



CITY OF OAKLAND

**Cultural Affairs Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 22, 2021
4:00 – 7:04 PM**

Members in Attendance: Diane Sanchez (Chair), Kev Choice (Vice Chair), Roy Chan, Jennifer Easton, J. K. Fowler, Michelle Mush Lee, Michael Orange, Charmin Roundtree-Baaqee, Vanessa Whang, Theo Aytchan Williams

Staff in Attendance: Roberto Bedoya, Neha Balram, Denise Pate, Kristen Zaremba

Guests: RyanNicole (The HAVEN Project), Ashara Ekundayo

Roll Call/Call to Order

1. Welcome

Meeting called to order by Chair Sanchez at 4:00 PM.

2. Land Acknowledgement + Call to Presence

Commissioner Whang led the Land Acknowledgement and Call to Presence—recognizing that those of us on the land we now know as Oakland and lands all the way up to Albany are in Huichin, the unceded territory of the Chochenyo-speaking Confederated Villages of Lisjan Ohlone. Stating that we stand with the Lisjan people and their right to legal recognition and benefits from the US Government. And celebrating the recent appointment and approval of the first Native American Cabinet secretary, US Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland of the Laguna Pueblo, NM.

3. Action Item 1: Approval of Minutes from January 25, 2021

Motion to approve the meeting minutes from January 25, 2020 made by Vice Chair Choice; seconded by Commissioner Lee.

Choice	AYE	
Chan	AYE	
Easton	AYE	
Fowler	AYE	
Lee	AYE	
Orange	AYE	
Roundtree-Baaqee		AYE

Whang AYE
Williams AYE
Sanchez AYE

The motion passed unanimously.

4. Artist Spotlight: RyanNicole, The HAVEN Project

Vice Chair Choice introduced Grammy nominated artist, actress, activist, and athlete. She shared her original poem about representation and spoke about The HAVEN Project for housing justice from the artist's perspective. The objective of the project, a documentary film released around the November 2020 elections, is to shift voter sentiment around housing and housing justice in our community.

5. Cultural Affairs Commission Chair's Update

Chair Sanchez noted that the Commission should now plan to present to the Life Enrichment Committee (LEC) after the current budget process because of a reduced meeting schedule and backlog of agenda items. This increases the importance of one-on-one meetings with Council Offices before June 2021. Chair Sanchez reminded the Commissioners to organize community Zoom listening sessions, where members of the public can inform the Commission about their needs, which can be relayed to the Mayor and City Council.

Commissioners Lee and Roundtree-Baaqee both discussed the need to identify topics of interest from the community prior to organizing a meeting, which could be done during the Public Comment period at the Commission meetings. Commissioner Roundtree-Baaqee also asked if it is possible to invite a member of the Life Enrichment Committee to a Commission meeting. Chair Sanchez recommended that Commissioners attend City Council and LEC meetings instead and make a prepared comment during their Public Comment period.

6. Cultural Affairs Division Manager's Update

Roberto Bedoya thanked his staff for their work. He provided an overview of the following:

The Downtown Specific Plan: (Culture Keeping, page 42 https://cao-94612.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/FINAL_DOSP-Public-Review-Draft-Plan_082819_Compressed.pdf). Bedoya talked about the early stages of drafting the Plan, which is now complete. He noted that the Culture Keeping section Key City Investments and Priorities: Provide affordable space for, small local retailers, artists and artisans by developing a master lease program; Dedicated ground floor space for cultural, arts, and maker uses in new developments located in cultural districts; Construct coordinated streetscape and public space improvements that help identify and enhance arts and culture districts

Grantmaking: Bedoya noted that after some delay the latest round of grant recommendations for the Cultural Funding Program: Neighborhood Voices was approved by City Council on March 16. The recommendations included funding for 17 organizations and 20 individuals.

Budget: The City’s Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) revenue loss of approximately \$500,000 resulted in Cultural Affairs receiving an immediate 10-percent budget cut. This has impacted funding for grantmaking, Art and Soul and the festival fund, and one staff position in Cultural Affairs.

Arts Advocacy: The State of California passed a 2-year budget plan for the arts called California Creative Core– \$5 million in 2021 and \$10 million in 2022. California Arts Council will distribute the funds to counties across the state but not cities.

SB-285 California Tourism Recovery Act was introduced in March. This bill would require the California Travel and Tourism Commission to, upon a determination by the Department of Public Health that it is safe to resume travel in California, implement a strategic media and jobs recovery campaign known as the “Calling All Californians” program for the purpose of reversing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the travel and tourism industry in California, as specified. The bill would require the commission to report to the Legislature, on or before January 1, 2024, regarding the cost of the program and the impact of the program on the tourism industry in California. The bill would require, only upon appropriation by the Legislature, the Controller to transfer \$45 million to the commission for the purpose of implementing the “Calling all Californians” program.

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) received \$135 million from the American Rescue Plan. Bedoya is a part of conversations about how the money will be allocated. The NEA does not support re-granting, which disqualifies the City of Oakland from receiving funds. There is an effort to ask the NEA to change their policy.

7. Public Comment

The following members of the public made a comment: Lyz Luke, Jean Marie Durant, Benjamin Lee, and Indi McCCasey

8. Guest Presenter: Ashara Ekundayo

Ashara Ekundayo is an Oakland-based independent curator, creative industries entrepreneur, cultural strategist, and founder working across arts, community, government, and social innovation spaces. She has a consulting company called AECreative Consulting Partners, LLC she designs and manages multidimensional international projects and fosters collaborative relationships.

Ekundayo shared a presentation about a new platform she is working on called Artist as First Responder (AAFR). This is a concept she was exploring before the onset of Covid-19. Artist As First Responder poses that artists show up first in crisis and celebration to forge solutions, heal communities, and save lives through Design, Practice, Invitation and Presentation.

Artist As First Responder is a 6-pillar philanthropic and immersive arts platform that acknowledges, engages, and financially supports Black, Indigenous, and Artists of Color whose creative practices heal communities and save lives.

The Reflection Fund for Artists a mutual aid/pilot-project of Artist As First Responder™ fueled by the ReCAST Grant - Human Services Dept, City of Oakland. The Reflection Fund for Artists is a 2-year (2019-2021) pilot project exploring a research and regranting process for artists, by artists, connected to well-being, social justice, and resiliency in communities after stress and trauma. Direct, Unrestricted Support to individual cultural practitioners, arts laborers, and artists working across genre and discipline living and/or working in Oakland, CA.

9. Public Art Program Overview

Kristen Zaremba, the Cultural Affairs staff who manages the City's Public Art Program, provided a detailed overview of the Program. Additionally, Zaremba oversees the Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC). The program is broken down into four categories (condensed presentation slides attached):

1. Oakland Public Art Ordinance (1.5% for Public Capital Improve Projects)
2. Public Art for Private Development (0.5 - 1% for Private Projects)
3. Temporary / Permanent City-Funded Artist Projects
4. Temporary / Permanent Artist and Community Initiated Projects

Commissioner Roundtree-Baaqee, Chair of the PAAC, discussed the role of PAAC and its relationship to the Commission. Additionally, she discussed how the Cultural Affairs web page can be more transparent in how information can be shared about opportunities and resources and artists that have been supported by City funds. She recommended the Commission consider practicing the following:

1. Be a community liaison: Help artist navigate the review and approval process in partnership with Cultural Affairs Division staff
2. Cohost or help promote an artist info session with Cultural Affairs Division staff.
3. Spread the word about pre-qualified artist calls (both City and private development).
4. Use social media channels to share important opportunities/updates.

10. Stories of Solidarity: API x Black Artists in Oakland Unite Town Hall

Commissioner Chan explained the purpose and intention of the Town Hall on February 25 organized by himself, Commissioner Lee, and Commissioner Choice and in partnership with Council President Nikki Fortunato Bas. He noted that the event was in response to the increased acts of racism and violence against the API community. The event was designed to be an artist-led moment of reflection on recent traumatic events and a space for healing. Commissioner Lee noted that this is a difficult moment for the API community that required immediate response from the Commission—one that united artists, grassroots organizers, youth voices, and

local entrepreneurs. Vice Chair Choice noted that the involvement of City Council Members Nikki Fortunato Bas and Carrol Fife brought greater attention to the programming and a sense of investment from the City of Oakland in this issue.

Land Acknowledgement ritual by: Calina Lawrence

Performances by:

Greer Nakadegawa-Lee, 2020 Oakland Youth Poet Laureate

Kev Choice

Tao Shi

Howard Wiley

Emily Tian

Terisa Siagatonu and more.

Speakers:

Councilmember Carrol Fife, District 3

Pastor Erna Kim Hackett

Tommy Wong

Tarika Lewis

Keba Konte

Kori Chen

Emily Tian

Jazz Hudson

A recording of the full event can be viewed on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/583450400/videos/10164703121820401>

11. California Re-opening Guidelines by Tier

Chair Sanchez provided a brief update on Alameda County's current guidelines on the re-opening process for live events and performances by tier for Alameda County. She noted that she is working with Vice Chair Choice to bring the Commission's perspective on Oakland arts to discussions about public health guidelines. Vice Chair Choice noted that it has been challenging for artists and performance spaces to keep up with up-to-date guidelines, in addition to the pre-existing challenge of being shuttered since March 2020.

12. Open Forum

The following members of the public made a comment: Elizabeth D. Foggie

13. Announcements & Oakland Artist Acknowledgements

The Commission took a moment to honor the late Dorothy King, owner of Everett & Jones BBQ, activist, and respected community leader in Oakland.

The Commission took a moment to acknowledge the following Oaklanders:

Grammy Winners

Fantastic Negrito - Best Contemporary Blues

Ledisi - Traditional R&B Performance

YoungArts Foundation Award Winner

Angela Watson National

YBCA 100 Honorees

Afro Urban Society (Nkeiruka

Oruche)

Alex Bledsoe

Antoine Hunter

Ayodele Nzinga

Binta Ayofemi

Cat Brooks

Chanell Stone

Corrina Gould

Davey D Cook

Deanna Van Buren

Destiny Muhammad

Eesuu Orundide

Hasain Rasheed

Jeffery Yip

Karen Seneferu

Keba Konte

Kev Choice

Vincent Medina – Cafe Ohlone

Margo Hall

RyanNicole Austin

Tahirah Rasheed

Thi Bui

Walter Hood

14. Closing

Chair Sanchez thanked the Commissioners, the public, and all the guest presenters and performer for participating, and staff and KTOP for their support and assistance.

The meeting adjourned at 7:04 PM.