

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

May 6, 2014
4:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E -109

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

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

OTHERS PRESENT: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:32 p.m. by Chairperson Tremblay who presided. All Commissioners were present.

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 Cole and it carried unanimously.

B. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the April 1, 2014, minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Cole. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Manfredi and it carried unanimously.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

4. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Bel-Red Arts District Launch

Mike Ogliore with the Bellevue Downtown Association said he was attending the meeting as Leadership Eastside Class member. Each class is required to do a project that provides a real benefit to the community. The classes divide into themed groups, and the group Mr. Ogliore represented was themed arts and culture. The Leadership Eastside group launched the project in the fall of 2013. He said thanks to Arts Specialist Mary Pat Byrne, who suggested the opportunities available in the Bel-Red corridor, the group has been focused on what the arts community was, is and wants to be in the future. On April 17 there was a very lively discussion on the topic that began with a welcome and recognition of the Bel-Red arts community by Mayor Balducci. The list of stakeholders participating included Sound Transit, the Arts Commission, city planners, and a large number of artists and arts groups. The discussion uncovered the fact that there are a lot of great things happening in the corridor,

most of which are operating independently. Some of those who attended said they finally felt a sense of community as a result of the coming together.

Mr. Ogliore said the Leadership Eastside team had a good post-event meeting hosted by David Brown, Executive Director at Pacific Northwest Ballet. It was noted there that while the team was ending its project, the Bel-Red arts community is just beginning its work. The Bel-Red Arts District group has started a Facebook page that already has 400 likes. The group has also discussed the issue of rents with city officials, including the Mayor, City Manager and Planning Director. The group has talked about events it can tag onto to promote itself and possible new events that could be created. Sound Transit, which as an organization will be an involved neighbor in the coming years, is excited about working with the group.

Catherine Springman with Emerald Ballet Theatre said the Bel-Red arts group is still working on what its next steps should be. Efforts are under way to reach out to artists and arts groups in the district. A number of local residents have indicated their strong support as well. A number of informal meetings are being scheduled to hear suggestions for what the next steps should be, and research is being done regarding other cities that have been successful in establishing arts districts.

Chair Tremblay commented that 4Culture facilitates a regional network of local arts agencies (LAAs) by scheduling bi-monthly meetings to share resources, knowledge, expertise and avenues for collaboration. She suggested it would be great if the Bel-Red Arts District group were to join. Ms. Byrne said the LAAs consist of people with jobs like hers in various governments, but the meetings are open to the public.

Commissioner Cole asked if the issue of identifying a funding mechanism has been discussed. Ms. Springman said the group has not reached that point yet but is fully aware that it will need funding to operate. Commissioner Cole said there are some enabling tools that exist under state legislation that can make things happen, though they would need to be exercised by the city. Anything is possible where there is a network of key civic leaders, political will, and enlightened self interests.

Arts Program Assistant Scott MacDonald said Seattle recently held a conference on how to create cultural districts. The keynote speaker shared her in-depth and creative study called *Creative Placemaking* in which five arts districts throughout the country are detailed relative to the steps taken to make them real and tangible places. He agreed to post the link to the article on the group's Facebook page.

Commissioner Cole cautioned against tapping into hot-button issues like parking or rents. While the issues can galvanize a lot of people to action, it would be better in the early stages to remain focused on outreach to increase the stakeholders base and on working with the city on its agenda.

Mr. Ogliore thanked Chair Tremblay for her work on behalf of the Bel-Red corridor. She said she liked the catch phrase B-Rad in Bel-Red as something that will capture a lot of younger people.

B. Arts Commission Elections

Chair Tremblay opened the floor to nominations for Commission Chair.

A motion to nominate Commissioner Jackson to serve as Chair was made by Chair Tremblay. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cole.

There were no other nominations made.

The nomination of Commissioner Jackson to serve as Chair carried unanimously.

Chair Tremblay opened the floor to nominations for Vice-Chair.

A motion to nominate Commissioner Manfredi to serve as Vice-Chair was made by Commissioner Jackson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cole.

There were no other nominations made.

The nomination of Commissioner Manfredi to serve as Vice-Chair carried unanimously.

Ms. Byrne noted that the new officers would assume their duties beginning June 1.

5. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS - None

6. REPORTS

A. Commissioners' Committee and Lead Reports

1. Livability Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Update

Commissioner Jackson said the Downtown Livability Initiative CAC is generally of one mind relative to the need for green space and public art in the downtown. There have been full discussions regarding topics such as parking and affordable housing, but because the group had not thought it necessary to highlight the arts because everyone was in agreement, the staff in prioritizing the incentives list placed arts and culture near the bottom of the list. She said at the meeting on April 23 the group clarified its position and pointed out that the lack of open discussion on the topic was reflection of general agreement rather than evidence that the topic is of less importance. While some on the Committee believe the market will demand good design and inclusion of arts and culture, others believe the market will seek the most cost-effective and profitable approach and that as such the need should continue to be highlighted.

Chair Tremblay said when talking about art the individual members of groups like the Downtown Livability Initiative CAC usually construe it in different ways. While some will have in mind traditional tangible artworks, others will be thinking about the more sophisticated idea of integrated design and creative placemaking. In directing funds into the arts, the language used needs to be broadly understood and applicable.

Commissioner Jackson said her biggest concern for the Bel-Red corridor is rent. She said she attended a conference in Seattle recently where the discussion focused on capital investments as the anchors that sinks organizations and cities. What works in Seattle for art groups is city-subsidized rents, and the same likely is true in Bellevue as in other cities. An arts scene is an ecology that needs people doing small art as well as those who do large art. In order to have top-level professional theater, a city also needs grassroots-level theater and people learning theater, and in order to have great ballet it is necessary to have ballet schools. That is what needs to be enabled in Bellevue.

2. East Link Artist Selection

Commissioner Ludeña said Sound Transit is working to identify artists to work on their construction projects in Bellevue. He said he part of the panel that selected six finalists from list of 29 artists for the South Bellevue station. The finalists will be interviewed individually on May 8. The six include both local artists and artists from around the country, each with a lot of experience with large-scale projects in various media. Construction on the East Link line will begin in 2015, though schedules for the individual stations have yet to be established.

Ms. Byrne said artist Patrick Marold has been hired for the station at 130th Ave. NE. and has already produced a preliminary design.

With regard to the downtown station, Commissioner Jackson said two locations for art have been identified: the tunnel portal, and the windscreen that will face Meydenbauer Center. The artist team for the portal, Ball Nogues Studio, is really into structure. Both members are trained as architects and they do very interesting things with interesting materials. Paul Marioni, a glass artist, will focus on the windscreen. Selecting the artists was a challenge given the outstanding artists on the list.

Commissioner Malkin said all of the artists on the list were certainly qualified. In the final analysis, the panel chose Mr. Marioni in part because he is local and has a cultural connection. The Ball-Nogues Studio will bring some real vitality and vision to the project. He added that he was very impressed by the rigor Sound Transit put into the selection process.

3. Arts Month Proclamation by City Council

Commissioner Jackson said the Council at its meeting on May 5 declared May as Arts Education Month. Interestingly, May is also music month, hearing and audiology month, and bike month. Ms. Chris Marks from the Bellevue School District Board was present to receive the arts education proclamation and she noted that every four years Bellevue voters accept a district-proposed levy from which most of the funding goes to visual arts and music. She said the 70 percent vote in favor of the levies denotes the support of the community about the arts and music.

4. Cultural Compass Focus Groups

Commissioner Malkin said even though the attendance was low at the group he participated in, everyone who participated was involved in some capacity in the arts. What came out of the discussion was the need to improve in the area of communication. The fact is there are those who are very active in using social media and those that are not. Unfortunately, those with deep pockets are generally from the older generation which uses social media less frequently and as such they are not always informed about what is going on.

Commissioner Manfredi said the group he attended also had very few people attend. Even so, the conversation was quite wide-ranging and touched on a variety of issues, including the need for space. He said he was struck by the degree of creativity in the conversation and the willingness of the attendees to consider approaches to repurposing spaces.

Chair Tremblay said she was concerned about the fact that so few people attended the focus groups. She proposed complementing the focus group process with a virtual process that could reach a larger audience and generate more comments and ideas. The approach could serve to connect the community permanently.

Commissioner Malkin suggested it would be a good idea to collect email addresses and use them to send out notices from the Arts Commission about what is going on in the arts. Ms. Byrne added there are more than 2000 email addresses who have subscribed to various Arts Program web pages and to which notice of happenings are sent regularly, including notice of the Cultural Compass focus groups.

Commissioner Cole asked if the fact that the focus groups were not very well attended will make the overall findings inconclusive. Ms. Byrne said she did not think so. The plan is to dial back a bit and redo part of the process. Nothing done to date will be lost. Currently, however, the Arts Program is completely impacted by Bellwether and the budget process, and it will not be possible to pick up Cultural Compass work again until July.

Commissioner Ludeña commented that he has a media list targeted to the Hispanic community that he would be willing to share with the Commission as a way to help target events to that community.

Commissioner Malkin asked if the press releases that go out from the city are in languages other than English. Ms. Byrne said they generally go out in English. Commissioner Malkin said his company routinely communicates with the Asian press and he would be willing to provide the Commission with that list as well.

Commissioner Jackson said the city's diversity director Kevin Henry will be conducting a workshop in the near future on reaching diverse media groups. Chair Tremblay suggested it might be a good opportunity for the Commission to collaborate with Mr. Henry.

B. Staff Reports

1. East Link Selected Artists - As Noted
2. Bellwether Update

Ms. Byrne said she and Mr. MacDonald have been following up on the suggestions and advice provided by the panelists in order to increase the number of artists available for the outdoor portion of the show. She said to that end four additional works have been added to the list for Downtown Park, all of whom, except for one, will be creating something new for the exhibition. Because there are fewer artists overall in the show, there is more funding available and at least the cost of the materials will be covered for the directly selected artists.

Ms. Byrne said the current focus is on permitting, pulling together works for the catalog, and generating contracts. Tanja Bauman, a public relations independent contractor who worked for the Bellevue Arts Museum for many years, has been contracted to put together a marketing package.

3. Project Status Report

Ms. Byrne said the window for having a celebration for the Bridle Trails public art project in May was missed, and the date picked in June is the same as the one chosen by the Botanical Garden visitor's center celebration. A date in July will be selected instead.

7. CORRESPONDENCE, INFORMATION

A. Written Correspondence - As Noted

1. Eastside Nihon Matsuri Association Thank-you

B. Information

1. Facebook Gains, April

Ms. Byrne reported that thanks to Commissioner Ludeña there was a burst of likes in April. She said Commissioner Ludeña is continuing to contribute along with Mr. MacDonald and herself. Funds are set aside to "boost" the postings in association with Bellwether, and that likely will increase the number of likes.

Commissioner Manfredi asked if there might be a way to leverage the success of the Bel-Red Arts District Facebook by inviting their likes to also like the Commission's web page. Commissioner Ludeña said that could be done.

2. *Seattle Times*, 4/30/2014 PACE Collaboration
3. *Bellevue Reporter*, 4/30/2014 City Vision (PACE Mention)
4. Upcoming Agenda Items
5. Committees and Leads
6. Cultural Compass Update Basics
7. Public Art Program Budget Update

8. FAREWELL TO COMMISSIONERS

The Commission took a few moments to say farewell to Chair Tremblay and Commissioner Cole and to thank them for their service on the Commission. Ms. Byrne shared with the Commissioners a list of all the items tackled and accomplished during the tenures of the departing Commissioners.

Chair Tremblay said she has served with a number of different groups over the years but never with a group as well managed as the Commission. She said it has been a privilege to be a part of the Commission.

Commissioner Cole agreed that the fact that the Commission is stewarded by a group of professional and capable staff is what makes the Commission such work so well. She thanked the Commission for making her feel welcome during her tenure. So many seeds have been planted and it will be interesting to watch them germinate.

Ms. Byrne reported that Commissioner Fateeva resigned effective April 23 in order to concentrate on her business, which is doing very well. That means there are three positions to be filled. In all, nine persons have applied for a seat on the Commission.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Tremblay adjourned the meeting at 6:15 p.m.