



MEETING OF THE FULL ARTS COMMISSION

Monday, July 7, 2025

2 p.m.

Hybrid Meeting

Minutes

President Collins called the meeting to order at **2:04 p.m.**

1. Call to Order, Roll Call, Agenda Changes, Land Acknowledgment (0:01)

Commissioners Present

Charles Collins, President
J. Riccardo Benavides
Patrick Carney
Suzie Ferras
Mahsa Hakimi
Nabiel Musleh
Jessica Rothschild
Debra Walker
Marcus Shelby
Lydia So

Commissioners Absent

Janine Shiota
JD Beltran
Yiying Lu

Staff Present:

Ralph Remington, Director of Cultural Affairs
Sarah Hollenbeck, Deputy Director of Finance and Administration
Alyssa Ventre, Chief of Staff
Manraj Dhaliwal, Commission Secretary



President Collins announced an agenda change, moving item 6, Advance Payment Policy Update presentation to before item 4, Director's Report. No other agenda changes were made.

President Collins announced the public meeting instructions.

Commission Secretary Dhaliwal announced public comment instructions.

President Collins began the meeting by reading the Arts Commission's land acknowledgment statement.

2.Approval of the Minutes (6:50)

Commissioner Ferras, seconded by Commissioner Walker moved to approve June 2, 2025, minutes.

There was no public comment.

The motion was unanimously approved.

RESOLUTION NO. 0707-25-107: Motion to approve the June 2, 2025, Full Commission minutes.

3. General Public Comment (7:51)

Public Comment

Vinay Patel, Executive Director of Asian Pacific Islander Cultural Center (APICC), asked the Commission to prioritize transparency and collaboration with community stakeholders. Patel emphasized the resilience and contributions of artists in shaping arts policy and advocated for reinstating joint meetings between Commissioners and Cultural Center Directors.

Maria Jenson, Executive Director of SOMArts Cultural Center, expressed concern over the lack of communication regarding a 10% grant cut. Jenson emphasized the importance of regular meetings between cultural

center directors and commissioners. Jenson stressed that the funding reduction, totaling \$89,000, would significantly impact operations, staffing, and the organization's ability to maintain city-owned property.

Jana McRae, Managing Director of SOMArts, highlighted the impact of the 10% grant cut, noting it would force staff layoffs, fewer exhibitions, and delay equipment upgrades. McRae emphasized that this would reduce access to the arts.

Dorka Keehn, a former Arts Commissioner, criticized the lack of transparency around proposed grant policy changes. Keehn reminded commissioners that they are responsible for approving major policy shifts and suggested reviewing their responsibilities. Keehn called for stronger oversight and warned against allowing fear and confusion to undermine the Commission's leadership and accountability.

Sean Garahan, Technical Director at SOMArts, said the 10% grant cut has caused reduced staff hours and could lead to layoffs. He warned that to keep operating, SOMArts may need to raise rental prices, which would hurt nonprofit clients who rely on affordable space. Garahan urged the Commission to consider stakeholders participation in the future.

Carolina Quintanilla, Gallery Director at SOMArts, said the 10% budget cut would force staff reductions and cancel programs, especially harming artists from marginalized communities. She explained that reduced funding limits their ability to pay artists fairly. Quintanilla asked the Commission to rethink the cuts and include the community in decisions

Dar del Rosario, Communications Director at SOMArts, said the 10% budget cut would hurt programs, delay equipment upgrades, and raise rental costs, making events less accessible. She asked the Commission to include artists and the community in important decisions.

There was no additional public comment.

4. Advance Payment Policy Update (24:47)

Deputy Director Sarah Hollenbeck explained that the Controller's Office found the Arts Commission's grant advance practices out of line with city rules, prompting a need to change. Hollenbeck shared the proposed new policy would limit grant advances to 50%, with the rest paid after reporting or reimbursement, but implementation has been delayed until the next grant cycle to allow time for outreach and planning. She noted the goal is to bring the Arts Commission into compliance while giving grantees time to adjust.

Commissioners expressed concern about the lack of early communication regarding proposed changes to the grant advance policy. Commissioners called for better transparency, stronger collaboration with cultural centers, and support to help grantees adjust to future financial shifts.

Deputy Director Hollenbeck explained that the Controller's Office flagged current grant advance practices as noncompliant with city policy. She shared staff worked with the Controller to propose a new policy limiting advances to 50% but agreed to delay implementation for one year to allow time for communication and adjustment. She emphasized the department's goal is to meet city requirements while supporting a smooth transition for grantees.

Public Comment

Vinay Patel, Executive Director of Asian Pacific Islander Cultural Center (APICC), said the proposed advance payment policy caused concern in the arts community and urged the Commission to include stakeholders in shaping future policy. He noted that the City Attorney confirmed the policy is not a legal requirement, and that arts grantees already have strong compliance records. Patel asked that the current model be preserved and that any changes be made through open, community-led dialogue.

Maria Jenson, Executive Director of SOMArts Cultural Center, said there was lack of communication about the 10% grant cut and policy change. She asked for regular meetings between cultural centers and commissioners to improve collaboration. Jenson said the funding cut would

hurt staff and operations.

Jana McRae, Managing Director of SOMArts, said they follow all rules and have passed audits with no problems. She explained that the 10% cut and city delays make it hard to keep up with costs and serve the community. McRae noted that during the pandemic, SOMArts used its reserves to keep staff employed, and now lacks the financial cushion to handle further delays or funding changes.

Dorka Keehn, a former Arts Commissioner, criticized the lack of transparency around the advance payment policy changes and said the Commission should have been informed earlier. She stated that although the current grant process is out of compliance, it doesn't mean it's wrong and called for exploring exceptions or alternatives. Keehn urged the Commission to use its authority to support grantees and avoid adding unnecessary burdens.

There was no additional public comment.

5. Director's Report

(1:07:30)

Director of Cultural Affairs Ralph Remington provided an update on the expansion of the Arts Commission's strategic planning process, which is now being integrated with Grants for the Arts and the Film Commission, per direction from Mayor Lurie. The director emphasized that this process would include extensive community engagement, listening sessions, and neighborhood outreach to ensure that stakeholder voices are included. He continued that the plan, facilitated by AMS Planning & Research, aims to align the operations of all three agencies. He announced that Jennifer Bielstein, Managing Director of American Conservatory Theater (ACT), will leave her role in September 2025 to become Managing Director at the Alley Theatre in Houston. He noted that the ACT managing director position will soon be open as the organization transitions. He noted a major funding milestone that over \$10 million in FY25–26 grant support was awarded to

individual artists, nonprofit organizations, and cultural centers with nearly half of individual artists awardees being first-time grantees.

Director Remington attended various civic and cultural events including Foresight's "Black Gold: Stories Untold" exhibition opening at Fort Point and the Mayor's Juneteenth celebration at City Hall. He shared current exhibitions include "Service Tension" at the SFAC Main Gallery, through August 23, and "Metaphors of Recent Times" at City Hall, closing August 1. He mentioned a community celebration is planned for July 17 to mark the completion of "Arrival," a new public artwork at the Chinatown Rose Pak Muni Station. He included that public comment on art proposals for Portsmouth Square's clubhouse and plaza is open through July 21. The director noted staff transitions, including the retirement of longtime Capital Program Manager Lisa Zayas Chien, and welcomed three new summer interns. He concluded by addressing the city's ongoing fiscal crisis, warning of likely future cuts and emphasizing the need for careful planning and open communication to support the arts community during uncertain times.

7. Committee Reports and Committee Matters **(1:27:38)**

1.1 Civic Design Committee Report **(1:27:42)**

Chair Walker reported on the approval of Phase 2 of the Jackson Playground Renovation project. Key elements include new inclusive playground equipment, a multi-use sports court, shaded picnic areas, and the relocation and upgrade of the historic clubhouse with a two-sided performance stage. The design incorporates sustainable practices such as eco-friendly materials and water-saving irrigation, with the design development phase set to finish by the end of 2026 and construction targeted for spring 2027.

There is no public comment.

2.1 Visual Arts Committee Report **(1:36:05)**

Chair Ferras presented updates on three art projects. She shared Eamon Ore-Giron, a Los Angeles based artist, proposal “Oro en Paz I and II” was selected for the Superhighway Integrated Wall and Pae White, Sonoma County and Los Angeles based artist, proposal was selected for the Suspended Sculpture opportunity. Ferras noted that sculpture “Invocation” was relocated to Palega Recreation Center at the convergence of the outdoor paths connecting the Recreation Center to the facility’s Silliman and Felton Street entrances, in the Portola neighborhood in District 9.

There was no public comment

9. Consent Calendar **(1:42:34)**

President Collins introduced all items on the consent calendar.

Commissioner Walker, seconded by Commissioner Hakimi moved to approve all consent calendar items.

There was no public comment.

The motion was unanimously approved.

RESOLUTION NO. 0707-25-108: that this Commission does hereby adopt the following items on the Consent Calendar and their related Resolutions:

1. **RESOLUTION NO. 0707-25-109:** Motion to approve the June 16, 2025, [Civic Design Review Committee Meeting Minutes](#).
2. **RESOLUTION NO. 0707-25-110:** Motion to approve the June 18, 2025, [Visual Arts Committee Meeting Minutes](#).

Civic Design Review Committee Recommendations (June 16,

2025, [link to agenda](#))

3. **RESOLUTION NO. 0707-25-111:** Motion to approve Phase 2 Review for Jackson Playground Renovation – Phase 2.

Visual Arts Committee Recommendations (June 18, 2025, [link to agenda](#))

4. **RESOLUTION NO. 0707-25-112:** Motion to approve the West Field Campus Public Art Program Plan of Approach, including West Field Garage 2 (670), Cargo Building 626.1, Cargo Building 720.1 and GSE 742.
5. **RESOLUTION NO. 0707-25-113:** Motion to approve the conceptual design proposal *Infinite Regress: Oro en Paz I and II* by Eamon Ore-Giron for the Terminal 3 West Superhighway Integrated Wall Public Art Project, as recommended by the Artist Review Panel.
6. **RESOLUTION NO. 0707-25-114:** Motion to authorize the Director of Cultural Affairs to enter into a contract with Eamon Ore-Giron (dba Lengua Inc.) for an amount not to exceed \$1,000,000 for the design, fabrication, insurance, and consultation during installation of a mosaic tile artwork for the Terminal 3 West Superhighway Integrated Wall Public Art Project.
7. **RESOLUTION NO. 0707-25-115:** Motion to approve the conceptual design proposal by Pae White for the Terminal 3 West Suspended Sculpture Public Art Project as recommended by the Artist Review Panel.
8. **RESOLUTION NO. 0707-25-116:** Motion to authorize the Director of Cultural Affairs to enter into a contract with Pae White (dba Pae White Studio, Inc.) for an amount not to exceed \$1,000,000 for the design, fabrication, insurance, and consultation during installation of an artwork for the Terminal 3 West Suspended Sculpture Public Art Project.

9. **RESOLUTION NO. 0707-25-117:** Motion to approve Vida Kuang, Bovey Lee, Mikael Gaspay, Amanda Phingbodhipakkiya, Monyee Chau, and Richard Lee as finalists for the Chinatown Public Health Center interior art wall opportunities, as recommended by the Artist Review Panel.
10. **RESOLUTION NO. 0707-25-118:** Motion to approve Dave Young Kim, Sorell Raino-Tsui and Twin Walls Mural Company as finalists for the Chinatown Public Health Center exterior art wall opportunity, as recommended by the Artist Review Panel.
11. **RESOLUTION NO. 0707-25-119:** Motion to approve the permanent installation of *Glide Heart*, an artwork by Jaz Cameron measuring 5 feet by 6 feet by 40 inches gifted to Glide Memorial Church from The San Francisco General Hospital Foundation's Hearts in San Francisco program, to be installed in the sidewalk in front of Glide Memorial Church on Ellis Street. The sculpture is fabricated from resin and fiberglass with steel structural elements at specific stress points and the base is made of concrete and steel. Glide Memorial Church will be responsible for ongoing maintenance. The artwork will not become part of the Civic Art Collection.

10. Adjournment (1:45:48)

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Posted 07/18/2025, 11:30 a.m., msd

Archives Available

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