



CITY OF OAKLAND

**Cultural Affairs Commission  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
Monday, July 26, 2021  
4:01 – 7:14 PM**

**Members in Attendance:** Diane Sanchez (Chair), Kev Choice (Vice Chair), Jennifer Easton, J. K. Fowler, Michelle Mush Lee, Charmin Roundtree-Baaqee, Vanessa Whang, Theo Aytchan Williams

**Members in Attendance:** Roy Chan

**Staff in Attendance:** Roberto Bedoya, Neha Balram, Denise Pate, Kristen Zaremba

**Guest Speakers:** Corrina Gould, Dr. Ayodele Nzinga, Greg Minor, Jim MacIlvaine, Steven Tiffin, Shifra de Benedictis-Kessner, Elena Serrano, Jessica Chen, Shari Godinez, Frank Ciglar, Daniel Swafford, Itzel Diaz-Romo, Samee Roberts

**Roll Call/Call to Order**

**1. Welcome**

**2. Artist Spotlight: Dr. Ayodele Nzinga (Oakland Poet Laureate)**

Commissioner Fowler introduced Oakland's inaugural Poet Laureate. Dr. Nzinga provided a statement expressing her gratitude for being selected to become Oakland's first Poet Laureate and accepting the responsibility to represent The Town. She stated that she considers the honor both an award and a reward.

**3. Guest Speaker: Corrina Gould (Co-Founder/Co-Director, Sogorea Te' Land Trust)**

Corrina Gould introduced herself to the Commission and noted her deep roots in Oakland. She noted that while the Ohlone still exist in Huichan Territory (including Oakland) evidence by her family's long history in the area, her Tribe is often referred to in the past tense. Gould also clarified that the Ohlone people are divided into eight different nations that each have their own language, creation stories, and cultural practices. Oakland sits in the Chochenyo language area.

Gould highlighted some of the Sogorea Te' Land Trust's recent accomplishments for the Ohlone community including obtaining formal recognition through signage and land designation, and cultural preservation throughout the East Bay. The City of Oakland is in the process of writing a letter of intent to return some land in Joaquin Miller Park. Additionally, through a relationship with the non-profit Planting Justice,

the City of Oakland returned a piece of land to the Ohlone— the first in over 250 years, which is being used as a dance pavilion for ceremonial practices. The City of Alameda recently agreed to change Andrew Jackson Park to Chochenyo Park. Additionally, the City of Alameda has agreed to pay a Shuumi (Gift) Tax at the rate of \$11,000 per year for the next three years to support cultural revitalization and land-back work. The City of Berkeley acknowledges Ohlone Territory on its signage. The Sogorea Te' Land Trust is working with the City of Albany to change signage there and raise the tribal flag, as well. A new park in the City of Richmond incorporated Ohlone art and designated land to harvest traditional plants and foods.

**4. Action Item 1: Approval of Minutes from April 26, 2021**

Motion to approve the meeting minutes from April 26, 2021 made by Commissioner Choice; seconded by Commissioner Whang.

Choice	AYE
Easton	AYE
Fowler	AYE
Lee	AYE
Roundtree-Baaqee	AYE
Whang	AYE
Williams	AYE
Sanchez	AYE

**5. Cultural Affairs Division Manager's Update**

Cultural Affairs Division Budget Overview

Roberto Bedoya provided the following updates:

- The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has approved a grant of \$900,000 to the New Venture Fund, in partnership with the Oakland Fund for Public Innovation and the City's Cultural Affairs Division, to support 12 cultural strategist placements within City of Oakland government. These engagements infuse creative problem-solving in the various participating City departments. This new grant funding expands the Cultural Strategist in Government (CSIG) program beyond a 2019 pilot that was established in response to the City's Cultural Plan "Belonging in Oakland: A Cultural Development Plan" which has informed how Oakland advances civic belonging and well-being. The CSIG program is designed to infuse government with artistic thought partners who work with them on efforts to serve Oaklanders as part of the "belonging strategy."
- Cultural Affairs received an additional \$500K in FY 21-22 and \$1M in FY 22-23 for Cultural Affairs Programming. Council directive associate with these new funds is to focus serving flatlands neighborhoods below 580, including East

Oakland, West Oakland, Fruitvale, San Antonio, Chinatown, Little Saigon/Eastlake, Laurel, Brookdale.

\$250k in FY21-22 for and \$250k in FY22-23 for the Black Arts Movement District – Business/Cultural Affairs support

- The establishment of the Special Activity Permits Division in the Economic & Workforce Development Department. This transfer reframes the Special Activity Permits Division from a nuisance abatement perspective to a facilitator of economic development. Jim MacIvaine will be moving from the Cultural Affairs Division to work directly with the new Special Activity Permits Division, where he will continue to work to support businesses and events in Oakland.

#### Expanded Special Activity Permits Division

Greg Minor, Assistant to the City Administrator, provided an overview of the Special Activity Permits Division in the Economic & Workforce Development Department that will oversee the permitting process. He provided an overview of an informational report submitted to the Commission and included in the meeting agenda packet on the work the Division is tasked with most immediately.

#### Background

- Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT), or “hotel tax”, declined due to COVID-19; Approx. \$65k available for festivals FY 2021-2022 (gap of \$300k+)
- Measure C (July 2009), a 3% hotel tax funds Cultural Arts Programs and Festivals (12.5% of the total revenue)
- Approx. \$334,929 annually for: First Friday, Laurel Street Fair, Chinatown StreetFest, Oakland Pride, Rockridge Out and About, Black Cowboy Parade, Oaktobefest, Dia de los Muertos, Chinatown Lunar New Year Bazaar, Malcom X Jazz Festival, and Temescal Street Fair

#### Transition of Special Event Permitting

- 2020 City Council Resolution to transfer of permitting from OPD
  - Did not come with new staff
  - FY 2021-2022 Budget adds permit technician
- Special Activity Permits Division (now in EWD) in process of finalizing transfer and improving related processes:
- Streamlining special event permitting
- Establishing new workflow/permit fee
- Developing transparent and objective security requirements
- Explore adjustments to OFD costs
- Target Date of Transition this fall

**Recommended Approach**

- Use available TOT to support festivals through November 2021
- New equitable process will inform distribution of Council's \$500k allocation to Cultural Affairs Division to festivals (FY 2021-2022)

**Guest Speakers on Festival Culture – Oakland TOT Recipients**

Recipients of the Oakland Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) took this opportunity to provide comments about the importance of the TOT funds to their festivals/events, except for Wilbert McAlister, whose statement was read aloud by City staff. Chair Sanchez acknowledged that the lack of representation from District 6 and 7 is an equity issue that needs to be addressed. She underscored that many festivals across Oakland have never received TOT funds.

- **Steven Tiffin** (Vice President/Director of Operations, Heart of the Town Events) (Rockridge Out and About, District 1)
- **Shifra de Benedictis-Kessner** (Executive Director of the Temescal Business Improvement District) (Temescal Street Fair, District 1)
- **Elena Serrano** (Program Director of Eastside Arts Alliance) (Malcom X Jazz Festival, District 2)
- **Jessica Chen** (Executive Director, Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce) (Chinatown StreetFest and Lunar New Year Bazaar, District 2)
- **Shari Godinez** (Executive Director, Koreatown Northgate CBD) (Oakland First Fridays, District 3)
- **Frank Ciglar** (Board Member, Oakland Pride) (Oakland Pride, District 3)
- **Wilbert McAlister** (President, The Oakland Black Cowboy Association) (Black Cowboy Parade, District 3)
- **Daniel Swafford** (Executive Director, Laurel District Association and Founder/Managing Director, Oaktoberfest) (Laurel Street Fair and Oaktoberfest, District 4)
- **Itzel Diaz-Romo** (Senior Manager of Communications and External Affairs, The Unity Council) (Dia de los Muertos, District 5)
- **Samee Roberts** (President/Executive Director, Heart of the Town Events) (Art and Soul, District 3)

**6. Public Comment**

The following members of the public made a comment: Mike Woolson, Hodari, Stephanie Tran, Omar Sabeh, Joseph Jung, Jim Santi Owen, Vanessa McGhee, Dave Campbell, Bessma Khalaf, Edward Brown, Matthew Ticknor, Sonja Brooks.

**7. Action Item 2: Vice Chair Vote**

The Commission was asked to vote on the following candidates for Vice Chair, a one-year term, Kev Choice and Michelle Mush Lee. Commissioner Lee was selected to be

the next Vice Chair of the Cultural Affairs Commission, receiving five out of eight votes.

**8. Commissioner Discussion: New Potential Ad-hoc Teams**

Due to time constraints, this item was tabled for the next regular meeting of the Commission on September 27.

**9. Open Forum**

The following members of the public made a comment: Timmy Johnson, Greg Hams, Angelica Contreras, Gema Cantu.

Additionally, comments from the following members of the public were submitted in advance of the meeting and read aloud: Matthew Mansanares, Heidi Pickman, Asia, Doran McGhee, Mike Thaler.

**10. Announcements & Oakland Artist Acknowledgements**

Commission Vice Chair Choice read acknowledgments of three artists connected to Oakland who passed away recently – Paul Mooney, Shock G, and Gift of Gab.

Chair Sanchez acknowledged landscape and public artist Walter Hood who received the 2021 Newly Elected Member (Architecture), American Academy of Arts and Letters.

**11. Closing**

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

Commissioner Williams made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Lee.

The meeting adjourned at 7:14 PM.