

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

March 5, 2019
4:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E -109

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Manfredi, Commissioners Gulati, Jackson, Malkin, Wolfteich

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners Lau Hui, Lewis

STAFF PRESENT: Joshua Heim, Scott MacDonald, Department of Planning and Community Development; Kathleen Kline, City Attorney's Office

OTHERS PRESENT: Zac Cullen, Ben Beres, John Sutton, SuttonBeresCuller

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:35 p.m. by Chairperson Manfredi who presided. All Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Wolfteich, who arrived at 4:37 p.m., and Commissioners Lau Hui and Lewis, both of whom were excused.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A. Approval of Agenda

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

B. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the January 2019 minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Malkin. The motion was seconded was by Commissioner Jackson and the motion carried unanimously.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

4. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Arts Commission Bylaws Discussion

Assistant City Attorney Kathleen Kline explained that the city has developed a standardized set of bylaws for all boards and commissions to use as tools to facilitate the work they do. While the standardized approach does not allow for much variability, there are some sections in which revisions can be made to make them work for the specific bodies. Currently, the Arts Commission does not have adopted bylaws.

Ms. Kline called attention to Article I of the bylaws mirrors the code section that pertains to the Commission, with the exception of paragraph B that specifically references artists and the guidelines of the Public Art Program. With regard to Section V, she noted that the section is variable as to the specific day and time for Commission meetings but is not variable in the requirement for the Commission to meet at least once per month, provided that the Commission can elect to recess for either August or December, a requirement that is attached to all boards and commissions.

Commissioner Malkin asked what the consequence would be of not adopting bylaws for the Commission. Ms. Kline said the Commission would then be out of compliance with city code.

Ms. Kline noted that paragraph J of Article V showed 6:30 p.m. as the time of adjournment for the Commission meetings. She noted that while the Commission may not want to be that specific, having a time for adjournment helps to maintain order over the length of the meetings. The Commission can always elect to extend the time of adjournment should there be a need to do so.

Commissioner Wolfeich suggested "at 6:30 p.m." in paragraph J should be changed to read "by 6:30 p.m." to avoid the need for a motion to adjourn early or to have each meeting run that late. Ms. Kline agreed.

Ms. Kline pointed out that the order of business shown in paragraph D of Article VI was variable. She said as drafted it closely reflects the Commission's current order of business but allowed that it could be changed if so desired. She also noted that the time allowed for Oral Communications as set out in paragraph D of Article VII could also be changed. She explained that other boards and commissions include the overall limit of 30 minutes.

Ms. Kline called attention to Article XIV in which the requirements regarding public records are outlined. She noted that in paragraphs B and C there is reference to an Arts Commission email address which is in the process of being set up as a tool for managing documents.

Chair Manfredi said from his point of view the proposed bylaws would work well for the Commission. He said the 30-minute time limit on public speakers would almost never come into play, and the order of business follows the Commission's current practice. He agreed with the proposal made by Commissioner Wolfeich regarding the time of adjournment. He said the fact that the Commission is obligated to meet monthly came as news to him, noting that in the past where the Commission had no items to discuss it has elected not to meet. He asked if language could be included that would make not holding a meeting possible. Ms. Kline said changing the text of Article V paragraph A would require amending city code.

Chair Manfredi called attention to paragraph B of Article II and said he was surprised to learn that the election of officers was to occur annually. Commissioner Kline said that requirement is spelled out in the city code.

With regard to paragraph B of Article I, Arts Program Manager Joshua Heim commented that the Commission supports a lengthy artist selection process. The Commission approves all requests for qualifications, convenes artist selection panels and weighs in on artist proposals. The Commission is not involved in the actual hiring of consultants or independent contractors beyond making a recommendation. Ms. Kline said the limiting language included in the paragraph is spelled out by city code.

Commissioner Malkin referred to paragraph A in Article XIII and pointed out that the Commission has not and does not currently provide at least quarterly communications to the Council regarding major activities and work plans. Mr. Heim said the issue is one that all boards and commissions face. It has more to do with scheduling for Council meetings. The requirement, however, can be satisfied in a number of ways, including through official meetings between the Commission Chair and the Council liaison, and through written letters and reports.

Ms. Kline said the Commission could choose to adopt the bylaws essentially as amended and otherwise drafted and then work to see the city code changed relative to sections that do not specifically work for the Commission. One example would be seeking a change to the code relative to Article V paragraph A allowing the Commission to not meet during a month if there is no business to conduct.

B. Bellwether 2019 Creative Brief

Ben Beres with SuttonBeresCuller referred to the 2019 Creative Brief included in the packet. He noted that it included the timeline that started with a productive workshop in the fall of 2018 with a lot of stakeholders. He said the brief also outlines the scope of work for 2019, how the event will connect to the Grand Connection, and the implementation timeline, all of which expands on the 2018 iteration of the event. He said there was a lot of trial by fire and learning about the various spaces, but the relationships have been developed. Some will be leaned on less in 2019 and some will be leaned on more. A good group of curators has been gathered to focus on certain things, including a much heavier music component, more tech and more video. Some of the curators will only deal with two or three projects while others will deal with more, but all in all it will be a good way to target what Bellwether wants to do.

John Sutton with SuttonBeresCuller said one notion behind having the curators onboard is to pair up with the programs to be implemented on the Grand Connection. For instance, a murals educator will be tapped to curate the mural section. That curator's work could involve developing more guidelines for how a mural program could move forward. The same will be true of the music and performance curators.

Mr. Beres reminded the Commissioners that the theme in 2018 was Connections. For 2019 the focus will turn to what happens after the connections are made in a format tentatively called Taking Root and centers on the notion of growth and evolution, what it means to put down roots, and what it means to live in the community.

Elisheba Wood Johnson, a Seattle resident who works for the mayor's office and who is currently curating a big show at the Portland Arts Museum, will curate the lion's share of the visual arts at the Bellevue Arts Museum, City Hall and hopefully Meydenbauer Center. Anthony White, who is relatively new to the Seattle arts scene, will do a version of his highly successful *While Supplies Last* that involves affordable artwork. He is looking at doing two events. Justine Waterhouse splits her time between the Pacific Northwest and Phoenix. She helped do *Out of Sight* and worked at the Fryer Museum. She will have two different projects, one including a collaboration between a Muslim artist, a filmmaker and a visual artist. Beth Sellers, formerly the curator of the Suyama Space for 19 years, will focus on a single outdoor project. Angelina Villalobos, an artist and muralist who has done a lot of work in Seattle and who has been involved in working with students, will join the team. Katherine Harris White, also known as Sassy Black, and Jonathans Wickle will each take a night of the music curation at Meydenbauer Center. Michelle Delavega, a Seattle artist and curator, will have two projects. Janet Galore comes from the tech world and is

an artist and curator in Seattle. She will be involved with several projects. Phirok Suon who is associated with the MakerSpace at the library is in talks about doing a month-long residency in the library before the actual Bellwether in which the public will be engaged in classes or demonstrations, and the objects created through laser cuts and 3-D printing will be put on display. John Boylen, an excellent moderator who has been engaged in conversations for over a decade, will focus on the potential themes, the art that has happened in Bellevue, and how it all leads into next year. Mr. Boylen works for Microsoft and is well connected with the Eastside tech scene.

Mr. Beres said the current focus is on juggling the budget numbers and determining who should get what, figuring the spaces and developing relationships. Consideration is being given to doing something at the new Meydenbauer Bay Park which opens on March 16.

Commissioner Gulati asked if the same artists that participated in 2018 will be tapped again for 2019. Mr. Beres said his goal was to not have any of the same artists return. Commissioner Gulati asked how many Eastside artists will be involved, to which Mr. Beres answered that the desire is to drastically increase the number. A lot of work is currently going into developing a new roster of Bellevue artists.

Mr. MacDonald added that the vision for Bellwether and its connection to the Grand Connection includes the notion of fostering opportunities for artists at different levels. He pointed out that three of those chosen to serve as curators for 2019 previously participated as artists in the show.

Chair Manfredi asked if the work is tracking well with the established schedule. Mr. Beres said some elements are ahead and some are behind, but generally the schedule is holding. Mr. MacDonald allowed that the schedule had been heavily edited to better reflect where things stand. The schedule is admittedly tight going forward.

Chair Manfredi asked if things will be roughly the same in terms of the Bellevue Arts Museum spaces. Mr. Sutton said it was lucky in 2018 that the museum was between programs and was able to offer its second floor. That opportunity will not be in place for the coming event, but there will still be space available in the lobby, the community gallery on the first floor, and certain outdoor spaces and the auditorium space. The Bellevue Arts Museum will still be a major hub but all exhibits will be on the ground floor. The opening event will again be at the museum.

Commissioner Malkin asked about the curatorial charrette that is scheduled for March 20. Mr. MacDonald said the general idea is to have a discussion with the curators about how to respond to the Taking Root theme. It will serve as a pivotal moment in being true to the theme in order to have an impactful show.

Chair Manfredi asked if a firm has been engaged to do the marketing. Mr. Heim said he had had a kick-off conversation with the marketing consultant from last year. He said her contract from last year included the option of renewing it for another year and that option will be activated. The same is true for the graphic designer which means the same team will be in place.

C. Lattawood Public Art Concept

Mr. MacDonald reminded the Commissioners that Jim Hirschfield and Sonja Ishii were the artists selected for the Lattawood public art project. He said the project is jointly funded with \$75,000 from the Arts Program, \$5000 from the Neighborhood Enhancement Program, and an additional sum of \$25,000 from the Neighborhood Enhancement

Program that will pay for the electrical and the lighting, bringing the total project budget to \$105,000, of which \$80,000 will be going to the artists. The Neighborhood Enhancement Program proposal that the public art project was combined with involves lighting the pathway with some level of pedestrian lighting. The artists have been talking with the community about how much light is desired and where light is needed. At a meet and greet event in the park last May the artists spoke with more than 40 local residents about the neighborhood, the history of the park, the site and much more. An online survey was conducted that generated 37 respondents answering a number of questions about the project. The concept produced by the artists was posted to the city's website and it generated one comment related to wanting to see solar and motion sensor lighting used, issues that will be addressed during the final design phase.

Mr. MacDonald said pending approval of the project, the artists will refine the concept and bring the project to the point of handing it off to the fabricators and installers. He said staff would be back before the Commission to provide a briefing on the final design once it is in hand ahead of seeking final approval of the design.

Commissioner Gulati asked how the artists were selected. Mr. MacDonald said the project went through the typical public art process that included having the Commission approve a call for artists. Given the choices of a targeted call or an open call, the decision was made to go with an open call. The submissions received were reviewed by a panel consisting of Commissioner Malkin, the president of the Collingswood Community Association, and Nori Sato, a Seattle artist. The panel selected the top three proposals. The final recommendation was approved by the Commission.

The artists drew from their conversations with the public and the online survey that the community appreciates the friendliness of the neighborhood, its neatness, its diversity, its convenience and its natural surroundings. It was clear there is also an appreciation for the families of the neighborhood and the strong sense of community that exists. Nearly 85 percent wanted to see a low level of lighting used, lighting only the path through the park. Almost 59 percent wanted to see lights along the path triggered by movement. There was a strong indication from the public that the sled run area should be protected.

The design as proposed, called *Nature's Integral Fragments*, involves three tables or lanterns containing a three-inch etched granite top on a stainless steel base. The bases contain apertures from which light will emerge. The tables will generally be at seating height for use during the day, and then at night they will light up and send across the path a distorted image of pollen. Each of the three will have a different image which will also be etched into the granite of the piece. The work is roughly based on the quote "Youth is the pollen that blows through the sky and does not ask why." The three tree pollen images selected were selected for their elegance, their mysteriousness and their cylindrical designs, and as reflection of the diversity of the community.

Commissioner Malkin said the Latta family lives adjacent to the park. They attended the community gathering and shared the history of the park as a gathering place for the neighborhood since before it was even a park in the early 90s. Mr. MacDonald added that the history of the area includes mining and timber.

Chair Manfredi asked about maintenance of the works, including how long the projectors will last. Mr. MacDonald said the answers to those questions will be addressed during the final design. All of the components will be rated for being outdoors.

A motion to approve the proposal for the Lattawood public art project was made by Commissioner Malkin. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jackson and the motion carried unanimously.

D. Puget Sound Education Services District Bellevue Art Student Award

Mr. Heim reported that an invitation had been received from the Puget Sound Education Services District (PSESD) inviting a representative from the Commission to judge entries from Bellevue high schools. He noted that both Commissioners Malkin and Gulati volunteered to do the work and were prepared to make a recommendation and a proposal.

Commissioner Malkin said they looked at about 20 different art works ranging from photographs to paintings. One textile piece stood out as being exceptional. It was submitted by Sarah Benjamin, a ninth grader from Interlake High School. The artist chosen as the winner of the overall contest will go on to the statewide competition. Each city that participated in the judging has the option of recognizing the artist they choose with anything from a certificate to a purchase of the actual artwork. He said he and Commissioner Gulati recommended purchasing the piece for the city's collection at a cost of \$250.

Commissioner Gulati said Ms. Benjamin is a special needs student. She said she was very impressed with the way Ms. Benjamin used a flow of colors in the knitted work. It would be wonderful for the artist to be rewarded for her efforts and to see her work displayed. Ms. Benjamin's teacher noted that the student struggles to communicate linguistically because of her autism. For that reason she uses her art form, knitting, to express who she is. The intricate color combinations interact with each other in unexpected ways depending on how the piece is displayed. The sophisticated patterns woven together in a repetition of fine detail says a lot about the young artist's identity.

Commissioner Malkin stressed that in looking at the works, he and Commissioner Gulati were told nothing about the individual artists beyond a number and their school affiliation. He said overall the 20 pieces looked at were all very well done and it was challenging to select the best.

Commissioner Gulati said encouragement from the city would encourage Ms. Benjamin to do more.

Commissioner Malkin said the award event is slated for March 20 at the PSESD office in Renton, and he said he will attend representing the Commission.

Commissioner Wolfteich asked where the \$250 price tag came from. Commissioner Malkin said it was recommended by the woman facilitating the art show. He added that there would likely be an installation cost as well.

Chair Manfredi asked if the city has in the past been involved with the PSESD art show before. Commissioner Malkin said this was the first time. Commissioner Gulati added that the program director has asked the city to be involved going forward in more than just judging Bellevue students.

Commissioner Malkin said he would like to also see recognition given to the second and third place artists as well. Commissioner Jackson argued against doing that, noting that there are lots of art competitions in the area students are involved in. It has not been researched whether or not the PSESD context is the best of the bunch or just one the

Commission fell into. The Commission should be careful in offering its imprimatur to one contest when there may be others it would be better to support.

Chair Manfredi agreed with the recommendation to purchase the work by Ms. Benjamin. He also agreed the Commission should be careful to not set a precedent by determining to decide on a year-by-year basis whether or not to be involved.

Mr. Heim said he had asked Mr. MacDonald to contact 4Culture for advice on collecting textiles. The city has had some in the past that are no longer in the collection for some reason. The city of Redmond has also had issues with textiles they collected. The artist could be given a cash award and the work could be displayed at City Hall without actually purchasing it.

Commissioner Wolfteich said he would not want to see the work purchased if it will ultimately only go into storage. He said he would support giving the artist a cash award.

Mr. Heim said May will be Washington State Arts Education Month, and the National Arts Education Week is set for September 8 to 14. The work by Ms. Benjamin could be part of either of those. The second and third place artists identified by Commissioners Malkin and Gulati could also be invited to display their works at City Hall.

Commissioner Jackson said she would support having a proclamation from the City Council outlining May as Arts Education Month. If that could be arranged, the artists could be invited to attend and their works could be put on display. Ms. Benjamin could be the acceptor of the proclamation.

Commissioner Malkin voiced support for that idea and suggested it would be a precedent the Commission could comfortably support.

Commissioner Wolfteich proposed a cash award of \$100. Mr. Heim said it would have to come out of the public art budget, which he said the budget could support.

Mr. Heim stressed that the creation of something like a Bellevue Arts Commission Student Choice Award would require a motion and vote.

Commissioner Gulati suggested such an award would appropriately be only for the artists chosen from the Bellevue School District. The PSESD contest involves students from a number of school districts.

A motion to create a City of Bellevue Arts Commission Student Choice Award for the Puget Sound Education Service District Art Competition was made by Commissioner Wolfteich. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Malkin and the motion carried unanimously.

A motion to give award to Sarah Benjamin the City of Bellevue Arts Commission Student Choice Award and an appropriate monetary compensation to be determined by staff was made by Commissioner Malkin. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wolfteich and the motion carried unanimously.

E. Follow-up Discussion About Topics of Interest

Mr. Heim explained that the topics of interest listed in the packet were taken from the minutes organized into themes. He suggested that the Commissioners could be sustaining conversations about the various ideas independent of staff and identifying

things that should be added to future meeting agendas, and which should be assigned to committees.

Commissioner Malkin asked if the bylaws demand that the Commission have standing committees, such as a facilities and space committee. Mr. Heim said there is no requirement to have standing committees. The chair has the authority, however, to establish committees. The ordinance establishing the Arts Commission lays out that the Commission is to act in a policy advisory capacity to the City Council. It gives the Commission the authority to hold public hearings and conduct studies, prepare analyses and reports requested by the Council. In addition, the Commission may perform a number of functions and is to keep the city informed in matters of art. As such, the Commission can flush out any topic regarding the arts and communicate it to the Council; staff permission to do so is not required.

Commissioner Gulati asked if there had been discussions regarding the Bellevue Festival of the Arts. Mr. Heim said nothing really can be done given that the organization has already made its decision.

Commissioner Gulati reported that she received a text from an artist who pointed out that Bellevue taxpayers support a portion of the Bellevue Arts Museum and questioning why Bellevue artists are not given priority consideration for selected slots for the Bellevue Arts Museum arts fair. She said it was her understanding that with the Bellevue Festival of the Arts shutting down, the museum has received a lot of applications from local artists. The issue is that the museum has already made their selections and the chances of them accepting additional artists is minimal.

Commissioner Malkin pointed out that the Bellevue Arts Museum arts fair is a curated show and the assumption that artists have been participating year after year should be considered is not valid. Commissioner Gulati said those artists get in automatically having been previously curated.

The Commissioners agreed to hold the discussion off line.

F. Tentative 2019 Arts Commission Meeting Schedule

There was agreement to move the April 2 Commission meeting to April 9. Mr. Heim noted that the artists for the Downtown Park project are slated to provide a presentation at that meeting, and said a request has been made to have at least part of the meeting be a joint session with the Parks and Community Services Board.

Commissioner Malkin proposed inviting the new director for the Tateuchi Center to visit the Commission and provide an update. He also said he was considering establishing a committee to focus on facilities and space.

Commissioner Malkin said he would be interested in participating on a facilities and space committee.

5. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS – None

6. REPORTS

A. Commissioner’s Committee and Lead Reports – As Noted

B. Project Updates from Staff – As Noted

7. CORRESPONDENCE, INFORMATION

A. Written Correspondence – As Noted

B. Information

i. Committees – As Noted

8. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Malkin adjourned the meeting at 6:32 p.m.