



**City of El Segundo**  
**Arts and Culture Advisory Committee**  
Meeting Minutes  
for May 26, 2020 5:30 p.m.  
Zoom

Land Acknowledgement: We acknowledge that we are holding this meeting on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Tongva. We recognize the Tongva people as the traditional land caretakers of Tovaangar (Los Angeles basin, So. Channel Islands). We also acknowledge that Los Angeles County is home to the largest Indigenous populations in the US.

**A. CALL TO ORDER** – The meeting was called to order at 5:30pm by Chairperson Neal Von Flue.

**B. ROLL CALL**

Members present: Jeff Cason, Maureen Kingsley, Mark Knight, Michael Kreski, Brian Mitchell (arrived 5:45PM), Samantha Smith-Strassner, Natalie Strong, Vice Chairperson Eva Sweeney and Chairperson Neal Von Flue

Members absent: Kristen Dorsey

City Council Liaison present: Lance Giroux (left at 7:30PM)

City Staff present: Melissa McCollum, Library Director  
Julie Todd, Senior Librarian

**C. PRESENTATIONS**

1. Library Park Activation Concept, including Learning Garden and Storybook Loop (Tavi Perttula/Tavi Design Group/20 minutes)

Tavi Perttula shared with the committee his concepts and designs for activating Library Park as an extension of the children's library. There are two phases of the project – a patio, learning garden, and small stage directly outside of the children's library and a storybook loop that utilizes other parts of the park.

The storybook loop encourages participants to stop at various stations along their walk through the park to read a complete story that can be changed out quarterly.

The Learning Garden will be a rustic, simple pallet using sensory plants that invite beneficial animals and insects into the space to be used as environmental learning tools, and also incorporate bird houses, bird baths, and a honeycomb shaped stage for informal story/music performances.

The storybook loop concept uses playful sculpture, naturalistic seating, and flipbook displays, spreading them out in a linear fashion to tell the story throughout the park.

Melissa McCollum reminded the committee that the project has a budget of \$120,000 allocated by the City Council, \$10,000 awarded by the State Library for design services, and an additional \$7,500 from Chevron for outdoor furniture.

Melissa also requested feedback from the meeting attendees, including ACC members, Recreation and Parks Commission members, Recreation and Parks Director Meredith Petit, and Council Member Lance Giroux. Implementation is planned by the end of the year. Much of the work will be done by Recreation and Parks staff along with Public Works staff. The project schedule will depend on work schedules and the ability to receive materials during COVID-19.

Councilmember Lance Giroux suggested bringing the presentation to a council meeting to share the exciting new project. Kelly Watson, member of the Recreation and Parks Commission is excited about the project. She wants to make sure the project is wheelchair accessible, and can be enjoyed by all. Tavi Perttula stated that the project is still in the concept stage and is taking into consideration these needs while working through design decisions pertaining to pathways and other ways of engagement.

Mark Knight likes the segmented stage and suggested incorporating some of El Segundo's aerospace theme and scientific tools with the heptagonal shapes used in the honeycomb stage design.

Dave Lubs from the Recreation and Parks Commission was concerned about fundamentally changing the nature of the park, from more serene without play structures to one with structures for kids to play on, encouraging a different way of engaging in the more natural space. He wanted to make sure everyone is comfortable with that change and also recognized that the change will lead to a more crowded park with elements throughout the park.

Natalie Strong mentioned that as a mom who spends a lot of time in the park, kids already have a tendency to climb on whatever is there and so from a mom's perspective, she would feel better having something there that was made for kids to climb on and engage with, instead of ruining the plants and other elements that were not intended to be played with.

Meredith Petit discussed with Tavi's design team in the beginning of the project the importance of using natural elements such as toadstools and logs that become imaginative play features to keep the park's natural environment as a theme rather than the use of more traditional play structures.

Vice Chairperson Eva Sweeney asked about the wind sculptures represented and asked if Tavi is interested in working with local artists. Tavi replied that this is a conceptual representation and that the end result depends on what the budget can accommodate. Maureen Kingsley wanted clarification if the park will still be able to accommodate the Hometown Fair and Concerts in the Park when the City is able to return to larger crowd events. Meredith Petit assured that the Park's space would still accommodate those activities once the community is able to gather again. Chairperson Neal Von Flue asked if it was considered tightening the story loop a little closer to the library so it doesn't extend so far into the park, or if the size of the story loop was considered in order to be an effective feature of the project. Tavi mentioned that this is the design team's first pass at the design

project and the design can be scaled up or down according to the City's desire. Their hope is to approach the project as sensitively as possible.

Jeff Cason is in favor of the project and loves the narrative that takes you through the story loop experience. Jeff is in favor of preserving the flexibility of the space for events, maintaining sightlines to the gazebo, the high school, and for Concerts in the Park. Secondly, Jeff wants to be sensitive to the overall aesthetic of the park, maintaining more natural-themed elements rather than story-specific, allowing kids to bring their own imagination into the space while at play.

Having the library incorporate their programming into the park was an interest and Melissa McCollum replied that the library does have plans to utilize the outside space more for library programs. Cleaning of the play elements was a concern during COVID-19 times. Meredith Petit mentioned that from a cleaning perspective, existing park equipment already has a cleaning schedule and is treated differently than it has been in the pre-COVID times. The elements of Library Park would be given the same consideration and be added to the cleaning schedule.

2. Beautify Earth Introduction – an international effort to transform communities through public art, murals, art education, and community engagement (Evan Meyer/Beautify Earth/10 minutes)

Mark Knight was introduced to Beautify Earth by Mayor Drew Boyles. There is an overlap between the mission of Beautify Earth and what the ACC plans to do, so there may be future opportunities for partnership.

Evan Meyer, Chief Executive Officer of Beautify Earth, shared how Beautify Earth can help El Segundo become a global art and tourism destination. He said street art is critical for community expression and also may translate to revenue for the City. Beautify Earth connects cities, the public, businesses, and local artists to facilitate the logistics of getting public art done more quickly.

Overall, Beautify Earth has helped to facilitate about 9,000 murals. Evan Meyer shared a few of Beautify Earth's projects with the committee. In one model, Beautify Earth charges a monthly fee and 1% of all fees goes back into schools and the community. Vice Chairperson Eva Sweeney asked if artists also have to pay a monthly fee to belong to Beautify Earth. Evan mentioned that artists do not. The question was asked if Beautify Earth would be able to come into communities to recommend walls that would be great possibilities for murals. Evan is willing to do so in El Segundo.

## **D. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS**

Natasia Gascon of El Segundo TV, who also serves as an Arts Administrator for West Los Angeles and the South Bay cities complimented Beautify Earth for what they do and what they have achieved and thinks that they are a valuable resource. Natasia

also mentioned that the ACC has a responsibility for representing the community and its history through the art projects and programs they support. With El Segundo's large working population, public art is a way to communicate El Segundo's story to the workforce population.

#### **E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES for February 19, 2020**

1. Approval of minutes of the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee Meeting of February 19, 2020.

MOTIONED by Natalie Strong and SECONDED by Vice Chairperson Eva Sweeney to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2020 meeting as presented. Motion CARRIED 9-0.

#### **F. SPECIAL BUSINESS - NONE**

#### **G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - NONE**

#### **H. NEW BUSINESS**

1. Arts and Culture Advisory Committee Vision Document (Michael Kreski and Eva Sweeney/15 minutes)

Michael Kreski reported that the Cultural Development Program Subcommittee met a few times virtually to review the draft Vision Document of the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee. Values represent what the committee is trying to achieve in terms of the spirit and purpose of the art and the goals are specific ways the art integrates into the community.

ACC values include responsibility, authenticity, intelligence, synergy, and equity. Goals include integrate Arts and Culture into City life, build a better City with art, integrate creative concepts into capital improvement, improve the quality of place throughout the City, make El Segundo a prime tourist destination, support local creative institutions and artists.

Chairperson Neal Von Flue believes that all elements of the values and goals provide for a strong document to guide the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee.

Mark Knight asked if members of the public are allowed to comment at this time. Melissa mentioned that if Neal would like to provide that opportunity at this time, it would be acceptable.

Member of the public Natasia Gascon commented that she appreciates the point of making El Segundo a tourist destination and thought that reaching out to the businesses in town and their employees to encourage them to participate in community events and programs – not overlooking this population, but rather taking advantage of the people El Segundo already has close to home.

MOTIONED by Chairperson Neal Von Flue and SECONDED by Brian Mitchell to approve the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee Vision and Values Document in its current draft. CARRIED 9-0.

2. Discuss Cultural Development Fund Budget Recommendations for FY 2020-2021 (Cultural Development Program Subcommittee/15 minutes)

Mark Knight shared that the Cultural Development Program Subcommittee has had a chance to translate some of the values and goals into actionable budget items. With one developer's contribution, the fund is at about \$25,000. There is also another developer project in the works that may result in additional funds. Based on historical trends there could be more funds, though COVID-19 may or may not have some effect on the numbers.

Various projects relate to parklets in response to COVID-19, Library Park Activation, possible community murals and the Art Walk. Melissa mentioned that the ACC will vote on budget recommendations at the ACC Meeting on June 23, and they will be shared with the City Council as part of Budget Study Sessions in July and August. ACC leadership wants the ACC to have plenty of time to discuss the options.

Chairperson Neal Von Flue asked why grants for artistic programming would come before the already approved Library Park Activation project. Clarification on COVID-19 related grant funding came from Mark Knight stating that the subcommittee thought that it may be a good idea to use some of the Cultural Development funds to provide local artists who may be struggling, grants to complete their projects with reduced income due to COVID-19. Chairperson Neal Von Flue feels that after the community gets back to the new normal, whatever that may be, that the public will have a desire for programming and safely distanced programming and feels that the ACC should play a role in helping to facilitate that.

Natalie Strong asked if it would be possible to look at the original mention of grants during COVID-19 as opportunities to plan for the socially distanced, safe programming to provide once people are able to resume in person programs and gatherings. Michael Kreski thought that it was a more appealing way to look at providing grants in relation to COVID-19.

## **I. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

1. Events/Marketing – none
2. Grants – none. Vice Chairperson Eva Sweeney mentioned a webinar for NEA Outtown grant August 6<sup>th</sup>. Vice Chairperson Eva Sweeney would like the Grants Subcommittee to work on the grant. She feels it is a very prestigious grant for a community to receive.
3. Cultural Development Program – discussed updates previously in meeting.
4. Projects – Chairperson Neal Von Flue discussed the Centennial Utility Box project and its status. The project is moving on. Four of the ten boxes have been designed and the designer feels confident that with the feedback he has received he can move forward with the project.

## **J. GOVERNANCE**

Melissa McCollum asked that Samantha take a look at the subcommittee makeup to see if there are any she is interested in joining. Events and Marketing and the Grants Subcommittees both have openings. Also, there will be three ACC terms ending in June in addition to the current vacancy, so there may be additional subcommittee vacancies to fill, possibly leading to new opportunities for members.

## **K. ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

Chairperson Neal Von Flue – Thanked everyone for participating in the Zoom meeting and is glad to be back to meeting in some format.

Vice Chairperson Eva Sweeney – Stay safe and healthy.

Jeff Cason – Welcomed Samantha to the group. Mentioned a secret filming of a bell tower projection show for the Class of 2020 High School Graduation that he will be working on.

Maureen Kingsley – Expressed that she is enjoying ESMOA's Art in the Time of COVID-19 public art space.

Mark Knight – Thanked everyone for meeting on Zoom. Glad to be back. Welcomed Samantha and thanked Melissa for her patience in answering his questions. The subcommittees have been productive with virtual meetings during the last two months.

Michael Kreski – Welcomed Samantha.

Brian Mitchell – Welcomed Samantha. Mentioned the new Brazilian restaurant where Main Street Café used to be. He met the owner who is very interested in the arts and plans to integrate art and film into his restaurant. Hopes to open in the fall.

Samantha Smith-Strassner – Excited to meet the members of ACC. Glad be on the committee. Excited to learn more and contribute more.

Natalie Strong – Reminded members to visit the COVID-19 Room of Requirement on Facebook that has been featuring various artists and art in response to COVID-19. Mentioned a TED Talk the inspired a series of mini museums. Will provide the link so that Julie can send it to the committee members.

## **CITY COUNCIL LIAISON COMMENTS**

Councilmember Lance Giroux – not present at this time (left at 7:30PM)

## **M. CITY LIAISON UPDATES**

Julie Todd – Mentioned the Centennial Utility Box project and that it is coming along. The library staff have been creating a lot of digital content for programs during COVID-19. Thanked Maureen Kingsley for providing her writing prompts and Sally Martin of Studio Antiques for her little history talks on collector's items found at the shop.

**N. ADJOURNMENT** – Meeting adjourned at 7:43pm.

NEXT MEETING: on Tuesday, June 23, 2020 at 5:30 p.m., held virtually on Zoom.

Posted by: Julie Todd

Date & Time: 6/18/20, 12PM