

City of Alameda

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC ART COMMISSION (PAC) MEETING Wednesday, September 18, 2024

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairperson Liz Rush called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

ROLL CALL

Present: Liz Rush, Peter Platzgummer, Robert Ferguson, Lisa Martin, and James Martin.

Jackie Keliiaa and Abby Thorne-Lyman present as staff to the Commission. Absent:
Dwayne Dalman

2. NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

3. MINUTES

3-A 2024-4397 Review and Approve Draft Minutes of June 17, 2024

A motion to approve the minutes was given by Commissioner Ferguson and seconded by Commissioner Platzgummer. Commissioners Rush, Ferguson and Platzgummer voted to approve the minutes; new commissioners Lisa Martin and James Martin abstained. The motion was adopted 3-0.

Remote participants: none.

Introduction of Two New Commissioners

Staff member Ms. Keliiaa introduced the two new commissioners: Lisa Martin and James Martin; they are not related. Lisa Martin is a nine-year resident of Alameda. Her background is in nonprofit arts administration, and she is also an artist. James Martin has lived in Alameda for 25 years. He is a photojournalist and photographer.

Ms. Keliiaa noted that commissioners Adam Gillitt and Jennifer Hoffecker have completed their terms of office and have left the commission.

4. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

4-A 2024-4400 Introduction to The Common Application for Arts Bay Area

Margot Melcon, Program Officer for Arts and Culture, Zellerbach Family Foundation, presenting why Bay Area arts and culture funders created The Common Application, how it works and who uses it.

Origins

Public and private funders work collaboratively in the Bay Area and are aware of each

other's work. We're often in conversation on the funders' side about how we can make the world better for arts and cultural practitioners. There are several places where these conversations come up. One is the Arts Loan Fund, which is a group of arts and culture funders that give low-interest loans to cultural institutions. Another is the Bay Area Culture Funders for Equity (BACFE). They meet and discuss how they fund artists and others in the community. For some years, they've been discussing how to create a common application for artists and organizations. Following COVID, they produced a Pandemic Relief & Recovery Report to examine emergency funding during COVID, which drove the creation of a common application with the following goals:

- Increasing access to funding opportunities
- Creating a better user experience
- Eliminating the sense of urgency
- Streamlining the backend
- Coordinating outreach efforts
- Simplifying the process

Common Application is a tool for artists and arts and culture organizations that are seeking funding from several Bay Area arts funders for one project. It's designed to make things simpler and faster, and only asks essential questions that funders deem necessary to make the grant-making decision. Common questions funders asked were synthesized so they made sense for participating funders (about 90 percent), but applicants still can appeal to individual organizations with certain priorities, if desired. The Common Application doesn't combine organizations or funding into one pool. All funds remain separate.

There's a list of common questions, same order and word count for all applications. There are also optional budget templates offered for projects and organization templates. There are also instructions on time limits, work samples, and notes that need to be included. Applicants can go to the website and download the application and work on it on their timeline, not ours. There are also examples of how to complete each section of the Common Application. Since the Common Application for Arts Bay Area began 18 months ago, more organizations are now using it.

There are a limited number of grant funds for the arts in the Bay Area, so we are collaborating to help distribute grant funds since it benefits the funders and the community. Ms. Melcon said they are refining the application, so there will be a Common Application 2.0. Currently, there are 450-500 applications per year.

Website: [Common Application for the Arts - Bay Area \(commonappartsbayarea.org\)](https://commonappartsbayarea.org)

Clarifying Questions

Commissioner Lisa Martin asked Ms. Melcon if more government and private sector funders will use the Common Application in the future. Ms. Martin said it will take some time for either to fully use the Common Application for a variety of reasons.

Commissioner Platzgummer asked how much data sharing occurs between the different organizations? Ms. Melcon said data is aggregated on the backend, but individual organizations' data is not shared publicly. Can break down data by county, organization size, art discipline, etc. He also asked about the funding structure of the Common Application? Ms.

Melcon said it's not funded through the grantmaking, that is separate. It is funded as a shared project with a steering committee and they contribute among the steering committee as they are able. Some of the larger foundations are paying for the website, coordination and consultants while smaller organizations are asked to provide thought leadership and some staff.

Commissioner Platzgummer asked what's the goal of your presentation today? Ms. Melcon said it's not a sales pitch for the City of Alameda to use the Common Application. I'm here to let you know about it as a resource that's available for use. It's a tool that anyone can use.

Ms. Thorne-Lyman added that we invited Ms. Melcon to give the presentation given that in the next couple of meetings, the PAC has two major projects in 2025: applications for the annual cultural arts grants and a major permanent work of art. Staff are seeking commissioners' feedback as we are thinking about how we will proceed with those two projects. We're not seeking a decision or recommendation from PAC at this time. This is where we're headed, the trajectory for the next year.

Commissioner Rush asked if there are any other city Public Art Commissions using the Common Application now? Ms. Melcon said no, but they are talking about it with the City of Oakland and the City and County of San Francisco.

Commissioner James Martin asked about pooled funding. Ms. Melcon clarified that the Common Application does allow two entities to fund one project.

Public Comment

None.

Commissioner Discussion

Commissioner Lisa Martin asked if staff could provide a comparison at a future meeting of the city's grant application form with the Common Application, which Ms. Keliiaa said staff could do while also using it to streamline the PAC's cultural arts grant application form and process.

Commissioner Platzgummer expressed doubts about the socioeconomic data that the Common Application gathers is not aligned with other benchmarks he felt are more important. Commissioner Rush commented that use of the Common Application would be the city staff's decision as she wanted to be mindful of their time and capacity to use it.

4-B 2024-4396 Recommendation to Select Public Art Commission Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

Following a question about procedure from Commissioner Platzgummer, a discussion ensued about the proposed new annual selection of the Chair and Vice Chair positions, which Ms. Keliiaa clarified were part of an effort to confirm with what other city commissions are doing. Ms. Keliiaa also noted that the PAC does not currently have bylaws in place.

Ms. Thorne-Lyman clarified that city staff were looking for two actions from the PAC tonight: the election of the chair and vice chair and to establish a one-year term for the two officers.

Commissioner Platzgummer made a motion to accept staff recommendation to have annual elections for chair and vice chair, which was seconded by Commissioner Lisa Martin. The motion was adopted 5-0.

Commissioner Ferguson made a motion to elect Commissioner Rush for new Chairperson of PAC, which was seconded by Commissioner Platzgummer. The motion was adopted 5-0. Chairman Rush made a motion to elect Commissioner Platzgummer as Vice Chairperson, which was seconded by Lisa Martin. The motion was adopted 5-0.

4-C 2024-4398 WITHDRAWN - Recommendation to Review and Select Final Primary Sites for Future Physical Public Art

Attachments: Exhibit 1 - Initial Future Public Art Site Analysis

Exhibit 2 - Final Public Art Location Ranking with Community Input

Exhibit 3 - Public Art Survey

Exhibit 4 - Map of Community Suggested Locations for Future Public Art

Exhibit 5 - New Ranking with Increased Weighing for Visibility Criteria

Public Physical Art Final Location Selection Presentation

Ms. Keliiaa said this item has been withdrawn because there are new developments about a potential site that was not included in the initial comprehensive site analysis. The item will be presented to PAC in October.

4-D 2024-4394 Recommendation to Review and Discuss Public Comments Responding to 2024 Cultural Arts & Arts Programming Grants

Attachments: Exhibit 1 - Public Comment Responding to 2024 Cultural Arts & Arts Programming Grants

Commissioner Discussion

Commissioner Ferguson said some grants get funded and people are happy, as a result, while others didn't get funded and, as a result, are unhappy. He said that the Chamoru Language proposal would impact a fairly small group. Our feedback was that it seemed like a very limited number of people would be able to take advantage of the program so it didn't seem to lend itself to the level of funding. Maybe a smaller grant somewhere would work for them.

Vice Chairperson Platzgummer said he doesn't think we have supported a program for First Nation. That is worth looking into and keeping in mind for next time. Is there another way for PAC to recognize and highlight projects that come to us that we don't support with a grant? Could we promote these programs on the website or city calendar? Give them a bit more visibility even though we can't give them funding due to our limited funds.

Commissioner Platzgummer said the second public complaint had two components:

1. Unbalance of grant funding. Too much money going to Rhythmics and Radium. I agree with this. It was a procedural problem because of this additional application outside of our typical grant program. It was frustrating, we need to figure this out.
2. Overweight ranking of scores. He said he didn't agree with it. It involved one former commissioner's voting pattern and how some people will agree with the weighing process and others won't. He said as much as outliers are frustrating for other grant applicants who didn't receive our approval and fell through our safety nets because

of a specific commissioner, it's part of the democratic process. Commissioner Ferguson said that there wasn't any bias on the commission for one grant applicant over another as far as he knew. Chairperson Rush said that there were also more grant applicants than ever before for this year's PAC grants. She said she thought the commission was fair in judging applicants on the many criteria for the grants.

Commissioner Platzgummer said the PAC doesn't have a process for dealing with affiliations. He said it would make sense to standardize what we consider an affiliation so commissioners can recuse themselves, as needed.

Ms. Keliiaa said she could investigate what other cities' art commissions have in place to handle affiliations and recusals for commissioners.

5. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Thorne-Lyman announced Dwayne Dalman is the new Economic Development Division Manager who started on September 16. He couldn't make tonight's meeting, but he will be at the next meeting.

6. COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Non-agenda communications

Commissioner Platzgummer said he attended the Summer Arts Fair, which is a small event but very worthwhile.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Rush adjourned the meeting at 7:14pm.