

ARTS COMMISSION - Regular Meeting
(virtual)

August 8, 2022, 4:30 PM

Public Participation Guidelines

Based on guidance from the California Department of Public Health, the California Governor's Office, and Santa Cruz County Health Officer, in order to minimize the spread of the COVID-19 virus, please do the following:

- The public may conference into the meeting via Teams using the info below:

Microsoft Teams Meeting link - click on or copy and paste this link into your browser window to join the meeting on your computer or mobile app

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_NDk5MTY0NjUtNzE1Yi00MTQ1LWFIZmMtOGQ3MDk4MzNhMjA4%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%2252044d34-04cb-41a4-a0cd-54ae6eeffb9f%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22bf658512-0c84-4799-9caa-45bad49620b6%22%7d

Calling in – audio only

[+1 831-454-2222,,399898826#](tel:+18314542222399898826) United States, Sacramento
Phone Conference ID: 399 898 826#

- Once in the meeting, ensure your microphone is muted when you are not speaking.
- If disruptive sound is coming from your device/phone line, the moderator will mute your device and you will have to unmute yourself to participate.

+You will NOT be able to attend the meeting in person as per Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-29-20 and N-25-20.

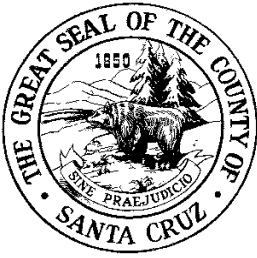
- RELATED CORRESPONDENCE: Written comments may be sent to the Arts Commission in care of Kathy DeWild, Program Coordinator, either by e-mail or U.S Mail. Please include the agenda item number.

E-mail: kathy.dewild@santacruzcounty.us

U.S. Mail:

Arts Commission
c/o Kathy DeWild
979 17th Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

(AGENDA to follow)



County of Santa Cruz

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, OPEN SPACE & CULTURAL SERVICES

979 17TH AVENUE, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95062

(831) 454-7901 FAX: (831) 454-7940 TDD: (831) 454-7978

JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

ARTS COMMISSION – AGENDA

Monday, August 8, 2022, 4:30-6:00PM

Regular Meeting - Microsoft Teams

Call in: [+1 831-454-2222,399898826#](tel:+18314542222399898826)

Meeting ID: 662 332 456#

To join the meeting via Teams please use the URL link provided on the agenda cover page.

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

II. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS OR APPROVAL

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: Opportunity for persons to address the Commission on matters which are within the scope of responsibility of the Commission but not on today's agenda. Presentations must not exceed two (2) minutes in length, and individuals may speak only once during Oral Communications.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approve minutes from March 23, 2022 Page 3
- b. Consider Reports:
 - 1. Aquatics Section Report..... Page 4
 - 2. Maintenance Section Report..... Page 5
 - 3. Planning Section Report..... Pages 6-7
 - 4. Recreation Section Report..... Pages 8-9
 - 5. Reservations Section Report..... Page 10
 - 6. Volunteer Section Report Pages 11-15
- c. Adopt resolution making findings and ordering the continued use of teleconference meetings of the Arts Commission due to COVID-19, pursuant to the requirements of Assembly Bill 361 Pages 16-17

V. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

VI. STAFF REPORT

VII. REGULAR AGENDA

A. Discussion Items

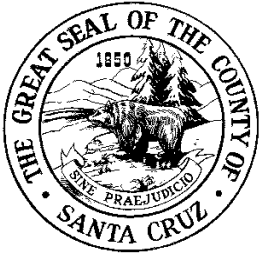
- 1. Annual presentation from the Museum of Art and History
- 2. Annual presentation from Arts Council Santa Cruz County
- 3. Presentation re: Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate..... Pages 18-19

B. Action Items

- 1. Appoint commissioner to serve on the Live Oak Library Annex public art selection panel.
- 2. Select Chair and Vice Chair of the Arts Commission to serve through April 2023.
- 3. Consider recommending to the County Board of Supervisors that the County of Santa Cruz establish a Poet Laureate program.
- 4. Appoint commissioner to serve on the county art exhibitions panel.
- 5. Select Artist of the Year 2023

VIII. AGENDA /MEETING FOR: September 19, 2022 - 4:30 p.m.

IX. ADJOURNMENT



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JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR OF PARKS

DRAFT

ARTS COMMISSION MINUTES

March 23, 2022, 4:00 p.m. - Microsoft Teams meeting platform

- I. Called to order at 4:05 p.m. Present: Kilian, Oslapas, Gardner, Stabile, Miyakusu, Niven
Absent: L Phillips, Scott, J Phillips, DeWorken
Staff: Kathy DeWild
- II. Approved Agenda
Motion/Second: Stabile/Miyakusu
AYES: 6
NOES: 0
ABSTAIN: 0
ABSENT: 4
- III. Approved Consent Agenda
Motion/Second: Stabile/Gardner
AYES: 6
NOES: 0
ABSTAIN: 0
ABSENT: 4
- IV. Adopted resolution approving the Arts Commission's findings under AB361
Motion/Second: Stabile/Niven
AYES: 6
NOES: 0
ABSTAIN: 0
ABSENT: 4
- V. Approved the selection panel's choice of Paul Cheney as public artist for the Aptos Library public art project.
Motion/Second: Stabile/Miyakusu
AYES: 6
NOES: 0
ABSTAIN: 0
ABSENT: 4
- VI. Next meeting date: May 2, 2022 - 4:30-6:00 PM, Microsoft Teams platform. Agenda items include on consent continuing teleconferencing meetings under AB361, a discussion regarding the commission's role in the Santa Cruz Poet Laureate program, and election of Chair and Vice-chair.
- VII. Adjournment – 4:37 PM
Motion/Second: Stabile/Gardner
AYES: 6
NOES: 0
ABSTAIN: 0
ABSENT: 4



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JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

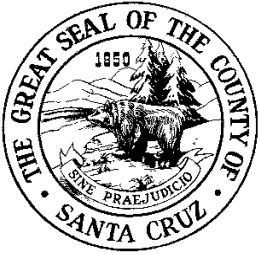
Date: July 26th, 2022
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Max Friedmann, Aquatics Supervisor
Subject: Aquatics Section Report

Simpkins Summer Programing

- Simpkins Family Swim Center reopened for public use on Monday, June 13th.
- Once Simpkins reopened all normal programming at the swim center resumed.
- This includes lap swim, recreation swim, adult fitness, water aerobics, swim lessons, and Junior Guards.
- The Swim Center offered “Low Stimulation” hours every Wednesday from 3-5pm this summer for folks that would benefit from a quieter environment for use of the pools. This program was made with guidance from the County Commission on Disabilities.

Simpkins August/Fall Programing

- The Swim Center will move to its “Fall” schedule starting August 8th.
- The Swim Center will continue to offer lap swim and recreation swim daily in the Fall and limited swim lessons.
- Additionally, the Swim Center will host local youth club swim teams Monday through Friday as well Dominican Hospital’s rehabilitation classes every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.
- Low Stimulation hours will continue every Wednesday from 3-5pm.



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JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

Date: August 1, 2022
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Jesse Williams, Parks Superintendent
Subject: Maintenance Section Report

County Wide

- Jesse Williams, former North County Maintenance Supervisor, is our new Parks Superintendent overseeing Maintenance and Operations
- Training and planning for the implementation of the Lucity digital work order system is still underway
- Recruitment underway for a new Park Maintenance Supervisor

South County

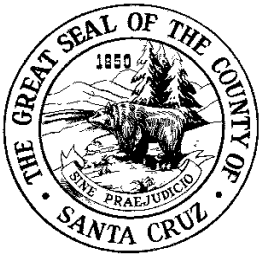
- New commemorative bench has been installed at Seacliff Village Park
- Irrigation repairs have been conducted at Seascape County Park
- An all-crew maintenance day was held at Pinto Lake for trail work

Simpkins Family Swim Center

- Swim center is fully operational
- During the Swim Center's closure:
 - The 50M and splash down pools were replastered and retiled
 - Pool deck stairs were rebuilt
 - Exterior walls were repainted
 - Landscaping was conducted around the facility
- Construction on the Live Oak Library Annex is well underway. Disruptions to the Swim Center have been minimal.

North County

- Tree work was performed at Quail Hollow Ranch County Park and the Emeline County Offices
- New signage and trash receptacles were installed on North Coast beaches as a part of the Keep America Beautiful Grant
- New signs were installed on the Jose Avenue Park Bridge
- Hazardous trees were removed at the Probation Center
- Upgrades were made to the horse barns at Quail Hollow Ranch



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JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

Date: May 25, 2022
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Michael Hettenhausen and Mike Pruitt, Park Planners
Subject: Planning Section Status Report

Anna Jean Cummings Mitigation Plantings

Parks staff is coordinating with the County's General Services Department to formally bid the installation and maintenance of the plantings.

Hidden Beach

Parks staff is collecting Letters of Support from local elected officials, which will be forwarded to the State Coastal Conservancy for their Board of Directors' consideration of funding for purchase and installation of the permanent restroom.

Moran Lake

Parks staff and consultants are continuing to model and monitor the lagoon monthly and are preparing and reviewing the various technical reports associated with the Moran Lake Restoration and Public Access Plan and Monarch Management Plan Update.

North Coast Facilities and Management Plan

Parks staff and our consultant held an in-person Working Group meeting on June 30th to review the project's goals and objectives. The consultant is currently drafting the community engagement plan.

Willowbrook

The design consultant is preparing the bid package to be submitted to County Planning for the required permits. Parks staff is communicating with volunteers about offering in-kind services for the installation of various features associated with the park rededication project.

188 Whiting Road

Staff has received and reviewed the agricultural viability study to assist in the evaluation to move forward with the proposed development of the site. Additionally, the team has received and reviewed the Biotic Report outlining the specific environmental features and wildlife present on site. Parks staff is awaiting the draft environmental assessment to understand the soil and water quality of the site an existing well(s).

Soquel Lions Park

Parks' design consultant had completed the 90% plans and specifications and submitted them for review by County staff. Environmental approvals and exemptions for construction are in discussion with County Planning.

Floral Park

The Mission of the Santa Cruz County Department of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services is to provide safe, well designed and maintained parks and a wide variety of recreational and cultural opportunities for our diverse community

Staff is the process of preparing conceptual designs to present to the community for feedback.

Felton Covered Bridge Park Pump Track

Staff met with project stakeholders on site to review the proposed project, current status, and future steps. Two concepts have been prepared by the local designer and Santa Cruz Mountains Trail Stewards. Parks staff will be meeting with the external team to discuss the designs prior to meeting with the community.

Boulder Creek Park

Staff was approached by a volunteer organization to explore the possibilities of developing a new park in downtown Boulder Creek. Park staff performed a preliminary site walk and assessment of the site for a potential park. A meeting was scheduled with stakeholders for June 2022 to discuss project goals, objectives, opportunities, and constraints based on the site analysis and preliminary community desires. This information will assist in formulating a design program which we can use to begin the conversation with the community. Parks staff is awaiting the information from this meeting and are moving forward with a property appraisal of the site.



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JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

Date: July 26, 2022
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Jaime Jimenez, Recreation Supervisor
Subject: Recreation Section Report

Summer Camps

- During the summer months, the County Parks Department has offered seasonal summer camps at Aptos Village Park, Quail Hollow Ranch and La Selva Beach Clubhouse. The camps at Aptos Village Park are offered from 7:30am-6pm or 9am-4pm, while the Camps at Quail Hollow Ranch operate from 9am-3pm.
- The camps are broken down into four themed sessions. Each session runs for two weeks and includes a local field trip in the Santa Cruz County area and an extended field trip out of the county. The sessions, Recreation Staff provide active games, arts and crafts, STEM education components, outdoor nature, and other science enrichment activities for youth ages 6-12.

Partnerships with Local Recreation Departments

- The Santa Cruz County Parks meets on Fridays with Recreation professional from the City of Watsonville, Capitola and Santa Cruz to discuss offerings and trends in the area. These meetings help collaborate and join forces between the nearby recreation agencies. This Saturday, July 30th we will be at the City of Watsonville – Ramsay Park celebrating Family Fun Day from 10am-2pm.
- July is Recreation Month – County Parks Friends participated in several fun activities for the community such as “Beach Bluff stROLL” for community members in wheelchairs at Seascapes County Park, Redwood Hike at Highland County Park, “Rock ‘n’ Roll” at Heart of Soquel and several others.
- The Santa Cruz Astronomy Club hosted a “Star Gazing” event at Quail Hollow Ranch along with Parks Department staff.
- Full Moon Hike was held at Quail Hollow Ranch with the Friends of Quail Hollow on Friday, July 15th from 9pm-12am.
- Movie Nights were held at Mesa Village Park and Anna Jean Cummings. The Parks Department partners with the Animal Shelter for many of the movie “Doggie Date Nights”.
- With the assistance of the Parks Department, Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County, Inc. had a movie night in their Davenport Resource Service Center and watched Disney’s “Encanto” family movie.

Recreation Programs & Contractual Agreements

- The Parks Department recreation team offered Jr. Academy sports camps through the National Academy of Athletics and the Santa Cruz Baseball School contracts.
- The recreation team is working on securing a contract for salsa dance classes for active adults and is currently renewing its sports program contracts to continue offering high quality youth sports camps throughout the Fall.

- The Santa Cruz Public Library and Parks Department are working together in providing a fun “Bridge” card game program and space for active adults at the Capitola branch as well as weekly Minecraft sessions with the La Selva Beach branch and our youth summer camp.

Marketing Efforts

- The Department marketing efforts this month consist of working on updating the website with current summer activities and is working on the Fall activity guide to inform the community of upcoming recreational opportunities and to help navigate their interest in our reservations and registrations system and opportunities on the Web.
- Summer camp banners 4’x8’ were used in the North, Mid and South County to promote summer camps.
- Agents of Discovery has been another way to promote our department by joining up with the Bay Area Explorers group in which outdoor space is promoted through a free software application on your mobile device as you explore the great outdoors and the County Park system through a variety of challenges and missions through Eventbrite and Facebook Live.
- Plastic A frames were placed out to promote the movie nights the night of the event. Banners will be produced for future movies nights at the park in both Spanish/English.
- The Department has continued to create our marketing flyers in both Spanish/English.



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JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

Date: August 1, 2022
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Sarah Shea, Recreation Supervisor
Subject: Reservations Section Report

Reservations have been working on ensuring a complete, accurate calendar that reflects availability for ease of use internally and for the community. With the constant weekend reservations at most picnic areas, we look forward to discussing new opportunities to grow the reservable spaces within the parks.

Horse Stables at Quail Hollow Ranch: All horse boarding stalls have been leased. The new tack room was completed by maintenance and continued improvements continue at the barns.

Venue Rentals: The Department has hosted 40 staffed events in the past two months including weddings, retirement parties, memorials, birthday parties, and appreciation events. The evolution of the Watsonville Vets Hall into a community resource and recreational space continues.

Special Events:

The following special events were permitted between June-July:

- Lifecycle Ride @Greyhound Rock
- Deputy Sherriff's Association Event @Aptos Village Park
- Arukah Project's Fundraiser @Aptos Village Park
- Aptos Chamber's 4th of July Festival @Aptos Village Park
- Walk Hawk Dancers Event @Pinto Lake County Park
- True Love Music Festival @Aptos Village Park

Commemorative Program: The program continues to expand, with the addition of new features as requested and possible throughout our non Oceanview parks. Also, we recently have been able to offer 5 non-renewed Oceanview features to those on our extensive waitlist.

Unique reservation requests including film permits, usage of parking lots, outdoor ceremonies, court rentals, 5k races and more continue to keep our team on our toes serving the community.



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JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

Date: August 1, 2022
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Margaret Ingraham, Volunteer Program Coordinator
Subject: Volunteer Program Report

Felton Discovery Park

We have monthly community volunteer days that are held the first Saturday of the month where volunteers help to keep the park weeded and pruned. We also have a few independent volunteers who help in the park on a regular basis. Volunteers purchased a shade structure and set it up over the gravel play area for the children.



Quail Hollow Ranch

The Trail Crew continues to meet weekly keeping the trails in great shape. The Bird Nest Box volunteers are wrapping up for the year and logged over 200 hours this season. The Habitat Restoration (French Broom removal) volunteers are done for the season and logged over 550 hours this season. . Monthly star gazing is offered by the SC Astronomy Club for free to the public; the next two are scheduled for July 29th and August 19th. Come join the star gazing from sunset till 11pm. ,



Little Nature Lodge volunteers!

Keep America Beautiful Grant

Pictured below are some of the new cans and signs as part of the funds provided by the Keep America Beautiful grant. Maintenance staff installed signs and placed cans along the North Coast. Also pictured are volunteers from the office staff of the Santa Cruz Warriors and some of their season ticket holders. This awesome group volunteered at the Davenport Main Beach location and removed approximately 200 pounds of litter off the trails, roads, and beaches.



Our awesome docents open the Visitor Center during busy times at the park for community members to enjoy. Docent, Richard James will be giving a history talk at the house on Wednesday, September 14th from 4:30 – 6:00 pm. This history talk is offered free to the community.

East Cliff Parkway

Pictured below are volunteers from a May volunteer event. Brittany Newton from the Nature Lodge, organized volunteers to paint the 'Keep Right' signs along the path, and the red curbs, they also picked up litter.



Before



After



Thank you Santa Cruz Warriors office staff and season ticket holders

Upcoming volunteer days are listed below come join us!

Saturday, July 30th, 10am-12pm will be at Davenport Landing Beach

Saturday, August 6th, 10am-12pm will be at Scotts Creek

Saturday, August 20th, 10am-12pm will be at Greyhound Rock Beach

Saturday, September 10th, 10am-12pm will be at Davenport Main Beach

We also added an additional day for staff from the Campbell, Santa Cruz, and Capitola Whole Foods stores.

Pinto Lake County Park

Disc Golf volunteers regularly help with the disc golf course maintenance. They do a lot of weed whacking and pruning to keep the course groomed and playable. They have over 400 hours to date in volunteer hours.

Highlands Park

Thank you to Volunteer, Linda Skeff. Linda organized and funded a new educational and informational kiosk at Highlands County Park. Linda worked with maintenance staff and a local Eagle Scout to complete the project. The Eagle Scout built the kiosk as his Eagle Scout project.



BEFORE THE ARTS COMMISSION OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

RESOLUTION NO. 22-1

**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY ARTS COMMISSION'S FINDINGS PURSUANT
TO ASSEMBLY BILL 361 AUTHORIZING TELECONFERENCE MEETINGS
AS A RESULT OF THE CONTINUING COVID-19 PANDEMIC STATE OF
EMERGENCY AND HEALTH OFFICER RECOMMENDATION FOR SOCIAL DISTANCING**

WHEREAS, the Arts Commission is a legislative body under the Brown Act as defined under Cal. Gov. Code section 54952(b) and Santa Cruz County Code Section 2.38.110; and

WHEREAS, on September 16, 2021, Governor Newsom signed Assembly Bill 361 ("AB 361"), urgency legislation effective immediately, that amended Government Code section 54953 to permit legislative bodies subject to the Brown Act to continue to meet under modified teleconferencing rules provided that they comply with specific requirements set forth in the statute; and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to AB 361 and Cal. Gov. Code section 54953(e)(1)(A), a legislative body may meet under the modified teleconferencing rules during a proclaimed state of emergency, and where local officials have imposed or recommended measures to promote social distancing; and

WHEREAS, on March 4, 2020, Governor Newsom issued a Proclamation of State of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and which remains in effect; and

WHEREAS, on September 30, 2021, Santa Cruz County Public Health Officer Dr. Gail Newel strongly recommended that legislative bodies in Santa Cruz County continue to engage in physical/social distancing by meeting via teleconference as allowed by AB 361 and confirmed that she will regularly review and reconsider this recommendation and notify the public when it is no longer recommended; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to AB 361 and Cal. Gov. Code section 54953(e)(3), within 30 days of the date the legislative body first holding a teleconferenced meeting under the modified rules, and every 30 days thereafter, a legislative body can continue to hold such teleconference meetings provided it has reconsidered the circumstances of the state of emergency and determined either that the state of emergency continues to directly impact the ability of the members to meet safely in person or that local officials continue to recommend measures to promote social distancing; and

WHEREAS, on March 7, 2022, the Arts Commission held an initial teleconference meeting under AB 361; and

WHEREAS, this Commission has reconsidered the circumstances of the current state of emergency and finds that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to directly impact the ability of members of the public to participate safely in person and further finds that the Santa Cruz County Public Health Officer continues to recommend measures to promote social distancing; and

WHEREAS, in the interest of public health and safety, and due to the emergency caused by the spread of COVID-19, the Arts Commission deems it necessary to utilize the modified teleconferencing rules set forth in AB 361;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Arts Commission makes the following findings by a majority vote:

Section 1. The foregoing recitals are true and correct, and adopted as findings of the Arts Commission.

Section 2. Effective immediately, and for the next 30 days, the Arts Commission will meet via teleconference as authorized under AB 361 and Government Code section 54953(e)(3).

Section 3. No later than thirty (30) days from making today's findings, or at the next scheduled meeting, the Commission will reconsider the circumstances of the COVID-19 state of emergency and, if necessary, adopt subsequent findings to continue holding teleconference meetings in accordance with Government Code section 54953(e)(3).

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Arts Commission in Santa Cruz, State of California, this 8th day of August, 2022, by the following vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSENT:
ABSTAIN:

Chair, Arts Commission

ATTEST: _____
Department Staff

Approved as to Form:

Office of the County Counsel

Santa Cruz County Arts Commission
Monday August 8, 2022, 4:30-6pm

Agenda report

Date: August 8, 2022

To: Santa Cruz County Arts Commission

From: Jessica Goodman, Manager of Adult Programs and Services, Santa Cruz Public Libraries

David Sullivan, Santa Cruz County's 2021-2022 Poet Laureate

Subject: Establish official Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate position

Recommendation: Recommend the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors establish an official Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate honorary position

Establishing an official Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate honorary position will elevate poetry in our community, educating the public about the value of creative expression, inspiring diverse voices to emerge, creating new points of connection among residents in our county, and increasing access to our cultural resources. The position would be sponsored by the County of Santa Cruz Department of Parks, Open Spaces, and Cultural Services, in collaboration with the Santa Cruz Public Libraries, Arts Council Santa Cruz County, and Poetry Santa Cruz. The honorary position will be selected through an application and community panel process and officially appointed by the County Board of Supervisors.

Santa Cruz County has a tradition of poets laureate going back to 2010 when Gary Young became the first Poet Laureate of Santa Cruz County. There has been a series of distinguished poets serving in the role since then. The role was initially developed in collaboration between the Arts Council (formerly the Cultural Council) and Poetry Santa Cruz. However, there has not been an officially established County Poet Laureate formally appointed by the government. Usually Poet Laureate positions—whether national, state, county, or city—are officially established and appointed by local governments. Locally the City of Watsonville established the new position of Watsonville Poet Laureate this past year. Monterey County recently named its first Poet Laureate as well.

The Poet Laureate serves a two-year term, during which they typically provide poetry readings at community events and engage in a project using poetry to strengthen our community. For example, the Santa Cruz Poetry Project: Poetry in the Jails was created by Ellen Bass when she served as our Poet Laureate. This program provides workshops that “foster creativity and self-expression and provide an opportunity for participants to transform personal challenges into a shared experience through poems and stories” (<https://www.poetryinthejails.org/>).

Our current Poet Laureate David Sullivan's project is "Agents of Change."
David remarks:

As Wallace Baine wrote in Lookout Santa Cruz, "Agents of Change is a collaboration between local visual artists and poets: a traditional art show enhanced by poets reacting to specific works of art." That's a nice summary of what we created as a community of creative individuals over the past two years. The "Agents of Change: Art & Poetry Poet Laureate Project" show is now at the downtown branch of the Santa Cruz Public Library. On June 18, I hosted a poetry workshop followed by a poetry reading featuring many of the artists and poets who participated in "Agents of Change."

It was a strange tenure as poet laureate, since my outreach to schools had to be over zoom, and the viewing of the art had to be through a website. Still, I was amazed at the diversity of art submitted to the project, and the enthusiastic responses of the poets. In a time of distress, distance, and dangerous divisions, poetry can serve as a compassion-building bridge between peoples. I hope you see how unifying and uplifting the past poet laureate projects have been—from Ellen Bass' Poetry in the Jails program, to Danusha Lameris' creation of the Hive poetry show on KSQD—and how invigorating it is to a community to have someone actively using poetry to create change, establish connections, and reflect diversity. As Bob Gómez, the first Poet Laureate of Watsonville, said recently: "Poetry is powerful, it can change us, it can move us, and that is why I write—to move people."

Creating an officially established and formally appointed Poet Laureate honorary position shows that we support creative verbal expression, increases access to our cultural resources, lifts diverse voices, and encourages learning. The Santa Cruz Public Libraries can assist with the nomination and application process, host events at library branches across the county, and potentially partner with the Poet Laureate on their project. Arts Council Santa Cruz County can provide grant funding for a stipend. The County, Arts Council, and Library can all contribute staff time to getting the new program created and launched. We ask the Santa Cruz County Arts Commission for their recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to establish the Poet Laureate position, representation on the selection panel, and assistance with getting the word out to the community.