

**Richmond Arts & Culture Commission**  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
450 Civic Center Plaza  
Richmond Conference Room  
Richmond

**Tuesday, August 27, 2019**

In attendance: Jenny Balisle, Michael Cohen, Meighann Helene, Joshua Horne, Nava Mizrahhi, and Florene Wiley

Absent: Rosalie Fay Barnes, and Melissa Kirk

Staff: Michele Seville, Arts & Culture Manager  
Katy Curl, Library & Cultural Services Director

Guests: Cordell Hindler, Tom Lyons

I. Welcome/Call to Order/Roll Call

Chair Balisle called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

II. Approve Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Wiley, second by Commissioner Horne to approve the agenda, as amended to include a new agenda item after the staff report to discuss Community Partner, carried by the following vote.

Ayes: Balisle, Cohen, Helene, Horne, Mizrahhi, Wiley  
Noes: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: Barnes, Kirk

III. Approve Minutes from July 23, 2019 Meeting

Chair Balisle requested an amendment to the end of the first paragraph of Item V on Page 2 to reflect that she had requested from Christy Chan a hard copy of the 100 selected quotes that she had read during her presentation of *Inside Out*, and that "Ms. Chan refused to provide a hard copy of the selected quotes to the RACC as she read them."

Motion by Commissioner Wiley, second by Commissioner Mizrahhi to approve the minutes of the July 23, 2019 meeting, as amended; however, prior to the vote, Commissioner Wiley advised that she had abstained from Item V, which had not been reflected in the minutes.

Motion by Commissioner Cohen, second by Commissioner Mizrahi to approve the minutes of the July 23, 2019 meeting, as amended and as corrected, carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Balisle, Cohen, Mizrahi, Wiley  
Noes: None  
Abstain: Helene, Horne  
Absent: Barnes, Kirk

#### IV. Public Comment

CORDELL HINDLER, Richmond, noted that appointments to the RACC were to be considered by the City Council sometime in September. He described his efforts to get young people involved in the RACC. He also invited everyone to the Contra Costa Mayors' Conference on September 5, 2019 at Contra Costa College.

#### V. Review and Approve 2020 Richmond Writes! Documents

Michele Seville, Arts & Culture Manager, reported that this year would be the tenth anniversary of the Richmond Writes! Poetry contest for student poetry in the schools. Given the limited time to identify the theme and with no RACC subcommittee for Richmond Writes!, she presented a proposed theme for RACC approval so that she could submit it to the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) by September 5, 2019.

Ms. Seville recommended this year's theme of "What Makes You Laugh?" and sought input from the RACC for helpful ideas. She reported the poetry deadline would be February 7, 2020, winners would be announced on March 27, 2020, and the Awards Ceremony would be held on April 17, 2020. She had removed the email address from the application to avoid confusion.

After discussion, the RACC supported the recommended theme and the recommended graphic and suggested the graphic be the cover for the book. The following helpful ideas were also recommended:

- Laughing in awkward situations
- Laughing at yourself
- What is laughter to you
- Who do you always laugh with?
- Do you have someone to laugh with?

With respect to the time required to type the poems and prepare the material, Commissioner Wiley recommended a community collaboration or other resource to help prepare the submittals expected to number over 450.

## VI. Compile Poet Laureate Selection Panel and Select Date

Ms. Seville advised that the term of the three current Poets Laureate had ended and a new selection would have to occur. She presented a draft of the Call for Poets and highlighted the guidelines involved, the composition of the selection panel, and sought a volunteer from the RACC. The deadline for applications was September 30, 2019 and the selection panel would convene in October 2019.

## VII. RACC/PAAC Work Plan Discussion

Chair Balisle reported that she had met with the former City Manager who had directed the RACC and PAAC to identify imperative tasks that needed to be completed. Since then a subcommittee had met, the RACC and PACC had met in a retreat, and multiple subcommittees and individuals had worked on the Work Plan task. The then City Manager had subsequently been let go, although the Work Plan had proceeded and the process would go on with an Interim City Manager. She explained that a meeting with the Interim City Manager had yet to occur but would continue to be pursued to be able to present the Work Plan.

On the discussion of whether the current situation would allow the Work Plan to be considered and the advisability of continuing to pursue the document, Ms. Seville advised that she had requested a legal opinion of the Work Plan and had asked if the City Attorney's office could take on the first two items on the list of Work Plan Goals, along with Item 5. She suggested that guidance would help with anyone who would consider the Work Plan in the future.

The RACC verified the ongoing efforts the Chair would pursue to meet with the Interim City Manager, to meet with the Council Liaison to the RACC (Ben Choi), and to await the response from the City Attorney's Office.

## VIII. Disabilities and Accessibility: Discussing ADA Compliance at Community Events

Commissioner Mizrahi noted that several months ago an event at the Richmond Museum of History, a City building, had starkly pointed out a lack of accessibility for the disabled, with not only an inability to accommodate wheelchairs but access to displays since tables were too high, and in that particular case there were too many people to allow the disabled to move around. Because of that she wanted to create a panel around disability to ensure accessibility, particularly with respect to RACC activities.

Commissioner Horne explained there was a whole catalog of law in building and zoning regulations that addressed the topic and he suggested making that information available to part of the process. When asked, he explained that any new project would trigger a compliance requirement with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). He suggested a list of those facilities that were not ADA compliant would be important to pursue.

Commissioner Mizrahi also noted that some local small businesses were being sued because of the lack of ADA accessibility and she wanted to be sensitive to both sides while offering the appropriate accessibility for any RACC associated event. She suggested an ongoing conversation would be important to educate the RACC and the public.

Commissioner Wiley suggested it would be important to include ADA information in the Neighborhood Public Art (NPA) presentations, and Ms. Seville clarified that disability related information had always been included at the bottom of each meeting agenda.

Chair Balisle stated that the available information should be provided to the RACC to allow a discussion at the next meeting, with that information to be incorporated into the NPA process.

#### IX. NPA Reports

Commissioner Helene, who had no project to mentor was assigned to work with Chair Balisle and Commissioner Mizrahi on Alfonzo Leon's *One Richmond Unifying Community Mural*.

The RACC reviewed the status of each NPA project and reported that the following projects were complete:

- *Bridging the Gap* by Seneca Family Agencies/Anna Scaiano; mentored by Commissioner Mizrahi.
- *Richmond Purple Tree Collard* by Tania Pulido; mentored by Commissioner Kirk.
- *Son Jarocho for Richmond* by Antu Antinao; mentored by Commissioner Horne.
- *Art Through Transition* by Richmond Main Street/Amanda Elliott.

Chair Balisle reported that the business license issue had delayed the *One Richmond Unifying Community Mural* by Alfonzo Leon, the school year had ended, the contract had to be approved by the WCCUSD which had been delayed by summer, the contract had been extended to December 31, 2019, and the completion of the project was expected this year.

Ms. Seville advised that she had become the liaison for *Inside Out* by Christy Chan, which projected quotes on the wall of the Richmond Art Center/Civic Center. Among the recommended quotes was one in Spanish that read "Trump we forgive you for being a racist." That quote had been submitted by the RACC to the City Attorney's Office for guidance, which office recommended City Council approval, although given the summer break, the Council had not been in session to make that determination.

As a result, a specific disclaimer for that one quote had been recommended by the City Attorney's Office, although Ms. Chan had included a disclaimer at the end of all the projections to state, in effect, that the City of Richmond had censored any quotes having to do with the President of the United States.

Ms. Seville stated the disclaimer was incorrect and misleading and had led to a headline from a KQED reporter that the City Richmond censored public art projects. Subsequently, social media had been criticizing everyone involved and others. No statement from the City had been made at this time although after discussing the issue with the Mayor's Office and the City Attorney's Office, it had been decided that since the Interim City Manager was on vacation for a week it would be discussed by the City Attorney with the City Manager after that time when a decision would be made as to any statement to be released.

Ms. Seville added that every contract for an NPA grantee required that the RACC be included in the credits for the project and due to a number of events in spite of the City's efforts to assist in that regard, that credit had not been provided. She suggested the City had been manipulated, misrepresented, and taken advantage of and she was very disappointed with Ms. Chan because of those events.

On the discussion, the RACC expressed a desire to make a statement to emphasize that the situation had been misrepresented.

Katy Curl, Library & Cultural Services Director, explained that any statement would have to be approved by the City Attorney's Office. She suggested the incident would allow the RACC and the City to recraft the NPA process to avoid a similar situation in the future.

It was clarified that to be able to submit a draft statement prior to the next meeting, a subcommittee comprised of Chair Balisle and Commissioners Helene and Horne would draft a response that could be forwarded to Ms. Seville who would submit it to the City Attorney, with Council Liaison Choi to be made aware of the statement.

Commissioner Wiley reported that the *Just Imagine KidZ Book Basket* by Tamara Shiloh was going well. She would provide an update in September after the opening of the new school year.

Ms. Seville reported that the *Cops & Kids Mural* by Dr. Shantina Jackson was complete and there would be a dedication in early September.

Commissioner Barnes was not available but her project, the play *Money Speaks* by Tracey Mitchell, had been extended due to the business license issue and would be held on October 18, 2019 at De Anza High School.

## X. Social Media Committee Update

Chair Balisle highlighted the discussion at the recent Social Media Committee meeting where she had created a Google document to add in passwords and other information about the Social Media process. She reported that Commissioner Helene had taken over Twitter, and when Commissioner Kirk was available there would be a discussion of guidelines and expectations with respect to the RACC's purpose, particularly with respect to NPA grantees.

## XI. Richmond Arts Salon Update

Commissioner Wiley reported that she was still looking for a November venue and would make sure that it was handicap accessible.

## XII. Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) Report

Chair Balisle stated that the Work Plan had been discussed as had an identification of the projects that qualified for percent in private development, and the 12<sup>th</sup> and Macdonald project and a selection process had been discussed, which she characterized as "messy."

Chair Balisle explained that Jessica Yaris, a member of the PAAC who had been a member of the selection panel had questioned the process and would prepare a statement to offer her opinions on that process.

Ms. Seville highlighted the situation with respect to the 12<sup>th</sup> and Macdonald project, how she had not previously been aware of the project but had learned that it had been under discussion for years, and how it had not followed established protocol creating a difficult situation with respect to process, which was why the selection panel of sorts had been convened to attempt to create a level playing field. The outcome was that Mario Chiodo, who had been placed on the project without any public process, had not been a selected artist although space had been made available at the project site for his sculpture. The public art requirement of \$400,000 would be spent on other projects with the artists that had been selected.

## XIII. Staff Report

Ms. Seville reported that the contract for John Toki related to the sculpture for the Family Justice Center had been extended to October 31, 2019; the sculpture had been fired and was currently being pieced together. There would be a dedication on October 5, 2019 at 6:00 P.M. for the Port Sculpture when a light show would be presented; fundraising would be pursued to allow additional wiring and programming for an interactive app to create different images. In response to questions related to the proposed app, she requested that those questions be submitted by email and she would forward them to the appropriate parties.

Ms. Seville also reported that Yuki Nagase's studio was progressing on the Officer Bradley A. Moody Underpass, the contract was being extended to December 2020, and efforts were underway to allow the Ohlone Tribe to rename the park in which the public art would exist.

With respect to the Community Conversations Grant, two people had volunteered to be the artist; Richard Muro and DeMarco Wooten. The mural was half finished although there had been a delay in finishing the Richard Muro half because he was working out of town. Efforts were underway to complete the mural.

Ms. Seville reported that the new updated Public Art in Private Development Brochure had been reprinted and distributed to the Planning Department. She also reported that the agreement with the City requested by the Shops at Hilltop to bundle all of the separate entities that were renting from them into one amount for the percent for art was currently being reviewed by the City Attorney's Office.

#### XIV. Community Partner

Commissioner Mizrahi explained that while she was no longer a member of the Board of Richmond Pride, she would emcee the Film Festival on October 12, 2019 at 5:00 P.M. at Bridge Arts. She requested that the RACC be identified as a community partner to that event.

Motion by Commissioner Mizrahi, second by Commissioner Helene to identify the RACC as a Community Partner to the Rainbow Pride Film Festival on October 12, 2019, carried by the following vote:

Ayes:	Balisle, Cohen, Helene, Horne, Mizrahi, Wiley
Noes:	None
Abstain:	None
Absent:	Barnes, Kirk

#### XV. Announcements

CORDELL HINDLER announced the Council of Industries monthly luncheon on September 18, 2019 from 12:00 to 1:30 P.M. at Hotel Mac.

Commissioner Horne recommended a shared Google calendar for the RACC, and Chair Balisle noted that Commissioner Kirk might already have created the calendar which would be verified upon her return.

Ms. Seville distributed some pictures and read a letter from Stephanie Nye, Program Manager, Richmond Love Your Block to advise that the Sustainable Practices Mural on the walls of the Shields-Reid Neighborhood Center was now part of the storage room at the center with little to no public visibility.

The Community Center had been closed for many months for renovations and would remain closed until October. The mural had been painted as a part of a Love Your Block Grant. Ms. Nye had expressed her hope there would be a spot on the building or elsewhere in North Richmond where the mural could be recreated in the future.

Ms. Seville recommended as part of the NPA grants for mural projects that applicants be urged to avoid similar obstructions in the future.

Commissioner Mizrahi encouraged more Commissioners to attend the NPA workshops.

Commissioner Wiley announced that Commissioner Mizrahi was a part of the committee doing the benefit for the Charlotte Maxwell Clinic offering free services for women with cancer, and there would be a fundraiser on September 15, 2019 at 1:00 P.M. at Freight & Salvage Coffee House in Berkeley.

#### XVI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:51 P.M. to the next meeting on September 26, 2019.