

*"For Locals, by Locals"*

# Newport Beach Independent

## City Accepts \$500K Grant for Sculpture Exhibition, Arts Education

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The Newport Beach Civic Center sculpture exhibition received a hefty contribution this week.

On Tuesday, City Council approved the application for Specified Grant Funding for \$500,000 for the Sculpture Exhibition in Civic Center Park Project

Earlier this year, Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris (D-Laguna Beach) allocated \$500,000 in the 2019-20 state budget for city of Newport Beach Arts Commission.

The grant guidelines require projects to be completed by Dec. 31, 2021. To meet the time requirements, staff proposed the grant be utilized for Phase V of the sculpture exhibition, currently funded in the city's 2019-20 budget, and Phase VI, to be programmed for 2020-21.

The action also included that the funds be used to enhance educational programming as part of the opening of Phases V and VI, and rehabilitation of the footpath in Civic Center Park.

Councilman Jeff Herdman moved to keep the \$135,000 as funding for the upcoming phase V, and use the grant funds for phases VI and VII.

Mayor Pro Tem Will O'Neill made a substitute motion to return the \$135,000 to the general fund and use the grant funds for phases V and VI

In explaining her support of the substitute motion, Mayor Diane Dixon said there are other pressing needs facing the city, particularly dealing with the homeless situation.

The substitute motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

The vote returns \$135,000 of general fund monies from Visit Newport Beach Public Benefit Funding, currently allocated for phase V.



*"Slices of Heaven" by Craig Gray, part of phase IV of the Sculpture Exhibition at Civic Center Park.  
— Photo by Christopher Trela ©*

Councilwoman Joy Brenner said the grant presents an opportunity.

"I'm really excited that at least the next two phases of the sculpture garden are approved," Brenner said.

It takes the pressure off the Arts Commission, for the time being, Brenner said. She suggested the funds being returned to the general fund be use for further outreach to study what the community wants and what they would be willing to subsidize through private contributions. Brenner confirmed that she would propose bring the idea back for discussion at a future meeting.

"I would really like to know what kind of art our community would like to see more of," Brenner said. "This is a great opportunity... for us to see what our community thinks about public art."

The item was continued from the Oct. 8 Council agenda in order for staff to review the grant's accounting, reporting and auditing requirements. Staff has reviewed these requirements and does not foresee any difficulty in adhering to the rules and regulations.

Arts Commission Chair Arlene Greer said the Commission and the people of Newport Beach have "realized a significant goal."

"We've been recognized for the outstanding work our community has put forth to create our museum without walls," Greer said.

Greer thanked Council members, both current and past, for their vision and support of the project.

"Without your support there would be no sculpture garden," she said.

Accepting this grant will secure the funding for two more phases of the exhibition, Greer explained. It will also allow them to renew and repair the grounds at the Civic Center Park, saving the city approximately \$200,000, she added.

"We hope and look forward to many more years of enjoyment of our museum without walls here in the community," Greer said.

Patricia Jorgensen, president of NB Arts Foundation, also spoke in support of accepting the grant.

This is way to save money from being used in the general fund and it brings money into the community from outside sources, Jorgensen noted.

Between the culture, harbor, and back bay, Newport Beach is a great place to live and visit, Secretary of NB Arts Foundation Carmen Smith commented.

"Vibrant culture, vibrant city," she said.

The funds will install and maintain the sculptures and the park. The walkway in the park has already been damaged and needs some repair, she noted.

The park could accommodate up to 30 pieces of art, Smith said.

"We have worked really hard to support this program," including conducting several tours, she said. "Everybody enjoys it. This is a real amenity for the city of Newport Beach."



*Burnt Matchstick by  
Karl Unnasch in the  
park at the Newport  
Beach Civic Center.  
— Photo by Sara Hall*

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