

CITY OF PALM DESERT STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: February 27, 2025

PREPARED BY: Erica Powell, Management Analyst

SUBJECT: APPROVE DEACCESSION OF GRAND PIANO BY DAVID MUELLER

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the deaccession and removal of *Grand Piano* by David Mueller.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

In 1992, the City Council approved the commission and installation of *Grand Piano*, an artistic picnic table by David Mueller, at City Hall (east of the Council Chamber). The piece, constructed from Kyner 500 sheet metal, measures 7 feet in length, 42 inches in width, and weighs approximately 300 pounds.

Over the past 30 years, *Grand Piano* has required extensive maintenance, with costs exceeding the original purchase price due to repeated graffiti and frequent repainting. The table has also become a safety concern due to its frequent use by unhoused individuals, raising security and workplace safety considerations.

Deaccessioning is the formal process for removing a City-owned artwork through sale, donation, or destruction based on specific criteria. *Grand Piano* meets multiple criteria for removal, including:

- **Excessive Maintenance:** The artwork has required frequent repainting and graffiti removal. The cumulative maintenance costs have surpassed the artwork's original purchase price.
- **Safety Concerns:** The table's location has contributed to workplace safety risks.
- **Public Safety & Security:** Reports of substance abuse, including underage cannabis use, have raised further concerns.

At the November 13, 2024, Cultural Arts Committee meeting, the Committee unanimously recommended the deaccession of *Grand Piano* with a 7-0 vote. The decision was based on the determination that the artwork has reached the end of its functional lifespan and that the costs associated with restoration and relocation are not financially viable.

Based on the above listed criteria for removal and that staff has been unsuccessful at locating the artist, staff recommends deaccessioning *Grand Piano*, removing the artwork, recycling the metal, and repairing the concrete surface.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The artwork was originally purchased for \$2,000 in December 1992. There is no record of its current market value. The only costs associated with this would be staff time for the removal and concrete repair which would be minimal.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Deaccession Policy
2. Deaccession Worksheet
3. Original artwork designs
4. Current artwork photographs