

**CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE  
CULTURAL COMMISSION**

**MINUTES**

**Wednesday, April 14, 2021  
6:00 p.m.**

**(Via Zoom Virtual Meeting)**

**Item 1 – Call to Order**

Chair Megan Deffner called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

**Item 2 – Introductions – Members and Guests**

Members present: Celia Daly, Megan Deffner, Nancy Dragani, Maru Garcia, Milly Nadler, and Kim St. Martin

Members absent: Shawna Black and Lisa Streisfeld

Guests: Kendall Peterson, Public Art Consultant

Staff: Susan Anderson, Recreation & Facilities Manager  
Wheat Ridge Parks & Recreation Center Department

**Introductions**

Chair Deffner asked for introductions since there were new commission members on board and to share their fond memory of a cultural or art experience growing up.

Chair Deffner: Stated she will be using her maiden name “Deffner” going forward since her married name is so long. She is a representative for District II. Her first membership to the DCPA years ago was a favorite experience.

Commissioner Garcia: Stated she was exposed to acting at a very young age but the most memorable was when she was six years old, she received passes from school to attend a live play which she enjoyed very much.

Commissioner Nadler: Stated when she was in 5<sup>th</sup> grade and was an understudy for

a lead in a play, she was very excited that she got the role to be the lead in the play.

Commissioner St. Martin: Stated she enjoyed going to the Arvada Center to see plays as she was growing up.

Commissioner Daly: Stated she is a representative for District I. She attended an artistic preschool kindergarten and created a lot of art which resulted in a meaningful impression and experience.

Susan Anderson: She is the Recreation Manager for the Parks and Recreation Department and is the staff liaison for the Cultural Commission. She was a dancer in college at UNC, and her first introduction to art was being a dancer in a production.

Kendall Peterson: She was hired by the city as a Public Art Consultant. She was born and raised in Evergreen, CO. Her first cultural experience was sitting in the front row watching the symphony orchestra perform music. It instilled in her the love of live music and her dad was the Executive Director of the National Repertory Orchestra.

She reported she has been working on the Clear Creek Crossing project with the selection committee for several months now. There have been difficulties in proceeding with the project mostly because of COVID. They have four different projects to undertake for the city: Clear Creek Crossing, Wadsworth Widening, The Green at 38th, and Ward Road Station. The process for each of these projects is finding community members to serve on selection committees according to the guidelines established by the Public Art Master Plan. A core group has been selected for the Clear Creek Crossing project. The first meeting was held in March and they completed a site orientation. They discussed the mission of the entire development, what the project would entail, and possible site locations. The criteria for the call for artists was discussed and they developed a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) pertaining to the project. The budget is for \$185,000 that will include the costs for materials, artist fees, engineering design, etc. The call for artists is for Colorado artists only. The site location of where the artwork would be placed has not been determined as of yet. There is interest in creating some kind of art for the underpasses which presents a set of difficulties. Also, they are considering locations adjacent to the highway off of I-70 that would be visible from the highway or another possibility would be to create some kind of artistic trailhead marker. For the second meeting, they will be able to have more information to review and discuss. Artists can apply for the RFQ's with a deadline of April 16<sup>th</sup>. Unfortunately not

many have applied so the deadline may be extended. The selection committee will then review the applications online but this process has never been done virtually. It may be more complicated due to the information that needs to be reviewed and she is considering setting up an in-person socially distance type of meeting. Once the artists have submitted their proposals, it can take up to six weeks before an artist is selected. For Clear Creek Crossing, it will have to go to the Architectural Committee for review for consistencies with the development. Regarding the process, it will also be presented to the Cultural Commission for review and approval. Chair Deffner asked if that was for approval by the commission or for information only since they have a commission member representative on the committee. Ms. Peterson stated since the commission is in charge of how the funding is granted pertaining to public artists, so the commission would have to recommend approval before it can proceed further to contracting and to state council.

Commissioner Garcia expressed concerns about the location of where the artwork would be placed, specifically the underpasses, since those areas are where the homeless population lives. Ms. Peterson stated the areas could be improved separately, maybe creating some kind of mural since underpasses may not be the most appropriate places for artwork but stated the committee would have to decide. She asked if there was a priority for the projects to be worked on. The commission agreed whatever was the best for the process and for the commissioner representatives on the committees. There were discussions regarding vacant commission member representatives for the projects. As a result, Commissioner Garcia volunteered for the Wadsworth Widening project. Shawna Black was listed for the Clear Creek Crossing project but they were unsure of her status. Chair Deffner is the representative for The Green at 38th, and Ward Road Station is Commissioner Streisfeld. They were unsure if Commissioner Streisfeld was still a member of the commission but will follow up with her regarding her status. Ms. Peterson reported that they will start on The Green at 38<sup>th</sup> and then on the Wadsworth Widening projects. With new commission members on board, Susan will forward Kendall's email address for information.

### **Item 3 – Approval of Minutes**

Chair Deffner made a motion to accept the minutes of March 10, 2021, as amended. Commissioner Nadler seconded the motion, all accepted and approved.

### **Item 4 – Unfinished Business**

#### **Virtual Art Show**

Commissioner Deffner reported this topic will be tabled in the absence of Commissioner Streisfeld.

## **Community Survey**

Commissioner Deffner reported this topic will be tabled in the absence of Commissioner Streisfeld unless someone wanted to volunteer to coordinate the survey. As a reminder, according to the commission bylaws, it states commissioners are allowed to miss 25% or a total of three meetings in a calendar year. Given that, she stressed the importance and commitment to the city to attend commission meetings.

## **Item 5 – New Business**

### **Review of Cultural Commission Vision and Mission Statement**

Chair Deffner asked if everyone had an opportunity to review the mission and vision documents. She inquired if there were any changes or if the documents were still relevant for the commission's needs. She proposed that since there are so many new commissioners on board, to not take the time to review the documents in detail. However, to keep in mind they are informative reports to refer to as a guideline in making sure how the commission operates aligns with the vision and mission statements. She expressed they could revisit and review the information when they have more time in the future. The commissioners agreed with the proposal going forward.

### **Review of Cultural Commission Calendar of Events**

Chair Deffner inquired if there were questions regarding the commission's yearly calendar of events prepared by Commissioner Nadler.

Commissioner Daly questioned the commission's goal in sponsoring and providing funds for a band at the Performances in the Park event. Anderson explained that the event is a series of performances that the Parks & Recreation Department has put on for years and different community groups/businesses have sponsored the different performances. Last year, the Carnation Festival decided to sponsor one of those events. The Cultural Commission has one representative that serves in the selection process in providing opinions and selections for the rest of the musical events. In the past, the commission has funded money for one performance. For this year, Commissioner Nadler is the commission representative for the program. Commissioner Nadler stated that Stephen was contacted regarding the commission's role pertaining to the band introduction. Commissioner Garcia was confirmed to do the introduction on July 28th, from 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Anderson stated that the summer activity guide is available on the Parks and Recreation "rootedinfun.com" website and all the summer performances are listed

on the back page. Commissioner Nadler will post The Performances in the Park summer events on the Cultural Commission Facebook page as well.

Commissioner St. Martin inquired if there was a need to start planning for the business award event listed on the July calendar. Nadler stated that the event is an awards breakfast held in September to honor the award recipients. The item was listed on the calendar for information only, just to start thinking about it as the Cultural Commission selects and honors one award winner at the breakfast.

### **Budget Planning**

Chair Deffner stated the budget for the commission is \$10,000. Due to COVID, the budget was cut \$10,000 last year. Given that, the commission will need to plan on how to spend that money. Also, there is \$5,200 available in the Wheat Ridge Foundation fund, for a grand total of \$15,200. In February's meeting, the commission voted to fund and sponsor an evening event for the Performances in the Parks for \$1,500 allocated from the commission fund and \$2,000 from the Foundation fund. Wheat Ridge Reads and the Chalk Art events are the other two programs where money will be allocated, which leaves a balance of \$7,000 for the year. She stated this provides an opportunity for the commission to plan on how to best spend the money. Another idea was to spend it on the Arts Drop event proposed for June as last year's event was so successful. With the Arts Drop event, that would leave a balance of \$6,000 in the budget.

Commissioner Daly suggested to sponsor live artists where they would create paintings and have music as entertainment. Anderson stated that the commission could use their Marketing Department to advertise the information. She suggested they could add something similar to the Wednesday night Performances in the Park event where music is already available and people would be in attendance. Commissioner Daly will do some research on having a live artist with music and present her findings at the next meeting. Commissioner Nadler commented a few years ago they had sponsored a live artist at RidgeFest and music was playing in the background and it worked out quite well. Commissioner Dragani shared that she attended something similar in Denver where they had live music present and artists were creating their paintings, and food vendors were available, such a nice event.

Commissioner Garcia shared that she owns a theatre company and in May is planning a drive thru theatre play production at Founders Park for six weekends. The event would not cost the Cultural Commission any money but asked if they wanted to promote the event. She explained that the actors would perform in the parking lot with social distancing in mind and each act would be created where

people would drive by to view each scene of the play. Commissioner Nadler thought it was a great idea and asked for a write up/brochure to post the information on the Cultural Commission Facebook page. Commissioner Garcia will post the information on Wheat Ridge Neighbors two weeks in advance of the scheduled date as reservations are required.

Anderson discussed another opportunity to spend funds would be to sponsor having several murals painted at the Recreation Center. Chair Deffner said it would be a chance to work with youths and professional artists to create murals for two walls at the Recreation Center in the pool area and children's pavilion. She reached out to the high school and shared they have a robust art program. They indicated that the National Artist Society may have an interest in getting involved but could not do so until the fall due to COVID. Anderson shared they are now allowed to pursue this type of undertaking. If funds were provided for a youth and/or amateur artist to create the two murals, the Recreation Center could have a contest and present the winner with an annual pass to the Recreation Center as a suggestion. She explained that the Recreation Center does not have the funds to do something like that, so if the Cultural Commission wanted to be a part of it in providing financial support that would be great. The commission and Susan would work closely together to form a plan of action for both pool areas. If a professional artist was hired, then it would fall under the public art process and their guidelines, so they may want to stay away from that process. Anderson stated to contact a youth/amateur artist and not go through the public art process and guidelines. Commissioner Nadler shared that the Wheat Ridge Greetings Mural at Anderson Building was temporary but it went through the public art process and she thought doing a mural by a professional artist would fall under that same category, the public art process. Anderson stated the idea was presented previously to the city manager and he approved the idea but will research further regarding the process and will let the commission know. Chair Deffner stated for now this venture will be on hold until Susan obtains more information and provides an update.

### **Arts Drop Planning - Spring/Summer**

Chair Deffner commented that this event was held in December last year and it mirrored off of Denver's Art Drop event. It was an opportunity for artists to drop art and the commission provided clues for someone to find the artwork for free. She proposed to plan the same event in June. They spent \$370 on 16 art pieces at last year's event. She would like to propose instead of a week long program, that they do it on weekends for a two-week period and have Tuesday and Thursday drops during the week. She asked to vote on continuing the program and to provide the funding. Commissioner Garcia asked for more clarification about what they were

approving. Chair Deffner shared they partnered with businesses and artists to donate pieces of art or they helped to offset the costs with in-kind donations. Artists with the Wheat Ridge Art League also donated pieces of art. They had a collection of different art items that were donated or the commission purchased. Over a week long period, twice a day, they would hide the art in a public park, trailhead or in the community in a public space. Then they posted pictures with clues where the art would be on the Facebook page. People would find the art and take it home for free. When the art was located, a picture was posted on the commission Facebook page. She will reach out again to the Wheat Ridge Art League regarding potential art pieces for donation. They could increase the number of artwork to 20 pieces (\$50 apiece) over a 10-day period. Commissioners Nadler and Daly volunteered to assist with the program. Chair Deffner made a motion to spend \$1,000 from the commission budget for the Art Drop Program to be held in June for a two-week period. Commissioner Dragani seconded the motion, all were in favor, and approved.

### **Asphalt Art Grant Project**

Chair Deffner shared information regarding a \$25,000 grant opportunity that Brandon Altenburg, Grant and Special Project Administrator for the Parks and Recreation Department found that is designed to fund visual art. It could be art interventions on roadways, pedestrian spaces and public infrastructures with the goal of revitalizing and activating underutilized public spaces. The grant is due the end of the month, which is very competitive with over 200 applications for the first round. The art that is created could be permanent or temporary and would be a partnership between the agency and the commission. The city is moving forward with submitting their grant application for artwork that would be on 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Wadsworth and Kipling. The city expressed that a \$2-3,000 contribution would be a meaningful commitment. The award would be in the fall and the project would commence in 2022. Commissioner Garcia asked about the commission's involvement. For now, Chair Deffner stated that it would be a financial commitment from the commission only. She was sharing the information and stated they could decide later if they wanted to pursue supporting \$3,000 from commission funds for artwork for the project.

### **Item 6 – Future Agenda Items**

Chair Deffner asked for any future agenda items. The following were suggested for next month's meeting:

- Wheat Ridge Reads Program
- Sponsoring Murals (Similar to those on 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue)

- Arts Drop Planning for June Event

**Miscellaneous - Cultural Commission Program Coordinators Updated:**

Arts Drop: Megan Deffner, Milly Nadler, Celia Daly

Chalk Fest: Nancy Dragani

Clear Creek Crossing: Vacant

Cultural Commission Mailbox: Celia Daly, Nancy Dragani

Performances in the Park: Milly Nadler

The Green at 38<sup>th</sup>: Megan Deffner

Wadsworth Widening: Maru Garcia

Ward Road Station: Vacant

Wheat Ridge Creates: Maru Garcia

Wheat Ridge Reads: Maru Garcia, Kim St. Martin

**Item 7 – Commissioner Comments**

Commissioner Nadler: Thank you Megan for doing a stellar job as Chairperson.

Commissioner St. Martin: Second what Milly said, great job Megan.

Commissioner Garcia: Wheat Ridge Creates will have an event on April 22nd from 5-6:30 p.m., will send the email link to everyone since it is by invitation only.

Commissioner Daly: Yes, great job Megan.

Commissioner Dragani: Yes Megan, you were organized, kept it moving and did a great job of chairing this committee. I apologize for not joining the meeting on time, was on the road and time got away from me. Have a great evening.

Commissioner Deffner: Thank you all everybody, great meeting. See you all next month.

**Item 8 – Adjournment**

Chair Deffner adjourned the meeting at 7:34 p.m.