



CITY OF PACIFICA
PARKS, BEACHES AND RECREATION COMMISSION
AGENDA SUMMARY REPORT
August 28, 2013

SUBJECT:

Poet Laureate Selection Process

BACKGROUND:

In 2003 Rod Clark was appointed as Pacifica's first poet laureate, and remained as such until his death on April 2 of this year. As Pacifica Poet Laureate, Mr. Clark edited a period "Poetry Page" for the Pacifica Tribune, served as a judge for various contests, read at civic functions, hosted a poetry forum and helped bring outside talent to the annual poetry festival.

A poet laureate is a poet who acts as an ambassador and advocate for poetry, literature and the arts. They are usually expected to contribute to the agency's poetry and literary legacy by composing and reading poems at (civic) events and occasions.

At a recent City Council meeting, the selection of a new poet laureate was discussed. Council has directed the Parks, Beaches and Recreation Commission to handle the selection process.

At the July 24, 2013 regular Commission meeting, Commissioners Urie, Tabor and Abbott volunteered and were appointed to serve on a subcommittee for the purposes of establishing a selection process for choosing Pacifica's next poet laureate.

DISCUSSION

The subcommittee met to discuss creating a process for selecting a poet laureate. San Mateo County is currently in the process of selecting a poet laureate and the subcommittee used the County's application as a guideline to create one (attached).

The subcommittee suggested the selection committee to be comprised of the following:

- Local High School (English, literature, creative writing) teachers – 2
- College teacher/professor - 1
- Members of local creative arts organization
 - Art Guild – 1
 - Pacifica Performances – 1
 - Pacifica Spindrift Players – 1
- Chamber of Commerce member – 1
- PB&R Commissioner - 1

At the time of this report, subcommittee members and staff were reaching out to potential subcommittee candidates to gauge their interest in participating.

Commissioner Abbott also spoke to Marci Dragun from San Mateo County Board of Supervisors Warren Slocum's Office to discuss the County Poet Laureate process.

The San Mateo County application process and packet was put together based on a review of other counties and locales. The California State Poet Laureate, who is an advocate for poetry throughout the State, also provided guidance.

Ms. Dragun suggested that a special announcement of the application period was a key element; the County announced it at the County Fair on the Literary Day event. She also suggested that the application requirements not be too restrictive and that the selection committee be as broad as possible (include panelist(s) outside of Pacifica).

The County had a scoring sheet that selection committee members used to individual score candidates. Top candidates were then invited for in-person interviews in order to ensure the poet has the presence to represent the City during meetings and events. Pacifica's subcommittee also felt a rating tool would be very helpful in the process. The County has indicated a willingness to share their documentation and suggestions about their process once it is complete.

The suggested timing for this process, once it is approved would be estimated as:

- Marketing and publication of application information – 2 weeks
- Application period (following the announcement) and selection committee recruitment – 1 month
- Selection committee scoring process – 2 weeks
- Interviews of candidates and final selection – 2 weeks.

ATTACHEMENTS

Pacifica's Poet Laureate Nomination and Application form

COMMISSION ACTION REQUESTED

Discussion and approval of the Poet Laureate application selection process.