

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES

June 7, 2016  
4:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Room 1E -108

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Commissioners Jackson, Lau Hui, Lewis, Madan, Malkin, Wolfteich

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Chairperson Manfredi

STAFF PRESENT: Joshua Heim, Scott MacDonald, Department of Planning and Community Development

OTHERS PRESENT: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:35 p.m. by Commissioner Malkin who presided. All Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Wolfteich, who arrived at 4:42 p.m., and Chair Manfredi, who was excused.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A. Approval of Agenda

**Motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Jackson. Second was by Commissioner Malkin and the motion carried unanimously.**

B. Approval of Minutes

**Motion to approve the March 5, 2016, minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Lewis. Second was by Commissioner Jackson and the motion carried unanimously.**

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

i. Cultural Compass Strategic Vision and Core Initiatives

Ms. Linda Pawson, 1001 NE 1st Street, said she serves as executive director of the Bellevue Arts Museum (BAM). She thanked the Commission for taking on the task of updating the city's Cultural Compass to better reflect the current growth and opportunities within the city. BAM uses the Cultural Compass regularly as a guide for planning and for delivery of its mission. It is also used as a tool for assessing the organization's impact on the community. The work of the Commission will ensure that Bellevue will have comprehensive guidelines for arts and culture. With regard to the cultural arts fund, she said BAM would like to see additional clarification regarding the sources of the fund. BAM participates in co-marketing efforts with a number of organizations and supports all efforts to enhance the sharing of resources, but often struggles to cover even its own business costs. Funding for all arts and cultural organizations by the city should be increased, and the Commission should push for additional funding in the next budget cycle and should seek other funding support for

cultural activities in all new city revenue plans. The proposed wording of the cultural space core initiative clearly addresses the need for affordable space for new and developing cultural organizations and artists to create a home for the arts. While BAM supports the concept, there should be greater recognition of support for currently established cultural organizations, including BAM. BAM is a home for the arts and enjoys 75,000 visitors per year who seek out BAM as a place to learn and engage. The organization offers hands-on programming and educational opportunities for all ages, and supports both artists who are just starting out and artists who have made art their lives. BAM was honored to co-sponsor the Grand Connection charrette with the city. Looking to the future, the concept of the grand connection links many important parts of the community, and the ideas generated during the charrette included fantastic designs and artistic thinking. Given the significant level of participation in the charrette, the Grand Connection should be specifically labeled in the cultural districts core initiative language, replacing the downtown artwalk and entertainment street. While the specific locations included in each definition may be slightly different, BAM supports using the Grand Connection to integrate all the pieces of the plans to provide both functional and artistic access for Bellevue citizens. BAM has a strong history in Bellevue, and as the 70th anniversary of arts fair is celebrated, the past will be honored while looking forward to a bright future. The city should continue to support the existing gems in the community while also building new ones.

Mr. Steve DeWalt, 9815 Belfair Road in Vuecrest, said his home, business and life are all within three miles of City Hall. He said he serves as a trustee for BAM. Every year, 150,000 people come to the arts fair, and 75,000 people come through the museum every year. BAM is always innovating. One of the new programs, called BAM Sound, melds music and art. Programs of that sort will help build the vitality of the arts on the Eastside. He said he was a member, officer and director of the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce in 1984 when attention was given to what to do with a piece of property the school district owned. Through a public/private partnership, a solution was identified that focused on the need for a park in the downtown. Great cities have great parks, but they also have great institutions. In Bellevue, BAM is one of those great institutions that should be supported as it continues to evolve and change with the community.

Ms. Wendy Tyner, Philanthropy and Publicity Director for Wintergrass, thanked the Commission for its support over the last four years. The event came to Bellevue seven years ago and was warmly welcomed, and the city continues to embrace the festival which brings between 12,000 and 15,000 to the Hyatt Regency for four days of bluegrass music. The support of the Commission helps to provide education for 250 children aged four to 21 every year, half of whom receive full scholarships. Every year the education program expands both in the number of students receiving instruction and in the number of programs offered. Over the years relationships have been built with various corporate sponsors who believe in the arts. The Commission was urged to continue funding the arts and to make sure the City Council understands the importance of the arts in Bellevue.

Mr. Stephen Ruffo, Wintergrass Executive Director, referred to the need for greater communication and collaboration among artists and performance venues as outlined in the updated core initiatives. He said Wintergrass created a 2000-seat performance venue in one of the ballrooms of the Hyatt. People love coming to Bellevue to enjoy the festival and but also because the city is family friendly. Each year as many as 140 artists come from all over the world and it is thrilling that the city has embraced the festival.

Dr. Todd Smith, 3223 99th Avenue NE, proposed the development of a Bellevue film festival. He said he participated in the first Sundance Festival and noted that he has connections with the movie industry. Bellevue should develop a film festival in association with BAM, if possible at the same time as the Bellevue Arts Fair. The fair has the perfect setup and

location with Lincoln Square and BAM. The idea would be to add onto the existing arts programs. A film festival would bring in a lot of income for local businesses. The festival could occur as early as 2018 and it certainly would enhance the city.

Ms. Mika Simpson, 8435 NE 13th Street, said she serves as a trustee for BAM. She said there were a variety of reasons why she chose Bellevue as a place to live, chief among them was BAM. Bellevue is a community of well-educated diverse citizens with a wealth of different backgrounds. BAM is one of the top ways the city connects with various groups of people. She said she has a young daughter and sees the importance of living in a city that has art education opportunities available for children. BAM has a variety of education programs for children ranging from toddlers to teens. BAM exhibits spur discussion on issues of importance to the community. BAM would not be able to continue fulfilling its mission without ongoing support from the city. The Commission was urged to take action to increase the level of support for the museum.

Mr. Jeff Ross, Board Chair for Music Works Northwest, 1331 118th Avenue SE, Suite 400, thanked the Commission for its tremendous support of the organization over the years. He noted that the City Council has also been very supportive. Very soon the doors will open for the summer camp program that is attended by some 300 kids. He suggested the survey did not fully address the issue of funding for the arts in the community. The funding level has remain the same for the past ten years, which means in real terms funding for the arts in the community is going down. The Commission should take a leadership role in working to evaluate what the financial needs are of the various arts organizations. The Commission could be very instrumental in providing guidance to the City Council as the next budgeting phase is ushered in. The Board and staff of Music Works Northwest will participate in every way possible and do all that can be done to support any initiatives the Commission wishes to undertake to come up with commensurate funding for the arts.

Mr. Rick Carlson, 2332 108th Avenue SE, spoke representing the Eastside Heritage Center. He said the organization supports the arts, but pointed out that culture is more than just performing and visual arts, it also encompasses history and heritage. Nationally and internationally, history and heritage are huge tourism drivers. The Eastside Heritage Center does not have a permanent home, and its collection is in a storage facility in Totem Lake. A home is being sought, and in considering funding the arts the Commission should remember the Eastside Heritage Center.

#### 4. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

##### A. Draft Strategic Vision and Core Initiatives

Commissioner Jackson reported that the Cultural Compass update committee, comprised of Commissioners Madan, Wolfeich and herself, with the assistance of Arts Program Manager Joshua Heim and Arts Program Coordinator Scott MacDonald, has continued to work on the draft of the strategic vision and core initiatives and to receive feedback on it. The next iteration of the draft should be ready for the July Commission meeting.

Mr. Heim said the 45-day public comment period began on May 18. A link has been posted on the Commission's Facebook page and information has been posted on the city's website. Written comments are being received. On June 17, the *It's Your City* publication will include an article summarizing the process and inviting further public comment. Feedback will be taken until July 1, after which the committee will reconvene, work through the comments, apply them to the draft as appropriate, and give a report to the City Council.

## B. Bel-Red Look Back

Mr. MacDonald said the Bel-Red look back was triggered by the Bel-Red subarea code that was adopted about six years ago. The look back will involve a general review of the code and the development that has occurred since to determine if the plan and the code are working as intended. One topic that will come up as part of the process is the arts district and the question of whether or not the strategies in the code are accomplishing the desired outcome. The process will involve retuning the code as needed.

Mr. MacDonald said three focus group sessions have been scheduled in which the Commission can participate. The groups will focus on topics such as the regional transportation network, public art, the amenity incentive system and whether or not it needs to be retooled, incentives for creating artist live/work opportunities and performing arts centers, and public park facilities. The sessions will be at City Hall on June 15 from noon to 1:30 p.m.; June 16 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.; and June 17 from 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. The sessions will help to form the scope of the work for the Council. The real meat of the work will be done in 2017.

Mr. MacDonald said a look back website has been set up. It includes the Bel-Red subarea plan as it currently exists.

## C. Grand Connection Artist Selection

Commissioner Lau Hui reported that over 20 artists were invited to respond to an invitational call for artists sent by City staff and 12 applied. Working from resumes, letters of interest and images of past work, staff and the design consultant selected three artists to be interviewed. Stokely Towles focuses on fundamentally changing how things are looked at. Nicole Kistler develops interactive art and landscapes and works collaboratively with the community. In the end, the panel selected SuttonBeresCuller, a cooperative entity rooted in unique collaborative and reactive art.

Photos of works by each of the three artists were shown to the Commissioners.

Mr. Heim said assuming approval of the panel's recommendation, a contract will be developed for SuttonBeresCuller to sign. The kickoff for the project will be somewhere in mid- to late-June with a public visioning process. A public visioning with the Council will occur in mid-July. Two additional visioning open houses will be scheduled, with the first one in October. The contract deliverables will be to collaborate with the general design team in developing an arts and culture element for the Grand Connection; identification of opportunities and strategies for standalone artworks as well as integrated artistic features within the project area; and opportunities for programming using the \$140,000 Bellwether allocation for the next biennium. Of the contract budget of \$40,000, \$30,000 will come from the project budget and \$10,000 will come from the public art fund. Other low-hanging fruit opportunities will be explored as well, including Downtown Park and wayfinding.

Commissioner Malkin said it was his understanding that the group would serve as a creative consultant rather than a creator of art. Mr. Heim confirmed that and added that they will also animate the vision.

**A motion to endorse the Grand Connection Artist Selection Panel's recommendation as presented was made by Commissioner Lau Hui. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lewis and the motion carried unanimously.**

## 5. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS

Mr. Heim pointed out the need to select a date for the Commission's meeting in July. He offered Tuesday, July 12 and Monday, July 18, pointing out that the Commission's update to the Council will be given on the 18th.

Commissioner Jackson said her preference was for the 12th to allow for more lead time ahead of the 18th.

There was agreement to set the meeting for July 12.

## 6. REPORTS

- A. Commissioners' Committee and Lead Reports – As Noted
- B. Project Updates from Staff
  - i. Bellwether

Mr. MacDonald said the first installations would begin in about a week and a half. He said questions have come up regarding some of the sites given the Downtown Park construction project schedule. Originally half of the park was to be closed off with construction fencing, and artwork has been commissioned for the construction fencing, but now it cannot be said for sure that there will be construction fencing, though some could be put up just to accommodate the art work.

For most of the artists, installation will begin on July 5 and run through July 15. An exception has been allowed for an artist who will be flying in from Puerto Rico to do a big installation in Downtown Park starting on July 17. All works will be in place by July 29, the date of the official opening for the exhibit. The opening event is planned to occur in Downtown Park, the details of which are currently being worked out. A series of art experiences are being planned to occur throughout the exhibition, the first of which will be the opening. The inflatable sculptures that artist Bill Kennedy is creating will move throughout the exhibition to highlight different points. The opening will align with the Arts Fair.

- ii. Portable Art Collection Call

Mr. MacDonald reported that the application period for the portable art collection ended on June 1. He said there were roughly 1450 individual applications received in the form of images. In all, there are well over a thousand artworks to choose from. About 80 percent of the applicants are from Washington state, and over 90 percent are from the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia.

A panel of three arts professionals has been formed to focus on developing a roster of artworks for temporary placement. The panel members are Lele Barnett, curator of the Microsoft Art Collection; Michelle Kumata, exhibit director for the Wing Luke Museum; and Cora Edmonds, gallery director for ArtXchange Gallery.

Mr. Heim added that the roster will be completed by mid-July and will be open for a period of two years.

- iii. Lattawood Park

Mr. MacDonald reported that the Lattawood Park public art and pedestrian lighting project is anticipated to start in the fall.

Commissioner Malkin commented that the Horizon Heights Neighborhood Association met recently and received a presentation from parks representatives who will be doing the lighting. He said the presentation generated an enormous amount of interest and he was asked to answer several questions. He added that he urged the residents to participate in the conversation going forward about the lighting project design.

Mr. MacDonald said the project has the opportunity to serve as the link between the two neighborhoods, with the park being the neutral ground. The project could well be a way for both communities to claim the park as their own. He said the lighting element of the project will be carried out with \$30,000 from the Neighborhood Enhancement Program.

iv. *Temple of the Stones* Repairs

Mr. MacDonald said ArtTech was engaged in making the repairs to the work that is located at the South Bellevue Community Center. The sealant that has failed is being ground off, following which the sculpture will be repainted and resealed. The work is expected to be completed by June 15.

7. CORRESPONDENCE, INFORMATION

A. Written Correspondence – As Noted

Mr. Heim provided the Commissioners with copies of 17 emails from various arts groups that were received after the publication date of the packet.

B. Information

i. Future Agenda Items – As Noted

The Commissioners expressed an interest in following up on the suggestion made during oral communications regarding development of a Bellevue film festival.

With regard to the budget process, Mr. Heim said sometime in July the draft budget will be presented to the City Council. At that time, the recommendations from the leadership team and the city manager's office will be made public. In the course of time, the Commission will be afforded the opportunity to provide input to the Council.

ii. Committees – As Noted

8. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Malkin adjourned the meeting at 6:08 p.m.