

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

September 1, 2015
4:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E -109

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Manfredi, Commissioners Jackson, Lau Hui, Lewis, Malkin, Wolfteich

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Madan

STAFF PRESENT: Mary Pat Byrne, Scott MacDonald, Department of Planning and Community Development; Camron Parker, Department of Parks and Community Services

OTHERS PRESENT: Stanko Milov, Global Organization for Arts and Leadership and Dr. Don Davidson

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Chairperson Manfredi who presided. All Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Madan, who was excused.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Lewis. Second was by Commissioner Wolfteich and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Approval of Minutes

Chair Manfredi called attention to the penultimate paragraph on page 3 and noted that the comment should be credited to Commissioner Malkin.

Motion to approve the August 4, 2015, minutes as amended was made by Commissioner Lewis. Second was by Commissioner Lau Hui and the motion carried unanimously.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Stanko Milov, 2546 130th Avenue SE, Executive Director of the Global Organization for Arts and Leadership, described his background and qualifications that led him to form his organization. The mission of Global Organization for Arts and Leadership is to be a global leader in innovation of artistic transformational leadership platforms through educational, artistic, and cultural programs vital to the whole leader. The organization aims to enrich individual productivity and quality of life through the universal language of the arts, and to inspire individual self-awareness and community engagement. To date the fairly new organization has participated in quite a few community partnerships, including the Bellevue Youth Theatre. He said that work inspired him to build a program around offering performing arts free of tuition to all who love to perform and build themselves up through the arts. The

resulting 21st Century Community Performing Arts Leadership Program has various approaches for building leadership teams, culminating in a performance at the end. Auditions will be held at the end of September. The Commission was asked to consider the program as its own in offering it to the community, building families and leadership for the youth, and giving the children of Bellevue the opportunity to grow as leaders. The annual cost for the program is \$48,000.

Chair Manfredi suggested the program should be put on a future agenda for discussion.

4. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Bellevue Parks and Open Space Plan

Senior planner Camron Parker with the Department of Parks and Community Services explained that the process of updating the Parks and Open Space Plan is under way. The plan is updated about every six years and lays out how the department will go about accomplishing the goals established in the Comprehensive Plan. The process includes marking off those items that have been completed, making changes to projects that are under way, and projecting what the next phase of the park system will be.

The Commissioners were asked to indicate how they use the city's parks and open spaces. Commissioner Lewis indicated she walks every day and primarily utilizes the city's trails. She said she likes the idea of creating more connecting trails, and stressed the need to maintain all trails.

Commissioner Jackson said she often rents park facilities for meetings, frequently attends events at the Northwest Arts Center, and enjoys walking around Downtown Park. She said she hopes the City will keep Ashwood Park green, and stressed the need for more open and green space in the Downtown. Open space, green space and trails will also be critical to the success of Eastgate and Bel-Red as those areas redevelop.

Commissioner Malkin said he regularly walks his dog in the park in his community. He said he also visits Downtown Park. He said he enjoys seeing sculptures in Downtown Park and believes developing an amphitheater there would be welcomed. Some of Bellevue's smaller parks should also have stages from which impromptu performances could be offered. He agreed that more green space is needed in the Downtown area generally. Mr. Parker pointed out that a new amphitheater has been developed as part of the Bellevue Youth Theater.

Commissioner Lau Hui said she has small children and often takes them to the park to play. Playground equipment for children is very important, as is open space in which children can play. Ashwood Park often hosts events and when it does there are many people there, otherwise the park is not heavily used and something more could be developed there.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Malkin, Mr. Parker said in most cases the trail system is part of the Parks System. In the area to the south of I-90 there is a combination of City-owned trails, open space and greenbelts, but some of the greenbelts are actually owned by individual subdivisions. Usually where there are trails they are City facilities.

Chair Manfredi said he also has children and spends a lot of time in parks. He echoed the importance of developing green space and open space in the Downtown, and said to the extent possible the various green spaces around the city should be connected.

Commissioner Wolfteich said he uses the parks primarily with his family. He agreed that there should be more performance spaces in the Downtown where he lives.

Mr. Parker said the project to complete the circle in Downtown Park is under way. He said there will be a series of terraces included that could serve as an amphitheater. Commissioner Malkin commented that where full amphitheaters would not be practical, band shells would be a good idea.

Mr. Parker highlighted the areas of focus included in the plan around the different types of parks and open space system elements. He noted that the list includes the trails and large natural area parks like Coal Creek and Mercer Slough, and the smaller neighborhood or community park facilities. Active recreation facilities, including gyms and sports fields, are included as well. While Downtown Park has a long history, the general notion of small urban parks, including hardscaped plazas in urban settings, is somewhat new. The work to update the plan will include looking at how Downtown has developed and what changes may be needed to include urban park facilities.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Lau Hui, Mr. Parker said the plazas associated with larger buildings are usually privately developed and include a provision that they will be open to the public. Commissioner Lau Hui commented that plazas that are actually open to the public should be made better known to the public.

Commissioner Jackson said the issue was addressed by the Downtown Livability Initiative CAC. Currently there are no requirements for developers to make their privately developed but open to the public plazas and open spaces easy to find, nor are they required to create pleasant places or make the areas easily accessible. The CAC included in its recommendation requiring developers to develop such plazas as green, useful and accessible. Mr. Parker added that there is text in the Parks and Open Space Plan about privately developed plazas.

Commissioner Jackson noted that the Commission every year talks about the need for more venues in the city. She said it is wonderful to have the new Bellevue Youth Theater and the outdoor amphitheater associated with it, but it is disappointing that the facility is always fully booked, making it inaccessible to most arts groups. Having band shells in various parks would be a step in the right direction and usher in new opportunities for live music throughout the city.

Mr. Parker commented that in 2010 when the Parks and Open Space Plan was last updated, it was possible to draw some lines between it and the Cultural Compass. Things have changed, however, since then and the opportunity should be taken to review the issues. The Parks and Open Space Plan also includes specifics regarding visual and performing arts resources and the Commission will be asked to offer comments on that section.

Commissioner Malkin said every opportunity should be taken to include public art in parks throughout the city.

Commissioner Jackson concurred. She suggested the Commission has done a good job to date in coordinating neighborhood art projects with park locations. Neighborhoods can be strengthened through having identifiable works of neighborhood art as well as gathering places, particularly where community residents are encouraged to contribute ideas and participate in the process.

Chair Manfredi noted that the Cultural Compass indicates Bellevue has become the hub of cultural life on the Eastside. The art walk project linking City Hall to the waterfront will be a big part of it all, and working with the Bellevue Downtown Association seems like an obvious approach. Additionally, the importance of venues in the Downtown cannot be overstated.

Commissioner Malkin said he took the online parks and recreation survey and found that while it talks about indoor sporting events it did not address indoor cultural events. What artists in the community are constantly saying is that they do not have any place to exhibit their work.

Ms. Byrne said there is a space at the South Bellevue Community Center in which individual artists, both amateur and professional, can display their works. She allowed that the city has been receiving increasing requests for that kind of community level exhibit space.

Mr. Parker thanked the Commissioners for their suggestions. He said over the next month or so he would be visiting with all of the City's boards and commissions asking similar questions. The Parks and Community Services Board will review the comments and provide a recommendation to the City Council in the first quarter of 2016.

B. Arts Commission Work Plan

Ms. Byrne explained that the City's formalized Budget One process culminates in an adopted budget that funds specific activities. The budgeting process is conducted every other year and it opens a window that allows the Commission to think about what direction the arts program should take.

The official process for the 2017-2018 budget will kick off in early 2016. Ms. Byrne said the Commission meetings prior to the beginning of the budget process will be structured to gain the most input possible before staff begins the process of writing the Budget One proposals. The process will include bringing in people to talk about some of the city's larger visions and the role the arts can play within those visions. Updates will be given to the Commission regarding the Grand Connection, Wilburton, BelRed, the economic development plan, development of the Spring District, and how collaboration among Eastside cities could potentially address venue needs and general support for the arts.

Ms. Byrne said the Budget One process divides all proposals into seven different categories. While the Arts Program often crosses category boundaries, proposals are addressed under the Innovative, Vibrant & Caring Community category. She shared with the Commission a matrix of the goals addressed by the Cultural Compass and the goal areas into which they fit. Items will always arise that will not be on the work plan as new opportunities arise like the Asian Pacific Islanders Heritage Month exhibit in May of 2015.

Ms. Byrne detailed key items on the draft work plan.

There are still policies that need to be developed for the Public Art Program. Information will be brought before the Commission in future meetings.

Overlapping programs include the Neighborhood Enhancement Program and Urban Boulevards. The Neighborhood Enhancement Program has been retooled and is back on track. The areas to be covered will be much larger, and there will be much more money available for projects. Art may or may not be included in the individual projects. The Urban Boulevards project is a capital project that also could involve public art.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Lewis about the Urban Boulevards project, Mr. MacDonald said the program works to improve rights-of-way through a variety of means. The program works as a collaborative unit by working across several City departments, and has worked with the Arts Program in the past on public art projects.

Chair Manfredi commented that currently Downtown is a construction zone, particularly along what is envisioned to become the art walk. He suggested giving consideration to what it would take to get people involved early in the process as tenants for the new spaces are identified along the route, with the aim of obtaining more casual exhibit space. Ms. Byrne agreed the issue should be given some thought.

5. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS - None

6. REPORTS

A. Commissioners' Committee and Lead Reports – As Noted

B. Project Updates from Staff

i. Monthly Project Update Report

Ms. Byrne reported that the Mevdenbauer Bay waterfront expansion project is moving right along. The concepts put together by the three artists will be reviewed on September 16. Each artist has been directed to development at least two alternative directions for their art and express them conceptually. The panel members will attend and will be able to hear the responses from the community. The artists will then turn to developing their designs.

With regard to the Newport Hills project, Mr. MacDonald said he met with the artist Bruce Myers who is finishing up the final elements of the *Rain Catcher* piece. There are six mosaics yet to be installed on some of the cut boulders along 119th Avenue SE. The project should be wrapped up in the next three or four weeks, after which a dedication ceremony will be scheduled.

Ms. Byrne reported that she will be before the Council on September 8 seeking approval for the funding guidelines. She said the item has been placed on the consent agenda.

Mr. MacDonald said the Comprehensive Plan update was adopted by the City Council on August 3. Some last minutes tweaks were made by Mayor Balducci to strengthen some of the arts policies.

7. CORRESPONDENCE, INFORMATION

A. Written Correspondence – As Noted

B. Information

i. Future Agenda Items – As Noted

ii. Committees – As Noted

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Manfredi adjourned the meeting at 6:08 p.m.