

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

January 21, 2014
4:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E -109

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Tremblay, Commissioners Cole, Jackson, Malkin, Manfredi

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners Fateeva, Ludeña

STAFF PRESENT: Mary Pat Byrne, Department of Planning and Community Development; Matthews Jackson, Department of Development Services; Susan Harper, Department of Civic Services

OTHERS PRESENT: Barbara Luecke, Chad Zettle, Sound Transit

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:36 p.m. by Chairperson Tremblay who presided. All Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioners Fateeva and Commissioner Ludeña, both of whom were excused.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A. Approval of Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Jackson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Manfredi and it carried unanimously.

B. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the December 3, 2013, minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Malkin. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Manfredi and it carried unanimously.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

4. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. East Link Citizens Advisory Committee Communications

Senior Planner Matthews Jackson, staff liaison to the East Link permitting citizen advisory committee (CAC), was introduced by Arts Specialist Mary Pat Byrne.

Mr. Jackson explained that his staffing efforts are complemented by Transportation planner Kate March and Land Use Director Carol Helland. The CAC is tasked with reviewing and making recommendations to the Land Use Director on the design and mitigation permits for Sound Transit. Sound Transit will be submitting permits by rail segment. The first segment, Bel-Red, is under review currently by the CAC. The city has never before set up a CAC and given it the authority to review and comment on permitting. The Land Use Code states that all station elements and the

light rail alignment must be context sensitive to the specific neighborhoods, and the CAC has been charged with helping to set the context in light of the characteristics spelled out by the Land Use Code for the South Bellevue, Downtown, Wilburton and Bel-Red subareas. Mr. Jackson briefly reviewed with the Commission the work done to date by the CAC and the schedule of upcoming work.

Mr. Jackson said the CAC has generally discussed potential opportunities for art. He noted that the CAC would greatly benefit from having input from the Commission, particularly in regard to the Bel-Red segment, either in writing or by presentation.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Jackson, Ms. Byrne said the Commission has been advising Sound Transit regarding art opportunities along the light rail line through Bellevue. However, Sound Transit will not be issued permits until the city is satisfied that Sound Transit is meeting the Code requirements, which in this case include site context considerations. Information regarding the work that the Commission has been doing with STart (Sound Transit's art program) and that information was relayed to the CAC to help with informing the CAC's definitions of site context. The best outcome will be where everyone is in agreement.

Mr. Jackson said the CAC will digest all of the feedback it receives and will in turn make recommendations to Sound Transit. Sound Transit will take the feedback, make adjustments to their permitting documents, and present them in revised format to the CAC. Once it is determined that Sound Transit is on the right path, the CAC will make a final recommendation to the Land Use Director to refer to in approving permits.

Mr. Jackson noted that current conditions set the context for the South Bellevue and Downtown subareas, but in Bel-Red development of light rail will in fact set the context. The focus of the CAC is on the stations and the light rail line and includes everything from layout and design to landscaping. A separate group of City staff is focused on station-area planning that takes into account the area within about a quarter mile radius of each station and will be making recommendations regarding things like access. The Commission certainly could play a role in the station-area planning process as well.

Ms. Byrne asked where things stand relative to the design for the Spring District station. Mr. Jackson answered that the developer Wright Runstad wants to take an active role in building the Spring District station; they particularly want to have more of a say in what the station will look like. The design that has come in involves locating the station below grade in a retained trench and there are concerns that there will not be much of an above-ground presence for the station. To counter that concern Wright Runstad has been talking about wayfinding and other options. The Spring District station is not part of the permitting under way for the 130th station segment.

Ms. Byrne said it was her understanding that STart has been pitching an art opportunity on land near the curve by the Pacific Northwest Ballet site. Mr. Jackson said that issue is part of the permitting for the 130th station segment. The rail line will make it necessary for Pacific Northwest Ballet to relocate in a new facility and representatives from that organization recently met with city staff to talk about what their needs will be.

Mr. Jackson provided the Commissioners with copies of the CAC's advisory document relative to the context-setting review phase. He noted that for South Bellevue the CAC wants to make sure the station will reflect the fact that it serves as a gateway into the city for transit riders, Mercer Slough Nature Park visitors, and others. The CAC wants the East Main station on 112th Avenue SE to include an element that speaks to youth given the nearby high school. The Downtown station should reflect a connection to city government and the transit center, and should include weather protection. With regard to the Bel-Red subarea, the CAC recognizes that light rail will establish the context for the corridor as it redevelops over time. With regard to the Wilburton subarea, home to

the Hospital station, the CAC wants to see an enhanced pedestrian path created on the north side of Whole Foods.

Mr. Jackson said there likely will be discussions about whether or not a pedestrian overpass crossing 116th Avenue NE should be developed. That issue, however, falls outside the purview of the CAC.

B. City Hall Plaza Design

Senior project manager Susan Harper shared with the Commissioners images of the City Hall plaza site as it currently exists and explained that the Downtown light rail station will take up about a third of the area. She then showed drawings depicting the proposed redesign of the plaza, including the water, landscaping and artistic features. Dan Corson's *Root* and the nurse log will need to be relocated. It is hoped money will be found to expand the plaza out over the parking area to the east, thus making it possible to reclaim all the square footage that will be lost, including sufficient space to program events. One option associated with expanding the plaza to the east might be to relocate the pavilion; some reconfiguring would be required to fit the space.

Ms. Byrne reminded the Commissioners that there will be development to the east on the King County Metro site that borders NE 6th Street and 112th Avenue NE. If the pavilion is relocated to the area indicated it would have to work with any connections established between City Hall plaza and future development on the Metro site.

Ms. Harper shared a drawing indicating that about a thousand people could gather on the site with the pavilion with the expansion to the east. Larger crowds could be accommodated if the pond were to be drained.

Establishing a required midblock connection, a meandering path will come up from 110th Avenue NE, and there will be a new midblock crossing created to tie into an ADA route of travel that connects with the front entrance to City Hall. *Guan Yin* will be located at about the midpoint of the path along with a water bowl having an edge detail that will allow people to sit on it. Construction on the midblock crossing and ADA route of travel will begin in mid-summer 2015.

The new sister city garden will include materials, plantings and surface treatments that are reflective of the various sister cities. There will also be bench seating around the tree wells. The area will be open with the trees providing a canopy. The Fu dog statues will be located near the entrance to city hall from the Sound Transit plaza.

Ms. Harper said a the icing problem that currently exists will hopefully be addressed with a change in materials and the suspension system on which the materials will be placed.

Commissioner Jackson asked if any concerns have been raised about exposing the Fu dog statues to a steady stream of transit riders. Barbara Luecke with Sound Transit commented that art is located at Sound Transit sites all through the three-county region, including some neighborhoods called rough by some, and there have been very few problems with vandalism. Generally speaking, the higher the design standard, the better the overall area is treated. Ms. Harper added that the area will be well lighted.

Commissioner Cole voiced support for saving the pavilion. Ms. Harper said originally the plan was to simply demolish the pavilion, but after objections were raised a line item was added to the budget to disassemble it and move it somewhere else and reassemble it, possible in a city park.

Ms. Harper noted that construction is slated to begin in mid-2015.

There was agreement to revise the agenda to take up item 7.A next.

7. REPORTS

A. Commissioners Committee and Lead Reports

i. East Link Artist Selection

Ms. Luecke stated that Chair Tremblay, Ms. Byrne and Arts Program Assistant Scott MacDonald participated in the first round of the artist selection process for the 130th station project. They looked at about 15 artists from the Sound Transit roster. The panel selected three finalists: Mary Lucking, Phoenix, Arizona; Patrick Merrill, Denver, Colorado; and Al Price, a local artist.

The Commissioners were shown works created by each of the three finalists.

Ms. Luecke said the primary focus is on the station railing. It will need to be a minimum of 42 inches tall and ideally it should have a two-sided, light and dark experience, possibly looking different when wet from when it is dry. Along the 380-foot platform there will be some focus points where people may linger more. The panel will reconvene on January 31 and each artist will be given approximately an hour, with the first 15 minutes used to talk about their past work and the balance of the time spent focused on a set list of questions.

Chad Zettle with Sound Transit said a presentation was made to the East Link permitting CAC the same afternoon the panel met. At that meeting an alternative scheme was discussed involving precast concrete rather than cor-ten for the wall behind the ticketing shelter. The CAC agreed that organically patterned concrete would work better than cor-ten in relating to the daylighted Goff Creek, and would better relate to the arts district.

Commissioner Manfredi asked how a conflict between the CAC and the Commission would be resolved. Ms. Luecke said every jurisdiction has a unique way of handling design review. The CAC Bellevue has set up is similar to the design commission established by Seattle to review building permits; a subcommittee of that group called the Light Rail Review Panel has a mix of design commissioners, people appointed by the Seattle office of Arts and Cultural Affairs, and planners. Mr. Zettle said in Redmond the design review board reviews all projects. Ms. Luecke added that at the heart of building consensus is a process through which everyone can air their concerns, so understanding all of the issues is always the first step toward reaching full agreement.

There was agreement to amend the agenda to take up item 6 next.

6. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS

Ms. Byrne noted that the Commission had previously agreed to move the February Commission meeting to February 11 to put some space between the January and February meetings. However, it will be possible to wrap up all of the crucial committee work relative to funding allocations ahead of February 4, which means the issue can be brought before the Council sooner.

Ms. Byrne noted that Commissioner Ludeña indicated he would not be able to attend a February 4 meeting. Commissioner Malkin said he could not make that date either.

There was agreement to retain the February 11 date for the next Commission meeting.

Commissioner Manfredi left the meeting.

5. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS (Continued)

C. 2015-2016 Work Plan Review

Ms. Byrne commented that in the coming weeks as part of the budget process she is going to have to put down on paper what the Commission wants to commit to doing in 2015-2016. She noted, however, is that many of the opportunities have not yet emerged. Part of the work program will, of course, reflect ongoing programmatic responsibilities.

Commissioner Cole said she would like to see particular attention given to the Bel-Red arts district development. Ms. Byrne said she had that on her list along with economic development.

Chair Tremblay commented that Pacific Northwest Ballet will in some ways serve as a beacon for the arts district, especially since they will be developing a new facility. She suggested there should be a work program item aimed at initiating conversations around a landmark or key public art opportunity that can be considered as Pacific Northwest Ballet creates its plans.

Commissioner Jackson said Bel-Red would be the perfect place to create another art walk in conjunction with the redevelopment of the corridor. Considering the siting of public art there would need to be part of that picture.

Commissioner Cole agreed the Commission needs to be forward thinking and have in mind an approach for the area. Additionally, wherever public dollars are going to be spent on art, daylighting streams or train station improvements, steps should be taken to leverage those investments with private investments, possibly by incentivizing certain kinds of investments.

Commissioner Jackson commented that the Downtown Livability Initiative work that is under way is zeroed in on how to make a developed area more livable. She said she would not want to see the Bel-Red area developed only to have to come back in years later with another committee aimed at how to make the area livable; there should be a focus on livability from the start, and that includes public art.

Ms. Byrne said the Bel-Red subarea plan emphasizes livability components. The station-area planning that is under way is also looking at livability elements. The various groups are all working toward the same goal, but each group is coming from slightly different direction and has its own particular focus. She said suggested the Commission should have some visioning sessions and that information could be folded into an arts district development program budget proposal.

Commissioner Jackson commented that the sheer size of the Bel-Red corridor argues in favor of some major art works. A few small sculptures scattered around will simply not have much impact.

Commissioner Cole said the focus needs to be on something more foundational than just the actual purchase of artwork for the corridor. With the right foundation, the area will grow its own legs and evolve on its own into a viable arts district.

Commissioner Malkin agreed. He said the Commission should facilitate galleries and performance space moving into the area. Commissioner Cole suggested an inventory should be done to identify the areas of greatest potential.

Ms. Byrne said recently there have been talks with several arts groups that are looking for space. The city does not, however, have resources to help them. Developing ways of assisting would be something concrete the city could do. Commissioner Jackson pointed out that every year when arts groups are asked what they need they say help with marketing and communications. The time might be right for the city to step up in that regard.

7. REPORTS (Continued)

- B. Staff Reports
 - i. Project Status Report

Ms. Byrne reported that the Bridle Trails art project is virtually complete. She added that it will not be many more weeks before progress is seen in Newport Hills as well.

8. CORRESPONDENCE, INFORMATION

- A. Written Correspondence
 - i. Pacific Northwest Ballet, Letter, 12-11-13, Thank You for 2013 Funding
 - ii. Bellevue Arts Museum, Letter, 12-13-13, Thank You for 2013 Funding
- B. Information
 - i. Upcoming Agenda Items
 - ii. Updated Committees List
 - iii. Cultural Compass Update Basics
 - iv. Public Art Program Budget Update

9. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Tremblay adjourned the meeting at 6:35 p.m.