



DC COMMISSION ON THE ARTS & HUMANITIES

**MINUTES**

**DC COMMISSION ON THE ARTS & HUMANITIES  
REGULAR MEETING  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2020**

**Call to Order**

The regular monthly meeting of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities was called to order at 5:30 pm, Monday, November 16, 2020 in open session via the WebEx virtual meeting platform, with Kay Kendall, Chairperson, presiding.

**Roll Call**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Kay Kendall, *Chairperson*; Stacie Lee Banks, *Vice-Chair*; Cicie Sattarnilasskorn, *Treasurer*; Alma H. Gates, *Public Art Chair*; Gretchen B. Wharton, *Grants Chair*; Cora Masters Barry; Quanice Floyd; Rhona Wolfe Friedman; Kymber Menkiti; Maria Rooney; José Alberto Uclés; Derek Younger

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Natalie Hopkinson; MaryAnn Miller

**STAFF ATTENDEES:**

Heran Sereke-Brhan, *Executive Director*; David Markey, *Deputy Director*; J. Carl Wilson, *General Counsel*; Lauren Dugas Glover, *Supervisory Program Manager for Public Art*; Brian Allende, *Resource Allocation Analyst*; Jeffrey Scott, *Chief of Staff*; Patrick Realiza, *Social Media Specialist*

**Quorum**

A quorum was determined to be present.

**Land Acknowledgment**

The Chair read the acknowledgment of the ancestral lands of the Nacotchtank and Piscataway Peoples.

**Adoption of the Agenda**

The meeting's agenda was adopted by unanimous consent.

**Approval of the Minutes**

The minutes of the October 15, 2020 regular meeting were approved by unanimous consent.

**Welcome & Public Comment**

Chris Naoum, Catherine Ferrando, Aaron Myers, and Graham Smith-White spoke on the continued economic hardships faced by independent music venues due to COVID-19 and the need for some kind of public assistance to prevent the venues from closing in the near future.

**Chairperson's Report**

Chair Kendall stated that the Council recently voted to confirm the reappointments of commissioners Stacie Lee Banks, Quanice Floyd, and Maria Hall Rooney; the appointments of three new commissioners: Hector Torres, Carla Sims, and Maggie Fitzpatrick; and the appointment of Heran Sereke-Brhan as Executive Director.

**Director's Report**

Executive Director Sereke-Brhan gave the Director's Report, noting that two staff members had recently changed roles: Lauren Dugas Glover is now the Supervisory Program Manager for Public Art, and Jeffrey Scott is now Chief of Staff. Both positions are in the Management Supervisory Service, allowing for a more efficient management structure for the agency. The Director also noted that the agency was in the preliminary stages of developing a multi-faceted approach to community engagement over the coming months.

**Finance Report**

Commissioner Sattarnilasskorn gave the Finance Report, noting that CAH's initial budget for FY21 of \$38 million had been reforecast by the OCFO to \$34 million due to declining sales tax revenues collected, and that staff were making necessary adjustments to work within the reduced budget amount.

**Public Art Committee Report**

Commissioner Gates gave the Public Art Committee report, which presented the FY21 Art Bank Program grant funding recommendations. Through the program, CAH provides support to local visual artists, District galleries, and District-based nonprofit arts organizations by acquiring fine art from metropolitan artists for the Art Bank Collection, which is display in District government agency buildings and offices. For FY21, 149 eligible applications were received and reviewed in the first round of two virtual panels. From the first round, the top-scoring 109 artworks were selected for second, final review. The recommendation is to acquire 60 works of art at various request amounts from 45 applicants for a total of \$229,583. Fifteen of the recommended artists are new to the Art Bank Collection. The geographic breakdown of the recommended artists is as follows: Ward 1, 6 artists; Ward 2, 1 artist; Ward 3, 2 artists; Ward 4, 5 artists; Ward 5, 8 artists; Ward 6, none; Ward 7, 2 artists; Ward 8, 1 artist; Maryland, 13 artists; Virginia, 8 artists.

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**Commissioner Gates moved that the Commission agree to the Public Art Committee's recommendation for the FY21 Art Bank Program grant as presented.**

**Roll call vote after discussion:**

*Ayes: Banks, Gates, Menkiti, Rooney, Uclés, Wharton, Younger*

*Noes: Friedman*

*NV: Barry, Floyd, Sattarnilasskorn*

**The motion was agreed to, 7-1-3.**

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**Grants Committee Report**

Commissioner Wharton gave the Grants Committee report and asked Deputy Director Markey to provide an update on the Upstart grant program. The Deputy Director stated that due to budget reductions, Upstart would not be offered as a traditional grant this year but was being reimagined as a series of capacity-building workshops and professional development events that would be available to the public as part of CAH's new community engagement initiatives.

Commissioner Wharton presented a proposal for a FY21 Facilities and Buildings-Relief (FAB-R) grant, which was developed by staff and agreed to by the Grants Committee. As proposed, FAB-R will pay up to 50% of an eligible organization's rent, mortgage, or lease payments for twelve months with an abbreviated application and objective pass/fail criteria. The maximum award amount would be \$40,000; no match would be required. An allocation of \$2 million from the \$4.45 million FY21 FAB budget would permit 50 awards at the maximum amount. Eligibility will be limited to nonprofit arts and humanities organizations committed to remaining in the District, receiving less than a total of \$200,000 in non-FAB awards from CAH in FY21 and receiving no more than \$60,000 in FY21 FAB (traditional) funds. A relief program for individuals is being planned for late-winter/early-spring 2021.

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**Commissioner Wharton moved that the Commission agree to the Grants Committee's proposed FY21 Facilities and Buildings-Relief (FAB-R) grant program as presented.**

**Roll call vote after discussion:**

*Ayes: Banks, Barry, Floyd, Friedman, Gates, Menkiti, Rooney, Sattarnilasskorn, Uclés, Wharton, Younger*

*Noes: none*

**The motion was agreed to, 11-0.**

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Commissioner Wharton continued the report, stating that the Grants Committee had included in their discussions the possibility of allowing for-profit arts organizations to be eligible to apply for FAB-R, but because of the OCFO's revised revenue forecast of an anticipated \$4.6 million dollar reduction to the agency's annual budget, along with the

**DRAFT MINUTES TO BE APPROVED AT THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING**

possibility of additional budget reductions in the coming months, the Committee was concerned that there was not enough funding available to include for-profit applicants.

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**Commissioner Wharton moved the following on behalf of the Grants Committee:**

***Resolved, That the Grants Committee does not recommend the Commission award FAB-R grants to for-profit entities.***

**Roll call vote after discussion:**

*Ayes: Banks, Barry, Floyd, Friedman, Gates, Menkiti, Rooney, Uclés, Wharton, Younger*

*Noes: none*

*NV: Sattarnilasskorn*

**The motion was agreed to, 10-0.**

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**New Business**

Commissioner Friedman stated that she believed it was important and necessary for commissioners to see images of visual artworks that are being recommended to receive funding, which had not been the case in the Public Art Committee report recommendations for Art Bank today.

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**Commissioner Friedman moved “that the Public Art Committee send to the full Commission only, two days prior to a meeting of the full Commission, images of the artworks being recommended for the Art Bank for Commissioner review prior to voting.”**

**Roll call vote after discussion:**

*Ayes: Banks, Floyd, Friedman, Gates, Sattarnilasskorn, Uclés, Wharton,*

*Noes: Menkiti*

*NV: Younger*

**The motion was agreed to, 7-1-1.**

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**Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the meeting, Chair Kendall adjourned the meeting at 6:54 pm.

The next regular meeting of the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities will be held Monday, December 14, 2020 at 5:30 pm.