RFP

### Clarifying Questions

Commissioner Ferguson pointed out that the evaluation criteria add up to 105%. Chairperson Gillitt and Mr. Toma said they would adjust the percentages later.

Chairperson Gillitt asked when the money for the grant awardees would be dispersed. Mr. Toma said that once the agreement with a grantee is executed, and they have provided the necessary insurance, half of the grant money is delivered; and once the performance- or programming-occurs, the grantee receives the other half of the money.

### Public Comment

**Rachel Campos de Ivanov** expressed her appreciation for staff's work on the RFP. She

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said events and cultural programs are important economic tools for the city. They are important tools for fostering a sense of belonging and we've certainly seen a lot of exciting new programs come to light this past year. These programs are expensive and difficult to produce, and even ones that are resounding successes aren't always financial successes. So having some underwriting is important to keep this kind of program happening.

As much as she's excited that staff and PAC are trying to get the funding awarded as quickly as possible, the timeline for the new special events permit process means that it's very likely that we will not see the fruits of your labor this year until the beginning of next year unless they're events and programs that can happen during our rainy season because the four-to six-month lead time is long. Overall, she said the grant amounts and general strategy to create a regular source of funding would be enormously helpful.

**Tara Pilbrow** said that the RFP timeline should include a grant activity date so that grant applicants know the exact date that the grant money would be awarded, and they could begin their work.

### **In-Person Speaker**

**Gabriel Duncan**, of the Alameda Native History Project, said it's great that the city offers artists grants. But, he said, one of the things you might want to consider is to make sure we're getting authentic art and programming rather than things that are presented in a traditional way by people who may not traditionally come from that way.

### **Discussion**

Chairperson Gillitt said he was glad to see in the RFP the addition of "capacity" as a criterion, which is an important change. As a city providing arts funds, there are a lot of new organizations that are young, don't have experience and don't have a track record to show off. And to be able to include capability and projected capability as opposed to a laundry list of all the events you've held, is going to provide a great opportunity for some new organizations to have a chance to earn some of the grant funds. It's hard as a new, smaller nonprofit to get the attention of funders.

Chairperson Gillitt asked what mechanisms will be in place to track grantees who stop communicating halfway through who have taken some of the money but don't deliver their program. Mr. Toma said he would draft a protocol and agreed it is important—given that the city is trying to issue as many grants as possible—and that unused money from a cancelled grant could be used for other grant applicants.

Chairperson Gillitt asked if it will be possible to have the RFP translated into all seven languages that the city translates documents into so that we can reach out to communities in Alameda that don't normally get these notices for grant applications.

Mr. Toma replied that it's a good idea and he would investigate translations.

Commissioner Ferguson said that often there is a city employee liaison who checks up on the artist and will ask for monthly reports in order to assure that the project is progressing,

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and the grant money is being used properly. He offered to mentor any new artists or organizations who are awarded grants from the RFP.

Commissioner Hoffecker asked how long grantees have to complete their performances and use the money. Commissioner Platzgummer said he thought it is one year from the date of the grant award. Mr. Toma replied that there's a one-year deadline from the date of the execution of the grant contract to when the activity of the grant is supposed to be completed, but he will verify it. Chairperson Gillitt said that the time it takes to get city permits should also be factored into the grantee's timeline for the completion of grant projects. Mr. Toma said the city could allow extra time for permits and write it into grant applications. He added that all grants are currently awarded on a case-by-case basis and have flexibility with regards to timeline, insurance, etc., but that a one-year cycle from grant approval could be imposed.

Ms. Butler said that one year from the date of execution would be fine. She added that staff are currently negotiating with the city's Finance Department about making sure the grants are used in a more expeditious fashion. So, she said PAC should be very specific about the timing of the grants.

Commissioner Platzgummer asked about organizations and priorities with regards to special events permits. Ms. Butler said that a grant application doesn't allow any priority for anyone. But Alameda nonprofits within the city will be notified that they can apply for a permit, and, if they apply, then they should be considered. And they can add in the grant application that they've applied for this grant and that they'd like it in connection with another grant for the special events process.

Commissioner Platzgummer said he wants the RFP's availability marketed as widely as possible and dates added to the RFP timeline, so applicants have a better idea of the average expected timeline of a project. Also, he wanted to know if PAC is okay with yearly repeated applications from the same artists and organizations, or do we want to limit them. He also asked: does the PAC really want to spend \$60,000 a year on grants? He'd prefer to reduce the total grant budget in order for it to be more sustainable for PAC.

Regarding limiting which artists or organizations could apply yearly for a grant, Mr. Toma said he understood the rationale for it and knows that Alameda isn't a large city and there aren't that many local organizations operating, but he said it would change the dynamic of the grant process over a number of years. Ms. Butler said you'd be limiting the existing organizations who work hard to try and secure funding from other places if you limit how many grants they can get. It would severely impact them. Chairperson Gillitt said that the process now allows anyone to apply each year and not limit applicants who, especially if a local Alameda arts organization, submits a poor application one year and doesn't get selected. The reason PAC awards grants to the same, regular artists and organizations each year is because they come with solid plans and know how to apply for it. He said by Increasing the grant capacity requirement, it will make room for new organizations to participate without squeezing out some of our traditional groups.

Regarding Commissioner Platzgummer's concern about the increase in the total amount of

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money spent on grants, Commissioner Ferguson, Vice Chairperson Rush and Chairperson Gillitt all said that given the increased number of construction projects in the city and the resulting revenue flowing into the arts fund, along with the ability to adjust grant monies as needed, it isn't a concern at this time to offer \$60,000 in grants. Mr. Toma said that a more robust outreach effort could lead to more grant applications, but it's not knowable. There were nine applicants for 8 grants in 2022. Ms. Butler said that as the grant application reviewers, PAC doesn't have to award every category of grant, which you've done in the past, but consideration should be given to the number of proposals we are suggesting.

Commissioner Platzgummer said he was still concerned about the grant applicant numbers and the grant amounts. Chairperson Gillitt said that keeping the number of grants at eight or fewer is probably the best choice, but there are arguments on either side for changing the amount. Chairperson Gillit indicated that a lot was learned from 2022, but there is not sufficient data that would tell us as to what amounts would be best received by the community. The \$5,000 and \$10,000 amounts were decided after what we proposed before, where people said "no, actually this would be more helpful for us." Some may want only \$2,500 while others \$20,000. Commissioner Ferguson asked if PAC is in the business of funding grant applications at 100 percent. He said sometimes a grant is to give someone a jump start on their project. Any amount is good. Commissioner Hoffecker asked about doing mini grants. Ms. Butler replied that PAC hasn't done them lately, they were a lot of work, and many people were unresponsive, and to this day some people never claimed their grants.

Mr. Toma said the feedback from PAC and the public was that the larger grants weren't as desired as the medium-size grants. The \$5k and \$10k grants were the compromise between small grants and larger grants of \$25k and \$35k proposed because we wanted to spread it out to more organizations.

Mr. Toma and Chairperson Gillitt said to Commissioner Platzgummer's point, more marketing will be done to advertise the grants, and also, per Gillit's suggestion, have grantees post on social media.

Commissioner Platzgummer asked what the feedback process will be for the grantees? Vice Chairperson Rush suggested a standard form that grantees would fill out after their event. Mr. Toma said it's a fantastic idea that aligns well with year one or two of the proposed five-year action plan inside the Public Art Master Plan to develop resources or procedure documents to help artists, staff, PAC. This would match quite clearly with that, so over the next year or two, for the next RFP, we will have something set up he said.

After some discussion about the translation of the 50-page RFP into seven languages, and Chairperson Gillitt's stated goal of getting the RFP into the hands of more members of the community, Mr. Toma suggested that just the grant's press release could be translated for a quicker turn around given the RFP is supposed to be released to the public on January 15, 2024.

Commissioner Platzgummer returned to the Evaluation Criteria, the seven sections of which totaled 105 percent, so he suggested decreasing the schedule and budget sections

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from 15 percent to 10 percent and increasing equity and accessibility to 10 percent so the seven sections of Evaluation Criteria now equal 100 percent.

Commissioner Platzgummer made a motion to go forward with everyone's suggested feedback at tonight's meeting and release the RFP on January 15, 2024, and seconded by Chairperson Gillitt. The motion was adopted 5-0.

## **5 STAFF COMMUNICATIONS**

Mr. Toma reminded everyone that staff will be bringing the draft of the proposed Public Art Master Plan to City Council, tomorrow, December 19. Plan to attend to lend support.

## **6 COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS**

Chairperson Gillitt praised Commissioner Hoffecker for having been part of the De Young Open at the De Young Museum in San Francisco. He said it's a huge accomplishment as thousands of people applied and only a few hundred people were selected to have their art displayed.

Chairperson Gillitt also said that tomorrow's City Council meeting will have Radium Runway, the proposed new performing arts center at Alameda Point, on the agenda. He encouraged everyone to attend the meeting to hear about the proposed project and give feedback about it.

## **7 ADJOURNMENT**

Chairperson Gillitt adjourned the meeting at 7:20pm.