



**City of El Segundo**  
**Arts and Culture Advisory Committee**  
Meeting Minutes  
for June 23, 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, Kristen Dorsey, Maureen Kingsley, Mark Knight, Michael Kreski, Brian Mitchell, Samantha Smith-Strassner, Natalie Strong, Vice Chairperson Eva Sweeney and Chairperson Neal Von Flue

City Council Liaisons:

Councilmember Lance Giroux: present (left at 7:30PM)

Councilmember Scot Nicol: present (left at 7:04PM)

City Staff present: Melissa McCollum, Library Director

Julie Todd, Senior Librarian

**C. PRESENTATIONS**

1. Comments by New City Council Liaison (Lance Giroux/10 minutes)

Councilmember Giroux is very happy to be a part of the ACC. His travels throughout the world have given him the opportunity to get to know different cultures through food, customs, and art. Lance Giroux sees the opportunity that the ACC has to really make a positive impact on the City both in the short and long term.

2. Decolonizing Through Truth-telling (Jaclyn Roessel/U.S. Department of Arts and Culture Director of Decolonized Futures and Radical Dreams/20 minutes)

Jaclyn Roessel joined the ACC conversation from New Mexico. Jaclyn is involved in rebuilding community through cultural equity and cultural justice. By embracing land acknowledgement, she said we are choosing to honor and respect the power of a place. Land acknowledgement is also important in addressing settler colonialism, the removal and erasure of indigenous people in order to take the land for use by settlers. It is important to recognize that the U.S. would not exist without settler colonialism. Settler colonialism continues to this day.

Jaclyn said decolonization is a methodology. Truth-telling, collaboration, and the centering of indigenous perspectives allows us to think about concrete ways that we can deconstruct settler colonialism as a whole. Looking at the term as it relates to the arts, it is important to keep in mind Tongva homeland representation on local

committees and councils. We need to reimagine the ways we are engaging with indigenous populations. Using the framework of decolonization and working with indigenous populations and applying it to how we also engage with other communities of color is important.

The lack of contemporary representation of native people and cultures in modern society has led to the misinformed thoughts of extinction and that they were a part of the past, regardless of how many native people live, work and create in our present day communities. It is important to find ways of connecting, including, and collaborating with native people as we are all responsible to each other.

3. Quick Public Art Updates (Jeff Cason, Julie Todd, and Melissa McCollum/15 minutes)

Julie Todd shared that the Eagle Scout's project to create a viewing area for John Van Hamersveld's DWP tank wrap mural is moving forward in the planning stages. The Eagle Scout has been consulting with Julie, John and John's wife, Alida to plan for benches, informational signage and a website that allows viewers an opportunity to sit, view and learn more about this mural. Julie also mentioned that the Centennial Utility Box project is near completion. Ten utility box wraps share historic photos of El Segundo. Two additional boxes are being planned that honor the Tongva and 2017, El Segundo's Centennial. The project is on target to be complete in August.

Jeff Cason described the 2020 High School Graduation projection project that he worked on with El Segundo Unified School District to celebrate this year's graduating seniors. Projected images of every graduating senior and their names appeared on the El Segundo Bell Tower while music played. The experience was recorded and broadcast on social media and via YouTube.

Melissa McCollum shared that an anonymous community member donated to Venice artist Nico Naismith who in turn has offered to create some of his basketball hoops made out of repurposed materials in El Segundo. Nico's hoops will be considered for inclusion in the Library Park Activation Project.

## **D. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS**

Julie Todd read two Public Communication emails received from community members Sarah Miskowicz and Lauren Abercrombie.

Sarah Miskowicz submitted comments in support of programming and public art that celebrates diversity and provides anti-racism education opportunities for the community. Sarah encourages the ACC to take this into consideration while discussing the 2021 budget to improve the community.

Lauren Abercrombie advocates for discussion around programming and public art that celebrates diversity and provides anti-racism educational opportunities for the community. This is something that Lauren is very passionate about. Lauren is planning to apply for the DEI committee and hopes that there can be collaboration between the

DEI and ACC committees to continue to celebrate diversity and advocate for equity and inclusion in El Segundo.

Community member Avery Smith echoes the emails regarding diversity. A couple of weeks ago Avery posted a video on social media about reshaping El Segundo regarding the legacy of its racist past and taking steps to move beyond through public art. A new mural or renaming a park were some ideas he shared. Avery is positive about the transformation of the City's interior and how welcoming people have been, and would like to have the exterior of El Segundo reflect what he can see on the interior. He sees a tremendous opportunity to do so during this time.

#### **E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES for May 26, 2020**

1. Approval of minutes of the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee Meeting of May 26, 2020.

MOTIONED by Natalie Strong and SECONDED by Jeff Cason to approve the minutes of the May 26, 2020 meeting as presented. Motion CARRIED 10-0.

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

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

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

1. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Discussion and ACC Action Steps (Neal Von Flue/20 minutes)

Chairperson Neal Von Flue mentioned that the City Council has moved to approve a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council. With the establishment of this new committee, the ACC still remains very interested in helping to bring diversity, equity, and inclusion into El Segundo through the arts.

Vice Chairperson Eva Sweeney mentioned that she and Kristen Dorsey had a talk on creating an Anti-Racism Subcommittee. Samantha Smith-Strassner also agreed that this subcommittee would be an important one to establish to help committee members as well as the community grow and see some change. Kristen Dorsey was hoping that there could be formal communication between the two committees to have access and conversations with them.

Melissa McCollum mentioned the potential for communication and collaboration between the ACC and DEI committees. Councilmember Nicol said that the new DEI committee will be a public meeting, so members of the public are welcome to attend as a guest if they are not a DEI committee member.

Vice Chairperson Eva Sweeney reminded the group of an outreach list appointing ACC members to other City CCBs as liaisons. An ACC member can be assigned to the new DEI committee to keep informed of the meeting minutes to see if anything is relevant for the ACC to become more aware of and involved with. Councilmember Giroux would like the new DEI to take a holistic approach,

including how the City populates their CCBs, and if the members truly represent the diversity of the El Segundo community. Other things to consider include hiring of staff and making sure that diversity is represented. Councilmember Giroux would like to see the ACC educate the community through art and programming for all ages.

Jeff Cason believes that representation is one of the major ways that the ACC members can contribute. Diversity of perspectives and having representation not only on the ACC, but also in the projects funded as well, which will naturally begin to bring diversity, equity, and inclusion into the City.

Creation of a new subcommittee to address anti-racism was discussed. Members expressing interest in serving on the subcommittee include Kristen Dorsey, Samantha Smith-Strassner, and Jeff Cason.

MOTIONED by Kristen Dorsey and SECONDED by Natalie Strong to approve the creation of the working title of Anti-Racism Through an Intersectional Lens Subcommittee. Motion CARRIED 10-0.

MOTIONED by Chairperson Neal Von Flue and SECONDED by Natalie Strong to approve the initial membership of Kristen Dorsey, Samantha Smith-Strassner, and Jeff Cason to the Anti-Racism Through an Intersectional Lens Subcommittee. Motion CARRIED 10-0.

## 2. Cultural Development Fund Budget Recommendations for FY 2020-2021 (Cultural Development Program Subcommittee/20 minutes)

Attached Supporting Documents: DRAFT Budget discussed May 26, 2020 and REVISED DRAFT Budget

Mark Knight explained the budget spreadsheet, a product of multiple discussions within the CDP Subcommittee, reflecting the funding level currently in the CDP account, a potential funding level based on existing projects in the queue, and a potential funding level with less certainty based on possible developer projects and related in-lieu payments.

Melissa McCollum explained that some of the funds were shifted to accommodate DEI education, speakers, and programming from the previous funding discussion at the ACC Meeting in May. Vice Chairperson Eva Sweeney explained the line item CDP program administration as expert consultants and/or platform subscriptions for grant applications. Kristen Dorsey mentioned that although the cultural gatherings will most likely have to take place virtually through Zoom through 2020, she is still in favor of designating funds for this purpose. Mark Knight reminded the group the ACC should pay their own administrative fees which is estimated at \$3,000 over the course of the upcoming fiscal year.

Jeff Cason recognized grants as two possibilities, either for El Segundo non-profits or for individual artists. Samantha asked for clarification on the education line item. Mark Knight mentioned that when you bring in a speaker to educate the ACC, it is good to be able to provide compensation.

MOTIONED by Mark Knight and SECONDED by Vice Chairperson Eva Sweeney to approve the Cultural Development Fund budget recommendations for FY 2020-2021 as presented. Motion CARRIED 10-0.

## **I. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

1. Events/Marketing – Natalie Strong mentioned the subcommittee prepared a press release regarding the CDP. Maureen Kingsley added that maybe the press release should be updated since it was written prior to having a budget. The subcommittee will revisit the item and coordinate with Deputy City Manager Barbara Voss who oversees the City's Communications.
2. Grants – Vice Chairperson Eva Sweeney mentioned that the subcommittee met last week. They are planning to research the Our Town grant which is due September 1<sup>st</sup>. Natalie Strong mentioned browsing the NEA website looking at previous Our Town projects for ideas. Jeff Cason also added they discussed disbursing grants and what that infrastructure needs to be. Jeff is looking into online platforms to be able to have electronic applications for convenience to artists and organizations.
3. Cultural Development Program – none
4. Projects – none

## **J. GOVERNANCE**

Melissa McCollum mentioned Arcia Hester from the Recreation and Parks Department (and former City Liaison to the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee) will likely provide City staff support for the newly formed Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commission. Arcia wrote her Master's thesis on DEI and is looking forward to being involved.

Melissa mentioned that if anyone knows anyone interested in applying for the DEI Commission, the application is on the City's website. An email may also be sent to [communications@elsegundo.org](mailto:communications@elsegundo.org) for more information.

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

Chairperson Neal Von Flue – none

Vice Chairperson Eva Sweeney – ESMoA had a great staff meeting and they are hoping to reopen at the end of July. Please mark your calendars for the next opening October 3<sup>rd</sup>. To be determined whether it will be virtual or in person.

Jeff Cason – none

Kristen Dorsey – Excited for the momentum that is happening in town regarding diversity and anti-racism and it feels like the ACC has real opportunities to transform El Segundo. She is happy to see El Segundo for Black Lives form and has attended

many of their events so far. She looks forward to working with everyone on the future goals of the ACC.

Maureen Kingsley – Appreciates being able to have candid discussions in the group.

Mark Knight – Attended the Juneteenth ceremony at Library Park and the work that was being done was very responsible, including the engagement with the community, the El Segundo PD, and making sure that due to COVID-19, they respected social distancing, wore masks, and also sanitized the megaphone between speakers.

Michael Kreski – none

Brian Mitchell – none

Samantha Smith-Strassner – Echo what Kristen has mentioned and has appreciated the art created over the last few months across the nation and how people are using art to make sense of their own learnings. She is excited that the ACC will play a role in that here in El Segundo.

Natalie Strong – What We Keep programming is still progressing for this year's Book to Action program. A virtual Grown-Up Show-and-Tell is scheduled for Friday, July 31<sup>st</sup>. They are also looking into engage children and older adults in other activities as well. Natalie is excited that the ACC is leaning towards advocacy in the future.

#### CITY COUNCIL LIAISON COMMENTS

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

Councilmember Scot Nicol – not present at this time (left at 7:04PM)

#### **L. CITY LIAISON UPDATES**

Julie Todd announced that the Penguin Random House book representative will be presenting a Book Buzz on Friday, June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2PM to kick off the Summer Reading Challenge. The Summer Reading Challenge is virtual this year through Beanstack.

#### **M. ADJOURNMENT** – Meeting adjourned at 7:50pm.

NEXT MEETING: on Tuesday, July 28, 2020 at 5:30 p.m., held virtually on Zoom.

Posted by: Julie Todd

Date & Time: