



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, Director of Parks and Recreation
Juanita Purner, Cultural Arts Manager

DATE: November 5, 2008

SUBJECT: Consideration of the Wording Submitted by the Ellis Family for a Plaque on their Strand Alcove Bench

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council deny the wording requested by the Ellis family that would appear on their plaque and approve the wording suggested by staff, which is consistent with the Council approved donor guidelines.

FISCAL IMPLICATION:

There are no fiscal implications on the general fund associated with the recommended action.

BACKGROUND:

On November 20, 2007, the City Council approved the guidelines for the installation of donated artistic benches in the Strand Alcoves. These Guidelines were developed to provide donors with criteria for the Strand Alcove benches and serve as a reference for the quality and aesthetic level the City is seeking.

DISCUSSION:

The City recently placed six artistic benches on the Strand as a model for the Alcove/Bench program. The Ellis family commissioned a bench with artist Stacy Dukes that is the same design used for the City benches installed on the Strand; the bench differs in that it has a white hue (a sample tile will be available at the Council meeting). The installation of the Ellis bench at the 24th Street Alcove is pending. The proposed wording for the plaque does not comply with the **Artist and Donor Recognition guideline** which reads: *Recognition of an artist and donor for each Bench/Alcove area may be placed in a discreet location and the size of the letters will be no larger than one inch high. Wording as follows: Donated by: Rodney Benson – Artist: Joe Johnson.*

The requested wording for the Ellis plaque reads: *Donated by: Friends and Family of Susan M. Ellis – Artist- Stacy Dukes Design.* Staff recommends that Council approve wording to read: *Donated by the Ellis Family – Artist: Stacy Dukes.*

The Cultural Arts Commission discussed the issue during their October 14th Cultural Arts Commission meeting (see attached minutes). They were divided in providing a recommendation. New Commission members did not object to the wording while the senior members thought the wording did not follow the *Artist and Donor Recognition* guideline.

CONCLUSION:

Staff strongly recommends denial of the request. The Commission and Council invested a great deal of time and effort in creating a document that would prevent wording with memorial inference. Because of past complaints from the community regarding Strand benches with strong memorial references, the Commission and the Council felt the recognition should only state: Donated by - "family name or an individual's."

Staff believes if the Ellis request is approved, the program could be subject to further challenges.

Attachments:

Cultural Arts Commission Minutes – October 14, 2008

Strand Alcove Bench Program – Donor Guidelines

DRAFT

CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION

Minutes

October 14, 2008

Manhattan Beach City Hall

Council Chambers

6:02 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Cultural Arts Commission (CAC) was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Candy Duncan, Chairman
Susannah Rosenthal, Vice Chair
Peter De Maria, Commissioner
Susan Sweeney, Commissioner
Nancy Humbarger, Commissioner
Juanita Purner, Cultural Arts Manager

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made for approval and was carried for the September 9th minutes.

IV. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None.

V. GENERAL BUSINESS

02/0612.6 Sculpture Garden Proposal

- The Commission's discussion included the following options and will be finalized before going to Council.
 1. An artist would display five **existing** works using the pole/container model or a concrete slab
 2. An artist would create five site specific **new** pieces
 3. Five artists would each provide an **existing** sculpture for the program
 4. Five artists would each be **commissioned** to create a new work
- The sculpture exhibited in the program is structured so that the public can purchase the art works directly from the artist.
- The sculpture is exhibited for either six months or a year, depending on availability.
- Commission suggested contacting John Gorman, a Manhattan Beach sculptor; and there is interest in Niki St. Phalle; her work is part of the Stuart Collection at UCSD.

- The Commissioners plan to visit the San Diego Port Authority to see the public art program's maquettes and the installed art work. If time permits, the Commissioners will make studio visits.
- Sculptural garden installation sites will begin at the Manhattan Beach Civic Center Plaza and move to the green belt (Valley/Ardmore).

VI. REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS

Children's Theater Proposal

The *Join the Circus* performances are scheduled for Saturday, November 8th and Sunday, November 9th; with load-in taking place on November 7 and tear-down on Sunday. The Beach Reporter advertisement is set for October 30.

Strand Alcove Bench Program

The wording on the proposed Ellis family plaque was discussed and it was read to the Commissioners: ***Artist & Donor Recognition*** guideline reads – Donated by: Rodney Benson – Artist: Joe Johnson. The Ellis plaque wording: Donated by: Friends and Family of Susan M... Ellis – Artist: Stacy Dukes Design. The senior members of the Commission took exception with the wording and the newer members did not object. The Commission did not vote on the issue.

Commissioner De Maria distributed a proposal outlining four design competitions which are intended to initiate a dialogue among local professionals and students. The proposal will be reviewed and discussed at next month's Commission meeting.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 pm. The next Commission meeting is November 18 at 6 p.m. in the City Manager's conference room.