



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS  
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 04/06/2021

ITEM NO: 1

---

DATE: April 6, 2021  
TO: Mayor and Town Council  
FROM: Laurel Prevetti, Town Manager  
SUBJECT: Review and Discuss the Arts and Culture Commission Accomplishments and Goals

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Review and discuss the Arts and Culture Commission accomplishments and goals.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Arts and Culture Commission (ACC) currently operates under the provisions of Resolution 2016-051 (Attachment 1) approved by Council in 2016, which replaced a previous Resolution from 2009, which replaced an older Resolution from 1992. Under the current resolution, the ACC consists of seven voting members of which one also serves as a member of the Youth Commission.

The ACC meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 4:00 p.m. The Library Director serves as the staff liaison to the ACC and acts as the interface with other Town Departments as necessary and appropriate for the facilitation of ACC goals.

Per Resolution 2016-051, the primary duty of the ACC is to advise Council on Town policies regarding art, drama, music, and other creative activities. However, it is noted that outside of this advisory role for policy, the ACC has since at least 1992 taken an active role in the production of arts related projects. At various points between 1992 and the present, these projects have included the *Catwalk* sculptures on Santa Cruz Avenue, the Gateway project, Music in the Park, and the Main Street Bridge Mural.

The most recent workplan of the ACC is the Arts Plan Strategic Planning Process (Attachment 3), approved by Council in April of 2017, which contains both elements of advising policy as well as facilitating projects.

**PREPARED BY:** Ryan Baker  
Library Director

---

Reviewed by: Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, Town Attorney, and Finance Director

---

DISCUSSION:

***Accomplishments and Projects Near Completion***

Working under the framework of the Arts Plan Strategic Planning Process, the notable accomplishments from the previous year and the current year (including projects that are slated for completion by June 30, 2021) are:

- The pending completion of an ordinance for a public arts requirement for new commercial development currently slated to be introduced to Council on April 20, 2021.
- The pending completion of the logistical documents and guidelines for developers to select and install public artwork in accordance with the ordinance stated above.
- The pending completion of the first sculpture installation of the Gateway sculpture project near Hwy 17 onramps/offramps on Los Gatos-Saratoga Road, currently slated for final installation on or about June 1, 2021.
- Serving on the art selection committee for Parks and Public Work's "Out of the Box" utility box artwork project.
- Serving in cooperation with the Community Health and Senior Services Commission on the Town's Community Grants committee which evaluates and recommends grant awards.
- Serving on the Town's Poet Laureate selection committee.
- Building relationships with artists for potential future projects.
- Contributing to the arts-related components of the General Plan Update.

***Goals***

Drawing from the framework of the Arts Plan Strategic Planning Process, the ACC has identified the following specific goals for work during the coming two-year period. The ACC would appreciate Council input as to how these should be prioritized or alternatively, if items should be dropped from this list due to budgetary, logistical, or other reasons. The current goals are:

- Commission and install a public art sculpture in an unused former bus stop near the corner of North Santa Cruz Ave and Los Gatos-Saratoga Road (project currently not funded).

DISCUSSION (continued):

- Begin work on an update of the Arts Strategic Plan with community involvement.
- Research additional forms of funding to support public arts in Los Gatos, including grants, sponsorships, or donations based on Council direction.
- Research the feasibility of procurement of deaccessioned artwork from third-party agencies (project not currently funded).
- Begin process of confirming locations and permissions for the second and third sculptures in the Gateway project and releasing the Calls for Artists (project not currently funded).
- Work in partnership with local schools to install a student mural on the bulkheads of the Forbes Mill Footbridge (project not currently funded).
- Improve communication and awareness of ACC activities to the community, including outreach and social media involvement.
- Solidify a workplan for the installation of murals in various locations throughout the Town (project not currently funded).
- Engage with the Chamber of Commerce, the New Museum of Los Gatos (NUMU), and other organizations to research possible partnerships.

***Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion***

The ACC feels strongly that public arts must recognize the wealth of creativity, ideas, traditions, and backgrounds of an ever-evolving community. The ACC wishes to provide opportunities for all community members to be represented and feel engaged. These opportunities could be through engaging in partnerships, providing more opportunities for community members to make or interact with the arts, commissioning artwork from a broad range of artists representing different experiences, and actively seeking potential new Commissioners that represent a broader cross section of creative thought and point of view. The ACC notes that its current roster of Commissioners is not representative of the community as a whole and hopes to have a more active role in recruiting future candidates.

The ACC has reviewed its Enabling Resolution (Attachment 1) and notes that section 1a has the stated requirement that “One (1) member of the Commission shall be an arts professional...” The ACC has expressed that this is not well defined and could be a possible barrier to entry to

DISCUSSION (continued):

an otherwise qualified candidate. The Commissioners express that the passion and desire to be involved in the arts combined with a wide range of backgrounds and creative ideas among the balance of all Commissioners should be the primary selection consideration of a potential new Commissioner. While professional experience in the arts is helpful, the ACC does not feel it is a requirement to fill the role. Additionally, the ACC notes that many of the questions asked in the Commissioner Application (Attachment 2) are targeted towards established previous involvement in arts organizations and may be a limiting factor to obtaining a broader number of applicants.

***Questions for Discussion***

In order to best support the Council in their vision as it pertains to the arts in Los Gatos, the ACC has areas in which it seeks Council direction and/or specific clarification on the scope of the roles and duties of the Commission as it moves forward:

1. The Enabling Resolution clearly states that the role of the Commission is to advise Council regarding Town polices on art, drama, music, and other creative activities of the community. The ACC feels however, that since Town-directed projects regarding the arts are so few, there is little from an advisory standpoint that they can contribute towards. Over time this has shifted the work of the Commission from a purely advisory body to what the Commissioners feel is a project facilitation body. The ACC would like the Council to clarify the following in this regard:
  - a. Should the primary role of the ACC be advisory, project-based, or some combination of the two?
  - b. If advisory, what items do you envision should be directed to the ACC for input?
  - c. If project-based, the ACC asks the Council to acknowledge that projects will in most circumstances have a financial commitment associated with them. Is Council comfortable with the ACC working on projects that will inevitably be attached directly to funding requests?
  
2. The ACC understands that it has no jurisdiction or decision-making authority over artwork such as murals on an existing privately-owned building where no public funding is contributed or no public art funding requirement is involved, and further, that the content of a publicly visible mural on an existing private building is generally an agreement between the building owner and the artist. Despite these limitations, the ACC and community members have expressed the desire to see public murals as part of a thriving downtown.
  - a. To what extent should the ACC pursue facilitating murals or other public art on privately owned buildings in downtown (or elsewhere in town) with or without public funding?

DISCUSSION (continued):

- b. To what extent should the ACC pursue or seek to engage in public-private partnerships for arts projects?
  
3. The Public Arts Selection Policy (Attachment 4) is intended for the donation of physical artwork as an in-kind donation. The Town Donation Policy (Attachment 5) forms the framework by which the Town accepts and receives donations when appropriate. The ACC would like clarification on the Town's and/or Commission's ability to solicit for monetary sponsorships or identify donors for the purpose of commissioning new public artworks or supporting performing arts events:
  - a. To what extent should the Commissioners be, or not be, engaged in soliciting for monetary sponsorships or donations to support the arts?
  - b. What potential outside or private funding mechanisms should the Commissioners judge as safe/appropriate to pursue?
  
4. The ACC wishes to engage in partnerships with organizations that have the skills, personnel, and expertise to facilitate the growth of public arts in Los Gatos through visual and performing arts. However, the ACC recognizes that most potential partner organizations are primarily in need of funding to facilitate projects and generally have their own internal team of project management, idea generation, or advisory help to which the ACC would be redundant.
  - a. What role does the Council see the ACC playing for facilitating partnerships if the ACC cannot assist in a funding role?
  - b. Would the Council consider increasing the overall amount of Community Grant funding available to organizations?

Staff notes that the ACC is the only one of the 13 active Boards and Commissions that has been allocated project funding in the past. When available, designated funding is tied to the CIP budget. Annual Community Grants funding is allocated from the Town Manager's budget and is recommended for allocation by a committee made up of equal members from the Community Health and Senior Services Commission and members of the Arts and Culture Commission.

CONCLUSION:

The ACC has operated for over three decades with a multitude of different Commissioners changing seats and under dozens of different Councilmembers. Time and changes inevitably lead to some confusion, but also opportunities to chart new directions. The ACC looks forward to this discussion to clarify how the current Council envisions the Commission's roles, opportunities, and boundaries going forward.

PAGE 6 OF 6

SUBJECT: Arts and Culture Commission Joint Study Session

DATE: April 6, 2021

Attachments:

1. Enabling Resolution (2016)
2. Commissioner Application (undated)
3. Arts Plan Strategic Planning Process (2017)
4. Public Art Selection Policy (2009)
5. Town Solicitation and Donation Policy (2015)