



Agenda Item #: _____

Staff Report

City of Manhattan Beach

TO: Honorable Mayor Cohen 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: March 4, 2009

SUBJECT: Status Report on the Metlox Music Series, Local Artist Activities and Artist outreach

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council review the local artists program and provide direction.

FISCAL IMPLICATION:

The total cost for the City's outreach for the local artists program for 2008 was approximately \$4,052 (street banner and installation cost, newspaper advertisements, printing, Art Tour bus rental, and reception).

BACKGROUND:

In 2007, at the request of City Council, staff developed a music series for Metlox town square. The series consisted of ten weeks of musical entertainment in the spring and summer.

The following year, City Council directed staff to incorporate local artist exhibits in the Metlox series and to provide additional opportunities for local artists. Staff organized an ad hoc committee composed of ten local artists, cultural arts commissioners and community members. Staff held meetings in June and July 2007 with the committee and was able to generate a list of 31 potential artists for the program and a process was developed to select additional artists.

A portion of the artists participating in the ad hoc committee became interested in becoming an independent organization named the Manhattan Beach Art Colony. They intended to design an expansive publicity campaign, hold receptions, and undertake fundraising for the group.

In the spring of 2008, staff posted an application on the city website directed at gaining additional artists interested in participating with the remaining arts in the Metlox program. A committee of volunteers and Cultural Arts Commissioners reviewed the applications and selections were made.

The local artist exhibitions for spring '08 were successful through May with artists exhibiting on

site every Sunday. The number of participating artists began to decrease and by the summer/fall there was no more interest.

Staff then conducted a survey of the participating arts and the responses were as follows:

- Marketing: increase in signage, newspaper ads and articles needed
- Location: lack of foot traffic; interest in moving music to the 13th Street area; make it more festive; include wine tasting.
- Weekly Exhibitions: weekly becomes too much for working artists; less often is better; programs become special
- Visibility – not enough exposure; most artists think the public congregates near the music and few visit the exhibition space.
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DISCUSSION

In addition, staff organized other local artists' events with the help of volunteers and cultural arts staff.

- The second annual local artist's exhibition, *Manhattan Beach Revisited II*, was held at the Creative Art Center on February 5; guest curator Ann Martin. Ten local artists participated in the exhibition.
- The Manhattan Beach Art Tour offered a studio tour of seven local artists on April 10; a bus was provided and the public had the option of a self-guided tour. A reception followed.
- *Meet Local Fine Artists* reception, Sunday, November 2, 2008 was held at Sashi restaurant. This event was a huge success and brought together local artists and the community. Art works were displayed in the restaurant where attendees could meet the artists and learn about their work. The Friends of Fine Art coordinated this event with FOFA president Angela Silverman. The Friends of Fine Art has plans to become a 501C3.

Current publicity for the local artist program includes e-mailed invitations sent to the artists for distribution to their mailing lists, a street banner, press releases, posters distributed to the downtown business community and new large A-frame signage.

Staff suggests the following for future local artist programming.

In order to expand the number of participants, staff plans to send an invitation to artists who participate in the Torrance Artist Guild and the Palos Verdes Friends of Art to become a part of the Metlox series. The Torrance Art Guild is a City sponsored group and PVFA is a non-profit organization.

The exhibitions will continue to focus on fine art (painting, photography, sculpture, and ceramics). Staff will schedule four Art Sundays in this year's spring and the summer series. In addition, adding a children's exhibition would also draw parents and young artists alike to the 13th square.

In addition, Staff will establish a local artist link on the City's website and add a web clip of the annual local artist exhibition at the Creative Art Center.

Staff proposes showcasing an artist quarterly by exhibiting their art work in city hall with the help of a panel of jurors.

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends that the local artist program continue; this program needs to expand its roster of participating artists and become a regular event for the Manhattan Beach community. Art exhibitions, combined with the Metlox Music Series, has enhanced and enriched the visitor's experience whether they are dining, shopping or relaxing at the Metlox Plaza center.