

## CITY OF OAKLAND

**Cultural Affairs Commission  
Regular Meeting Agenda  
Monday, January 27, 2025  
5:30 – 8:30 PM**

Please note that all meetings of the Cultural Affairs Commission will be conducted in person at:

**Oakland City Hall  
1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Hearing Room 2 (First Floor), Oakland, CA  
94612**

### **How to Make a Comment:**

There are two opportunities for the public to address the Cultural Affairs Commission and City staff. The first opportunity is during the "Public Comment" period. The second opportunity is during the "Open Forum" period. Dialogue during the meeting with Commissioners, City staff, or its guest speakers is not permitted outside of the two comment periods. **Zoom participation is for viewing only. Comments will no longer be accepted via Zoom or telephone.**

### **RE: ZOOM PARTICIPATION + COMMENT PERIODS**

All Cultural Affairs Commission meetings will be conducted in person. The Cultural Affairs Commission is no longer accepting public comments via Zoom or telephone. Therefore, live comments must be made in-person. You can choose to submit a written comment by 5:00 PM THE DAY BEFORE the meeting starts to [culturalaffairs@oaklandca.gov](mailto:culturalaffairs@oaklandca.gov). Any comments received via email during the duration or after the meeting may not be entered into public record but will be shared with the Commission and City staff later.

### **Please click the link below to join the webinar:**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84761257645> Or

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Or Telephone:

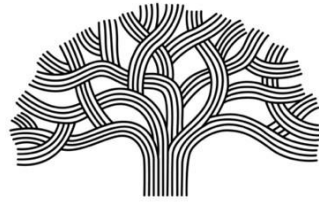
Dial(for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

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**CITY OF OAKLAND**

**Cultural Affairs Commission  
Regular Meeting Agenda  
Monday, January 27, 2025  
5:30 – 8:30 PM**

**AGENDA**

- I. Roll Call / Call to Order
- II. Land Acknowledgement + Official City of Oakland Love Life Acknowledgement
- III. Action Item:
  - a. Approve Minutes from the October 28, 2024 Cultural Affairs Commission Meeting
- IV. Artist Spotlight: Mama Celeste of Oaklash
- V. City Clerk Presentation: Board & Commission Regulations, Presenter: Britney Davis, Assistant City Clerk
- VI. Public Comment
- VII. Informational Item: Cultural Affairs Division Update
  - a. Interim Manager's Update
  - b. Cultural Funding Program Updates
  - c. Public Art Program Updates
- VIII. Action Item:
  - a. Approval of proposed amendments to Ord. 13561
- IX. Cultural Affairs Commission Chair's Update
- X. Commission Ad Hoc Teams/Updates
- XI. Open Forum
- XII. Announcements & Acknowledgements
- XIII. Adjournment

**Next meeting (special): Monday, February 10, 2025 from 5:30 – 8:30 PM at  
Oakland City Hall – 1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Oakland, CA 94612**  
**Next regular meeting: Monday, April 28, 2025 from 5:30 – 8:30 PM at  
Oakland City Hall – 1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Oakland, CA 94612**

Oakland Cultural Affairs Commission, 1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, 9th fl. Oakland, CA 94612  
[www.oaklandculturalarts.org](http://www.oaklandculturalarts.org)

Oakland Cultural Affairs Division of the Economic & Workforce Development Department 1 Frank  
H. Ogawa Plaza, 9th fl. Oakland, CA 94612  
[www.oaklandculturalarts.org](http://www.oaklandculturalarts.org)

This meeting location is wheelchair accessible. To request disability-related accommodations or to request American Sign Language (ASL), Cantonese, Mandarin, or Spanish language interpreter, please email [riglesias@oaklandca.gov](mailto:riglesias@oaklandca.gov) or call (510) 238-2212 Or 711 (for Relay Service) at least five (5) business days before the meeting. Please refrain from wearing scented products to this meeting as a courtesy to attendees with chemical sensitivities.

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Địa điểm tổ chức cuộc họp có đường dành riêng cho xe lăn. Để yêu cầu các phương tiện hỗ trợ phục vụ người khuyết tật hoặc yêu cầu thông dịch viên ASL, tiếng Quảng Đông, tiếng Quan Thoại hoặc tiếng Tây Ban Nha, vui lòng gửi email đến địa chỉ [riglesias@oaklandca.gov](mailto:riglesias@oaklandca.gov) hoặc gọi đến số (510) 238-2212 hoặc 711 (với Dịch vụ Tiếp âm) ít nhất năm (5) ngày làm việc trước khi cuộc họp diễn ra. Vui lòng không sử dụng các sản phẩm có mùi thơm khi tham gia cuộc họp này như một phép lịch sự đối với những người tham dự nhạy cảm đối với các chất hóa học.

**Cultural Affairs Division - Economic & Workforce Development Department Cultural  
Affairs Commission Contacts – Raquel Iglesias, Cultural Funding Coordinator, and Pamela  
Mattera, Assistant Cultural Funding Coordinator**  
Email: [culturalaffairs@oaklandca.gov](mailto:culturalaffairs@oaklandca.gov)  
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Telecommunications Relay Service: 711

Oakland Cultural Affairs Commission, 1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, 9th fl. Oakland, CA 94612  
[www.oaklandculturalarts.org](http://www.oaklandculturalarts.org)

# Land Acknowledgement

**On behalf of the Cultural Affairs Commission & Public Art Advisory Committee:**

**We want to take a moment to honor the traditions and territory we are a part of. Those of us on the land we now know as Oakland and lands all the way up to Albany are in Huichin (*Hooch-yoon*), the unceded territory of the Chochenyo (*Cho-Chen-yo*)-speaking Confederated Villages of Lisjan (*Lih-Shawn*) Ohlone. We stand with the Lisjan people and their right to legal recognition and benefits from the US Government.**

## **LIFE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT (abridged version)**

We acknowledge that in service to our beloved city of Oakland, and all its citizens, adhering to the city of Oakland's official motto, "Oakland Love Life" we enter into this space committed to embody love as our guiding principle.

We acknowledge Love Life as our motto as we denounce violence in all forms and the conditions that create it.

We acknowledge that when we demonstrate love, we also exhibit respect and kindness towards each other.

We commit to acts of love as an intentional force to generate tangible solutions, in regards to all of our actions.

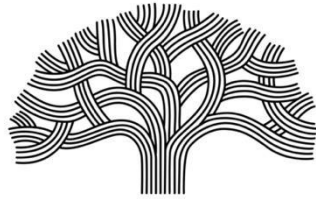
We recognize as leaders, we must set an example and precedent for those in community who have entrusted us with these duties.

We welcome and appreciate all contributions to this space, and even when expressing disagreement, we request that we lead with love in your heart.

We seek to find common ground, and tangible solutions that demonstrate love for our city, its residents, and all constituents.

We acknowledge that when we lead with love we are able to uplift a thriving city rooted in equity, equality, justice, inclusion, and opportunity for all.

We commit to the action of "Love Life" as our motto and mantra



CITY OF OAKLAND

**Cultural Affairs Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, October 28, 2024  
5:30 – 8:30 PM**

**Members in Attendance:** Vanessa Whang (Chair), Kev Choice (Vice Chair), Olaywa K. Austin, Jennifer Easton, Ebhodaghe Esoimeme, Michelle Mush Lee, Ilana Lipsett, Jim Santi Owen

**Members Absent:** Mandolyn “Mystic” Ludlum (excused), Candi Martinez

**Staff in Attendance:** Roberto Bedoya, Josie de Mira, Raquel Iglesias, Pamela Mattera, Kristen Zaremba

**Guest Speakers:** Kat Torio, Special Event and Film Office Coordinator, and Sam Bempong and Grace Porras, East Bay Film Collective

**Roll Call/Call to Order**

**1. Welcome**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Whang at 5:36 PM.

**2. Land Acknowledgement + Official City of Oakland Love Life Acknowledgement**

Commissioner Austin read the Land Acknowledgement and Vice Chair Choice read the City’s [Love Life Acknowledgement](#). Chair Whang noted that the intention of the Love Life Acknowledgement was to set the tone for all City of Oakland board and commission meetings, and that it is especially resonant in this time of discord.

**3. Action Item: Approval of the Minutes for July 22, 2024**

Motion to approve the meeting minutes from July 22, 2024, made by Vice Chair Choice; seconded by Commissioner Lipsett. Discussion around whether commissioners can vote to approve the minutes from the previous meeting if they were not in attendance at said meeting.

Choice	AYE
Easton	AYE
Lipsett	AYE
Whang	AYE
Austin	AYE
Ludlum	Excused
Martinez	Absent

The motion passed.

**4. Commission Honors Roberto Bedoya, outgoing Cultural Affairs Manager**

Chair Whang acknowledged that this was the final Cultural Affairs Commission meeting with Roberto Bedoya, as he completes 8 years of service to the City and embarks upon retirement. Chair Whang shared that Bedoya changed the trajectory of her life as they worked together to center justice and fairness for the City and its residents. Bedoya re-established the Commission during his tenure. Vice Chair Choice and Commissioners Easton, Lipsett, Santi Owen expressed their gratitude for Bedoya's leadership.

Bedoya stated that his time at the City has been the best experience and that he learned so much while being in service to the City of Oakland. He thanked the commissioners for their commitment to the City.

**5. Artist/Grantee Spotlight**

Mama Celeste of nonprofit arts organization Oaklash will present at the January Commission meeting.

**6. Film Initiative Informational Presentation – Film Rebate Program**

Chair Whang welcomed Kat Torio, Special Event and Film Office Coordinator, to present draft rules and regulations for the film rebate program approved by City Council in July 2024. Torio expressed gratitude to the Commission for making space for their presentation. She noted that the program is subject to the contingency budget so they hope to move forward with the pieces that can currently move forward. Torio worked with the City Attorney's office on rules and regulations. She introduced East Bay Film Collective/#MakeItBay members Sam Bempong and Grace Porras who will speak to community involvement in the program.

Torio asked the Commission for feedback on the draft rules and regulations, specifically around whether they feel any items need more explanation or attention and that it matches what is in the ordinance. She will also be showing the draft to the Workforce Board for their input, especially on the training program. Once they get feedback, they will draft the application. Torio shared that while there might not be funding yet, the program exists and is not going to disappear. They are looking for letters of intent from the community and production houses to see how fast they can move on this. She described that "film is hot" and they want Oakland to be represented and a part of that, and this program is how they will do that.

Chair Whang asked Torio for more specificity around the timeline and approvals process. She further asked if passing the ordinance gave them the green light to operationalize the program/process. Torio clarified that within the ordinance they are authorized by the City Administrator to create the rules and regulations. They do not need approval from the Cultural Affairs Commission; rather, they would appreciate input. It's somewhat of a floating timeline – they are presenting to the Workforce Board on November 7 and would love feedback by the end of November. Project launch by early December would be ideal. If a production company comes in and wants to spend millions of dollars, they don't want to turn them away. The ordinance permits donations so Torio noted that if the Commission knows of anyone who would want to seed the program for the first year, the opportunity exists and does not require approval from the Council or City Administrator.

Chair Whang opened up the floor to questions from commissioners. Commissioner Easton began by asking about the outreach process that informed the draft and program. Bempong responded that they leaned on the knowledge of the East Bay Collective and also put out a call to the community through what they called a “solutions lab.” Over 80 people showed up at the “solutions day” and they put them on committees, including a workforce committee, which had representation from organizations that do film training and media training with youth. They solicited their feedback on the skills and training piece because one of the prerequisites to receive the incentive is to provide skills and training to Oakland residents.

Vice Chair Choice asked how they determined criteria that includes percentages around certain zip codes and noted that it felt like a grant program in that respect. Bempong replied that when they started talking to the City and the community, they were initially looking at demographics and people who had historically been disadvantaged and/or left out. They were quickly told by folks at the City that because of the Supreme Court decision on affirmative action, they couldn’t use certain language like BIPOC. The City’s proposed suggestion was to look at zip codes, which Bempong noted felt like a fit for them. She has spoken with other film offices to determine how they are working on this.

Chair Whang stated that using zip codes to provide opportunity for people who have not historically had them is a “blunt instrument,” and suggested using census tracts, which the state uses; for example, the California Healthy Places Index. Chair Whang recently worked on a project that was funded by the State, the California Creative Corps, and used the Index. She noted that the ordinance does specify zip codes and that she had previously voiced her concern about this from an equity perspective. An additional equity concern is around the 10% set-aside for lower budgeted work; Chair Whang pointed out that there is no language targeting this towards creatives in Oakland. Torio addressed the question around the Healthy Places Index, explaining that they use the Index for Special Events permits so that is something they can consider using. She will reach out to the City Attorney to see if writing it in the rules and regulations is sufficient. Porras, also from the East Bay Collective, responded to the concern around the 10% set-aside; it was designed, based on Commission feedback, to target lower budget projects. She then raised the question about what qualifies as an Oakland-based project. Is it if the writer is Oakland-based? The subject matter? They would still like feedback on this piece.

Chair Whang shared that Commission Ludlum, who is excused from this meeting, also had questions about what qualifies as Oakland-based and about the add-ons; do the rebates add up to maximum of 17.5% - is that correct and how does it compare to other rebate programs? Bempong thanked Chair Whang for this feedback and conceded that this needs clarification. She noted that it is not an add-on; it’s a maximum of 15% back and it’s outlining the business versus the hiring spend. She used Mandela foods as an example; they provide catering and are a worker-based cooperative so they would qualify a production for the maximum rebate.

Chair Whang further asked if they put in contingency language about what happens if no small projects come in or if a preponderance of small projects come in. Torio stated that the money will roll over. There is also a caveat that, if there is a surplus, they can adjust the percentage without going back to Council. Pre-approved amounts will be encumbered, and the team will create a waiting list: the program is run on a first-come, first-served basis. Throughout the production, teams will be asked to verify their spends and must complete a rebate claim form and provide receipts. A check will be cut once the form is complete and verified.



Commissioner Easton asked if a project must be at a certain production point to be in the queue. Torio shared that they are asking for planning and budget documents to gauge where the project is – they want the most serious candidates. Commissioner Easton followed up by asking if the productions will be required to show income from another source or a specific percentage of funding secured. Torio said that they are working with their business analyst to find a middle ground to make the program sustainable; once a production receives pre-approval, they must start filming within 180 days, which requires a film permit that gathers even more information. They allow a short extension, too; they want to be in personal contact and grow relationships to attract future projects.

Commissioner Lee thanked the team for their work and thinks the landscape is ripe for this rebate program. She asked for clarity around the \$250,000 threshold. Bempong confirmed that it is a \$250,000 threshold per production; that is not the budget, that is the amount of money to be spent in Oakland. For lower-budget projects, the spend is between \$50,000 and \$250,000. Commissioner Lee queried if there have been discussions yet about increasing the threshold and how will the program be evaluated. Bempong reflected that it will all come down to data; they will compare data to see how money was spent by project type and then compare it to other markets. She shared that in San Francisco, for example, they have determined that for every dollar invested in film projects, \$13.66 has been spent by productions.

Commissioner Lee noted how great the Public Art Prequalified Roster is; will they do something similar for filmmakers? And she followed up by asking about providing training or TA for production teams and how competitive Oakland is based on this plan. Her final question: what is the total possible funding? Chair Whang noted that the cap is currently \$500,000. Porrás shared that part of the design has always been to make Oakland artists and creatives accessible to productions. Part of the grant coming from the City to Visit Oakland is being used to purchase a CRM to make this information easily available. The East Bay Film Collective will work with the Center for Cultural Power, for example, to share opportunities with their community and networks. Bempong and Porrás are looking at workarounds for the CRM if the funding doesn't come through; they are determined to make this happen. Porrás further explained that the competitiveness lives in the program design: it was designed to be stackable with other incentives in the state, like the California Film Credit. When combined, these incentives bring the rebate percentage to 45%, which is competitive with Atlanta. If a project is also shooting in San Francisco, they will qualify for their incentive program. They are encouraging the entire region to grow; they are not working Oakland in a silo. Bempong shared that this design makes them the most competitive rebate program in California.

Chair Whang asked for more specifics around the training program. Torio noted that they are still working on this and will share when it is ready by mid-November. She further shared that they would create a visual document to guide people through the application process. They are considering this first year a pilot.

Chair Whang pointed out staffing – how will this all work? She referenced TA sessions that Cultural Strategists offered. Chair Whang then introduced a conversation about content. She asked what would happen if someone wanted to make a film that portrays Oakland in a negative light. Will there be criteria around this? Chair Whang shared that we don't need to be putting money into things that will diss Oakland and she is concerned about content. Bempong noted that this is a valid

concern. The East Bay Film Collective spoke with over a dozen film offices and an international consultancy on this question very early on. They found that incentives that included any kind of censorship did not do as well as those that were solely based on economics, and it could open a Pandora's Box on censorship. Bempong gave an example of another incentive program turning down a horror film because they didn't know if it would portray the location in a positive or negative light. She elaborated that studies have found that when people from a diverse and creative place make films, they tend to have a more equitable lens than the current industry. She reiterated that it's a valid concern and they will continue to look at that throughout the pilot year, but they made the decision not to have a lever on content. Vice Chair Choice echoed that it's important not to censor artists, explaining that there may be things that are reflective of Oakland that some people don't want to see. He voiced that the Commission needs to be supportive and additive to this process. Vice Chair Choice asked if Bempong and Porras could share more about the East Bay Film Collective.

Bempong thanked Vice Chair Choice for his comments and question. She stated that if there are ways they can include more equity in the rules and regulations to please share that feedback so they can integrate it. Bempong shared that the East Bay Film Collective was founded by accident: Oakland lost film productions that wanted to spend more than \$100 million collectively while also providing a lot of creatives with their first major credits. A conversation started – how can we ensure we don't lose the next production that wants to be here? Councilmember Carroll Fife and Mayor Thao called W. Kamau Bell and asked him for guidance on fixing this problem. He responded by picking up his phone and calling filmmakers and people in the community; the first call was to Pastor Mike who sees this as an anti-violence program. Anchor founders are W. Kamau Bell and WB Productions, Favianna Rodriguez at the Center for Cultural Power, and Pastor Mike. #MakeltBay is the initiative under the East Bay Film Collective umbrella. They put a call out to include as many folks as possible who wanted to be involved. Vice Chair Choice thanked Bempong again, noting that they didn't have to come before the Cultural Affairs Commission and he's grateful that they did and are asking for their input and feedback.

Commissioner Lee followed up by asking for information on the oversight and governance structure. Kat Torio shared that this program lives in Special Events under the Film Office, which she manages. She explained that she has received calls of concern, too, and that they have implemented guidelines around notifying community members about filming; some productions have even held town halls so that community members can learn how this program benefits them. Torio spoke specifically to parking – Oakland offers reserved parking for productions while San Francisco does not. Her office works with the production companies to make this work for the communities, too, so they are not taking up an entire block of parking but spread it around or even rent a parking lot, bringing additional revenue into the community. Chair Whang thanked Torio for clarifying these details and all of the work that has gone into this, and apologized if she sounded strong earlier; she is in support of this program and is simply concerned about the details.

Commissioner Esoimeme voiced his support for this program, stating that Oakland needs to make more money. He asked if given the parameters and thresholds, they can better anticipate the types of productions this will attract. Bempong replied that this is targeted toward indie films, and that they are not yet competitive with Atlanta in terms of attracting a Marvel-level production. She posited: "How do we grow what we already have here and invite in without pushing out?" They have a hypothesis that this will primarily attract indie films, but they could be wrong, and it could

exclusively garner music videos. That's why they're treating this first year as a pilot. She reiterated the 180-day principal photography clause; this will prevent teams from putting money on hold and then waiting 3 years to film. Commissioner Esoimeme asked what principal photography means and Bempong walked the Commission through the different stages of production.

Torio excused herself from the meeting.

Commissioner Easton also declared her opposition to censorship, and brought up the question of the right of first refusal. She explained that she was not in favor of pulling funding from a production, but rather, pulling the program's name and logo if they determined that there was a production with which they no longer want to be associated.

Commissioner Esoimeme brought up the example of the TV show, "Atlanta." He said that if someone read the script and didn't agree with the representation of Atlanta, they would have cut a brilliant show that resonated with a lot of people.

## **7. Public Comment**

Chair Whang opened the discussion for public comment.

No public comments were entered.

## **8. Vice Chair Election**

Chair Whang called the action item for the election of a new vice chair and stated that it needed to be via paper ballot. She noted that there is 1 person running for the position, Commissioner Santi Owen, and that his bio is in the agenda packet. Chair Whang invited Commissioner Santi Owen to make a statement. Commissioner Santi Owen shared that he had been on FAC for 6 years and the Commission for 2 years; he hopes to provide continuity to the conversation around Cultural Affairs and the trauma of underfunding. He feels there's a lot of education the Commission needs to do with the elected officials. He's lived in the Bay Area since 1991, primarily in Oakland, and has a family history going back 5 generations. Commissioner Santi Owen is a musician and educator, and prior to being on FAC, he spent 3 years as a panelist for the Zellerbach Foundation's Community Arts Program and sat on commissions for SFAC, City of Berkeley, OUSD, and the CAC. Chair Whang thanked Commissioner Santi Owen for his statement and expressed her gratitude to him for stepping up. Motion to approve Commissioner Santi Owen as Vice Chair made by Commissioner Lee ; seconded by Commissioner Austin. Cultural Funding Coordinator Raquel Iglesias collected the paper ballots and announced that the motion passed.

Chair Whang recognized Commissioner Choice's term as Vice Chair, expressing gratitude and reflecting on the goodwill he generated in the community. She noted that he lives up to his stature in the community. Commissioner Lee thanked Choice for his leadership and noted that he could walk into any room bringing his whole self, his artist, academic, activist, father, and musician identities. She described him as a friend to everyone in the City. Commissioner Easton noted that she has enjoyed getting to know him through the Commission, and appreciated that he approaches everything with the attitude that he can always learn. Commissioner Lipsett added that she is always surprised by Choice and his ability to hold so much. She described him as an embodiment of the Love Life Acknowledgement and leading with love while in service to the City he loves. Commissioner Austin shared that Choice is the reason that she wanted to serve on the Commission, admiring the way that he shows up for Oakland with grace and Town attitude. Austin thanked him

for being a guiding light. Vice Chair Santi Owen commented that he is inspired by Choice as a musician and the way that he is present in the world. Commissioner Choice thanked everyone for their sentiments and said that it's an honor to serve on this Commission. He noted that he had 3 board meetings tonight and that this was the place he wanted to be. He stepped into the Vice Chair position to be useful to his City and to serve as an example of engagement. Commissioner Choice noted that he learned so much from past Chair Sanchez and Chair Whang, and that he's going to be an even louder voice now.

## 9. Cultural Affairs Division Update

Raquel Iglesias, Cultural Funding Coordinator, introduced the Cultural Affairs Division Update. She noted that Ashleigh Kanat, Director of Economic and Workforce Development, intended on being at the meeting but is sick and will share details about the Interim Cultural Affairs Manager via email. Iglesias then welcomed Pamela Mattera as the new Assistant Cultural Funding Coordinator. Mattera briefly introduced herself and shared how excited she is to join the team and to work with Oakland's arts and culture communities and the Commission. Iglesias identified the importance of data in telling the story of CFP impact and expressed the team's interest in providing resources outside of grantmaking.

Iglesias shared an update on the CFP grantmaking budget; she is still absorbing the changes. The team expected to make \$1,130,840 in grants in FY24-25 and that has now been reduced to \$835,000. The contingency budget, which was passed in July, has been set in motion and has resulted in a roughly \$300,000 cut to the CFP General Fund allocation. She encouraged Commissioners to watch and read the Finance and Management Committee resources that she shared via email and that she will pass on information as she receives it. She added that additional cuts may be possible over the coming months.

Iglesias presented a chart with CFP funding breakdowns between Cultural Organization Assistance and Neighborhood Voices for Festivals grants. Organization Assistance grants, in year 2 of 2, have been reduced by 30%. The Festival grants have been roughly cut in half from last year; panels were just held and 21 festivals were recommended for funding with an average award of \$12,000. CFP staff are currently working on the agenda report for both grant categories and will share the report once it is finalized and shared publicly.

For context, Iglesias followed up with a FY23-24 funding chart, which demonstrated the year-over-year funding disparities. CFP granted \$1,477,000 last fiscal year, so the FY24-25 cuts represent a nearly 50% reduction. Moreover, CFP gave 75 grants last year and is currently looking at making 48 grant this year. Iglesias anticipated that more cuts may be coming so the program is hoping to get these grants approved as soon as possible.

Commissioner Lipsett thanked Iglesias for the information and holding the burden of reduced funding. She asked if the team has a sense of when additional cuts may come and how much they would be. Additionally, she queried about the percentage cut by the contingency budget compared to other departments. Iglesias stated that she does not know about the percentage cut, but she is interested in learning this, too. She added that she does not know about exact timing for more cuts but that it should be in the next month since we are 4-5 months into the fiscal year. Commissioner Lipsett asked for clarity around TOT funds, which Iglesias provided.

Vice Chair Santi Owen asked if the Organization Assistance grantees have learned about the 30% cuts and what kind of responses they are expressing. Iglesias stated that all grantees have been informed and that the CFP cuts are exacerbating an already shrinking arts philanthropic pool. She feared that some organizations wouldn't make it and stated that this is a really dark time for the arts community.

Commissioner Lee expressed that this was devastating as she read the numbers and, as a director of a Bay Area nonprofit, she can testify that this is the landscape. Her organization is anticipating government cuts at the local, state, and federal levels, and points to the fact that Cal Shakes shuttered after 50 years. She described the situation as existential. Commissioner Lee wondered what the Commission's role is in this – the CFP budget is 0.3% of the City's budget. She lamented that taking away arts and youth programming will have long-term effect on the community.

Iglesias noted that she and Mattera plan to meet with grantees in person and they can provide an update on how organizations are faring at the January Commission meeting.

Chair Whang shared that people may not know that organizations are struggling and, if they knew, they may want to support them. She asked the Commission if they should send something to their Action Network. Commissioner Esoimeme responded that he doesn't think people understand the magnitude of the situation – he thinks people should be more vocal about the proposed cuts. Chair Whang further explained that she doesn't think people know the extent of the work of the City's arts organizations.

Commissioner Choice expanded the conversation by asking the Commission to think about where artists and organizations are thriving and bringing that into the discussion. He explained that he dislikes that the frame is often about what Oakland is lacking or how things are mismanaged and proposed asking, instead, how the Commission can contribute to budgeting and other revenue opportunities. He posited: is 0.3% a fair share of the budget? If the Commission doesn't think that's fair, he felt that they need to raise their voices. Commissioner Choice stated the Commission exists to advise City Council and wondered if Commissioners are effectively communicating with Councilmembers and holding them accountable. He advocated for meeting with SFAC and other local commissions to explore all possibilities. He brought up ad hoc committees. Chair Whang suggested holding on this and having the Public Art program present before discussing committees.

Kristen Zaremba, Public Art Coordinator, next shared an update on the Public Art Program. She plugged the Cultural Affairs Briefing Book as a good resource to share with elected officials. Zaremba explained that the Public Art Program has continued to exist because it is not tied directly to the General Fund; there is an ordinance that requires set-aside funding from capital improvement projects and for public art in private development.

Zaremba stated that the Public Art Prequalified Artist Roster recruitment closed in mid-August. They received 417 artist applications and selected 260 artists to add to the Roster. Commissioner Easton sat on the selection panel. The roster had a 62% acceptance rate. 60% of the artists live in Oakland while it was 50/50 split of emerging versus experienced artists. 71% of the artists identified as non-white and 50% are muralists. The Public Art team helps muralists develop additional skills since most of their commissions are for permanent work.

Zaremba explained that she and Josie de Mira, Assistant Public Art Coordinator, are working on several projects in different phases, including Mosswood Recreation Center, the 14<sup>th</sup> Streetscape, Embarcadero West, a pocket park at 1900 Broadway featuring bronze sculptures by Woody De Othello, the Native American Health Center, Mercy Housing, the Temescal Black Panther Party Monument, the Grand Performance Mural, and BART Gateway.

Commissioner Lee thanked Zaremba for uplifting the good amidst all the bleak news. She asked for clarity on how much money is earmarked for each Councilmember through discretionary funds; Zaremba confirmed that it is \$60,000 per Council district. Most Councilmembers have not moved forward with the funding. The funding requires a grant agreement and legislation going to City Council and the City Attorney and is exclusively for murals. Zaremba also confirmed that the Public Art Prequalified Artist Roster went through the Public Art Advisory Committee and is accessible publicly.

Chair Whang asked if there could be a crossover person between the Cultural Affairs Commission and the Public Art Advisory Committee. Zaremba said that no one has expressed having the bandwidth to do so and that the most productive way to accomplish this may be through recruitment. Chair Whang followed up by asking if the team had presented the Public Art Plan to the Public Art Advisory Committee; Zaremba shared that they did a high-level review with the Public Art Advisory Committee and have not yet presented to City Council. The Budget Department needs to be consulted before taking the step of presenting to Council. Chair Whang requested that the Commission be invited to review the Public Art Plan so they are aware of the specifics. Zaremba added that she was contacted by Planning Department; they would like to present the General Plan to the Commission in January.

Commissioner Easton gave a shout out to the Public Art team for completing the Public Art Prequalified Artist Roster. She expressed the hope that they can work with Planning to operationalize getting consultants to reference this list and prioritize Oakland artists.

Commissioner Easton excused herself from the meeting as planned.

#### **10. Cultural Affairs Commission Chair Update**

Chair Whang provided an update on the virtual City Council Candidate Forums. She stated that they had great turnout – almost all of the candidates who are running participated. Two forums were hosted: the first was on October 6 with at-large and D5 candidates and the second was on October 16 with D1, D3, and D7 candidates. There are recordings that can be shared – they are currently posted on the Oakland Museum, Symphony, and Art Murmur websites. Whang requested that Commissioners post or share them if they are able so that voters can learn what the candidates have to say about arts and culture.

The forums had two main goals, both of which were met. 1) Educational: To let the candidates know about the arts and culture sector and 2) To hear from the candidates about their experiences with arts and culture and how they believe it can solve some of Oakland's biggest challenges like health and wellbeing or public safety.

Chair Whang noted that it was a great experience although a bit technically difficult. They had no funding, which is why the forums were virtual, but this made them more accessible.

Commissioner Lipsett thanked Chair Whang for organizing the forums and encouraged everyone to watch the recordings. She said that she would share the recordings with their Action list. She added that she heard a lot of love and enthusiasm for the arts but not understanding from a policy perspective. She proposed putting together a fact sheet authored by Commission and presented to incoming Councilmembers to help with reinforcing the message that Cultural Affairs is situated in the Economic and Workforce Development Department. She couched it in terms of an investment by the City rather than an expense.

Chair Whang added that they did provide candidates with a two-page fact sheet that included information on revenue-generating numbers for the sector. And she confirmed that the Briefing Book will be updated for new Councilmembers.

#### **11. Commission Ad Hoc Committees**

Commissioner Choice recognized that the Commission has had past conversations about ad hoc committees. He previously served on the East Oakland Arts Committee and feels that it needs to be brought back. He proposed working with the Black Cultural Zone; they have an arts and culture subcommittee and relationships with East Oakland artists. He elaborated on an idea for an ad hoc committee to find other revenue sources or collaborative partners.

Iglesias reminded the Commission that it was proposed in the mid-cycle budget to cut Cultural Affairs entirely. She highlighted how critical it will be to generate income outside of the General Fund. She mentioned Denver as an example to research.

Chair Whang noted that some of the ad hoc work can be very task-oriented like reviewing the Briefing Book or bringing visibility to the financial state of nonprofit arts organizations. She stated that we know that the community cares about arts and culture and that when it's on the ballot, people usually vote in favor of it. She asked if other Commissioners had ideas.

Commissioner Esoimeme explained that he thinks it's a storytelling issue – we can't live without art, so we need to tell the story better. He explained that art is intrinsic within Oakland's values, but we yet don't fund it. Chair Whang asked if he had ideas to try given that they are a volunteer body. Commissioner Esoimeme pointed to the LGBTQI+ community proactively sharing their needs with candidates. He believes that Commissioners should reach out to candidates individually. Chair Whang noted that it may be hard to do this in such a campaign-intensive moment.

Commissioner Lee suggested editing the candidate forums into sound bites. Chair Whang asked if anyone could do that; Commissioner Esoimeme volunteered to do the editing. Chair Whang cautioned that they have to treat everyone equally; Commissioner Esoimeme suggested creating a 90-second clip for each candidate. Commissioner Lee volunteered to review the clips and Chair Whang volunteered to identify key moments. Commissioner Lipsett recommended reviewing the Zoom transcripts for key terms. The commissioners agreed to continue this discussion offline.

Commissioner Choice asserted that the Commission has had the ad hoc committee conversation several times and that they now need to sign up for committees. Commissioners discussed which committees feel most vital right now. Chair Whang identified the committees as: policy and revenue streams, advocacy and communications, and onboarding for newly elected officials (including Briefing Book.) Chair Whang and Commissioner Lipsett discussed the nuance between onboarding and ongoing relational work. Lipsett put forth that ongoing relational work should be happening as a

standard practice and that the ad hoc committees should be for more discreet work that can be disbanded when complete, ie. onboarding.

Commissioners volunteered for ad hoc committees as noted below:

Policy and revenue streams: Choice, Easton, Lee

Advocacy and communications: Austin, Esoimeme, Lipsett

Onboarding: Santi Owen, Whang

## **12. Open Forum**

Zaremba asked the Commissioners if they have completed the General Plan survey – the deadline is October 31. She will send the link out to everyone.

## **13. Announcement & Acknowledgements**

Jocelyn Jackson introduced herself to the Commission; she's been in the Bay Area since 2009 and began volunteering with People's Kitchen Collective in 2012. She became a co-founder of the group when they collectivized in 2015. She announced the transition of the Life is Living Festival from Youth Speaks to the caretaking of People's Kitchen Collective. She asked the commissioners to share Festival feedback with her.

Commissioner Lee thanked Jackson for her work and the work of People's Kitchen Collective. She noted that last year Youth Speaks handed over Life Is Living to former Cultural Strategists Candice Wicks-Davis and Hodari Davis of Edutainment for Equity. The Festival was facing an existential crisis; it was created as a lab to demonstrate that environmental movements in Black communities were activating in ways that the mainstream conservation movement had not activated up until that point. The recycling movement of the 90s, for example, was very white and middle class.

Commissioner Lipsett shared a reminder to send any events for inclusion in the newsletter by next week.

Commissioner Choice acknowledged the passing of Rashad Pridgen, a multidisciplinary artist and culture bearer, and offered his condolences.

## **14. Adjournment**

A motion to end the meeting was made by Vice Chair Santi Owen, seconded by Commissioner Lee.

The meeting adjourned at 8:39 PM.



## Artist Spotlight: Mama Celeste of Oaklash



**Mama Celeste is the co-founder and Executive Director of Oaklash, a queer arts nonprofit that hosts large scale events, facilitates mutual aid, and provides mentorship for emerging queer and trans leaders in nightlife. Often regarded as a cheesy hot mess, they have performed in drag and DJed nationally at venues in New York, Florida, Texas, Louisiana, Virginia, Nevada, and all across California. This year's Oaklash Festival of Drag and Queer Performance will take place at venues across Oakland the weekend of May 16th through the 18th - learn more at [oaklash.com](https://oaklash.com)**

### **Oaklash:**

Oaklash hosts a weekend-long festival of drag and other queer performance that takes place annually in Oakland, California.

Founded by Beatrix LaHaine and Mama Celeste in 2018, Oaklash has featured hundreds of queer performers from the Bay Area and all around the world.

Oaklash is dedicated to building new and ever-expanding stages to showcase & elevate Bay Area queer talent. Our programming aims to create safe and accessible environments that celebrate the queer community, especially queer and trans people of color. Our organization was created to showcase performances that are boundary pushing, provocative, and unique to the sensibility of the Bay Area. We aim to stay true to the history of Oakland as a home to creative renaissance rooted in diversity. We hope that by amplifying and supporting the queer art community in the Bay Area, we can emphasize the need for investment in the arts in the face of systemic racism, growing economic disparities, and the Bay Area housing crisis.

## OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_ C.M.S.

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**ORDINANCE AMENDING AND REENACTING ORDINANCE NO. 13561  
C.M.S. TO UPDATE THE DUTIES OF THE CULTURAL AFFAIRS  
COMMISSION AND TO CLARIFY ITS AUTHORITY TO CREATE  
STANDING COMMITTEES**

**WHEREAS**, the Cultural Affairs Commission (the “Commission”) was established by the Oakland City Council pursuant to Section 601 of the City Charter, effective May 1, 1991, by Ordinance No. 11323 C.M.S. for the purpose of advising the Mayor, City Council, and City Administrator on matters affecting cultural development in the community; and

**WHEREAS**, on July 16, 2019, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 13561 C.M.S. to redefine the duties, modify membership and quorum and clarify the appointment process of the Cultural Affairs Commission; and

**WHEREAS**, to reflect the importance of the arts and cultural expressions in Oakland and our City’s size, stature, and diversity, the City of Oakland continues to merit a robust, active, and relevant cultural commission; and

**WHEREAS**, the current enabling legislation for the Commission requires that City Council approval must be obtained prior to the creation of any standing committee of the Commission; and

**WHEREAS**, there are no current standing committees of the Cultural Affairs Commission, however the Commission is exploring the need for standing committees to enable greater Commission engagement, and increased focus on certain issues within the jurisdiction of the Commission such as funding requirements, and therefore wishes to amend the enabling legislation to allow the creation of standing committees with approval by the City Administrator; and

**WHEREAS**, this Ordinance would amend Ordinance No. 13561 C.M.S. to clarify the authority of the Cultural Affairs Commission to create standing committees subject to City Administrator approval, make clarifying edits regarding the scope of the Commission, and to ~~XXX~~ establish a quorum, and broadly serve and support the City’s arts and cultural communities, pursuant to the tracked changes version attached as Exhibit 1 to this Ordinance; and

Oakland Cultural Affairs Commission, 1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, 9th fl. Oakland, CA 94612

[www.oaklandculturalarts.org](http://www.oaklandculturalarts.org)

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OAKLAND DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

**THIS WILL BE UPDATED WITH CLEAN VERSION OF THE ORDINANCE WHEN FINALIZED; SEE EXHIBIT 1 FOR TRACKED CHANGES VERSION.**

**SECTION 1.**

**SECTION \_\_. Severability.** If any section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase of this Ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid or unconstitutional by decision of any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of the Chapter. The City Council hereby declares that it would have passed this Ordinance and each section, subsection, clause or phrase thereof irrespective of the fact that one or more other sections, subsections, clauses or phrases may be declared invalid or unconstitutional

**SECTION \_\_. Effective Date.** This ordinance shall become effective immediately on final adoption if it receives six or more affirmative votes; otherwise it shall become effective upon the seventh day after final adoption.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES - BROWN, FIFE, HOUSTON, KAPLAN, RAMACHANDRAN, UNGER, AND  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE GALLO

NOES –

ABSENT – COUNCIL PRESIDENT JENKINS (serving as Mayor pursuant to Charter Section 303)

ABSTENTION –

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_

ASHA REED  
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council of the  
City of Oakland, California

OCA DOCUMENT NUMBER / ATTORNEY INITIALS

**NOTICE AND DIGEST**

**ORDINANCE TITLE (Indent half inch both sides and justified)**

## EXHIBIT 1

This Exhibit 1 indicates the amendments to Ordinance No. 13561 C.M.S., as adopted pursuant to this Ordinance. Amended additions are indicated by underscoring and deletions are indicated by strike-through-type; any portions not cited or not shown in underscoring or strike-through type are not changed.

~~SECTION 1. The City Council of the City of Oakland hereby determines that the preceding recitals are true and correct and hereby adopts and incorporates them into this ordinance~~ **REACTMENT OF THE CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION ORDINANCE**

Pursuant to Oakland Charter Section 212, Ordinance No. 13561 C.M.S. is hereby amended and reenacted as set forth herein.

SECTION 2. The provisions governing the Commission as set forth in Ordinance No. 11323 C.M.S. and Ordinance No. 11778 C.M.S. are hereby amended and restated to add, delete or modify sections as set forth below; additions are indicated by a double underscoring and deletions are indicated by a strike through type. **SECTION 23. CREATION OF COMMISSION**

As of May 1, 1991, pursuant to Section 601 of the Charter of the City of Oakland, there is hereby created a Cultural Affairs Commission.

**SECTION 3.4. GOALS AND DUTIES**

It shall be the function and duty of the Cultural Affairs Commission to:

- a. Advise the Mayor, City Council, and City Administrator, on matters affecting cultural development in the community;
- b. Review and comment on City and community policies, programs, and actions which affect arts and cultural development in Oakland;
- c. Advise the Mayor, City Council, and City Administrator on recommendations arising out of the Cultural Plan affecting City support for cultural development;
- d. Act as ambassadors and advocates for the people of Oakland, through the and as such will design, development, and implementation of a Commission work plan after consultation with the Cultural Affairs Manager, or other City staff as designated by the City Administrator;

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- e. Encourage and assist in the development of support for ~~individual~~ artists, culture bearers, culturists, traditional artists and nonprofit arts and cultural le organizations within and serving Oakland;
- f. Make cultural planning status reports and recommendations to the Mayor, City Council, and City Administrator regarding actions to be taken by the City to fund, assist, and encourage activities in support of artistic, cultural, and humanities activities in the City;
- g. In addition to the reporting requirements stated in this Section, the Commission shall submit an informational report to the City Council committee designated as liaison to the Commission as directed by the Chairperson of said committee;
- h. Informational reports submitted as required in this Section must include detailed descriptions of operating and staffing needs, to be developed and maintained by the department responsible for staffing and administration of the Commission;
- i. Take such other actions as may be necessary or desirable to promote public awareness of, and participation in artistic, cultural, and humanities activities in Oakland;
- j. Perform such other functions and duties pertaining to Commission member's' role as advocates and ambassadors as may be directed by the Mayor, City Council, or the City Administrator;
- k. City Council approval must be obtained prior to the creation of any standing committee of the Commission. A proposal to create a standing committee of the Commission must include information regarding the costs of complying with noticing and reporting requirements resulting from the establishment of any such standing committee of the Commission. The Commission may create, modify and/or terminate standing committees of the Commission following ~~recommendation to and~~ approval by the City Administrator. Any committee must serve as an advisory body to the Commission and may not act inconsistent with this Ordinance.

In prescribing the above duties and functions of the Cultural Affairs Commission, it is not the intent of the Council to duplicate or overlap the functions, duties, or responsibilities heretofore or hereafter assigned to any other City board or commission or to a City department. As to such functions or responsibilities of another board or commission or of a department of the City, the Cultural Affairs Commission will render

assistance and advice to such board, commission, or department as may be requested.

## SECTION 45. AUTHORITY

The Cultural Affairs Commission shall directly report to and advise the Mayor, City Council, and the City Administrator.

## SECTION 56. MEMBERSHIP

- a. The Commission shall consist of eleven (11) members, who shall serve without compensation. Appointments shall be made pursuant to Section 601 of the Charter.
- ~~b. Six (6) members shall constitute a quorum, and any decision by the Commission shall require a majority of those members present. A majority of appointed commissioners shall constitute a quorum, but in no case shall be less than four (4).~~
- ~~e.b.~~ To the extent practicable, appointments to the Cultural Affairs Commission shall be made using the guiding principles of cultural equity to help reflect the diversity of the City.
- ~~d.c.~~ To the extent practicable, appointments to the Cultural Affairs Commission shall reflect the geographical diversity of the City.
- ~~e.d.~~ In making appointments to the Cultural Affairs Commission, the Mayor shall ~~consider request~~ recommendations for appointments ~~offered~~ by each Councilmember and by the Commission. ~~Councilmembers must submit recommendations to the Mayor for consideration at least 30 days prior to expiration of an existing Commission member's term.~~
- ~~f.~~ ~~The Commission shall recommend to the Mayor at least one (1) member for appointment.~~
- ~~g.e.~~ The Commission shall include at least one (1) member of the Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) to be selected by the Mayor and appointed pursuant to Section 601 of the Charter. If no PAAC agrees to accept an appointment to serve, the Mayor may appoint another member pursuant to Section 601 of the Charter.

## SECTION 67. APPOINTMENT

Oakland Cultural Affairs Commission, 1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, 9th fl. Oakland, CA 94612  
www.oaklandculturalarts.org

- a. Terms of Appointment. All terms shall commence on October 1 and end on September 30. For the initial appointment only, four (4) members shall be appointed for a three-year term, four (4) members shall be appointed for a two-year term, and three (3) members shall be appointed for a one-year term. Thereafter, all appointments shall be for three (3) years, except that an appointment made to fill a vacancy created by the premature departure of a Commission member shall be for the unexpired portion of the departed Commission member's term only.
- b. Limit on Consecutive Terms. Commencing with the effective date of this Ordinance, no person shall be appointed to serve as a member of the Cultural Affairs Commission for more than two (2) consecutive three-year terms plus any initial term of less than two years. A former member of the Commission can be appointed to the Commission for another two consecutive terms only after a full term of three (3) years has passed after the completion of the member's second term.

Holdover. In the event an appointment to fill a vacancy has not occurred by the conclusion of a Commission member's term, that member may continue to serve as a member of the Commission in a holdover capacity for a period not to exceed one year, to allow for the appointment of a new Commission member. The newly appointed member shall be appointed pursuant to Section 7.a, above, notwithstanding any holdover period.

- c. Removal. To assure participation of Commission members, attendance by the members of the Commission to all regularly scheduled and special meetings of the Commission shall be recorded, and such record shall be provided semi-annually to the Office of the Mayor for review. A member may be removed pursuant to Section 601 of the City Charter. Among other things, conviction of a felony, misconduct, incompetence, inattention to or inability to perform duties, or absence from three (3) consecutive regular meetings except on account of illness or when absent from the City by permission of the Commission, may constitute cause for removal.

## **SECTION 78. VACANCIES**

A vacancy on the Cultural Affairs Commission will exist whenever a member dies, resigns, or is removed, ~~or~~ whenever an appointee fails to be confirmed by the Council within thirty (30) days of appointment, or as provided in Charter Section 601. An appointment to fill a vacancy shall be for the unexpired portion of the term only.

## **SECTION 89. OFFICERS AND MEETINGS**



The Mayor shall appoint the chairperson of the Commission. ~~At the first regular meeting of each year~~ Every two years, the members shall elect a vice chairperson. The Cultural Affairs Commission shall establish the date, time and location for its regular meetings in its bylaws, and shall conduct its regular and special meetings in accordance the state and local open meeting laws.

## **SECTION ~~9~~10. RULES AND REPORT**

The Commission shall establish reasonable rules for the conduct of its business and a copy of said rules and any amendments thereto shall be delivered to the City Administrator for review and approval. Voting shall be required to pass any motion or resolution. An affirmative vote of the majority of the members present is required to pass any motion or resolution. The Cultural Affairs Commission shall make cultural planning status reports, findings, and recommendations either to the Mayor, the City Council, or the City Administrator, as appropriate. The Cultural Affairs Commission shall submit an informational report to the City Council committee designated as liaison to the Commission as directed by the Chairperson of the City Council committee to which the Commission reports. Recommendations from the Cultural Affairs Commission shall be carefully and fully considered by the City Administrator. If rejected by the City Administrator, the Commission may submit recommendations to the Council for consideration, as appropriate.

## **SECTION ~~10~~11. STAFF**

The City Administrator shall provide the Cultural Affairs Commission with staff assistance to support the effective functioning of the Commission as needed.

## **SECTION ~~11~~12. SEVERABILITY**

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase of this Ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid or unconstitutional by decision of any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of the Chapter. The City Council hereby declares that it would have passed this Ordinance and each section, subsection, clause or phrase thereof irrespective of the fact that one or more other sections, subsections, clauses, or phrases may be declared invalid or unconstitutional.

## **SECTION ~~12~~13. EFFECTIVE DATE**

This ordinance shall become effective immediately on final adoption if it receives six or more affirmative votes; otherwise it shall become effective upon the seventh day after final adoption.