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P R E S S R E L E A S E
April 21, 2017

COUNTY ARTS COMMISSIONERS INCREASE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) - The Santa Barbara County Arts Commission has announced plans to host public open houses in each County Supervisory District. “Arts Coffee” will provide those constituents interested in arts and culture with an opportunity to meet their Commissioners. The first Arts Coffee will be hosted from 10-11 a.m. on Friday, April 28 by First District Supervisor Das Williams and First District Commissioners Mike Allen, Elyse Gonzales and Mary Harris. The event will take place at the newly-opened Carpinteria Arts Center, 855 Linden Ave.

“I make no secret about my love of fine art in all mediums, as well as my love for coffee of all kinds – it is tough for me to imagine a more appealing combination,” commented Supervisor Williams. “Creating a space for engagement between the public and their elected and appointed representatives is critical. I look forward to finding out what our constituents expect from the County when it comes to supporting art, providing opportunities for artists, and enhancing our County’s rich culture.”

The Arts Coffee open house series are free and open to the public. The Executive Director of the Carpinteria Arts Center, Rebecca Stebbens, noted that the open house is a good opportunity for the community to explore the center.

“We look forward to welcoming the Arts Commissioners, Supervisor Williams, and anyone interested in the arts to join us in Carpinteria and check out our plans for our future home for the arts here,” said Stebbens.

The next planned Arts Coffee will take place at 11 a.m. on July 28 in Solvang at the Elverhøj Museum, 1624 Elverhoy Way, with Third District Supervisor Joan Hartmann and Commissioners Karen Evangelista, Stacey Otte-Demangate and K.C. Thompson.

INTRODUCING THE NEWEST MEMBERS OF THE ARTS COMMISSION

Formed in 1977, the Arts Commission convenes monthly to oversee county art projects and galleries as well as make policy recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. The 15-member body comprises three representatives from each Supervisory District appointed by the Board of Supervisors.

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Newly-appointed First District Commissioners include Mike Allen and Mary Harris. Mr. Allen, a Santa Maria native, is an art enthusiast specializing in Francophone culture. He started the Santa Barbara chapter of the Surfrider Foundation, and serves as the county appointee to the Santa Barbara Bowl Board. Mary Harris, a native New Englander, spent almost a decade as the Founding Executive Director of the Santa Ynez Valley Visitor Association. Her career in higher education administration and development included managing Tufts University's educational facility in Talloires, France.

Stacey Otte-Demangate, Executive Director of Solvang's Wildling Museum of Art & Nature since 2010, was appointed to serve as a Third District Arts Commissioner in November 2016. Ms. Otte-Demangate, a resident of Los Alamos, also served as executive director at the Catalina Island Museum for many years. She is a past president of the Solvang Chamber of Commerce and is a member of the countywide Creative Communities project.

Morgen McLaughlin was appointed to serve as a Fourth District Commissioner in November 2016. Ms. McLaughlin moved to the Santa Ynez Valley from the Finger Lakes region of New York almost five years ago to serve as Executive Director of the Santa Barbara County Vintners Association. In New York, Ms. McLaughlin stewarded a number of programs that connected arts and wine while highlighting the artisanal component of winemaking.