



Civic Arts Commission

**Civic Arts Commission
Public Art Subcommittee
Tuesday, September 19, 2023
3:00 PM**

PUBLIC ADVISORY: THIS MEETING WILL BE CONDUCTED EXCLUSIVELY THROUGH VIDEOCONFERENCE AND TELECONFERENCE

To access the meeting remotely: Join from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone, or Android device: Please use this URL <https://cityofberkeley-info.zoomgov.com/j/1601608901>. If you do not wish for your name to appear on the screen, then use the drop-down menu and click on "rename" to rename yourself to be anonymous. To request to speak, use the "raise hand" icon by rolling over the bottom of the screen. To join by phone: Dial **1-669-254-5252** and enter Meeting ID: **160 160 8901**. If you wish to comment during the public comment portion of the agenda, Press *9 and wait to be recognized by the Chair.

To submit an e-mail comment during the meeting to be read aloud during public comment, email civicsarts@berkeleyca.gov with the Subject Line in this format: "PUBLIC COMMENT ITEM ##." Please observe a 150-word limit. Time limits on public comments will apply

Agenda

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The City of Berkeley recognizes that the community we live in was built on the territory of xučyun (Huchiun (Hooch-yoon)), the ancestral and unceded land of the Chochenyo (Chochen-yo)-speaking Ohlone (Oh-low-nee) people, the ancestors and descendants of the sovereign Verona Band of Alameda County. This land was and continues to be of great importance to all of the Ohlone Tribes and descendants of the Verona Band. We acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of Berkeley, the documented 5,000-year history of a vibrant community at the West Berkeley Shellmound, and the Ohlone people

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who continue to reside in the East Bay. We recognize that Berkeley's residents have and continue to benefit from the use and occupation of this unceded stolen land since the City of Berkeley's incorporation in 1878. As stewards of the laws regulating the City of Berkeley, it is not only vital that we recognize the history of this land, but also recognize that the Ohlone people are present members of Berkeley and other East Bay communities today. The City of Berkeley will continue to build relationships with the Lisjan Tribe and to create meaningful actions that uphold the intention of this land acknowledgement.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT (for items not on the agenda)

4. CHAIR'S REPORT

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS WITH POSSIBLE ACTION

- a) Action: Approval of mural design by Nigel Sussman for Fire Station #5 (Attachment 1)
From: Jennifer Lovvorn
Public Comment

- b) Action: Approval of selected artwork proposals for Aquatic Park (to be announced at meeting)
From: Jennifer Lovvorn
Public Comment Letter Received (Attachment 2)
Public Comment

- c) Discussion of Queen Shamiram Donation
From: Jennifer Lovvorn
Public Comment

- d) Staff Report
From: Jennifer Lovvorn
Public Comment

6. ADJOURNMENT

Attachments:

- 1. Mural Design by Nigel Sussman for Fire Station #5
- 2. Public Comment Received for Aquatic Park Public Art Project Selection

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1236 Oxford St.
Berkeley, CA 94709
Sept 9, 2023

Berkeley Civic Arts Commission and Public Art Subcommittee (for Sept. 19 and 27 meetings)
Berkeley Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Commission (for Sept. 13 meeting)
Cultural Affairs Officer Jennifer Lovvorn; Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Director Scott Ferris; City Clerk

Commissioners and Staff Members:

I strongly urge that the Civic Arts Commission consider carefully whether the large, costly, and highly visible public art works proposed for Aquatic Park meet two of the project's three stated goal: "reflecting the multi-layered history of the site, and highlighting its ecological importance."

While some proposals seem to me to meet these goals, all deserve careful scrutiny. In what ways do they reflect this site's history? Do they highlight actual ecology of these human-made lagoons, or our myths or wishes?

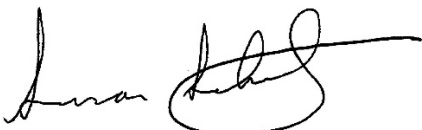
Here are two examples I believe clearly fail to meet these goals:

- Artist Jean Shin's lovely abalone shells tell the sad story of our decimation of these once-plentiful giant snails. Abalone, however, are creatures of the open Pacific Coast, with its reasonably consistent salinity and temperatures, large kelp, and rocky substrate, among other factors. Abalone appear never to have lived in San Francisco Bay, much less in artificial lagoons with limited circulation and massive inflows of freshwater runoff. (See Andrew Cohen, *An Introduction to the San Francisco Estuary*, published by Save the Bay, San Francisco Estuary Institute, and San Francisco Estuary Project.)
- Artist Liz Hernandez proposes a colorful mosaic of California wildflowers used in commercial seed mixes. Except for California poppies, these are not typical of East Bay shorelines. In Aquatic Park, they have been seeded from time to time, such as spring 2023, when seeded goldfields and a few others put on a show in the just-cleared organic-waste dump north of the rowers' boathouse. Based on 25 years of East Bay observations, I feel confident these will not persist. Aquatic Park can and does have beautiful wildflowers. Miniature meadows of jaumea edge the water, backed up by taller bright suns of coastal gumplant. Plantings due to the new lab building will include more species of salt-marsh flowers. Sticky monkeyflower, yellow bush lupine, and beach evening primrose flourished for years following efforts of Aquatic Park EGRET volunteers, the city after costly environmental study, and CalTrans mitigation. All were recently wiped out by close mowing.

I write as a longtime resident who has enjoyed Aquatic Park from the time my children were small. As part of Berkeley Partners for Parks, I helped [build](#) the Dreamland for Kids playground. As head of Friends of Five Creeks, I have removed invasives and encouraged natives at Aquatic Park for more than 20 years. Now in my 80s, I am part of an informal group seeking to revive community stewardship.

Please choose art that is at least congruent with the reality of this lovely, beloved, but troubled finger of artificially enclosed bay: The near-miracle year when the park's eucalyptus trees were festooned with thousands of monarch butterflies. The great egrets that roosted in other eucalyptus, now too thinned. The smaller snowy egrets that use the dense evergreens on the west shore. (Should these be pruned to frame a fantasy ship?) The dwindled flocks of migrant shorebirds loafing on the shoals of the southwest shore. The hope that black-necked stilts now stay year-round. The thrill of bat rays "flying" through the water -- not seen since February's massive die-off, attributed to massive inflows of storm water and lack of circulation, problems [pointed out in studies since at least 1990](#).

Sincerely,



Susan Schwartz