



Stephen Seymour, District 1  
Mahdad Nassiri, District 1  
Deepa Nair, District 2  
Lois Fried, District 2  
VACANT, Dist. 3  
Josephine Deciron, District 3  
Jeanne Heise, District 4  
Farah Yasmeen Shaikh, District 4  
Victoria Magbilang, District. 5  
Reno Anoa'i, District 5

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**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE ARTS COMMISSION**  
**Saturday, March 23, 2024 – 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**  
**Twin Pines Park Manor House, 10 Twin Pines Lane, Belmont, CA 94002**

**MINUTES**

**1. Roll Call** Vice Chair, Commissioner Heise called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. with roll call.  
In Attendance: Commissioners Heise, Magbilang, Fried, Nassiri, Shaikh, Deciron, Seymour, Anoa'i, and Youth Commission Liasion Zhao  
Absent: Commissioner Nair  
Staff: Aimee Shapiro, Mara Grimes, and Jacki Rigoni  
Guests: Debbie Schechter, Retreat Facilitator; Alan Sarver announced the SchoolForce Celebrate the Music Festival at Twin Pines Park in Belmont on April 28, 2024; and Maria Pacelli

**2. Agenda Amendments**

None

**3. Oral Communications**

None

**4. Consideration of Minutes** Minutes from the January 17, 2024 meeting were approved unanimously.

**5. Retreat Purpose:**

Develop goals for the Arts Commission for the next one to two years and begin development of an action plan to accomplish these goals.

**Retreat Objectives:**

- Reflect on accomplishments from last year
- Identify Commission goals and objectives for the next one to two years
- Begin developing an action plan for addressing the goals
- Build on existing relationships to enhance collaboration and teamwork

**6. Welcome, Facilitator Introduction, Retreat Purpose, Agenda Review, Group Agreements**

Director introduced herself and welcomed the group. Facilitator Debbie Schechter introduced herself, reviewed the retreat goals and presented the following group agreements:

- Listen for understanding
- Share the air
- Be present and engaged
- Let the facilitator guide the process

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- Technology on silent

## 7. Introductions and Framing Activity

*Purpose: Get to know each other better and set the tone for the day*

Participants introduced themselves and described or shared an artwork that is meaningful or inspiring to them. Commissioners shared a variety of different types of art and explained the personal importance of the artwork. In reflecting on this activity, Commissioners noted that art ties them together, creates vibrant communities and has power. They appreciated the experience and talent in the room and noted that everyone is an artist.

## 8. Looking Back/Looking Forward

*Purpose: Develop a shared understanding of accomplishments and begin thinking about future goals (recognize that some people are new)*

Commissioners individually answered the following questions:

- What are you most proud of accomplishing over the past year?
- What are you most looking forward to this year?

Responses were as follows:

### Proud of

- Countywide celebration of the arts (2)
- Art bags for celebration of the arts
- Hiring Aimee as the new Executive Director
- Helping draft the bylaws
- Participating on the Commission
- Being part of civic arts
- North Fair Oaks 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue mural
- Awakening to the richness of art and artists in San Mateo County through learning and listening

### Looking Forward to

- Making recommendations to the Board of Supervisors that bring more and uplift diverse art voices in the community
- Bridging and advocating for art and artists of all types and cultures from and in San Mateo County
- New leadership (Aimee), new Commissioners
- New Executive Director of the Commission
- Continuing my work on the Arts Commission and helping with arts programming
- Creating a message to be conveyed by the artist
- Formalize the Commission's vision
- Working on a functional Commission
- Connecting with other Commissioners and County departments (ex: education, etc.)
- Continue to work to ensure all communities are being served.

## 9 . Review Founding Resolution, Strategic Plan and Bylaws

*Purpose: Understand Commission purposes and overall goals and strategies*

Prior to the retreat, Commissioners were asked to review the Commission's founding resolution and current Strategic Plan and to consider the following questions:

- How do these documents guide the commission? Which parts continue to be relevant? Which are not?
- What stands out as most important?

Aimee explained that the Strategic Plan were developed by prior leadership and Commission members. She noted that the strategic plan should be considered as background.

**Strategic Plan:** Commissioners shared the following perspectives on the Strategic Plan:

- What stands out?
  - Advocating and building visibility for the arts (Goal 1) is important. This includes being present, letting people know about the Arts Commission and art opportunities, supporting artists, and building trust and relationships with the arts community.
  - Increasing equitable involvement, support and access to the arts through policies and partnerships (Goal 4) is important and should be moved up in the strategic plan.
    - DEI principles should drive us
    - Partner with businesses and organizations to build arts infrastructure

- Partner with local organizations, arts and culture communities; list them out in each district and in unincorporated areas
- What's missing and should be added?
  - The mission of art as central to a healthy and vibrant community should be integrated into the goals
  - The strategic plan is missing a message from artists about arts and culture through different languages
  - Amplify arts efforts, partner, connect through creating systems
  - Have a strategy to communicate with the community and have a toolkit and a collective message to take to partners
  - The plan should include an intention to learn from arts commissions and organizations from throughout the Bay Area
  - Include using resources like libraries and schools to get art to people (somewhat addressed under Goal 6)

**Bylaws:** Prior to the retreat, a subcommittee of the Commission drafted bylaws which were reviewed and edited by Aimee and Mara and then distributed to Commissioners for their review. Subcommittee members explained that the Commission currently has no bylaws, and that bylaws are helpful to outline how the Commissioner operates and to ensure clarity, consistent and accountability. Commissioners briefly discussed the bylaws and shared the following key perspectives:

- Attendance: The bylaws should indicate that the Chair and Vice Chair need to be in attendance. A concern was expressed about excused absences and that these should be limited.
- Removing commissioners: the bylaws refer to a volunteer group as deciding about removing commissioners, but this decision needs to be made by the Board of Supervisors.
- The bylaws should include something about what participation means and expectations of the time commitment
- The Commission should have an onboarding process that includes familiarizing members with the bylaws and expectations
- The Secretary position needs to be added to the bylaws

The following next steps regarding the bylaws were identified:

1. Comments will be provided by the County Counsel shortly
2. Commission members should submit comments on the bylaws to Commissioner Heise by April 15
3. Bylaws will be revised and will be discussed at the May 15 Commission meeting

## 10 . Setting Goals and Workplan Development

*Purpose: Develop a one-to-two-year workplan to guide the work of the Arts Commission*

Based on the retreat discussions regarding accomplishments, what Commissioners are looking forward to and the Strategic Plan, Commissioners brainstormed priority projects and goals individually and in pairs. Commissioners noted that it is important to identify (1) who the Commission is and (2) what vacuum the Commission is filling. Ideas were presented and categorized by the group as follows. Commissioners volunteered to serve on subcommittees to develop the goals, specific tasks and timeline more fully:

1. **Partnerships/ Communication/Visibility** (Victoria, Jeanne, Mahdad, Josephine)
  - Partner with other commissions and County departments on joint arts initiatives (e.g., contests, scholarships, events, cross-promotion): identify 3-5 commissions or county departments and make a presentation
  - Partner with the Center for Creativity to bring a dedicated arts center to San Mateo County
  - Develop a list of arts and culture organization partners
  - Have concrete communication with arts organizations—they need to know what we do and how to reach us
  - Have concrete communication with school districts to build awareness and support
  - Connect the Arts Commission in a meaningful way with the libraries and schools in the County

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- Develop and implement a clear and accessible way for artists and the San Mateo County community overall to engage with the Office of Arts and Culture, e.g., tabling at events, google form, more online interaction
  - Improve communication within individual Supervisorial Districts
2. **Toolkit/Message/Awareness** (Lois, Josephine)
    - Develop a toolkit with an effective message
    - Work on the toolkit for Commissioners to access
    - Establish a consistent message/strategy across districts on how to approach constituents, Supervisors, other organizations
    - Have measurable outcomes for increasing awareness of the Arts Commission and its work (e.g., survey arts organizations and the community)
  3. **Resources for artists** (Stephen, Farah)
    - Develop a list of resources on the website for artists, district-specific, including contact information for Commissioners

During the discussion of goals, the following broad/overall ideas for Commission role and process were identified:

- Identify the Commission's vision of arts and culture
- Ensure the arts and culture are visible and thriving in all communities in the County (events)
- Hold a second County-wide celebration of the arts
- Develop recommendations and present to the Board of Supervisors
- Develop a yearly work plan
- Plan, implement and execute the goals
- Execute: civic role in arts as County position
- Have detailed clarity in writing of the role and expectations of Arts Commissioners
- Accountability: yearly reporting and recommendations to Board of Supervisors
- Fill vacancies on the Commission: reach out to residents

### 11. Role of the County vs. Cities

Commissioners briefly discussed the role of the County and the Commission vs. the cities in promoting arts and culture. They noted the importance of Commissioners forming relationships with jurisdictions and organizations within their Districts, understanding who they represent and bringing this recognition into their role as Commissioners. The following ideas were suggested:

- Geographic mapping of each District and institutional knowledge of the roles should be part of onboarding for new Commissioners
- Knowledge of the unincorporated areas within each District is important; Jacki can provide this

### 12. Summary, Next Steps, Meeting Evaluation, Closing Activity

*Purpose : Identify clear next steps with timeframes*

Facilitator Debbie Schechter summarized the Commission's accomplishments at the retreat and captured the following next steps:

- Bylaws:
  - Comments on the bylaws will be provided by the County Counsel shortly
  - Commission members should submit comments on bylaws to Commissioner Heise by April 15
  - Bylaws will be revised and will be discussed at the May 15 Commission meeting
- Goals and objectives:
  - Subcommittees will meet prior to the May 15 Commission meeting to refine and further develop goals, objectives and timeline
  - Subcommittees can use the attached suggested format as a framework
  - Subcommittees will present and discuss goals and objectives/tasks at the May 15, 2024, Commission meeting

- Jacki will provide information on the unincorporated areas within each District by May 15, 2024

The retreat concluded with each participant sharing a one-word reflection on the retreat.

### **13. Adjournment**

Vice Chair adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

**NEXT REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING: May 15, 2024 – 3:00-5:00 PM**

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