



Agenda Item #: _____

Staff Report

City of Manhattan Beach

TO: Honorable Mayor Montgomery and Members of the City Council

THROUGH: Geoff Dolan, City Manager

FROM: Richard Gill, Parks & Recreation Director
Juanita Purner, Cultural Arts Manager

DATE: August 5, 2008

SUBJECT: Consideration of a Recommendation from the Cultural Arts Commission to Conduct Three Children's Theater Productions in Joslyn Community Center Using \$53,600 from the Public Art Trust Funds.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the City Council approve the Cultural Arts Commission's recommendation to conduct a Children's Theater series in Joslyn Community Center using \$53,600 from the Public Art Trust Fund.

FISCAL IMPLICATION:

The fiscal implication for the recommended action requests \$53,600 from the Public Art Trust fund. Cost breakdown: three productions - \$25,000; purchase of stage enhancements and pipe and drape; lighting and sound – \$28,600. The current Art Trust balance is \$273,897.83

BACKGROUND:

The Cultural Arts Commission (CAC) has been an enthusiastic advocate for theater in the City of Manhattan Beach for some time. In July 2006, Council approved the CAC's recommendation for a space design study of the Joslyn Center's performance area using Art Trust funds. The professional consultants provided four configurations in the Joslyn Center with drawings, seating set-up, and the piping and draping needed for a theater environment. The four renderings were presented to Council during the January 8, 2008 joint meeting.

At the January 8th meeting, the Commission requested approval for the children's theater presentation of "Aesop's Fables" by DancinDan Productions at the Joslyn Center. This trial effort would gauge the community's interest in children's theater and test one of the consultant's theater formats generated in their study. Council approved the presentation of two performances on Saturday, March 1 and on Sunday, March 2; and the \$14,000 from the Art Trust fund for the production. Ticket sales generated \$3,068. Costs totaled \$13,679.00. The four performances were well attended and the audience surveys indicated the community was enthusiastically in favor of seeing more children's theater and appreciated the quality of the performance.

DISCUSSION:

The Commission is seeking Council’s approval for a children’s theater series scheduled for the coming fall, winter and spring. The productions will be held on Saturday and Sunday with two performances offered each day. The series includes: “Join the Circus – A Family Musical.” “You’re a Good Man Charlie Brown,” and “Tales of Hans Christian Andersen.” The shows are 50 minutes long, full of lively songs, colorful costumes and exciting action. The professional performers keep everyone involved as tales of popular children’s stories and fables are told. These productions will encourage insight to the diverse world of live theater.

An added benefit to selecting DancinDan Productions is that all promotional materials are provided: such as camera ready artwork for the marketing materials; including flyers, posters, tickets and ads, fully designed in the sizes needed.

The Commission and staff researched vendors who rent and sell theater enhancements and the following reflect the best equipment for the Joslyn Center:

1. Stage Extension, decking and cloth skirting, steps to stage	\$5,088.50
2. Pipe & Drape, Uprights and horizontals, steeldeck platform With legs for chair risers Platform & Pipe & Drape Storage Equipment Pipe & Drape 44 Bushel Hamper	\$13,107.76
3. Lighting & Sound 16 Channel Sound System, Microphone, Podium, Sound monitors Piano Tuning	\$10,245.00
TOTAL	\$28,590.50

The enhancements will be kept in a secure storage unit located behind Joslyn Center. Staff will contract professionals to set-up and dismantled the stage extensions, pipe and drape, decking and risers. The cost associated with set-up and tear down for Aesop’s Fables was \$770.00.

The Commission anticipates theater revenues over time will help off-set the costs of this program given the public’s positive response. A family of four can see three musical plays right in their own neighborhood for \$80. Pre-paid tickets for the series can be sold in advance through the Parks & Recreation guide and through on-line registration.

The advantages to purchasing the enhancements for Joslyn Center include: increased venue use, new program and revenue possibilities. Renting the enhancements items over a two-year period would utilize Art Trust funds equivalent to the purchase price but would not provide expanded program benefits if rented.

CONCLUSION:

Using the Art Trust for this program not only benefits the families of our community, but it also fulfills the performing arts component of the Art in Public Places Master Plan. Staff recommends the approval of the funding for three productions and the purchase of the theater enhancements.