

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING**  
**July 10, 2017**  
**12 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.**

The members of the California Arts Council convened telephonically to discuss and vote on various items as listed in the minutes below.

**PRESENT:**

Council Members

Donn K. Harris, Chair  
Nashormeh Lindo, Vice Chair  
Larry Baza  
Phoebe Beasley  
Christopher Coppola  
Juan Devis  
Kathleen Gallegos  
Jaime Galli  
Louise McGuinness

*Council Members Absent: Steve Oliver and Rosalind Wyman*

Arts Council Staff

Ayanna Kiburi, Interim Executive Director  
Caitlin Fitzwater, Director of Public Affairs  
Kristin Margolis, Director of Legislative Affairs  
Jaren Bonillo, Arts Program Specialist  
Jason Jong, Arts Program Specialist  
Josy Miller, Arts Education Program Specialist  
Andrea Porras, Arts Program Specialist  
Mariana Moscoso, Arts in Corrections Program Analyst  
Kimberly Brown, Public Affairs Specialist

Other Attendees / Members of the Public

Debra Lucero, Shasta Arts Council

**MINUTES**

**I. Call to Order, Roll Call and Establishment of a Quorum**

Chair called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m. Mariana Moscoso took the roll and a quorum was established.

**II. Cultural Districts State Designation**

At 12:04 p.m., Fitzwater introduced the topic of the pilot Cultural Districts state designation. She began noting the uniqueness of meeting by teleconference and the importance of completing the Cultural Districts designation in a timely manner given the legislative origin of the program.

Kiburi acknowledged Fitzwater as the interim program coordinator for Cultural Districts, and acknowledged the numerous individuals involved in the Cultural Districts site visit process, including seven staff members and five Council members. She also acknowledged the importance of highlighting the diversity of CAC staff and of the Cultural Districts applicants across California.

(At 12:09, Coppola joined the call.)

Fitzwater guided the Council through the Cultural Districts memo and the recommendations. She noted there was an hour to discuss Cultural Districts in the teleconference. Fitzwater explained that there were 14 recommended pilot Cultural Districts and provided information about the Cultural Districts program, its benefits, legislative history, application, and adjudication process. She also reminded the Council who the members of the initial review panel were: Beto Gonzalez, Brian Ulaszewski, Jessica Cusick, Jill Moniz, Keith Robinson, Larry Baza, and Libby Maynard, and panel advisor Moy Eng. Fitzwater read through the criteria used to adjudicate the applications, including throughout the site visits.

(At 12:15, Galli and Lindo joined the call.)

Beasley asked where the funding for the technical assistance for pilot Cultural Districts program would come from. Fitzwater responded that the funds came from the CAC's administrative budget.

Devis asked Fitzwater to provide a definition of each of the Cultural Districts types, aside from Urban, Suburban, and Rural. Fitzwater provided the explanations of the different Cultural Districts types. Devis asked for the subcategories to be designated during the voting process.

Fitzwater introduced the CAC staff members who conducted site visits to share their experiences, starting with Bonillo. Bonillo noted the Cultural Districts process was a wonderful experience. She also noted that she took part of the panel process by taking panel notes. Bonillo listed the Cultural Districts applicants she visited with Fitzwater and Porras. She noted that during her visits she was able to experience the cultural diversity of the state. Bonillo added that most of the site visits she attended were arts focused.

Fitzwater introduced Miller to share her experience during the site visits she performed. Miller began her comments by noting that it was a privilege to be a part of the Cultural Districts site visits and shared her experiences visiting the Northern Californian applicants with Jason Jong.

Fitzwater then introduced Porras and asked her to share her experiences. Porras noted it was also a privilege to be on the ground with our communities. Porras shared her first visit was to Visalia, listing her site visits. She concluded that she visited a total of eight potential district sites. She said she had traveled with Bonillo, Gilbride, and Fitzwater, adding that it was amazing experience to see how

communities work together. Porras said she also admired the ways many communities use restorative justice to heal and reinvigorate communities.

Fitzwater asked Jong to share his experiences. He lists the sites he visited and acknowledged the enthusiasm and anticipation of communities across the state.

Lastly, Fitzwater asked Kiburi to share her experiences. Kiburi said she would have liked to have visited more sites, noting she visited Oakland and Barrio Logan. Kiburi stated that the site visits demonstrated the numerous ways the CAC is relevant in California. She also added that the site visits also demonstrated the various stages of Cultural Districts across the state, and were invaluable to the process.

Fitzwater acknowledged that CAC Programs Officer Shelly Gilbride conducted site visits but was not present to share her experiences.

Harris asked if there were notes of the adjudication process for the applicants. Fitzwater replied that there are extensive notes for each of the applicants that will be provided to all applicants.

Fitzwater added that the program specialists got to know the semifinalists quite well throughout the adjudication process, then read the list of the recommended Cultural Districts.

Fitzwater reiterated the relevance of the CAC across the state, as Porras had mentioned in her statement. She noted that there were positive outcomes for applicants that were not recommended. Fitzwater also noted many districts that were not recommended receive CAC grant support for local projects. She specifically cited Creative California Communities grant examples for the East Oakland Black Cultural Zone, the Creamery in Arcata, and Chinatown in SF.

Beasley noted that there were no African-American culture or communities recommended in this pilot cohort. Gallegos asked why the one African-American cultural heritage community that applied for designation – the Oakland Black Arts and Business District – was not recommended. McGuinness stated she was a part of the Oakland site visit and did not think the district was organized enough to be designated at this time. She added that they may have the potential to become one later on.

Galli added that it would be more helpful to have a detailed executive summary. She requested to see the notes that were taken. Kiburi thanked Galli for the comment and said the notes are available if anyone wants them. Kiburi acknowledged Beasley's comment. Beasley reiterated her comment.

Devis also noted there was a lack of representation of black districts. Kiburi responded that there was a general disappointment in the lack of applications from potential black Cultural Districts. Kiburi added that these communities could potentially be prioritized for outreach and increased technical assistance in the future in order to increase the applicant pool.

Devis provided an example of informal black districts in California. Fitzwater added several communities asked for information about the Cultural Districts program but ultimately did not apply. She added that staff hopes that as the program grows, the diversity of the program will grow as well.

Coppola asked if it was possible to conduct a second call to attempt to expand the representation of applicant communities. Devis said that prioritizing a particular group would be problematic. Kiburi agreed with Devis and said that this pilot is designed to serve as a learning experience. Gallegos asked if there could be a webinar for applicants in the future. Kiburi acknowledged Gallegos' comment, and stated that there was a webinar for applicants this year.

Coppola asked if there are values by which the CAC abides for the Cultural Districts program. Kiburi acknowledged there are values in the current iteration that were reviewed by Council and published in all materials. She said that the pilot program will be a learning experience to improve representation, among other aspects of the program. Coppola added the CAC could focus on grassroots movements in communities and he iterated the importance of representing all cultures. Harris said it was troubling that the pilot Cultural Districts program does not have a black district. Kiburi noted that the recommended districts are culturally diverse in many ways.

Lindo said that she was not aware that Oakland applied until they became semifinalists, and that it would have been helpful to know beforehand. She added that the gentrification of the area has had a profound impact on the applicant. Devis said that Boyle Heights did not apply because of fears of gentrification. He added that local organizations in Los Angeles possibly did not organize cohesively and the result was that the fractured aspects of the community sought to prevent further gentrification.

Galli reminded the Council that the Cultural Districts program is a pilot and only has a \$5,000 stipend. She emphasized the importance that the CAC should be using this pilot to gather data to improve future iterations of the program. Coppola again stated he wanted to bring attention to the issue of the lack of cultural representation. McGuinness agreed with Galli's statement regarding the pilot nature of the program.

Lindo asked about Chinatown, San Francisco. Fitzwater said generally any district not selected meant they did not excel in their application. Fitzwater referred to notes from the SF Chinatown site visit and said that there was not yet a strong vision for a cultural arts district, and that the district's arts efforts are still in its emergent stages. Galli added she was present at the Chinatown, San Francisco site visit. She noted that there was a lack of future planning. Harris asked if there was a prominence of art. Fitzwater said it is not the prominence of art that is relevant but rather the engagement, programming, and cohesiveness of arts efforts.

Devis said even though only \$5,000 will be granted to the new Cultural Districts designation, he asserted that there will be a ripple effect based off of the recommendations. He suggested for the Council prepare should there be backlash from the public. Harris reminded Devis the application notes can be made public upon request and the CAC will issue a release with the necessary awareness of the sensitivities around this program. Kiburi said she will work with Fitzwater to provide a public communication.

Fitzwater added that the summary available in the Council book was merely a thumbnail of the entire scope of notes of the process. She reminded the Council of the staff and Council's extensive role throughout a yearlong process.

Margolis added several members of the Legislature have been abreast of the Cultural Districts program, and they have acknowledged the thoroughness of the adjudication process.

Beasley wanted the minutes to note that the next Cultural Districts panel should not have a Council member on it.

Lindo asked if the applicants that were not recommended would get technical assistance and/or outreach. McGuinness asked if those that did not receive designation would be provided feedback about the process. Galli added that future mentorship from those that achieved Cultural Districts status with those that did not receive designation would be a great way to improve representation in the program. Fitzwater stated that detailed evaluative notes will be provided to all applicants.

Fitzwater responded to Lindo's comment by outlining that community cohesiveness and buy-in into the program was an important element in the adjudication process. Kiburi added that there seemed to be a split opinion in Oakland's community about pursuing the Cultural Districts designation. Kiburi shared that perceived lack of cohesiveness and tenuous nature of cultural assets played a factor in assessing readiness for Cultural District designation in this pilot phase.

Gallegos spoke about Little Tokyo and how the community's current efforts paired with the designation would protect their community. Fitzwater acknowledged that this is true and it is one of the reasons why the district was recommended.

Lindo asked if it is possible to go to Oakland in the next round, to obtain information from the community. Coppola again expressed concern whether the Cultural Districts program has representation from all over the state.

**ACTION ITEM:** At 12:55 p.m., Harris asked for a motion to approve the recommended Cultural Districts designations. McGuinness moves and Lindo seconds. The motion passed at 1:08 p.m. with 5-0 votes with "Yes" votes from Baza, Devis, Galli, Harris, and McGuinness. Beasley, Coppola, Gallegos, and Lindo abstained.

Harris shared he would like to discuss with Kiburi regarding the meaning of an "abstaining" vote.

Lindo requested the minutes to reflect that the Council did not "rubber stamp" the Cultural Districts pilot program but engaged in a thoughtful and robust discussion about this unique program prior to voting.

### **III. Review of Grant Appeal—Reentry through the Arts**

At 1:15 p.m., Kiburi introduced the Reentry through the Arts grant appeal received. She summarized the memo included in the Council book. Kiburi acknowledged that there was a discrepancy between the guidelines and the application. She added that due to this discrepancy the panel deemed the application ineligible.

Gallegos asked if the application was reviewed. Kiburi said it was reviewed. Gallegos asked if there would have to be a panel to review the application again. Kiburi responded that if the Council granted the appeal it would be reviewed again by a peer panel.

Beasley asked if there are funds to pay the grant. Kiburi confirmed there are funds available should the application receive a ranking eligible for funding.

Baza noted that the appeal was a unique situation because it rarely happens. Harris acknowledged Baza's comment.

ACTION ITEM: Harris asked for a motion to approve the Reentry through the Arts grant appeal. At 1:22 p.m., Coppola moves and McGuinness seconds. The motion passed at 3:49 with 8-0 votes from Beasley, Coppola, Devis, Gallegos, Galli, Harris, Lindo, and McGuinness. Baza abstained.

#### **IV. Public Comment**

At 1:24, Harris calls for the public comment. The following individuals provided public comment:

- Debra Lucero, Shasta County Arts Council

Thanked the Council for the Cultural District designation. She added that, even in her relatively small community of Redding, the application and planning process brought her community together in new ways.

The meeting adjourned at 1:27 p.m.