



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: January 27, 2021

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Recreation Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Santa Barbara Arts and Crafts Show Program

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Commission receive a presentation on the Santa Barbara Arts and Crafts Show and discuss options for improving the Show organization to ensure its successful longevity.

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this report is to provide the Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) with an overview of the Santa Barbara Arts and Crafts Show (Show), present key issues, and outline considerations for improving the Show to ensure its successful longevity. The Parks and Recreation Department staff (Staff) prepared this report in response to the request of the Commission at its regular meeting on December 16, 2020.

Introduction

A long standing Santa Barbara tradition, the Show has officially operated in Chase Palm Park between State Street and Calle Cesar Chavez since 1974 (Attachment 1). In recent years, due to a number of economic challenges, as well as organizational difficulties, Show members, the Arts and Crafts Show Advisory Committee and Department staff have grappled with approaches to ensure the successful longevity of the Show. The following discussion provides the Commission with a brief review of the Show background, municipal code guidance, and Advisory Committee functions. Key issues and considerations, as identified by Show members, Advisory Committee members and/or Staff follow to provide a framework for further discussion. The report also provides the Commission with a review of efforts to sustain the Show during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Background

The Santa Barbara Arts and Crafts Show first began in 1965 when a dozen artists, led by painter Robert Eischen, displayed their work in De La Guerra Plaza on Sundays. An informal event called the “Domingo Art Show”, the group outgrew De La Guerra Plaza and moved to

Cabrillo Boulevard, where it expanded to Saturdays and Sundays. Crafts members who created functional items such as clothing, jewelry, and pottery, joined in 1971.

Criticized by downtown businesses when it changed from an art gallery to a marketplace that would compete with other businesses, conflict between artists and the business community led to a 1973 ballot initiative seeking to formalize the Show. The initiative was approved by a vote of 10,161 in favor and 7,392 against.

Municipal Code Chapter 15.08 Santa Barbara Arts and Crafts Show

Established by Ordinance 3626 in 1974, Chapter 15.08 provides the policy guidance for the Santa Barbara Arts and Crafts Show (Attachment 2). The Chapter establishes the time, dates and location of the Show, Show administration, Advisory Committee composition, rules and regulations, exhibit and exhibitor parameters, fees and permit requirements. Key aspects of the municipal provisions establish the basis for the formation and governance of the Show.

Advisory Committee

Section 15.08.060 establishes the Arts and Crafts Show Advisory Committee to advise the Department Director concerning the administration of the Show. The Committee is composed of two members and two alternates representing the Arts section, and two members and two alternates representing the Crafts section. Committee members are elected by Show members. Appointments are made for staggered 18-month terms and members cannot serve more than two consecutive terms. The Committee also includes one member at large which is appointed by the Parks and Recreation Commission,

Administration and Rules and Regulations

Section 15.08.050 provides the Department Director with administrative authority, and the Recreation Superintendent (Supervisor) responsibility to promulgate rules and regulations (15.08.070) with the advice and suggestions of the Advisory Committee. Section 15.08.170 also gives the Recreation Supervisor the ability to delegate any of the administrative authority to the Advisory Committee.

Terms and Conditions of Exhibits and Exhibitors

A number of sections of the code provide guidance for the type of exhibits, residence of exhibitors (limited to Santa Barbara County), application process to exhibit, payment of fees, and conditions under which a permit may be revoked. The Recreation Supervisor has the administrative authority to approve all applications if the applicant demonstrates that the exhibits meet the requirements set forth in the code as well as published "Standards and Guidelines for Permit Applications" (15.08.080).

Procedures and Regulations

Consistent with Sections 15.08.070 and 15.08.080, the Show has a set of Procedures and Regulations that provide guidance on exhibitor applications, permit requirements, Show conduct, the Advisory Committee and Show Administration (Attachment 3). As a matter of

practice, Department staff works with the Advisory Committee, with input from the Show members, to develop, revise and implement the procedures and regulations. Over time, the rules and procedures have become increasingly lengthy and complex. The attached document, dated December 2019, contains 19 page of requirements that apply to all Show members.

Key Issues

Advisory Committee

There are a number of issues regarding the elections and appointments of Advisory Committee members, as well as the conduct of meetings that contribute to conflict within the Committee and among the Show membership. Although a full Committee slate would total nine members (including four alternates), this is rarely achieved. The member at large position is rarely filled and has historically not drawn many interested applicants. This position, representing neither the Arts nor the Crafts sections, can be pivotal for Committee decision-making. The declining pool of Show members (from a maximum of 280 to the current membership of 150), also limits the pool of potential applicants, especially since not all Show members seek a role on the Advisory Committee. This has historically made it difficult to fill the Committee roster. Lastly, since Advisory Committee members are also Show members, there is potential for an underlying economic conflict of interest with all decision making.

Administration, Procedures and Regulations

Since the Show's inception, staff has worked with the Committee to develop a working document with guidance for day-to-day operations. While the rules are regularly updated through a collaborative process with staff, the Committee, and Show members, rules and regulations are relatively restrictive as compared with other community arts and crafts events. Some members oppose rule changes out of concern that the Show would change from its initial vision, while other members request less restrictive procedures that allow use of newer technologies and opportunities such as 3D printing and use prints of paintings as long as painters comply with the same rules as photographers. In addition, potential new members are often dissuaded from joining the Show due to the extensive rules and procedures, and the process by which the Committee evaluates applications.

Show Sections

When Crafts members were invited to join the Show in 1971, they were allowed to participate in a less-desirable area east of the Chase Palm Park Center, while Arts section members selling decorative fine arts were assigned the spaces starting at State Street where there are adjacent businesses, better parking, and larger spaces. This geographic division of premium and non-premium assignments has contributed towards many conflicts over the years. Members consider the most desirable spaces to begin at Mission Creek and extend east to Garden Street. The division of members into divided sections at the Show has been challenged several times by Crafts section members. The Committee has never approved requests to integrate the Crafts and the Arts exhibitors.

Membership Price and Benefits

There are a number of issues related to membership fees and benefits that create inequities as well as present challenges for scheduling other events within and adjacent to Chase Palm Park on Show days.

Show members pay an annual fee of \$568 for the opportunity to show at least 62 days per year (every Sunday, plus ten holiday shows – nine of which occur on Saturdays). This fee includes an annual assessment of \$24 to support advertising. Very affordable as a year-round show, with the Palm Springs VillageFest most similar, which has annual fees of \$3,333. Many other arts and crafts shows only operate for a single weekend.

All members pay the same fee regardless of which section they are in, space assignment size, or if they have an assigned space. Spaces are not all the same size because the original concept provided for a larger space to accommodate art exhibits. Arts section spaces average 59% larger than Crafts section spaces. Some spaces are less desirable due the location of trees, utility boxes, and parking availability. Space sizes are established through Committee meetings and are occasionally adjusted as needed, such as during the Cabrillo Bridge widening project which reduced the Show's usable space.

Since Show members have the opportunity to exhibit year-round, the Show has exclusive use of a large section of Chase Palm Park on Sundays and holidays, and receives considerable staff support for Show communications, Committee meetings and Show days. Each year, Santa Barbara hosts a multitude of special, community, and expressive events that enhance the quality of life and contribute to the economic vitality of the City. Year-round exclusive use on Sundays has significantly limited the opportunities for special event organizers to use Chase Palm Park, Cabrillo Blvd, or other areas adjacent to the Show in the waterfront.

Membership Declines

During the early years of the show, there were few opportunities for local artists and craftspeople to exhibit. From the 1970's into the 1990's, the show was often at full capacity (280 members). Annual membership levels averaged 200 participants from the mid-1990's to 2015. Beginning in 2015, the Cabrillo Boulevard Bridge widening and the lower State Street construction projects adversely impacted Show membership, which has not rebounded. Declines in Show membership were exclusive to the Crafts section, partly due to a significant section of on-street parking lost when it was re-designated as a red curb section on the eastern half of the Crafts section. At the same time, as with traditional bricks and mortar retail, the popularity of the Show as a shopping destination declined with the increase in online retail. In addition, in the current economic and retail environment, local artists and craftspeople also have more opportunities for sales locally, including the Makers Market in Paseo Nuevo, seasonal stores, boutiques, and online sales. As the table on the following page indicates, Show membership declined 40% between 2015 and 2019.

Participation Statistics (as of July of each year)

Year	Arts Members	Crafts Members	Total
2015	60	130	190
2016	55	119	174
2017	55	104	159
2018	60	94	154
2019	60	90	150

COVID-19 Pandemic Impacts

The Show was suspended on March 22, 2020 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic (Pandemic). Throughout the spring and summer, Staff worked with the City Attorney and Santa Barbara County Public Health Department to navigate the Health Officer Orders and identify ways to successfully restart programs, services, and the Show. In September, the County of Santa Barbara Health Department approved the Show to resume under the category of “retail operations.”

Foreseeing the potential reopening of the Show, staff met with the Committee to begin planning for reopening. Staff polled members to determine their interest and the Committee held a special meeting to review options on how to safely proceed. Approximately half the membership wanted to resume Show operations while the remainder wanted to wait until they felt conditions were safer. As a result of membership feedback and Committee input, a system was established to allow any member to place their membership into an unpaid hiatus status beginning on March 22, 2020, and extending until they returned to the Show. The Department is allowing flexibility, within reason, on when members return; some may not resume until the summer.

The Show resumed on Sunday October 4, 2020. Normal procedures and regulations are temporarily modified to avoid large gaps between sparsely populated areas due to lower expected attendance. To equitably assign the spaces, the online reservation system (SignUpGenius) allows members with assigned spaces to pre-reserve those spaces before vacant spaces could be claimed on a weekly basis.

Safety protocols require exhibits to be set back six feet from the sidewalk edge, face coverings to be worn at all times, and a limit of one household visiting each member’s space at a time. The Department registered with the County Health Department’s Reopening In Safe Environment (RISE) certification program and required all returning Show members to independently register with RISE.

There were 16 show days, including additional holiday days, since the Show reopened in October through December 2020, and 27 to 38 members present at Sunday shows.

Considerations for Discussion

Today's environment is vastly different than when the Show was established in 1974. With a variety of retail, dining, museum, and outdoor activities, Santa Barbara's waterfront is a popular destination for both residents and visitors. At the same time, the Show is in decline. To ensure the successful longevity of the Show, Staff seeks the Commission's input on options to improve the Show, while supporting broader community activities and special events in the waterfront. Staff recommendations for further discussion include:

1. Undertake amendments to Municipal Code Chapter 15.08 to address Show administration, organization, membership residency, and Advisory Committee structure.
2. Streamline Rules, Regulations and Procedures to increase equity and flexibility, for both Arts members and Crafts members and broaden show membership.
3. Establish Plans and Guidelines Policies for Use of the Waterfront for Special Events during Arts and Crafts Show Days.

ATTACHMENTS: 1. Arts and Crafts Show Map
2. Municipal Code Chapter 15.08
3. Arts and Crafts Show Procedures and Regulations

SUBMITTED BY: Jason Bryan, Senior Recreation Supervisor

REVIEWED BY: Rich Hanna, Recreation Manager

APPROVED BY: Jill Zachary, Parks and Recreation Director