



# City of Emeryville

CALIFORNIA

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** April 21, 2020  
**TO:** Christine Daniel, City Manager  
**FROM:** Charles S. Bryant, Community Development Director  
**SUBJECT:** **Consideration of Reinstatement of The Emeryville Poet Laureate Program**

### INTRODUCTION

At the special City Council meeting on March 19, 2020, the City Council requested a future agenda item for the Council to discuss whether to reinstate the Emeryville Poet Laureate Program, previously active from 2011 to 2015. This agenda item responds to that request.

### BACKGROUND

On April 6, 2010, the City Council approved the establishment of the Emeryville Poet Laureate Program. The first Emeryville Poet Laureate was Janell Moon, who was selected in October 2010 and served in this capacity through October 2012. On March 5, 2013, the City Council directed staff to prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a City Poet Laureate and added \$3,000 to the Community Grant Program to fund the Poet Laureate. The second Emeryville Poet Laureate was Sarah Kobrinsky, who was selected in October 2013 and served in this capacity through October 2015.

To select a third Poet Laureate, on May 19, 2015 the City Council approved an RFP process based on the prior RFP, to solicit proposals for a Poet Laureate for a two-year term from November 2015 to October 2017. The RFP received limited responses and weak proposals; consequently a second RFP was circulated with wider eligibility to broaden the pool of participants to those living or working in the 94608 zip code, including the area outside of Emeryville. Even fewer submittals were received in response to this RFP, and staff determined there was not a suitable candidate Poet Laureate to recommend to the City Council for consideration. Due to this lack of participant interest, the Emeryville Poet Laureate Program was placed on hiatus.

In the interim, the Community Grant Program continued, and poetry in the schools was occasionally funded through these grants. Additionally, the former Poet Laureate, Sara Kobrinsky, has coordinated poetry presentations at the annual Emeryville Celebration of the Arts.

### DISCUSSION

As described above, the Emeryville Poet Laureate Program has faced challenges relating to the level of interest from prospective participants. Consequently, the program format, themes, and method of solicitation may require a revised approach. If directed by the

City Council, staff can evaluate alternatives to improve participation and program relevance.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the City Council consider whether to reinstate the Emeryville Poet Laureate Program.

**APPROVED AND FORWARDED TO THE  
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EMERYVILLE:**



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Christine Daniel, City Manager