



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: Parks, Open Spaces, and Cultural Services

Subject: Poet Laureate

Meeting Date: January 28, 2025

Formal Title: Adopt resolution approving panel recommendation of 2025-26 Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate, and take related actions

Recommended Actions

1. Adopt resolution approving Nancy Miller Gomez to serve as the 2025-2026 Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate; and
2. Authorize the Director of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services or designee to take necessary actions to support the Poet Laureate in implementing poetry programming county-wide

Executive Summary

The Department of Parks, Open Space & Cultural Services (Parks), with the support of the Santa Cruz County Arts Commission, is requesting that the Board approve Nancy Miller Gomez as the 2025-2026 Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate and appoint her to the honorary two-year position.

Discussion

The Santa Cruz County Laureate position was approved by your Board on October 18, 2022. Farnaz Fatemi, 2023-24 County Poet Laureate, has completed her two-year appointment to the position. The 2025-26 County Poet Laureate application period was open through October 30, 2024 and several local poets applied for the position. A seven-member selection panel convened by Santa Cruz Public Libraries staff and comprised of a County Arts Commissioner, an Arts Council Board Member, a previous Poet Laureate, a poetry student, a spoken word poet, a member of Writers of Color Santa Cruz County, and a community member reviewed the applications at their November meeting and selected Nancy Miller Gomez to recommend for the position. Should she be approved by the Board to serve as Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate for 2025-26, she will use poetry to bring people together not only for connection, but for opportunities to build bridges and to engage with one another in ways that are deeply meaningful.

The arts are essential to a community's vitality and economic development, and appointing Ms. Miller Gomez to the Poet Laureate position will elevate poetry in our community, educate the public about the value of creative expression, inspire diverse voices to emerge, create new points of connection among residents in our county, and increase access to our cultural resources. The County Poet Laureate cultivates the arts in accordance with Objective 2.5 (Partnerships), and Objective 3.2 (Arts) of the Parks Strategic Plan.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact from the recommended action.

Strategic Initiatives

Equity Framework - Community Voices & Partnership

Submitted By:

Jeff Gaffney, Director of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services

Recommended By:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrative Officer

Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) did not significantly contribute to the development of this agenda item.