



# AGENDA REPORT

## CITY OF SAN CLEMENTE

### CITY COUNCIL MEETING

910 Calle Negocio  
2nd Floor  
San Clemente, California  
www.san-clemente.org

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**Meeting Date:** September 14, 2023

Agenda Item: 10A

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**Department:** Beaches, Parks & Recreation

**Prepared By:** Samantha Wylie, Beaches, Parks & Recreation Director

**Subject:**

**CITIZENS AMPHITHEATER COMMITTEE PROGRESS UPDATE**

**Fiscal Impact:**

Unknown at this time.

**Summary:**

The Citizen Amphitheater Committee (“Committee”) was established in August 2022 with a primary objective to provide information to the City Council on the feasibility of an amphitheater in the city. In June 2023, the City Council directed staff to initiate meetings with the Committee as soon as possible and provide an update to the Council within 90 days. Since receiving the direction, the Committee has met four times to discuss potential locations, types of uses (i.e., organizations and groups), funding opportunities, and to hear from interested stakeholders of any future project.

Based on discussions from the meetings, the Committee is seeking further direction from the City Council. The City Council has several options to consider in the decision-making process which are incorporated in the Council Options section of this report. The Committee has set a future meeting date of September 28, 2023, at 11 a.m. to discuss any direction provided.

**Background:**

At its initial meeting, the Committee discussed several possible areas for an outdoor theater site, including, but not limited to, the Vista Hermosa Sports Park and Richard T. Steed Park. The Committee opined that a significant concern surrounding the use of any open space is the parameters of Measure V, which requires voter approval for rezoning or development of open space. This would impact the previously considered site at Calle Saluda and Avenida La Pata that was pursued by the former Association for the Amphitheater in 2014. The draft minutes from that meeting are included in Attachment 1.

The Committee held a walkthrough with the listing manager of the former Krikorian Movie Theater site to understand the feasibility of converting the existing space into a performing arts venue that could host multiple community performance groups annually while supporting community theater. The Committee and community stakeholders in attendance at the walkthrough agreed on the potential to use the commercial space for a theater, however, it was determined that the venture would be cost-prohibitive given the high cost of monthly rent, tenant improvements that would be required, and operational expenses. The draft minutes from the meeting at the Krikorian site are included in Attachment 2 and 3.

At its August 31, 2023, meeting, the Committee collectively agreed that an amphitheater may be possible in the future but is not feasible right now given constraints with open space, land availability, and potential impacts on the environment including noise to surrounding neighborhoods. In the course of discussion, the Committee expressed the opportunity to evaluate the use of the Community Center Auditorium as an existing space that could be upgraded or renovated to accommodate stage productions and performances. This is an excellent location given its proximity to the downtown area. Additionally, Committee members concluded the city should seek to establish a reputation for performing arts prior to making a significant investment in an outdoor amphitheater. It was suggested that if a facility were to be established it would need to support performances of up to 300 people at times and fundraising efforts in partnership with existing performing arts groups are critical for a successful development.

At its next meeting date, the Committee is seeking to meet with a representative from the San Clemente Outlets to further explore options for indoor or outdoor space. This initiative would include a discovery of potential costs for leasing.

***Council Options:***

1. Provide direction to the Committee on how to proceed;
2. Rename and increase the scope of the Citizens Amphitheater Committee to include the feasibility of establishing a performing arts center;
3. Direct staff and the Committee to provide a cost and operational analysis of retrofitting the Community Center Auditorium to accommodate community arts;
4. Direct staff, with input from the Committee, to incorporate a white paper in the 2024 Long Term Financial Plan that would consider the costs for building and operating a new performing arts center or outdoor amphitheater;
5. Dissolve the Citizens Amphitheater Committee and/or direct this project to be further considered by the newly established Arts and Culture Committee;
6. Take no further action on the development of an amphitheater and/or performing arts space.

***Environmental Review/Analysis:***

Not a “project” pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15378 (14 CCR § 15378).

***Recommended Actions:***

**Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends the City Council provide direction to the Citizens Amphitheater Committee on how to proceed with its research on the feasibility of an outdoor amphitheater and/or performing arts center.

***Attachment:***

1. Draft Minutes – Citizens Amphitheater Committee 7-24-23
2. Draft Minutes – Citizens Amphitheater Committee 8-17-23
3. Draft Minutes – Citizens Amphitheater Committee 8-25-23

***Notification:*** Citizens Amphitheater Committee Members

**CITY OF SAN CLEMENTE  
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
CITIZENS AMPHITHEATER COMMITTEE  
JULY 24, 2023**

Committee Members Present: Wayne Eggleston; Susie Lantz; Kirsti McCleary; Amanda Quintanilla

Committee Members Absent: Laura Ferguson

Staff Present: Beaches, Parks, and Recreation Director Samantha Wylie

**1. MINUTES**

**A.** None.

**2. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Oath of Office/Brown Act Overview**

Deputy City Clerk Megan Jimenez provided the Oath of Office for all committee members in attendance. She provided a copy of the Committee/Commission Handbook to each member and summarized the Brown Act. All committee members were encouraged to review the contents of the handbook to be versed in the

**B. Work plan & discussion on the feasibility of an amphitheater**

Beaches, Parks & Recreation Director Wylie summarized the purpose of the Committee. The purpose of the Council-Appointed Committee is to understand the feasibility of what an amphitheater may look like in San Clemente. The Committee should consider all factors of development and use and provide a recommendation to City Council on how to proceed. Additional consideration should be given to funding sources and potential costs. The Committee has approximately 60 days to return to Council with an update.

The Citizens Amphitheater Committee (CAC) discussed the project, and made the following comments either individually or as a group:

- Noise should be considered and evaluated with an outdoor amphitheater;
- It may be advisable to consider an indoor performing arts center instead of an outdoor venue given the potential environmental impacts;
- The former “Krikorian Movie Theater” may be an option for a location;
- The outdoor space provided for San Clemente High School theater productions attracted several hundred audience members but lacked adequate areas for the performers to get ready;
- Underutilized areas exist in San Clemente exist including, Miramar Theater property, Krikorian Theater commercial space, Linda Lane Park, and Richard

- T. Steed Park; many of these locations pose some type of barrier to entry/development;
- Vista Hermosa Sports Park (VHSP) undeveloped areas were reviewed for possible location;
  - A future community center at VHSP could include an indoor theater/center;
  - Funding must be considered in reviewing options;
  - Starting from “scratch” is going to be expensive;
  - Open space will be difficult to develop and could require a vote of the people under Measure V;
  - Partnership with San Clemente High School, the Cabrillo Playhouse, and/or other entities may be an option for support;
  - Laguna Niguel Crown Valley Park has a large amphitheater that hosts approximately 80 concerts per year, but there is a significant grade and it may be challenging to traverse;
  - Consider exploring indoor and outdoor options;
  - Moonlight Amphitheater in the city of Vista would be ideal to have in San Clemente, but is likely too large to work within the city;
  - Moonlight has been funded by grants and private donors, with city support;
  - Other public spaces include the City of Anaheim amphitheater which provides free or low-cost programming annually;
  - Consider a Joint Use Agreement with the Capistrano Unified School District for the upper campus area at San Clemente High School;
  - The size of the facility is important;
  - Different user groups require different size facilities;
  - The Krikorian Theater space has established infrastructure and parking; the surrounding businesses operate during the day while a theater would operate in the evening;
  - Star Theater in the city of Oceanside was a former movie theater that has been converted into a performing arts facility;
  - The rental price should be considered;
  - Funding and development should start small with an established indoor space, given the significant undertaking a large outdoor amphitheater would require;
  - Other stakeholders and interested parties are welcome to attend a future meeting.

Committee member Lantz and Committee member Eggleston will connect with the realtor representing the Krikorian Theater, Jim Wynne, to consider an on-site meeting in the future. Each committee member will communicate with interested stakeholders and invite them to the next meeting or gather input on the use of a future facility to share at the next Committee meeting. Committee members will bring a list of interested user groups/genres to the next meeting.

### **C. Future Meeting Date**

Committee members shared dates and times that work best for a future date. BP&R Director stated she will follow up with the group on a confirmed date.

**3. ORAL COMMUNICATION**

None

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

Adjourned at 3:54 p.m. to a date to be determined, at the off-site location of 641 Camino De Los Mares B, San Clemente, CA (formerly Krikorian Movie Theater).

Respectfully submitted,

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Wayne Eggleston, Member

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Susie Lantz, Member

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Kirstin McCleary, Member

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Amanda Quintanilla, Member

Attest:

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Samantha Wylie,  
Beaches, Parks & Recreation Director

**CITY OF SAN CLEMENTE  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
CITIZENS AMPHITHEATER COMMITTEE  
August 17, 2023**

Committee Members Present: Wayne Eggleston; Susie Lantz; Amanda Quintanilla

Committee Members Absent: Kirsti McCleary

Staff Present: Beaches, Parks, and Recreation Director Samantha Wylie

Call to Order at 10:09 a.m.

**1. MINUTES**

**A. Citizen Amphitheater Committee Minutes – July 24, 2023**

Motion by Committee member Eggleston, second by Committee member Lantz, passed (3-0).

**2. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Discussion on feasibility of an amphitheater**

Beaches, Parks & Recreation Director Wylie summarized the purpose of the Committee meeting was to get a tour of the commercial property listed for lease and explore the viability of utilizing the property for an indoor performing arts center. Members of the public were present for the tour and meeting, including Amanda Cobb, Founding Director of the Ballet Academy & Movement; Donia Moore, San Clemente Journal; and Leslie Eisner, President of the Camino Real Playhouse.

Jim Wynne, listing manager of the Krikorian Movie Theater property, provided an overview of the property and real estate listing details. Mr. Wynne provided the following insight:

- The property owner has commissioned plans to return the building to its shell, including removal of walls and the mezzanine; the rough estimated cost of demolition is \$1,000,000;
- The existing HVAC unit and roof need to be replaced in full – owner will manage this cost;
- There is no interest from other movie theater companies to utilize the space as a movie theater;
- If they are unable to find a single tenant, the property owner has considered plans for a demising wall to split the unit into two separate commercial spaces;
- The asking monthly lease rate is \$2.25/sq.ft. net; net charges are \$0.65/sq.ft.; all-in costs are estimated at \$3.00/sq.ft., plus utilities;

- The property is approximately 24,000 sq.ft.; The second floor is approximately 4,000 sq.ft., is not included in the total square footage and is excluded from the listing price;
- There is one offer on the property from Zion Church which includes a request for tenant improvement dollars but the owner declined due to the other investment improvements;
- The property owner is not interested in selling the property;
- Parking was discussed, including a reciprocal parking agreement that existed with the movie theater;
- It is likely a new parking study would be required or explored;
- The building is not likely ADA compliant; there is no elevator; seating may not be current with building code;
- There are six theaters – four stadium and two standard seating;
- Theater seating varies from theater to theater.

The committee members asked questions and toured the facility, and made the following comments either individually or as a group:

- ADA compliance is an important upgrade;
- The mezzanine level would not need to be removed because it is important for the tech operations for performances;
- The church may be interested in subletting to other organizations to offset lease costs;
- The theaters are in decent condition and could be quickly modified to build a stage with the removal of a few rows of seats.
- A wall could be removed between the larger theaters to increase the capacity of one theater stage and expand usage for larger productions;
- Separate theater options are intriguing to diversify the offerings;
- Options for staging, dressing rooms, and stage production must be considered within each space;
- Second floor can provide storage for props and staging supplies;
- An architect may need to be utilized for further consideration in construction and design options;
- Subletting the property may be an option to consider.

Members of the public made the following comments either individual or as a group:

- The Ballet Academy and Movement organization is looking for a space to host performances with seating up to 300 people per show and training facility;
- Projectors would need to be removed, but the mezzanine level is important to a performing arts operation;
- Camino Real Playhouse needs to vacate its property within 18-24 months after 35 years of occupancy; it has two theaters that seat 60-110 people; they desire to increase this capacity up to 150 to allow for larger audiences with fewer shows; they currently host children's camps, comedy shows, music shows, and theater arts;



- Camino Real Playhouse has all its own equipment and production materials and can be ready to operate in a new facility within two months;
- Separate theater options could serve more user groups;
- A tech booth and functioning curtains are important at each theater space.

**3. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Future Meeting Date**

Committee members a desire to meet quickly following and shared dates and times that work best for a future date. It was determined that Friday, August 25 at 1 p.m. worked best for the committee.

**4. ORAL COMMUNICATION**

None

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

Adjourned at 11:08 a.m. to Friday, August 25, 2023 at 1 p.m. at San Clemente City Hall located at 910 Calle Negocio, San Clemente, CA 92673.

Respectfully submitted,

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Wayne Eggleston, Member

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Susie Lantz, Member

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Kirstin McCleary, Member

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Amanda Quintanilla, Member

Attest:

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Samantha Wylie,  
Beaches, Parks & Recreation Director

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**CITY OF SAN CLEMENTE  
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
CITIZENS AMPHITHEATER COMMITTEE  
AUGUST 25, 2023**

Committee Members Present: Wayne Eggleston; Susie Lantz; Kirsti McCleary; Amanda Quintanilla, Pamela Roth

Committee Members Absent: N/A

Staff Present: Beaches, Parks, and Recreation Director Samantha Wylie  
Acting Administrative Assistant Debbie Fields

Call to Order at 1:05 p.m.

**1. MINUTES**

**A. Citizen Amphitheater Committee Minutes – August 17, 2023**

Motion by Committee member Lantz, second by Committee member McCleary, passed (5-0).

**2. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Discussion on feasibility of an amphitheater**

Committee member Eggleston stated that a non-profit should be formed first. Committee members decided on excluding Krikorian Movie Theater property as the site for the amphitheater due to extreme costs.

Committee member McCleary will find out if Capistrano Unified School District is interested in partnering.

Members of the public made the following comments either individual or as a group:

- Camino Real Playhouse is a non-profit and is willing to take on the role of overarching the non-profit and lease. They would consider 10,000 – 11,000 sq. ft. warehouse to lease. Will be setting up a meeting with Samantha Wylie and City Manager, Andy Hall do discuss further.
- Cabrillo Playhouse is interested in space 1 – 2 times per year.

**3. NEW BUSINESS**

**A.** Committee members discussed and shared dates and times that work best for a future date. It was determined that Thursday, August 31, 2023 at 2:30 p.m. at San

Clemente City Hall located at 910 Calle Negocio, San Clemente, CA 92673.

**3. ORAL COMMUNICATION**

None

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

Adjourned at 2:12 p.m. to a date to be Friday, August 31, 2023 at 2:30 p.m. at San Clemente City Hall located at 910 Calle Negocio, San Clemente, CA 92673.

Respectfully submitted,

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Wayne Eggleston, Member

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Susie Lantz, Member

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Kirsti McCleary, Member

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Amanda Quintanilla, Member

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Pamela Roth, Member

Attest:

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Samantha Wylie,  
Beaches, Parks & Recreation Director