

**Public Arts Commission  
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA**



**MINUTES  
Regular Meeting**

Thursday, June 11, 2015  
Palm Springs City Hall • 3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way  
Large Conference Room

**ROLL CALL:**

	<u>Present This Meeting</u>	<u>Present to Date</u>	<u>FY 2014/2015 Excused Absences</u>	<u>FY 2014/2015 Unexcused Absences</u>
Joshua Edmundson	x	9	1	
Anne Rowe, Chair	x	9	1	
Bonnie Ruttan	x	10		
Amy Sand	x	6	4	
Ann Sheffer	x	4		
Thomas Yann	x	1		

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by Chair Rowe at 2:00 p.m.

**ALSO PRESENT:** David H. Ready, Esq., Ph.D., City Manager  
John S. Raymond, Director, Community & Economic Development  
Jennifer Henning, Arts and Special Projects Coordinator

**ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA:**

**MOTION:** by Commissioner Sheffer, second by Commissioner Edmundson, to approve Public Arts Commission Agenda for Thursday, June 11, 2015; unanimously carried

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** David Ready, City Manager, addressed the Commission at this time. Mr. Ready advised the Commission that John Raymond has accepted a new position and will be leaving the City of Palm Springs. In the interim Mr. Ready will be more involved with the Commission; first, this will fill the void that will be created by John’s leaving, and, second, we will be dealing with issues of resources, funding and what direction you want to go; Mr. Ready feels he needs to be part of the discussion, as City Manager, so he can figure out how to get the Commission to where they want to be. Mr. Ready will be attending upcoming meetings; Mr. Raymond will be available for discussion purposes and for the transition; Ms. Henning will be available to assist from the Staff level.

Commissioner Sand – Congratulated and thanked John Raymond; looking forward to working with the City Manager and receiving his guidance.

Commissioner Sheffer – Is delighted; thinks the Commission can play a bigger role in City government if the City Manager is there to see how the commission fits in with some of the development that is going on and other arts resources in the City so it's not quite such a single vision, but it's really part of the whole.

Commissioner Ruttan – would like the first resource to be getting Ms. Henning more than half-time; would be able to do a great deal more if we had full-time staff.

Commissioner Edmundson – congratulated Mr. Raymond and thanked the City Manager; looks forward to the coming months and working with the City Manager; feels we can do a lot more than we have been doing.

Chair Rowe – Will miss John Raymond and appreciates the City Manager being here and supporting the arts; Palm Springs has the opportunity to shine and we want it to shine.

At next month's meeting Mr. Ready would like to discuss the roles of the subcommittees and what can be done in between regular monthly meetings.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**MOTION:** by Commissioner Edmundson, second by Commissioner Sheffer, to approve meeting Minutes of May 14, 2015; unanimously carried

#### **A. PRESENTATIONS**

1. Thomi Clinton, President/Founder of Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR)  
Palm Springs and Transgender Community Coalition  
Public Art Proposal to Recognize Transgender Day of Remembrance and Transgender Victims of Violence

Thomi Clinton provided the Commission with a written proposal for review; the proposal includes information on fund-raising efforts and renderings.

One of the biggest problems in the transgender community is about every 39 hours a transgender person is murdered in the nation; there are also an enormous amount of suicides based on the fact of a lack of support from the community. The inspiration for the sculpture comes from the silhouette burns from Yaz'min Sanchez' body (she was found in a Florida alley).

Fund-raising efforts are currently underway; approximately \$7,000+ has been raised with a goal of about \$10,000.

A description of the proposed artwork and Application for Donation of Artwork is attached hereto and made a part of the record of this meeting.

Currently looking for a fabricator to create the piece – feels an Artist would be more involved in creating their own piece of work.

Thomi has spoken to Jasmine Waits in Parks & Recreation who felt the piece would work best at Ruth Hardy Park. Staff and Thomi have also been discussing placement of this piece should the donation be accepted – They have discussed the southwest corner of Ruth Hardy Park at Miraleste and Tamarisk; this piece might also fit well in the park's rose garden which currently has a public art installation, *Whirlwind*. Staff feels this location for *Whirlwind* does not do justice to the piece and could be relocated.

Commissioner Yanni – since there has been some concern of butterflies being taken from the piece, wondered if Thomi has considered making it a piece that the butterflies can be taken away. Also, asked if there was consideration of having an unveiling November 20<sup>th</sup>, during gay pride. Has some concerns of the butterflies getting hot/sharp edges; park is widely used by children. Thomi has spoken to the fabricator regarding the butterflies not being sharp.

Thomi feels that during pride month the piece should already be present.

Commissioner Sand – wanted to know if this is a one-time sculpture or the first of a series.

At this time only one sculpture will be created; has experienced some frustrations in fund-raising; were just approved for a 501(C)3.

Commissioner Sheffer – is the piece white or does it have a blue hue? Maybe we could think of something for the fabrication of the butterflies, other than steel, that wouldn't get so hot.

There is a very slight blue hue to the sculpture as white was too washed out; the marble has not yet been chosen; was thinking about a neutral gray; dimensions were discussed (see proposal).

Commissioner Ruttan – the form is remarkable; only concern is vandalism; there are haters and vandals out there and concerned about the butterflies being taken off. Would need to make sure they are very secure; maintenance may be an issue. It is a lovely concept. The butterflies can be replaced should something happen.

Commissioner Edmundson – very impressed, it is serene and beautiful; It looks like a crypt; Thomi said it is just a person laying down/looking like they are resting; the butterflies symbolize the change from a caterpillar to a butterfly; feels the rose garden is a perfect site. Not too concerned if the butterflies are steel/metal, there are a lot of metal sculptures in the collection currently, including the new sculpture at the Chamber of Commerce.

Chair Rowe – walks that fine line of a memorial but uplifting with the butterflies; it is very clever; kind of like Sleeping Beauty.

This is an internationally recognized Day of Remembrance (11/20) founded by Gwyneth Smith in 1999, when her best friend was murdered in Boston.

The sculpture will be gender neutral.

Chair Rowe – to summarize, we have heard support for Transgender Day of Remembrance; I think we are all wowed about the design; there are some logistical issues to work out with the fine tuning of the design in terms of safety, longevity, and possibly people removing parts of the sculpture, i.e., butterflies. This will be on the Agenda going forward and will be a topic we will continue to support and discuss as this project evolves.

## **B. NEW BUSINESS**

2. None.

**C. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

3. Rainmaker Fountain Assessment  
Discuss Water Usage Issues and Potential Options  
**RECOMMENDATION:** Direct Staff as Appropriate

Staff – Have not had a conversation with Artist David Morris; but, in reviewing the Rainmaker file we do not necessarily have the rights to go in and start moving the piece. Also, in the past the Artist was not in agreement or in favor of moving the piece or dismantling it in any way.

The water has been shut off to the fountain; we had continued to be billed for power and water usage, have spoken to the Director of Facilities who will be looking into this issue. While the fountain is off the public arts fund will not be incurring any costs for that piece.

As we move forward and the piece remains off Staff will continue to have conservation performed on the piece to remove bird debris and keep the piece clean; Parks Staff will also continue to pressure wash the fountain/sculpture.

Chair Rowe – this is something I have pushed from the very beginning; there is no such thing as a permanent installation, we have a collection, we manage the collection; it is at our will to move things around for safety, aesthetics, etc. – appreciates the relationship with the artist, but wants the flexibility to be able to dismantle or move something if we want to.

Staff explained briefly that the commission is allowed to move pieces; however, significantly altering pieces is another story.

John Raymond – was here when the piece was installed; the artist will always want a say in any alteration as the art piece is the “whole” thing; since the piece has been installed this same discussion has been had (seriously) at least 3-4 times; the upper bowl/wands, amphitheater, arroyo, lower bowl, and mechanical is the piece; anything done to any part of the fountain/sculpture would be an alteration. It does not mean you cannot have another conversation with the artist.

John Raymond – brief discussion regarding decommissioning a piece; we don’t have artists waive their rights; there are Federal and State laws regarding this.

Commissioner Sand – in lieu of removing the piece; this might be a good time to talk to the Artist about reinterpreting Rainmaker to accommodate the environment that we are now in.

John Raymond – this would be a good conversation to have with the artist; we are in a drought and this could be the time to reinterpret the piece.

4. Public Art Sculpture Restoration and Relocation  
Discuss 1) Restoration of James O. Jessie Desert Highland Mural by Richard Wyatt, and 2) Relocation Option for the Sculpture “Frank Bogert on Horseback” by Raymundo Kobo  
**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff Update, Conservation Options for Desert Highland Mural and Subcommittee Report on Relocation Option for “Frank Bogert on Horseback”

1) Restoration of James O. Jessie Desert Highland Mural by Richard Wyatt

Staff – distributed a copy of the proposal to the Commission; Mr. Wyatt is not interested in working with graduate students to restore the mural; currently Mr. Wyatt has proposed \$30,000 for an artist assistant; he has invested a lot of time/years in the assistants that he currently has working with him

and does not want to use the time in training students and/or volunteers; he has made a significant investment in the assistants that are with him at this time.

Currently the proposed cost for restoration is \$110,700; Staff advised that the lowest that Mr. Wyatt may possibly go is around \$80,000+; the next option would be the tiles. Lastly, if there are no funds to do this, it might be time to let it go. The piece is 20 years old; Mr. Wyatt is pleased that it has lasted this long and maybe it is time to let it go. He will not support the commission going forward to restore the piece with students or some other fashion. The Commission could think about fund-raising for this piece.

Commissioner Ruttan – it is tempting to let it go; however, does not feel it is respectful to the community.

Commissioner Sand -- Many of the community members that helped create the original piece were children at the time and are now grown with children of their own. It would be really great to refurbish it for the community. This would be a great opportunity to have a documentarian film the restoration of this beautiful mural with the community members.

Commissioner Sheffer – if I understand the City Manager, this is the type of project that he would like a list of; it is beyond the scope of this commission/beyond the budget so he can find other resources.

Commissioner Yanni – this is a great piece; it has a huge place in the community; but if the artist is willing to say “let it go” maybe we should consider creating a new piece for a new generation; it is 20 years old.

Staff – one other option is to have a UV sealant applied to the piece along with some touch-up; the last time this was done the colors became much more vibrant; the cost is approximately \$10,000-\$13,000.

Commissioner Sheffer – has seen instances where a mural that is in need of repair has been replaced with a photographic reproduction; it is the same mural in a different media.

Commissioner Edmundson – we are talking about spending a lot of money on a project that is not sustainable; this may not be the best use of \$100,000; perhaps members of the community would have something to say about that. Letting it go might be a good decision for this commission and the City.

This item will remain on the Agenda.

## 2) Relocation Option for the Sculpture “Frank Bogert on Horseback” by Raymundo Kobo

Staff – has done a bit of file research on this piece and cannot find anything that indicates we cannot relocate it; however, did find that in 1995 there was discussion about moving the sculpture to the southwest corner of Frances Stevens Park; current site of Rainmaker fountain; Mr. Raymond spoke briefly regarding 1990s Frances Stevens Park; the Rose Garden; Desert Arts Center, etc.

The efforts that led to Rainmaker were not spearheaded by the Arts Commission; it was originated by the Downtown Development Center office (Jerry Ogburn); the Commission became the lead on the competition.

Commissioner Ruttan – does not feel that in this political climate if we are sure we want to be moving statues of iconic Mayors; certainly considering what the expense would be as well; our budget is very small; want to clarify how items come to the Commission, whether it is discussed by Council or do we need to look at things that just come up in conversation.

John Raymond – advised that this did come up at a recent City Council meeting and Mr. Raymond had advised Staff to place this on the Arts Commission Agenda; Council will bring items up and make various requests of commissions during Council Comments or bring items to the Commission through the City Manager’s office.

Chair Rowe – this item will remain on the Agenda; we will be adjourning to a Study Session to prioritize next year’s work.

**D. LEGISLATIVE:**

5. None.

**E. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

6. None.

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS/REPORTS/REQUESTS:**

Commissioner Edmundson – No comments.

Commissioner Ruttan – It has been a pleasure working with John Raymond and sorry to see you go.

Commissioner Sheffer – No Comments.

Commissioner Sand – Ditto Commissioner Ruttan and we will miss John Raymond.

Commissioner Yanni – will also miss John Raymond; very happy to be on the Public Arts Commission; looking forward to the work ahead; looking forward to working on educational aspect of the commission.

Chair Rowe – Ditto everybody ... will miss John Raymond and good luck in your new endeavor; welcome to new Commissioner Yanni.

**REPORTS OF STAFF:**

John Raymond – it was a very good introduction to the meeting with David Ready, City Manager, opening the meeting; this is what we have been talking about for the last 6 months; marshal the resources and reset the commission. Chair Rowe really has a calming influence. There are a lot of good things on the horizon for public art in this community; the revenue has improved, not dramatically, but the trend is good. So today is my last day in the office, have taken a position with the City of Carson as the Community and Economic Development Director; very exciting; will be working on building a new NFL stadium and getting football to Los Angeles again. Looking forward to new opportunities and an exciting future; there are so many wonderful things happening here in Palm Springs, expect good things coming from the Public Arts Commission...and thank you to everyone.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The Public Arts Commission adjourned at 3:32 p.m. to a Study Session Meeting, Thursday, June 11, 2015, at 3:30 p.m., Palm Springs City Hall, Large Conference Room, 3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs, California.

Adjournment unanimously approved by a Motion of the City of Palm Springs Public Arts Commission this 11th Day of June; unanimously carried.

Approved by a Motion of the Public Arts Commission this 11<sup>th</sup> Day of June, 2015.

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Paula Jean Sweat  
Economic Development Program Assistant