

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES  
Approved as corrected, May 5, 2015

April 7, 2015  
4:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Room 1E -109

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Jackson, Commissioners Lewis, Ludeña, Madan, Malkin, Manfredi, ~~Wolfeich~~

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Mary Pat Byrne, Scott MacDonald, Department of Planning and Community Development

OTHERS PRESENT: Jody Montague, Tim Rasmussen, Linda Hillesheim, Unity Performing Arts Center

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A. Approval of Agenda

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

B. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Lewis noted that she should be shown in the minutes as having been absent from the meeting.

**A motion to approve the February 10, 2015, minutes as amended was made by Commissioner Malkin. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Madan and it carried unanimously.**

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS - None

4. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Unity Performing Arts Center

Ms. Jody Montague gave a brief description of the 270 seat Unity Performing Arts Center and the services it can provide. The theater is a separate entity from Unity Church focused on promoting the arts. The process of obtaining non-profit status for the theater is under way.

United church has invested in doubling the size of the stage, installing all digital lighting and sound, and putting in concessions. The facility accommodates full concerts and theatrical productions, as well as presentations with projection equipment and offers the community a smaller affordable option to the Meydenbauer Theatre.

Ms. Montague said it is the intent to give back to the community once the facility is self-supporting. That could be done by involving at-risk teens in the theater arts, and bringing in low-income residents and getting them into the arts. She said she has been involved with a 12-step artists program for a long time in which recovering alcoholics and addicts are sobered through performing. Her associate, Mr. Tim Rasmussen, said he has been involved with the youth at Studio East for the past ten years and that the Unity space could be a good rehearsal space or an instructional space for the group.

Commissioner Malkin asked how the facility is being promoted. Ms. Montague said she has been working the phone and visiting with theater groups directly since taking over the job.

Arts Specialist Mary Pat Byrne said it is not unusual to hear from artists who are looking for a place to do something in Bellevue and that the Unity Performing Arts Center appears to be a great alternative. Artwork could also be incorporated into the atrium.

Chair Jackson said in addressing the City Council on April 6 she stressed that the lack of performance and exhibition facilities will hold back in the arts in Bellevue unless something is done.

#### B. Neighborhood Public Art Projects Selection

Arts Program Coordinator Scott MacDonald briefly recapped previous work of the Commission at their September, 2014 meeting where they identified seven potential sites for neighborhood public art.

The first opportunity looked at was the Lake Hills Shopping Center adjacent to the library. Mr. MacDonald presented site analysis prepared by staff, detailing pros and cons, and staff's conclusion that opportunities for public art are limited at this site.

Chair Jackson commented that the landscaping that is in place helps to balance the intensity of development.

The second site reviewed for a possible public art project was on the PSE poles on 156<sup>th</sup> at Lake Hills Boulevard. Owned by Puget Sound Energy, the large poles impact views and the overall experience of the street. Staff previously looked into the potential of attaching artwork to the poles, confirming with Puget Sound Energy that this would be possible.

Mr. MacDonald said the conclusion of staff was that the cell towers represent an excellent opportunity for public art.

Commissioner Madan asked if Puget Sound Energy has a budget for beautifying their utility poles. Ms. Byrne said she has not seen any evidence of a percent for art program for Puget Sound Energy.

Commissioner Malkin pointed out that there is an art installation associated with the substation on the corner of 156th Avenue NE and Bel-Red Road.

Commissioner Manfredi commented that the poles represent a very good opportunity, but recognized that artwork attached to the poles would not completely solve the visual impact of the poles.

The third location discussed was 148th Avenue SE and Main Street. Staff saw very limited opportunities in the right-of-way but there is a small chance that artwork could be located in the 18 foot wide median to the south of the intersection on 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE. Parks is looking to rebuild the median in the coming years. However, previous attempts to locate artwork in medians have been unsuccessful due to Transportation department concerns.

Commissioner Malkin said the blueberry farm to the south could be appropriate for public art. Ms. Byrne pointed out that a previous attempt to site public art in what the public deemed a greenbelt or natural area angered a lot of people. Chair Jackson added that the site is somewhat isolated from the two closest key residential areas.

Mr. MacDonald introduced the fourth area analyzed as streets adjacent to Lake Hill Elementary concluding that there are few opportunities. There are a lot of children in the area, which is in a neighborhood, but artworks at that location could potential add visual clutter, and could put kids in danger given the high traffic flow during the parent pick-up time.

The fifth site reviewed, at the entrance to Woodridge, located at the corner of SE 8th Street and Lake Hills Connector, involves a small clearing served by a path that leads from the school through a natural area to a bus stop on the Lake Hills Connector. The site was rated by staff as having the third highest opportunity. There is an adjacent neighborhood, people use the space, and it is visible from the Woodridge side and possibly also from Lake Hills Connector. Past collaborations with King County Metro have worked out well. Although staff saw this location as an excellent site for public art, other sites analyzed had little to no public art in the area, while this location is close to several artworks at Kelsey Creek and at the Botanical Garden.

In response to a question regarding foot traffic at the site, Commissioner Manfredi said it sees quite a lot given that the International School is nearby.

The BelRed arts district was highlighted as a possible location for public art. There are several individual areas in play with the development of the Spring District, but most of them are as yet undefined. One major drawback is the fact that there are not yet any residents living there, a core component of the neighborhood public art process. One possible location is where Spring Boulevard will intersect with NE 12th Street. The site was identified as a gateway location as part of the BelRed Corridor plan. Spring Boulevard will be an exceptional street with bicycle and pedestrian amenities. The corner will be widely viewable.

Commissioner Malkin pointed out that public art projects can take quite a while to bring online and he asked what the timeline is for the Spring District becoming a neighborhood. Mr. MacDonald said that will not occur for seven or eight years. If the site is chosen for public art, the art would be completed before the Spring District development is inhabited.

Ms. Byrne commented that while the location does not appear to fit with the criteria for the neighborhood program, the Commission has long had a priority to establish a foothold in BelRed as an arts district. If not done under the neighborhood program, the site could be the focus of a special opportunity project. It may be possible to combine funds with transportation as they develop the corner.

There was consensus that the site offers an excellent opportunity but does not fit with the neighborhood art program.

Mr. MacDonald reviewed the site analysis for the final location previously identified. Lattawood Park in southeastern Bellevue is located in an area that has no public art. The park connects two adjacent neighborhoods and thus operates as an important community space. Given the site analysis and confirmation from the Parks department, Staff saw Lattawood Park as an excellent location for a possible public art project.

Commissioner Malkin noted that he lives in the area. The Horizon Heights neighborhood ~~holds~~ sometimes holds its summer gathering in the park, and Local residents also ~~conducts~~ its conduct an annual Easter egg hunt there followed by a picnic. The park does tend to unite the Horizon Heights neighborhood with the Cougar Heights Hills neighborhood on the other side.

Mr. MacDonald said staff looked at several other neighborhood parks but came away from the exercise without finding a parks plan for where art should be located.

Ms. Byrne commented that the Arts Commission and the Parks and Community Services Board got together on a Saturday about ten years ago and drove around looking at many different parks with an eye on identifying opportunities for art. She suggested it should be done again. Any art located in a public park in Bellevue must be in keeping with the design of the park.

Mr. MacDonald said the conclusion of the staff was that in keeping with the neighborhood public art program goals, the three most viable sites are the Lake Hills cell towers, Lattawood Park, and the Woodridge site adjacent to the bus shelter on Lake Hills Connector.

Ms. Byrne said the option of launching more than one neighborhood public art project exists.

Commissioner Manfredi said he liked all three sites and asked if a project could be marked out for each one. Ms. Byrne said the most staff could handle would be two at a time.

Chair Jackson commented that much can change in a short time. To try moving ahead with three projects could lock the Commission into something it might not want to do in a couple of years.

**A motion to select the Lake Hills cell towers and Lattawood Park sites was made by Commissioner Manfredi. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lewis.**

Commissioner Madan voiced his support for the Lattawood Park site.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Madan, Ms. Byrne said Puget Sound Energy has verbally indicated a willingness to allow art to be installed on the cell towers. Before actually moving ahead with a project, however, it would be necessary to have the agreement in writing. The agreement would have to spell out who would have the responsibility for maintaining the art.

Commissioner Manfredi said the unusual character of the cell towers creates an opportunity for art that is prominent and unique.

Commissioner Madan commented that the cell towers site is much more visible than the Woodridge site.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

5. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS - None

6. REPORTS

A. Commissioners' Committee and Lead Reports

Chair Jackson reported that the work of the Commission relative to the Urban Design & the Arts Element of the Comprehensive Plan helped to inform the work of the Planning Commission. On April 6 the final draft of the Comprehensive Plan was presented to the City Council. The Council will be reviewing the various elements in the coming weeks.

B. Project Updates from Staff

1. Monthly Project Update Report

Ms. Byrne reviewed the project status of the relocation of *Wild in the City*, originally undertaken in partnership with the owners of the Bellefield Office Park many years ago. The representational work is located on 112th Avenue SE at the SE 15th Street entrance to the Bellefield Office Park. The East Link project that will run down 112th Avenue SE has triggered the need for the Utilities department to relocate a pump station vault to the very spot where the art is sited. The work has been removed and is currently in storage. Two potential sites are under consideration. She said she would move ahead toward getting an estimate of what it would cost to install the work at both locations and bring that information back to the Commission to discuss.

Mr. MacDonald reviewed repairs to *Season's Shelters* completed by Artech.

2. PACE Update

Ms. Byrne said there is a lot of activity under way relative to the PACE project. Councilmembers are being briefed on the findings of the studies that have been completed. The Council has scheduled an executive session for April 27 to discuss whether or not it should go forward with negotiating a commitment with PACE and will identify the deal points and conditions. On May 4 the Council will in regular session have a conversation about what direction it wants to take, and it will at that meeting take a vote.

Ms. Byrne said two more presentations have been, one to the Eastside Heritage Center board and the other to the Bellevue Convention Center Authority board. The Eastside Heritage Center would like a building of their own in the future and see the PACE project something interesting to track. The Bellevue Convention Center Authority expressed an interest in what kind of competition PACE may represent relative to Meydenbauer Center. Consultants are working on that issue and will develop a high-level report.

3. Future Agenda Items - As Noted

4. Committees - As Noted

5. Public Art Program Funds - As Noted

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Jackson adjourned the meeting at 6:07 p.m.