

CITY OF OAKLAND

Cultural Affairs Commission Special Meeting Agenda Monday, May 19, 2025 5:30 – 8:30 PM

Please note that all meetings of the Cultural Affairs Commission will be conducted in person at:

**Oakland City Hall
1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Hearing Room 2 (First Floor), Oakland, CA
94612**

Join from PC, Mac, iPad, or Android:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84761257645>

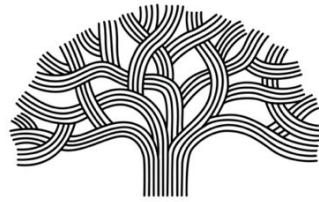
Phone one-tap:
+16699006833,,84761257645# US (San Jose)
+14086380968,,84761257645# US (San Jose)

Join via audio:
+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)
+1 408 638 0968 US (San Jose)
+1 669 444 9171 US
Webinar ID: 847 6125 7645
International numbers available:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/kcqYJBKVK>

RE: ZOOM PARTICIPATION + COMMENT PERIODS

All Cultural Affairs Commission meetings will be conducted in person. The Cultural Affairs Commission is no longer accepting public comments via Zoom or telephone. Therefore, live comments must be made in-person. There are two opportunities for the public to address the Cultural Affairs Commission and City staff. The first opportunity is during the "Public Comment" period. The second opportunity is during the "Open Forum" period. Dialogue during the meeting with Commissioners, City staff, or its guest speakers is not permitted outside of the two comment periods.

You can also choose to submit a written comment by 5:00 PM THE DAY BEFORE the meeting starts to culturalaffairs@oaklandca.gov. Any comments received via email during the duration or after the meeting may not be entered into public record but will be shared with the Commission and City staff later.



CITY OF OAKLAND

Cultural Affairs Commission

Special Meeting Agenda

Monday, May 19, 2025

5:30 – 8:30 PM

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order / Roll Call**
- II. Land Acknowledgement + Official City of Oakland Love Life Acknowledgement**
- III. Open Forum**
- IV. Action Item:**
 - a. Approve Minutes from the April 28, 2025 Regular Cultural Affairs Commission Meeting
- V. Informational Item: Cultural Affairs Division Update**
 - a. Interim Manager's Update
 - b. Cultural Funding Program Update
 - c. Public Art Program Update
- VI. Public Comment**
- VII. Cultural Affairs Commission Chair's Update**
- VIII. Commission Ad Hoc Teams/Updates**
- IX. Announcements & Acknowledgements**
- X. Adjournment**

**Next Regular Meeting: Monday, July 28, 2025 from 5:30 – 8:30 PM
at Oakland City Hall – 1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Oakland, CA 94612**

Oakland Cultural Affairs Division of the Economic & Workforce Development Department
1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, 9th fl. Oakland, CA 94612
www.oaklandculturalarts.org

This meeting location is wheelchair accessible. To request disability-related accommodations or to request American Sign Language (ASL), Cantonese, Mandarin, or Spanish language interpreter, please email culturalaffairs@oaklandca.gov or call (510) 238-2212 Or 711 (for Relay Service) at least five (5) business days before the meeting. Please refrain from wearing scented products to this meeting as a courtesy to attendees with chemical sensitivities.

Esta reunión es accesible para sillas de ruedas. Si desea solicitar adaptaciones relacionadas con discapacidades, o para pedir un intérprete de en español, Cantones, mandarín o de lenguaje de señas (ASL) por favor envíe un correo electrónico a culturalaffairs@oaklandca.gov o llame al (510) 238-2212 o al 711 para servicio de retransmisión (Relay service) por lo menos cinco días hábiles antes de la reunión. Se le pide de favor que no use perfumes a esta reunión como cortesía para los que tienen sensibilidad a los productos químicos. Gracias.

會場有適合輪椅出入設施。需要殘障輔助設施, 手語, 西班牙語, 粵語或國語翻譯服務, 請在會議前五個工作天電郵 riglesias@oaklandca.gov 或致電 (510) 238-2212 或 711 (電話傳達服務)。請避免塗搽香氛產品, 參加者可對化學成分敏感

Địa điểm tổ chức cuộc họp có đường dành riêng cho xe lăn. Để yêu cầu các phương tiện hỗ trợ phục vụ người khuyết tật hoặc yêu cầu thông dịch viên ASL, tiếng Quảng Đông, tiếng Quan Thoại hoặc tiếng Tây Ban Nha, vui lòng gửi email đến địa chỉ culturalaffairs@oaklandca.gov hoặc gọi đến số (510) 238-2212 hoặc 711 (với Dịch vụ Tiếp âm) ít nhất năm (5) ngày làm việc trước khi cuộc họp diễn ra. Vui lòng không sử dụng các sản phẩm có mùi thơm khi tham gia cuộc họp này như một phép lịch sự đối với những người tham dự nhạy cảm đối với các chất hóa học.

Cultural Affairs Division - Economic & Workforce Development Department Cultural Affairs Commission Contacts – Raquel Iglesias, Cultural Funding Coordinator, and Pamela Mattera, Assistant Cultural Funding Coordinator
Email: culturalaffairs@oaklandca.gov
Phone: (510) 238-2212
Telecommunications Relay Service: 711

Land Acknowledgement

On behalf of the Cultural Affairs Commission & Public Art Advisory Committee:

We want to take a moment to honor the traditions and territory we are a part of. Those of us on the land we now know as Oakland and lands all the way up to Albany are in Huichin (*Hooch-yoon*), the unceded territory of the Chochenyo (*Cho-Chen-yo*)-speaking Confederated Villages of Lisjan (*Lih-Shawn*) Ohlone. We stand with the Lisjan people and their right to legal recognition and benefits from the US Government

LIFE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT (abridged version)

We acknowledge that in service to our beloved city of Oakland, and all its citizens, adhering to the city of Oakland's official motto, "Oakland Love Life" we enter into this space committed to embody love as our guiding principle.

We acknowledge Love Life as our motto as we denounce violence in all forms and the conditions that create it.

We acknowledge that when we demonstrate love, we also exhibit respect and kindness towards each other.

We commit to acts of love as an intentional force to generate tangible solutions, in regards to all of our actions.

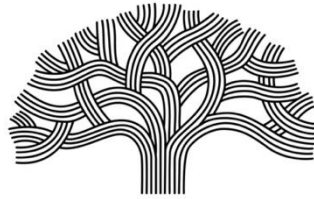
We recognize as leaders, we must set an example and precedent for those in community who have entrusted us with these duties.

We welcome and appreciate all contributions to this space, and even when expressing disagreement, we request that we lead with love in your heart.

We seek to find common ground, and tangible solutions that demonstrate love for our city, its residents, and all constituents.

We acknowledge that when we lead with love we are able to uplift a thriving city rooted in equity, equality, justice, inclusion, and opportunity for all.

We commit to the action of "Love Life" as our motto and mantra



CITY OF OAKLAND

Cultural Affairs Commission

Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 28, 2025

5:30 – 8:30 PM

Members in Attendance: Vanessa Whang (Chair), Jim Santi Owen (Vice Chair), Kev Choice, Jennifer Easton, Michelle Mush Lee, Ilana Lipsett

Members Absent: Olaywa K. Austin, Ebhodaghe Esoimeme, Mandolyn “Mystic” Ludlum (excused)

Staff in Attendance: Josie de Mira, Raquel Iglesias, Lex Leifheit, Pamela Mattera, Kristen Zarembo

Call to Order/Roll Call

1. Welcome

The meeting was called to order by Chair Whang at 5:40 PM.

2. Land Acknowledgement + Official City of Oakland Love Life Acknowledgement

Commissioner Lipsett read the Land Acknowledgement and Commissioner Choice read the City’s [Love Life Acknowledgement](#).

3. Informational Presentation – Town Nights

Zach Cohen shared an overview of the Town Nights program. For the last two years, Cohen has been an employee of the City of Oakland in the department of violence prevention, piloting Town Nights. Due to the City’s budget cuts, Town Nights is now an independent organization with a fiscal sponsor, Community Initiatives. They will be principally financed independently of the City, and are negotiating an agreement to continue using public spaces in-kind to create safe and free community engagement activities. He noted the four strategies crucial to the success of the program: outreach, employment opportunities, recreational activities and food, and community activation.

Cohen shared statistics, including that they hosted 89 events over two summers and served 35,000+ hot, free meals. He shared that their strategies will remain the same now that they are independent. A major change is that the pilot was limited to Friday night events over the summer and the program will now shift to a year-round calendar. He invited Oakland organizations and individuals to look to Town Nights as an advocate and a home for partnership.

During the Q&A, Commissioners expressed support for the program and asked if the program could possibly return to the City’s budget in the future. For this next iteration, the City will remain a

partner in the program. The Alameda County Probation Department has offered a three-year partnership of \$250,000 per year, pending board approval. Private philanthropy has looked at Town Nights as an event sponsorship; Cohen is trying to shift the narrative on this. The Commission posed an idea about collaboration between Town Nights and Festivals with regard to possible in-kind use of public space, given cuts to Cultural Affairs subsidies.

4. Informational Presentation – Oakland Cultural Collaborative

Lori Fogarty, director of the Oakland Museum of California, presented on behalf of an emerging consortium of cultural organizations in Oakland. Their mandate is to develop models and case studies for bold systemic change for support of arts and culture in Oakland, whether public or private philanthropy. She described the ecosystem as fragile and precarious.

Fogarty shared recent examples of arts advocacy in Oakland, including advocacy that successfully secured federal pandemic relief funds for arts and culture uses through Alameda County; an endeavor by cultural facilities to attempt a bond measure last year, demonstrating the urgent need for infrastructure; and candidate forums leading up to November 2025 council elections.

The collaborative is hoping to host a series of convenings or a conversation in July 2025 with the field and to commission data research (economic, health and wellbeing, employment, safety, etc.) to help make their case.

Fogarty suggested that Cultural Affairs could play an important role in Oakland's creative and cultural sector by providing research and policy support. They will soon be reaching out to the broader arts community for involvement and welcome any support gathering data and case studies.

Fogarty shared that what sets the Oakland arts community apart is that organizations of all sizes are working together.

5. Public Comment

No public comments were entered for items on the agenda.

6. Action Item 1: Approval of Minutes from October, January, and February

Motion to return to Action Item to approve meeting minutes made by Vice Chair Santi Owen and seconded by Commissioner Easton. Motion to approve the meeting minutes from October 28, 2024; January 27, 2025; and February 10, 2025 made by Commissioner Easton; seconded by Vice Chair Owen.

Austin	Absent
Choice	AYE
Easton	AYE
Esoimeme	Absent
Lee	AYE
Lipsett	AYE
Ludlum	Absent
Owen	AYE
Whang	AYE

The motion passed.

7. Interim Cultural Affairs Manager Report

Lex Leifheit, Interim Cultural Affairs Manager, provided an update on the work of the Division. Leifheit shared the timeline for the City's budgeting process and the Division's role, as described in the budget documents, which is a work-in-process as resources shift. She described the Division's work in three buckets: deploying and leveraging the resources available, including staff and financial assistance; developing policy, plans, and programs informed by listening and analysis; and delivering high-quality service and accessible results. She noted that the team has been actively engaging with the community, and listed examples since the Commission last met in February 2025.

8. Cultural Program Updates

Raquel Iglesias, Cultural Funding Coordinator, provided a recap on funding cuts and the Special Cultural Affairs Commission meeting on February 10, 2025. The grants and subsidies recommended by Commissioners at the February meeting were approved by City Council on April 14 and the CFP team is now working on the contracting process.

Kristen Zaremba, Public Art Coordinator, presented slides and an update on recent Public Art activities. The team is tentatively scheduled to present the Public Art Plan at City Council on May 13, 2025. Mosswood Park Community Center is under construction and the Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) has approved the community-based selection panel recommendation to award the project commission to Oakland artist Adia Millett. Zaremba shared examples of Millett's work. Zaremba subsequently shared updates on a private development project with artist Craig Dorety for an East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC) affordable housing development on a city-owned parcel at East 12th Street. Examples of other EBALDC projects coming online which incorporate public art include: The Phoenix housing in West Oakland, West Brush & Grand, and Senior Housing for the Lake Merritt / Chinatown BART station. Zaremba noted that recommendations for new PAAC members have been shared with the Mayor's Office. She added that progress is being made on state-wide legislation to amend the licensing requirements for muralists, pending approval by the California State Senate.

9. Action Item 2: Recommended Amendments to Ordinance 13561

Lex Leifheit walked Commissioners through amendments to Ordinance 13561. These are procedural suggestions for change: standing committees to be approved by the City Administrator instead of the City Council and establishing quorum. A discussion ensued on the difference between standing and ad hoc committees, especially in terms of public participation. After a question about required meeting attendance for Commissioners, Leifheit stated that staff are directed by the Ordinance to submit an attendance report to the Mayor's Office twice a year. Motion to recommend the amended ordinance for approval by City Council by Commissioner Easton, seconded by Commissioner Lipsett.

Austin	Absent
Choice	AYE
Easton	AYE
Esoimeme	Absent
Lee	AYE
Lipsett	AYE
Ludlum	Absent
Owen	AYE

Whang AYE

The motion passed.

10. Discussion Item: Drafted Bylaws

Before the discussion on newly drafted bylaws, Commissioners engaged in conversation about relationships with elected officials and what power the Commission holds. Leifheit introduced that a goal of the bylaws is to help the Commission own its power. Leifheit and Chair Whang highlighted shifting from a mayoral-appointed Chair of the Commission to having the Commission elect the Chair and adopting two-year terms for Chair and Vice Chair. Commissioners debated the strengths of both approaches for electing a Chair. Leifheit recommended that typically, the Commissions elect their Chair and Chair Whang agreed, emphasizing that the Commission is a citizen body that advises elected officials on the City's cultural needs. Leifheit flagged the importance of upcoming commission recruitment. Chair Whang noted that the bylaws intended to address Commissioner responsibilities and make clear how conflicts of interest affect the Commission. She also mentioned that the Commission must be in alignment with the Government Acts Guide and the Boards and Commission Ethics Handbook. Commissioner Lee lifted up three areas for further discussion: attending City Council/Life Enrichment meetings as a designated duty, the role of Commission secretary, and clarification around artists recusing themselves from decisions regarding City funding. An ad hoc committee will form to continue discussing the by-laws, particularly around the conflict of interest policy.

11. Cultural Affairs Commission Chair Update

Chair Whang reported on recent events for Arts, Creativity & Culture Month (April), including the Oakland Kickoff Event at OMCA and CA for the Arts' Arts Summit and Arts Advocacy Day, and noted the participation of CAD staff, many Oakland arts community members, and Commissioners Choice, Easton, and herself. Attendance was robust at all events. She expressed gratitude to CA for the Arts, Grassroots Artist Advocates, and Alameda County Arts Commission for their organizing and support.

12. Ad Hoc Committee/Commissioner Updates

Commissioner Choice echoed Chair Whang's enthusiasm for CA for the Arts and the Arts & Culture Summit. He suggested presenting at the Summit next year, perhaps on Oakland's Cultural Strategist-in-Government (CSIG) program.

Commissioner Lipsett asked those who attended the Summit or Advocacy Day to share photos or quotes for the next action network newsletter.

Vice Chair Owen asked Commissioners to send recommendations for upcoming Commission vacancies. Commissioner Lipsett inquired if there is a job description and volunteered to create an infographic for those interested in serving as a Commissioner.

Commissioner Lee commended Commissioner Lipsett on recent communications as well as staff who are managing the Division's Instagram account.

13. Announcement & Acknowledgements

Vice Chair Owen acknowledged that the next Commission meeting on May 18, 2025 will be during budget negotiations so he'd like an agenda item to discuss outreach. Commissioner Easton requested that the meeting adjourn in memory of D'Wayne Wiggins, of Tony! Toni! Toné! Commissioner Choice offered sentiments expressing how much Wiggins meant to Oakland's arts community.

14. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Vice Chair Owen, seconded by Commissioner Easton.

The meeting adjourned at 8:33 PM.

DRAFT