



City of Palo Alto

City Council Staff Report

(ID # 6505)

Report Type: Study Session

Meeting Date: 2/1/2016

Summary Title: Study Session on National, State and Local Trends on the Impact of Arts and Culture

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From: City Manager

Lead Department: Community Services

Recommendation

This is a study session; no Council action is required.

Discussion

The City of Palo Alto's support and sponsorship of the arts and culture ensures broad access to culture in our community. The benefits, however, only begin there. The arts also improve the City in terms of their impact on education, youth well-being, economic and community development, and healthcare.

This study session will feature national arts leader, Randy Cohen, of Americans for the Arts, and Craig Watson, Executive Director of the California Arts Council, for a presentation on national, state and local trends regarding the impact of the creative sector in every fabric of the community.

Biographies

- **Randy Cohen is Vice President of Research and Policy at Americans for the Arts, the nation's advocacy organization for the arts.** A member of the staff since 1991, Randy stands out as one of the most noted experts in the field of arts funding, research, policy, and using the arts to address community development issues. He publishes *The National Arts Index*, the annual measure of the health and vitality of arts as well as the two premier economic studies of the arts industry—*Arts & Economic Prosperity*, the national impact study of nonprofit arts organizations and their audiences; and *Creative Industries*, an annual mapping study of the nation's 750,000 arts establishments and their employees. Randy led the development of the *National Arts Policy Roundtable*, an annual convening of leaders who focus on the advancement of American culture,

launched in 2006 in partnership with Robert Redford and the Sundance Institute. In the late 1990's, Randy collaborated with the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities to create *Coming Up Taller*, the White House report on arts programs for youth-at-risk; and the U.S. Department of Justice to produce the *Youth ARTS Project*, the first national study to statistically document the impact of arts programs on at-risk youth. A sought after speaker, Randy has given speeches in 49 states, and regularly appears in the news media—including the *Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, and on C-SPAN, CNN, CNBC, and NPR.

The mission for the Americans for the Arts is: to serve, advance, and lead the network of organizations and individuals who cultivate, promote, sustain, and support the arts in America. Connecting your best ideas and leaders from the arts, communities, and business, together we can work to ensure that every American has access to the transformative power of the arts.

- **Craig Watson is the Executive Director of the California Arts Council, Sacramento, CA, since 2011.** As the director, he is the first in the agency's history, after an extensive national search, to be hired directly by the Council rather than by Gubernatorial appointment. He came to the Council after serving as executive director of the Arts Council for Long Beach. Before that, he enjoyed a long career in the telecommunications field and held senior executive positions in Rhode Island, New York, and California. Earlier, his arts career included service at the Sonoma County Arts Council, Rural Arts Services (Northern California), and Santa Barbara Arts Services. Watson has experience as a visual artist as well. He studied fine arts at Occidental College, trained as a sculptor, and worked with renowned artist Christo on *Running Fence* in Sonoma. He has served on the board of the Western States Arts Foundation and currently sits on the governance board for CREATE CA, California's "collective impact" model working to reverse years of arts education cutbacks in public education. He also was the founding Board Chair of the Armory Center for the Arts in Pasadena, an international model for community-based arts learning.

The mission of the California Arts Council is: Advancing California through the arts and creativity.

Californians thrive from public belief in, and support for creativity and the arts. To that end, we envision a California where:

- the lives of all Californians are enriched by access to and participation in a diverse spectrum of artists and arts and cultural experiences;
- the arts are woven into the fabric of daily life—promoting civic engagement, encouraging collective problem solving and building bridges across cultures;
- the arts enjoy strong, sustained public support;
- the arts ecosystem reflects contributions from all of California's diverse populations;

- our students are provided with quality arts education so that they can reach their full potential, including advanced education;
- streets, neighborhoods, and communities are revitalized, enriched and enlivened by art and culture;
- creative industries are recognized as crucial to the economy;
- public and private resources for the arts increase and are sustained to more effectively serve the people of California;
- Californians' artistic contributions mark the long-term legacy of the state;
- the California Arts Council is recognized as an innovative and cutting-edge agency and known as a regional leader among state arts agencies for its exemplary work on behalf of all Californians; and
- the California Arts Council is a source for policy development and builds a strong foundation for the arts in our state.