



CITY OF OAKLAND

Cultural Affairs Commission

Regular Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 25, 2021

4:00 - 7:05 PM

Members in Attendance: Diane Sanchez (Chair), Michelle Mush Lee (Vice Chair), Roy Chan, Kev Choice (partial attendance), Jennifer Easton, J. K. Fowler, Vanessa Whang, Theo Aytchan Williams

Staff in Attendance: Roberto Bedoya, Neha Balram, Raquel Iglesias, Kristen Zaremba

Guest Speakers: Aida Salazar, Safi Jiroh, Rachel Farahbakhsh, Darlene Flynn, Jacque Larrainzar, Greg Minor, Jim MacIlvaine

Roll Call/Call to Order

1. Welcome

Meeting called to order by Commission Chair Sanchez at 4:00 PM.

2. Land Acknowledgement

Commissioner Williams led the Land Acknowledgement, recognizing that Oakland is the Huichin land of the Chochenyo speaking Ohlone and opened the meeting with peace, love, prosperity, and abundance.

3. Action Item 1: Approval of Minutes from September 27, 2021

Motion to approve the meeting minutes from September 27, 2021 made by Commissioner Easton; seconded by Commissioner Fowler.

Chan	AYE
Choice	absent
Easton	AYE
Fowler	AYE
Lee	AYE
Sanchez	AYE
Whang	AYE
Williams	AYE

The motion passed.

4. Action Item 2: Adopt Resolution 21-10-02 Determining that Conducting In-Person Meetings of the Cultural Affairs Commission and its Committees would Present Imminent Risks to Attendees' Health, and Electing to Continue Conducting Meetings Using Teleconferencing in Accordance with California Government Code Section 54953(e), a Provision of AB-361

Motion to adopt the Resolution 21-10-02 made by Commissioner Whang; seconded by Commissioner Chan.

Chan	AYE
Choice	absent
Easton	AYE
Fowler	AYE
Lee	AYE
Sanchez	AYE
Whang	AYE
Williams	AYE

The motion passed.

5. Public Comment

No members of the public made a comment.

6. Cultural Affairs Division Manger's Update

Neighborhood Voices Grant Program

Roberto Bedoya noted that the Funding Advisory Committee voted to approve Neighborhood Voices grant program funding recommendations for 60 organizations and individuals in the amount of \$1.246M in the categories Organizations, Individual Artists, and Organizational Assistance. The recommendations are scheduled to be presented to City Council for approval in November. The second round of Neighborhood Voices Festival Culture

Oakland Poet Laureate

He noted that Commissioner Fowler organized a successful First Oakland Poet Laureate Inaugural Address for Dr. Ayodele Nzinga on October 7. The event include artists and Poet Laureates from across the Bay Area.

Belonging in Oakland: A Just City Cultural Fund

In October, the Belonging in Oakland: A Just City Cultural Funding announced its latest [eight awardees](#).

Staffing

He noted that his staff has diminished significantly with Denise Pate's departure from the City of Oakland, Jim MacIrvine's transition to a new division in the department, and Neha Balram's temporary family leave. He is working on replacing Pate's position with a temporary hire, while Human Resources completes the paperwork to announce the vacant position. Additionally, the Kristen Zarembo and the Public Art Program continues to need assistance, especially now with a new mural program charge from City Council.

Cultural Strategist in Government

Bedoya noted that the Vanessa Whang is the senior advisor for the new round of the Cultural Strategist in Government program. Ten City Departments have signed up to participate in the program but the process to complete paperwork has delayed the formal request for proposals.

Advocacy

He noted that he and Commission Chair Sanchez have participated in conversations about securing additional funds for Alameda County and possibly the Oakland Cultural Affairs Division. Also, OMCA and the Berkeley Repertory Theatre are working with other local arts groups on a media campaign to boost visibility for the re-opening of visual and performing arts in the East Bay. The 2021 State Budget included \$60 million one-time General Fund for the California Arts Council to implement the California Creative Corps Pilot Program, a media, outreach and engagement campaign designed to increase: (1) public health awareness messages to stop the spread of COVID-19; (2) public awareness related to water and energy conservation, and emergency preparedness, relief, and recovery; (3) civic engagement, including election participation; and (4) social justice and community engagement. The Arts Council is accepting self-nominations from across California for the California Creative Corps Program Development Community Panel.

7. Department of Violence Prevention Presentation - Guillermo Cespedes, Chief of Violence Prevention

Chief Cespedes, who joined the City of Oakland in September 2019, provided an overview of the work of the Department of Violence Prevention, which was established by City Council in 2017. He noted the primary goals of the department include: (1) Reduce Gun Violence, (2) Reduced Intimate Partner Violence, (3) Reduce Commercial Sexual Exploitation, (4) Reduce Number of Unsolved Cold Cases, (5) Reduce Levels of Community Trauma.

He noted that the department is launching a new series in Oakland called Town Nights, a violence interruption strategy in response to increasing gun violence. The program is an adaptation of a similar program introduced in Los Angeles in 2004. The concept revolves around creating safe, violence-free spaces for all ages by keeping community spaces or parks open late and bringing arts and culture activities and public programming for the local community. He noted that instead of restricting the events to the key demographics found to be violent offenders or victims of violent offenders in Oakland, it is safer to make the events all ages.

Fall Town Nights Events

4 consecutive Fridays

6:00pm-10:00pm

- Monday, November 22, 2021
- Friday, December 3, 2021
- Friday, December 10, 2021
- Friday, December 17, 2021

Summer Town Nights Events

4 consecutive Fridays

6:00pm-10:00pm

- Friday, June 17, 2022
- Friday, June 24, 2022
- Friday, July 1, 2022
- Friday, July 8, 2022

8. Artist Spotlight: Aida Salazar

Commission Chair Sanchez introduced local author Aida Salazar. Aida Salazar is an award-winning author, arts activist, and translator whose writings for adults and children explore issues of identity and social justice. She is the author of the critically acclaimed middle grade verse novels, THE MOON WITHIN (International Latino Book Award Winner) and LAND OF THE CRANES (Américas Award, California Library Association Beatty Award, Northern CA Book Award, NCTE Charlotte Huck Honor, Jane Addams Peace Honor). Salazar read excerpts from some of her books.

9. Racial Equity Impact Assessment Report Presentation - LeaderSpring Center: Safi Jiroh, Deputy Director, and Rachel Farahbakhsh, Senior Manager of Operations

Roberto Bedoya introduced the consultants from LeaderSpring Center who conducted the racial equity assessment of the Cultural Affairs Division in 2020. Bedoya secured funding for this research project from The Surdna Foundation after the findings from the Cultural Plan indicated that a racial equity of assessment of the division should be conducted. He noted that Darlene Flynn and Jacque Larrainzar have been invited to answer questions from Commissioners about the City's perspective on the report's findings.

Safi Jiroh noted that they interviewed the division's senior staff, the Cultural Affairs Commission, the Public Art Advisory Committee, the Funding Advisory Committee, and organizations who were either unfunded or never applied for cultural and public art funds. The report reviewed data from FY 2014/15 through FY 2018/19. The questions that guided this report were:

- How is racial equity relevant to the work of the Cultural Affairs Division and its government boards?
- What are the demographics of grant recipients?
- What are the barriers to access to professional development opportunities, decision-making, and funding opportunities for BIPOC artists and cultural workers?
- What are the outreach efforts for funding opportunities?
- Where does the power reside in framing arts and culture in Oakland?
- Who makes grant recommendations to the City Council and what is the process for making those recommendations?

Darlene Flynn noted that Prop 209 should not be viewed as a barrier to collecting demographic data about grant recipients. Commissioner Whang facilitated a question-and-answer period for the Commission.

10. Update: Special Activity Permits Division - Greg Minor, Assistant to the City Administrator

Greg Minor and Jim MacIlvaine provided an update on the Special Activity Permits Division activities. Minor noted that they are working on making equity-centered updates to permitting and security requirements for special events. They asked for feedback on the Draft Security Requirements and Appeal Process for Special Events, particularly the three possible approaches for an appeal process.

11. Open Forum

No members of the public made a comment.

12. Announcements & Oakland Artist Acknowledgements

Commissioner Williams asked the Commissioners and the public to take a moment of silence to remember Dr. Zakarya Sao Diouf, who recently passed away, and provided a brief history of his many accomplishments and achievements both locally and nationally.

13. Closing

Commission Chair Sanchez thanked the Commissioners, City staff, and the public for joining the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 PM.