

APPROVED

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

NO. 06-323

DATE November 1, 2006

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BOARD OF RECREATION  
and PARK COMMISSIONERS

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BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY - AGREEMENT WITH FRIENDS OF THE OBSERVATORY TO ACCEPT A GIFT OF THE GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY EXHIBIT PROGRAM

J. Combs _____	J. Kolb _____
F. Mok _____	S. Huntley _____
K. Regan _____	H. Fujita _____
*B. Jensen _____	M. Shull _____

*Robert Jensen (sa)*  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 General Manager

Approved *AS amended* \_\_\_\_\_

Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_

Withdrawn \_\_\_\_\_

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board:

1. Accept a gift of the Griffith Observatory Exhibit Program valued at \$15 million, as installed or under installation at Griffith Observatory, from Friends Of The Observatory (FOTO) as a component of the Griffith Observatory Renovation and Expansion Project, subject to the conditions in the Agreement to Accept Gift;  
*subject to receipt of Appendix D to Exhibit E-4 and approval thereof by the City Attorney,*
2. Approve the Agreement to Accept Gift, substantially in the form on file in the Board Office, subject to the approval of the Mayor and the City Attorney as to form;
3. Direct the Board Secretary to transmit forthwith the proposed Agreement to the Mayor, in accordance with Executive Directive No. 3, and concurrently to the City Attorney for review and approval as to form; and,
4. Authorize the Board President and Secretary to execute the Agreement subsequent to all necessary approvals.

SUMMARY:

On September 20, 2002, the Board awarded Contract No. 3068 to S.J. Amoroso Construction Co., Inc., to renovate and expand the Griffith Observatory (Board Report No. 02-339). Prior to the award and throughout the construction phase of the project, FOTO has been engaged in a

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fundraising campaign to supplement funding for the project, including and specifically to provide funds for equipment in the Samuel Oschin Planetarium and other specialty items and services, for which FOTO also managed the contracting activity. To date, FOTO has gifted a total amount of \$8,273,850.90 to the City for these purposes; some have been gifts of funds for the purposes of awarding various Additive Alternates, and other gifts are of services, materials, and equipment integral to the Renovation and Expansion Project, and which have ranged from theater seating to the gift of the Zeiss Universarium Mark IX sky projector (the full schedule of these gifts is described in Board Report Nos. 03-120, 03-201, 04-53, 04-227, 04-228, and 05-06).

In addition to its aforementioned fundraising and contracting roles in support of the Renovation and Expansion Project, FOTO took on the responsibility for managing and funding the design, development, fabrication, and installation of all elements for the Griffith Observatory Exhibit Program. Reflective of the public-private partnership between the City and FOTO for all aspects of the Renovation and Expansion project, the Exhibit Program was executed by FOTO at the request of and on behalf of – and with explicit design, content, and implementation guidance from – Observatory and other City officials. Interactions between the Observatory and FOTO on exhibit development were seamless and all in service to the concepts of quality, accuracy, and excellence which guided the entire project.

FOTO provided a full-time employee to serve as the Exhibit Program Manager to oversee all aspects of exhibit creation, development, and installation. FOTO acquired the services of exhibit design consultants, installation specialists, an exhibit scientist, an exhibition writer, curatorial and research experts, and a wide range of contractors and vendors. It also managed dozens of contracts and purchase agreements, including the extensive accounting and payment activities associated with an enterprise of this scale and complexity. With a finished value of \$15 million, the development of the Exhibit Program was, in scale and scope, an effort second only to the construction project itself. The gift of the Exhibit Program from FOTO constitutes one of the largest such private contributions ever made to the Department and the City.

The resulting Exhibit Program builds on the mission of Griffith Observatory to provide information on astronomy and related sciences to the public and an understanding of its visitors' knowledge and interests. The Observatory staff and FOTO undertook development of a conceptual framework for a new Exhibit Program beginning in 1999. This framework was reviewed by a group of noted experts, including professional astronomers, public education and communications specialists, journalists, and architects, each of whom offered guidance and input into the fundamental messaging for the new exhibits. The framework took account of Griffith Observatory being a relatively unusual hybrid of public observatory, planetarium, and exhibition space. The Exhibit Program seeks to present fundamental concepts in a clear and engaging manner intended both to make an immediate impression on the visitor and to draw them in for further exploration. Exhibits were conceptualized to give meaning and context to the most common visitor inquiries, such as basic astronomical concepts and recent astronomical

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discoveries and events reported by the media, by presenting the universe as a much more knowable, understandable, and very real place, albeit one that is also astonishing, breathtaking, and mysterious.

Visitors begin their transformation into observers from the moment they approach the iconic Griffith Observatory building. To that end, each major exhibit zone focuses on a unique aspect of observation. The exhibits actively engage visitors in the process and conduct of scientific observation. They present real data in an effort to enable observers not only to increase their knowledge but also to translate that knowledge into meaning and significance. Each wing in the classic building focuses on observation from an Earth-based perspective. The Hall of the Eye illustrates how our understanding of the nature of the universe continually evolves as our ability to observe with more accuracy and precision improves. The Ahmanson Hall of the Sky demonstrates how the most fundamental celestial phenomena we encounter – like moon phases, seasons, eclipses, and tides – result from the motions of the Earth, Moon, and Sun. In the new Richard and Lois Gunther Depths of Space, visitor perspective shifts from earthbound to an experience of cosmic scale and galactic landscapes leveraged by space exploration. Here visitors encounter both spectacular models of the solar system and opportunities to explore the farthest reaches of the universe. The Big Picture, an unprecedented 152-foot-long by 20-foot-high installation, magnifies real research imagery to reveal that a small swath of the night sky actually contains millions of stars and galaxies. Finally, the Gottlieb Transit Corridor located on the new, west-facing lower terrace, features an arc and ecliptic chart which track the position of the sun as it cycles through the year.

FOTO engaged the following major consultants and contractors to execute the Exhibit Program:

**C&G Partners LLC (formerly Chermayeff & Geismar Inc.): Exhibit Planning and Design Contractor (August 2000 to present)**

Prominent C&G clients have included the New York Hall of Science, the Library of Congress, Ellis Island Visitors Center, and the D-Day Museum in New Orleans.

**Maltbie, Inc.: Exhibit Fabrication and Installation Contractor (November 2004 to present)**

Maltbie, Inc. was selected through a competitive process based on their 45-year history of excellence in developing museum exhibitions including projects such as the National Holocaust Museum, the National Constitution Center, the Clinton Presidential library, and the Bishop Museum.

**Russell Brosnahan Haffner Multimedia Incorporated: Audio-Visual Content Development Contractor (March 2005 to present)**

**Carpenter Norris Consulting and Tobo Construction: Design, Fabrication, and Installation Contractors for the Transit Corridor Instruments (May 2005 to present)**

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The City will be the beneficiary of all warranty of materials and workmanship on the Exhibit Program, along with undertaking future responsibility for proper use and maintenance of the exhibit installation. Commitments relative to intellectual property rights on certain images or original creations used in the Exhibit Program will also become City responsibility and are laid out in the various attachments integrated into the Gift Agreement.

### FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT:

Acceptance of this Gift, valued in development, fabrication, and installation at \$15 million, permits the City to furnish the newly renovated and expanded Griffith Observatory with an installation of exhibits which transforms the building into a meaningful expression of public astronomy and offers a range of learning opportunities to visitors. The City alone would not have had the funding or expertise to create this program. While acceptance of the Gift does not have any direct impact on the General Fund, there will be future costs in maintaining and updating the exhibit program in line with the standards and excellence of the original gift in the coming months and years. These likely can be offset by a portion of the revenue from shows in the Samuel Oschin Planetarium (a surcharge of 20% of this revenue remains in the Observatory Surcharge account).

Report prepared by Linda Barth, Observatory Reopening Project Manager