

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

March 1, 2016
4:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E -109

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Lewis

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

OTHERS PRESENT: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:32 p.m. by Chairperson Manfredi who presided. All Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Wolfteich, who arrived at 4:40 p.m., and Commissioner Lewis, who was excused.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Madan. Second was by Commissioner Lau Hui and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the January 19, 2016, minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Lau Hui. Second was by Commissioner Jackson and the motion carried unanimously.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Desiree Leigh, 5489 170th Place SE, asked the Commission to consider adding to the neighborhood public art program a teen-based traveling exhibit moving from community center to community center. The project would be good for the neighborhoods. It would engage young adults, and each community center would have the opportunity to have the young people present different ways to bounce off their ideas for their community. The general public would also be interested and would want to visit the community centers to see the works. The traveling exhibit should be in play for about two years. Local arts instructors could be asked to help on the advisory committee, and Bellevue College art students could participate as well. She called attention to page 18 of the Comprehensive Plan vision and pointed out that it says Bellevue creates extraordinary places for people and embraces the arts as an integral part of the community. The project would certainly fulfill that role, would also fit well with the Cultural Compass, and could get the business

community involved as well. At a minimum, a pilot program should be put together just to see if the concept would work, maybe at two community centers.

Chair Manfredi suggested the project would certainly be appropriate for special projects funding. Ms. Leigh said she would work with Arts Program Manager Joshua Heim.

4. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Public Art Project List 2017-2023

Mr. Heim reminded the Commissioners that Budget One, the outcomes-based biennial budget process, is under way. All department budgets are zeroed out and funding proposals are submitted that are focused on achieving the outcomes. The approach opens the door to new and innovative ideas and doing away with approaches that are no longer viable.

The city's operating budget funds things like the Arts Core Program. The Public Art Program falls under the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), a seven-year fully funded program of capital projects, including new public art. Other departments are submitting project lists that encompass the entire seven-year CIP period. There is currently no public art project list, but one is needed to account for how public art program dollars will be used throughout the life of the CIP. The more specific and concrete the plan, the more likely it will be to have funds allocated to it and retained for projects in future years. At the same time, it is important to remain focused on the two-year budget cycle.

Mr. Heim said the proposed process will be fast paced and should be concluded within about six weeks. CIP owners from different departments will be asked to identify which current and future projects will have art opportunities. Projects will be prioritized based on the Arts Commission's and the city's priorities, factoring in specific opportunities like placemaking and memorability, and visibility. The hope is to get artists involved in the project as early as possible in the design or master planning process.

Commissioner Jackson asked if the work to relocate the artwork on the City Hall campus to accommodate the East Link project will be paid for by Sound Transit. Mr. Heim said Sound Transit will bear both the responsibility and the costs.

Mr. Heim said he would bring to the Commission on April 5 a draft projects list for review and comment.

As projects are identified, they will need to have budgets assigned to them.

Chair Manfredi directed the Commissioners to email Mr. Heim with comments on the importance of existing public art opportunities.

B. Artist for the Grand Connection Project

Mr. Heim reminded the Commissioners that the Grand Connection initiative is intended to establish a unique and landmark vision for connecting the waterfront at Meydenbauer Bay Park with the Pedestrian Corridor, City Hall, and across the freeway to Wilburton. The project team in the Department of Planning and Community Development is fully invested in making the Grand Connection both memorable and a place for art and culture and will be hiring an artist to add creative capacity to the design team.

Commissioner Jackson said one thing Bellevue really does not have is a good outdoor performing arts venue. She asked if that sort of thing could be folded into the planning for

the grand connection. Mr. Heim said it certainly could. The design team, in conjunction with an artist, will take a look at the sites that are most appropriate for art as well as public gatherings and performance spaces.

Commissioner Madan said it was his understanding that the artist selected to serve with the design team will not necessarily do any of the art along the Grand Connection. Mr. Heim confirmed that the artist will not be creating artwork for this particular scope of work, which is focused on identifying opportunities and working with the design team.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Lau Hui, Mr. Heim said rather than an open call for artists, the focus is on an invitational call. In part that is because of the timeline. A charrette is scheduled for April 8 and April 9 and in a perfect world an artist would be onboard by then. The planning budget for the artist will likely be in the range of \$30,000 to \$50,000. The project team wants the artist to be able to bring about quick wins in the form of art projects as early as by the end of the year to demonstrate the vision of the project and to test ideas.

C. Grant Program Impact Report 2010-2015

Mr. Heim said the grant program is funded through the operating side of the budget. The program zeros out every year and those writing grant proposals need to demonstrate results. During the last budget cycle, the Results Team ranked the grant program very low and recommended funding at half what had previously been awarded to the program. Their recommendations were forwarded to the Leadership Team, which is comprised of all the department heads, and then on to the Council. It was at the Council level that funding for the program was replenished.

Mr. Heim said every budget proposal has associated with it performance measures. For the grant program, the measures are the cash value of the grants and the free tickets, the number of artists and arts organizations served, and the percentage of residents who feel they live in an inspired and visionary community. By comparison, the performance measures for community recreation programs involve the number of registrants and the number of volunteers and the hours they contribute. The performance indicators and metrics include factors for civic engagement and rates of participation.

The attention of the Commissioners was called to the grant program impact report covering the years 2010-2015. For every grant that was distributed, the grantee was required to submit a report outlining participation, both ticketed and free; access and public benefit in the form of free tickets and scholarships; and creative opportunity as measured by the number of artists, volunteers and volunteer hours. Mr. Heim suggested the matrix could serve as the performance measures for the grant program given that they do a good job of actually telling the story of what the program yields for the community.

Commissioner Jackson noted that metrics previously used involved the number of artists and arts organizations funded, the cash value of the free tickets and scholarships, and the city's budget survey.

Chair Manfredi noted that he has served on the grant committee twice and stressed the fact that the number of requests for Special Projects has increased. Given that the allocation to the program has not increased, projects either get rejected or funding for longstanding arts organizations that have traditionally been supported gets significantly reduced. He said the Council should be informed about the increase in the number of applications because it is a clear representation of how successful the program has been.

Commissioner Jackson commented that the information in the matrix presented by Mr. Heim are more emotionally powerful than cold data related to the number of organizations and artists. It is not easy for someone unfamiliar with the arts organizations to translate 50 organizations into 50,000 volunteer hours. The growth in special projects requests and the way in which they are tied to diversity is also compelling and should be stressed. Additionally, while the number of Bellevue residents served is important, the number of non-Bellevue residents served ties into the economic development argument. Mr. Heim concurred, noting that the economic impact of every ticket sold could easily be calculated and shown.

Commissioner Lau Hui stressed that how the information is presented will be as important as the information itself. Good graphics should be used to draw the attention to the value of the grant program. Mr. Heim agreed and said it would be useful to develop a graphic that overlays the numbers on the projected population growth.

Commissioner Jackson said all that can be done should be done to get the pool of funds for the grant program increased, and not just back to where it was several years ago. A simple line chart showing the fact that Bellevue's population and the amount the city spends on the arts are going in different directions.

Mr. Heim said at the Commission's April meeting, target numbers will need to be solidified. He said he would bring draft numbers for 2017 and 2018 to that meeting.

Commissioner Malkin said during a recent meeting with former Arts Specialist Mary Pat Byrne, it was mentioned that the notion of increasing funding for the arts was at one time presented to the Council by former Mayor Claudia Balducci. A memo was written in which the Councilmembers all agreed the funding level should be increased. Ms. Byrne stressed the need to not lose track of that memo in going forward with a funding request.

Commissioner Malkin asked if there are funds available to hire a professional to turn the data into an infographic to tell the compelling story. Mr. Heim said he would have to check on that.

Mr. Heim said the City Clerk recently convened all the coordinators for all the commissions across the city and communicated the desire of the Council to have more frequent updates. The timing of the updates is being negotiated. Chair Manfredi noted that Ms. Byrne made periodic reports to the Council regarding the Commission. Commissioner Jackson said she certainly would not object to giving a formal quarterly report to the Council; it is clear from past experience that the more in touch with the Council the Commission is, the better the outcomes have been.

Commissioner Malkin pointed out that even though it was a lot of work for the staff, the Asian art exhibit at City Hall in 2015 did a lot to call attention to the arts and the work of the Commission. Mr. Heim mentioned the idea of having an ongoing exhibition series. Chair Manfredi said it would be wonderful to be able to do that, but the pressure that would put on staff could be too much. Commissioner Madan highlighted the idea of utilizing art students from the University of Washington and Bellevue College.

D. Cultural Compass Update: Vision

Commissioner Jackson reminded the Commissioners about the work that has been under way for the past couple of years to update the Cultural Compass. Work was done in 2015 to convene various artist groups to talk about parts of the document, but nothing really came of it. She proposed starting with a review of the vision and building the document around it.

Commissioner Jackson noted that the Cultural Compass vision statement is “By 2015, Bellevue’s cultural sector will have reached adulthood.” She commented that the Council has also been focused on visioning and has come up with the statement “Bellevue welcomes the world. Our diversity is our strength. We embrace the future while respecting our past.” Additionally, the Comprehensive Plan vision for 2035 contemplates Bellevue as “The city where you want to be” and goes on to indicate that the arts are an integral part of the community.

Commissioner Malkin asked if the proposal is to start over and draft a completely new Cultural Compass document, or to revise and leverage what already exists. Commissioner Jackson said that will be up to the Commission as a whole. She commented, however, that the existing document is both dated and confusing and as such it might be better to start from scratch. The place to start in any case is with the vision.

Commissioner Jackson commented that the vision phrase about Bellevue’s cultural sector reaching adulthood was a jargon term when the document was drafted. At the time Bellevue was referred to as being a teenage city not yet grown up with highrises and mass transit, all the things that are now in place. The metaphor no longer works.

Commissioner Malkin allowed that to some extent the Cultural Compass as written has served a valuable purpose. That is evident in part by the fact that the city has designated an arts district, something that would not have happened unless the document was in hand. He agreed, however, with the need to revise the vision, and said it should be something big enough for the city can grow into.

Chair Manfredi commented that there is an obvious disconnect between what was envisioned in 2004 when the document was written and where things are currently. Certainly the vision could be worded differently, but it could be interpreted to refer to a diverse range of cultural facilities, which the city does not yet have.

Commissioner Jackson called attention to the paragraph on the vision page that reads “The City of Bellevue is known nationally as a model of urban cultural cultivation for cities of its scale” and questioned if that is really part of what the Commission wants for the citizens, and if indeed that would even be the best things for the citizens. National reputation is less important than giving the people what they want.

Commissioner Malkin commented that if Bellevue is indeed a national model of urban cultivation, the reputation piece will come naturally. Commissioner Jackson agreed but questioned whether national recognition should be the ultimate goal. Commissioner Malkin suggested the goal should be a high cultural quality of life for Bellevue residents. A lifestyle rich in arts and culture will make people want to live in and be a part of Bellevue.

Commissioner Jackson asked the Commissioners whether or not the vision statement as it is currently written needs to be updated. The clear consensus was that it does.

Chair Manfredi proposed establishing a committee of Commissioners to put together something for the full Commission to review. Commissioner Jackson concurred. She said once there is a draft in hand, it can be shared with art leaders for comments.

Mr. Heim said in anticipating the desire to get feedback from outside groups, he developed a survey tool designed to elicit feedback and response. In short, it is based around the questions of has the vision been realized, is it still relevant, and what other ideas should be

considered. Commissioner Jackson suggested the Commissioners should take the survey first before deciding if it should be taken to a broader audience.

Mr. Heim pointed out that there are nine elements to the Cultural Compass, the first part of which is the vision statement and core initiatives. He agreed to send that section of the document to the Commissioners along with the link to the survey. It is yet to be determined who the ultimate approver of the plan will be, though it most likely will be the City Council. Accordingly, a revised vision statement should be ready to transmit to the Council by July. Beyond that, the nine sections can be tackled one at a time.

There was agreement to establish a subcommittee to address the vision and to have its members be Chair Manfredi and Commissioners Jackson and Wolfteich. There was also agreement to ask stakeholders to fill out the survey as well and include their answers along with those of the Commissioners in a report for the Commission to review.

5. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS - None

6. REPORTS

A. Commissioners' Committee and Lead Reports

Commissioner Madan reported that he served on the panel for selecting an artist for the Sound Transit Spring District station. He said the station itself will be far different from all others in the city in that it will be in a trench and includes very large flat surfaces that are ideal for 2-D art. The panel selected Seattle-based artist Louie Gong.

B. Project Updates from Staff

i. Monthly Project Update Report

Mr. Heim said the artists attached to the Meydenbauer Bay waterfront project will convene on March 2 to develop a plan for fabrication and construction. The project has been pushed out for various reasons and construction is not set to begin until 2017.

Mr. Heim reported that because of the work to be done relative to the grand connection and the city budget, it was decided to push the pause button on the Lattawood Park and Lake Hills/PSE Poles projects, as well as the project to relocate *Wild in the City*, and the ArtSpace feasibility study. Those issues will be taken up again in the fall. Mr. Heim explained that the feasibility study will focus on what it would take to build artist housing units in the BelRed corridor.

7. CORRESPONDENCE, INFORMATION

A. Written Correspondence – As Noted

B. Information – As Noted

i. Future Agenda Items

ii. Committees

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Manfredi adjourned the meeting at 6:24 p.m.