



**MINUTES OF THE
MEETING OF THE
Arts and Culture Commission
Monday, August 27, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.**

**El Cerrito City Hall – Council Chambers
10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito**

Approved September 24, 2018

7:02 pm Roll Call

Present: Ruth Cazden, Allison Cooper, Richard Fernandez, George Gager, Judith Tannenbaum, Christopher Walsh

Council Liaison: Councilmember Paul Fadelli

Staff Liaison: Maya Williams

1. Commissioners Reports & Liaison Reports

Councilmember Fadelli reported on major actions taken and discussions had by the City Council at its most recent meeting.

Commissioner Tannenbaum reported the new Poet Laureate, Dani Gabriel, was presented to the City Council at its most recent meeting.

Commissioner Cazden reported that she continues to work the California Sound Collective in regards to a possible music festival in El Cerrito in summer 2019.

Staff Liaison Williams announced two new ACC Commissioners: Richard Fernandez and Amei Papitto.

2. Comments from the Public

None.

3. Approval of Minutes

Motion (Cooper/Tannenbaum) to approve minutes of July 23, 2018 meeting: Passed, 4-0.

4. ECCRU Artist in Residence Selection

Williams described the ECCRU program and selection process, and Commissioner Cooper presented the selected candidate, Erin McCluskey Wheeler.

Motion (Tannenbaum/Walsh) to award the ECCRU Artist in Residency to Wheeler:
Passed, unanimous.

5. Acoustic Consideration for the Community Center

Ken Kantor, acoustics expert, made a presentation on his study of ways to improve the acoustics in the Community Center. He suggests that the ACC discuss the findings and budget considerations and then discuss next steps with him. Williams will contact Recreation and other relevant departments and will report to ACC at next meeting.
(Kantor report attached)

6. Arts Month Planning

Commissioner Walsh is working on a publicity poster and brochure for Arts Month. Discussion of timeline, including requesting a proclamation by the City Council; finalizing publicity materials; hanging banners around the city.

7. Proposal Process for Commission Support

Discussion of procedure and documents relating to the process for requesting support from the ACC. Williams will provide amended documents at the next meeting.

8. Review of Standing Subcommittees

This item was put over until the next meeting.

9. Subcommittee Updates

- a. ACC/EDC Subcommittee – Discussion of updates in efforts to include musical performances in Restaurant Week. Motion (Cazden/Tannenbaum) to fund musicians who participate in Restaurant Week 2018 music activity at \$100/hour/musician; total support limited to no more than \$800. Passed, unanimous.
- b. Community Outreach Subcommittee – Tannenbaum suggested that this subcommittee may not be necessary, given that the procedure for submitting proposals to ACC is being created.

10. Items for Next Meeting

Proposal process for Commission support

EC Art Association: discussion of providing judges and/or support for annual art show

Adjourned Time: 8:52 pm

Acoustic Considerations for the El Cerrito Community Center

27-AUG-18

Ken Kantor

Executive Summary:

The El Cerrito Community Center is a multi-use facility seating approximately 200 people. The large, (3,200 ft², 45,000 ft³), untreated room suffers from a number of acoustical problems, including poor intelligibility and room tone. An informal study was undertaken to determine ways to mitigate these problems in a cost-effective manner. It is my opinion that a significant, although not complete, improvement can be effected using fairly cost effective means. A few possible directions to pursue are discussed below.

Background:

Early this year, as the result of a chance meeting, Chris Sterba invited me to visit the Community Center to discuss acoustical issues that were resulting in audience complaints. Although I took no technical measurements, the architectural reasons for these problems were immediately obvious. Three general problems were noted to be the most significant:

- 1- A great deal of reverberation, which renders both presented speech and audience conversation difficult to understand.
- 2- An uneven tone, emphasizing or reducing, certain sounds in certain places.
- 3- A large change in room sound based on the size of the audience, the presence of tables, etc.

Further to my visit, I contacted suppliers of acoustical treatment materials to begin to explore options and budgets.

Room Acoustics Fundamentals:

- While room acoustics is complex, the most important single measure of a room's sound is, "Reverberation Time," or, "RT60." This number is determined by the size of the room, and how reflective or absorbant the surfaces are.
- Different applications do best with different amounts of of reverberation.
- Speech and lectures: RT60 less than 1 second.
- Most music: RT60 about 1.5 seconds.
- Liturgical, choral, symphonic music: RT60 of 2 seconds, or above.
- Typical target for multi-use spaces: RT60 between 1.5 and 2 seconds.
- Estimated when CC room empty: RT60 greater than 6 seconds.

- Estimated when at capacity: RT60 above 4 seconds.
- These differences may seem small, but they are not. Such numbers can make the difference in sound between a large living room and a cathedral or gymnasium.
- An added complication is that large, flat reflective surfaces can produce a nasty kind of sonic, "hall of mirrors" effect that causes unpleasant ringing tones. This effect was prominent between the rear, (behind the presenter), and front, (entrance) walls.
- Another significant factor is that RT60 is highly dependent on the size of the audience, the presence or absence of tables and chairs, carpeting, etc.

Mitigation Strategies:

- Add as much absorptive material as possible to reduce overall RT60, and reduce the variations caused by audience absorption.
- Concentrate on treating to rear wall to reduce hall of mirrors effect.
- Commercial wall treatments would cost 10's of thousands of dollars, but draping heavy fabric material can work well, be attractive and, possibly, be sourced as surplus or a donation.
- Numerous flags or drapes can be permanently hung from the ceiling in a decorative manner.
- The Center currently owns a few rolling acoustical divider walls. These can be used to further improve the sound absorption and to adjust slightly for different uses. These should probably be supplemented with an additional equal number of similar dividers.
- Cost and technical details were obtained from the divider manufacturer, and forwarded under separate cover.
- Inexpensive fabric or fabric-over-foam fixtures can be hand made, attached or removed from the side walls as needed.
- In all cases, fire codes must be considered in the choice of material.

Budget Discussion:

- It is difficult to develop an accurate budget before determining which of the above approaches are acceptable to the Center and, especially, what materials may be sourced for free or at a discount. Some >very< rough guesses are below, just for discussion purposes.
- Fabric and hanging materials for rear wall, (~100 yds): \$1,000 to \$2,000, plus installation labor.
- 10 fixtures for side walls: \$1,000.
- Ceiling banners: \$2,000 to \$5,000, plus installation labor.
- Additional dividers: \$4,000 to \$10,000, depending on source and condition.
- All estimates assume that volunteer labor is available for simple sourcing, fabrication and installation tasks.

Recommendations:

- Minimum: \$2,000, ceiling only.
- Recommended basic: \$6,000, ceiling and rear wall.
- Recommended target: \$7,000, ceiling, rear wall, side walls.
- Maximum benefit: \$11,000 to \$18,000.

Next Steps:

- Q&A.
- Committee discussions.
- Formulate action team.
- Second meeting.
- Budget refinement.
- Selection of approach.
- Source materials.
- Budget update
- Begin work.
- Make actual acoustic measurements to document effectiveness.
