



**Stephen Seymour, District 1**  
**VACANT, District 1**  
**Deepa Nair, District 2**  
**Lois Fried, District 2**  
**Andrea Jones, Dist. 3**  
**Josephine Deciron, District 3**  
**Jeanne Heise, District 4**  
**Farah Yasmeen Shaikh, District 4**  
**Victoria Magbilang, District 5**  
**Reno Anoa'i, District 5**

**County Executive's Office**  
**400 County Center**  
**Redwood City, CA 94063**  
**[www.smcgov.org/smcac](http://www.smcgov.org/smcac)**



## **REGULAR MEETING OF THE ARTS COMMISSION**

**Wednesday, May 21, 2025 – 3:30 - 5:00 p.m.**

**455 County Center, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Room 101, Redwood City, CA 94063**

### **MINUTES**

- 1. Roll Call** Chair, Commissioner Magbilang called the meeting to order at 3:31PM with roll call.  
In Attendance: Commissioners Magbilang, Fried, Shaikh, Seymour, Anoa'i, and Heise  
Absent: Commissioners Jones, Deciron, and Nair  
Staff: Mara Grimes, Aimee Shapiro  
Guest: Florence Wong, Commission on Disabilities
- 2. Agenda Amendments**  
Commissioner Shaikh asked that she be allowed to make her presentation before staff reports as she needed to leave the meeting early. It was agreed by the group that she do so.
- 3. Oral Communications**  
None
- 4. Consideration of Minutes** of April 16, 2025, regular meeting minutes. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Shaikh and seconded by Commissioner Fried. Approved unanimously.
- 5. Staff Reports**

#### **Aimee Shapiro:**

The Director thanked Commissioner Shaikh for providing a public comment in person at the last Board of Supervisor's meeting. She said that she and the Admin-Manager have heard many comments from County staff who attended the meeting and were impressed by her comments. She noted that the Office of Arts and Culture have been working on the following programs and events:

- Attending the Arts & Culture Summit surrounded by others throughout the state who all support the arts was an inspiring and a welcome experience. We were able to network with others, meet with legislators, and learn more about the arts in other parts of the state. Thanks to Commissioners Magbilang and Shaikh for joining us.
- The Cordilleras Landscape Furniture project is moving along; 3 vendors have been selected by committee during the RFQ process to submit an RFP and present their work in June or July.
- The five 2024-25 Youth Arts Fellows met for the last time to present a recap of their projects and share their experiences and insights with the cohort, their parents, and several representatives from the Supervisors' office. They all did a wonderful job, and we will miss them. Applications for the 2025-26 program will begin in July.
- The Poet Laureate event on May 5, 2025, was well attended and received. They are working with the Poet Laureate to establish a schedule of future events. Thanks to all that attended.
- New artwork will be exhibited in the lobby at 500 County Center in July and two new paintings by Emily Fromm have been added to the café.

*Public records that relate to any item on the open session agenda for a regular Arts Commission meeting are available for public inspection. Those records that are distributed less than 72 hours prior to the meeting are available for public inspection at the same time they are distributed to all members, or a majority of the members of the Commission. The Commission has designated the Board of Supervisors Office, located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063, for the purpose of making those public records available for inspection. The documents are also available to be sent electronically by e-mailing [artscommission@smcgov.org](mailto:artscommission@smcgov.org). In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), auxiliary aids and services for this meeting will be provided upon request when given three days' notice. For the safety of those sensitive to airborne chemicals, please refrain from wearing chemically based products.*

**Mara Grimes:**

- The September Arts & Culture Fest has launched, and we'll begin accepting applications on July 1, 2025, for visual artists, performing artists, and new this year a poetry corner. She asked that Commissioners share the information with artists and arts/culture organizations in their district.
- The Admin-Manager continues to look for spaces around the County to exhibit the affinity art shows but has secured several venues already. The Disability Showcase (Oct.) and Voices of Recovery (Sept.) will be held at the Center for Creativity. A list has been created and she asked Commissioners to contact her if they have suggestions of venues in their districts.
- Causeway Mural Project is moving forward; we met with the vendor that is providing the wrap and the artist. We are waiting on permits from Redwood City to get approved soon. Tentative date is the week of June 23, 2025.
- The Admin-Manager shared that she is working with the Edgewood Drop-in Center, that supports underserved youth, on an art exhibition of youth art during their Wellness event in June.

**6. Discussion Items**

**A. NEA Grants Defunded; Action/Advocacy Statement**

Commissioner Shaikh stated that the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grant guidelines had changed and that they were giving priority to organizations celebrating the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our nation. She added that grants that had been awarded earlier in the year had been cancelled which has been devastating to many nonprofits. The system runs on a reimbursement system, pay-as-you-go, so many organizations are out the money already spent. She went on to say that not only are arts and culture organizations affected but also many funding organizations.

Commissioner Shaikh recommended that the Arts Commission include an article in the next newsletter alerting arts and culture organizations, so they are aware of what is happening and also providing resources such as Californians for the Arts and California Arts Advocates who are doing work in this area.

Commissioner Heise asked if this change was an executive order or up to Congress.

Commissioner Shaikh replied that there are their lawsuits in progress. Many of the NEA staff have quit, especially in dance.

The Admin-Manager reminded the Commission that the OAC decided not to submit a grant to the NEA as they changed their guidelines and would not support any organization that used DEI language or supported organizations that used that language or ideology.

**B. San Mateo County Fair Updates**

Commissioner Magbilang stated that things are going well in general with all things that are fair related, however they needed more people to volunteer to sit at the Arts Commission table to help promote the Commission and their work. She will email a signup sheet so that Commissioners can sign up for 2-hour shifts. Commissioner Seymour said that they would be receiving 600 pieces of artwork on Friday and Saturday. They will start building the walls on Thursday to get ready to display the artworks.

Commissioner Fried told the group that she is working on the literary arts section of the fair. In addition to the showcase of poetry and short stories submitted, there will be an area for attendees to create a haiku poem on the spot that will be added to a community installation. She is also managing a poetry event on Sunday, June 1, 2025, that will feature all of San Mateo County Poet Laureates, several city Poet Laureates, community poets, and youth poets. She invited the Commissioners to attend and enjoy the event.

**C. Timeline for surveys for arts and culture nonprofits**

Commissioner Magbilang stated that Commissioner Deciron has been working on a timeline for the surveying of arts and culture organizations. She has reviewed the document, asked for some changes and once they are made, the document will be added to the Arts Commission folder on Google Drive.

**D. Summary of Commissioner tasks following meetings**

Commissioner Magbilang asked that the Commission begin creating a list of action items discussed during each meeting that could be documented and shared following each meeting. The Commissioners could take turns being responsible for the list. The Commissioners agreed that this was a good idea to ensure accountability.

**E. Updates from Commissioners on activities in their district**

Commissioner Fried said that she has continues to be focused on poetry, especially at the San Mateo County Fair as previously mentioned. She presented a reading on April 27, 2025, at the Domini Hoskins Museum in Redwood City, which was an important event, although not as well attended as she had hoped.

Commissioner Anoa'i said that the after-school youth program he works at held an event which was a segway to Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) month called Pacific Islander Heritage Days in schools. He also

participated in an AAPI event at Stanford as well as singing at the AAPI Alliance event. He will be singing at the celebration of the life of Mama Dee in East Palo Alto over the weekend.

Commissioner Seymour is focusing his efforts now on making sure that the fine arts area at the San Mateo County Fair is the best and runs smoothly. He is thankful for help from Commissioners Magbilang and Fried and hopes all the Commissioners will attend and bring others from their communities.

Commissioner Magbilang said in addition to her focus on the San Mateo County Fair, that the Daly City Youth Poet Laureate Commencement event on April 30, 2025, in Daly City at City Hall was a huge success. She also served as a judge for the annual Congressional Art show hosted by Congressman Kevin Mullin, along with the Director and Admin-Manager.

Commissioner Heise stated that she attended the convening of the 2025 Arts and Culture Grantees that was very meaningful to all. Although the number of grants and the grant amounts were small, it was powerful to be in one room together and hear their stories and learn about their work. She also attended the presentation of the Arts Commission to the Board of Supervisors and the appointment of the Poet Laureate at the beginning of the month along with Commissioners Magbilang, Shaikh, and Anoa'i. She will continue to attend the Arts Redwood City monthly meetings.

**7. Action Item**

A. *None*

**8. Adjournment**

Commissioner Magbilang thanked everyone for their work and participation and adjourned the meeting at 4:55 pm.

**NEXT REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING: May 21, 2025 – 3:30-5:00 PM**