

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

February 11, 2014
4:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E -109

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

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 4:35 p.m. by Vice Chair Jackson who presided until the arrival of Chair Tremblay. All Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Fateeva, who arrived at 4:43 p.m., and Chair Tremblay, who arrived at 4:45 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A. Approval of Agenda

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

B. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the January 21, 2013, 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. Tateuchi Center Update

Arts Specialist Mary Pat Byrne informed the Commission that at its meeting on February 10 the City Council passed a resolution authorizing staff to begin a process that will help the Council to decide how and to what degree the city should support the Tateuchi Center. She said the Councilmembers are supportive of the performing arts center. Several said they recognize the need to respect the substantial contribution of \$63 million by private individuals and foundations to the project. Staff will be researching financial options and will make sure there are no legal issues that would keep the city from participating financially. The Council also directed staff to engage in a robust public process, to build awareness, to receive public feedback and to build regional support.

Ms. Byrne said there is an outline of activities staff will pursue and a timeline. The first will be to develop an agreement with the PACE board so that the City and the PACE Board can move forward in concert with each other.

King County Councilmember Jane Hague and Fred Jarrett, staff for King County Executive Dow Constantine, both were in attendance at the January 10 Council meeting and both spoke during oral communications in favor of the Tateuchi Center as a regional facility, that they are encouraged by the City's interest in working with PACE and their willingness to work with PACE and the City. Given the regional nature of the facility, the Council has directed staff to seek support from other Eastside cities, the nature of which is yet to be defined.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Jackson, Ms. Byrne responded that the specific role the Commission is to play is being worked out. She said as the tasks on the list are worked through, the Commission will be given regular updates. When the time comes to talk to the larger community, the Commission will likely be asked to provide the forum.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Manfredi, Ms. Byrne said the \$63 million donated toward the project is the largest cultural funding commitment ever achieved on the Eastside. Even so, there is a long way to go in the amount of money yet to be raised.

Commissioner Malkin asked if there were any risks identified. Ms. Byrne said there are risks associated with the unknown. For instance, if the city invests a large amount the money it is required to show some kind of return on the investment, so there will need to be a very clear public benefit. It could be that there will need to be some sort of public ownership of assets. There is also the risk that even with a pledged city investment the project will not meet its funding goal. One of Council's principles of funding is that actual city investment would occur at the end of the project.

B. Allocations Recommendations for 2014

Commissioner Jackson said the committee consisted of Commissioners Cole, Malkin and herself. Debra Twersky from 4Culture served as a guest member and her expertise was invaluable. The committee focused on allocating \$110,000 between the Eastside Arts Partnership (EAP) applications and the Special Projects applications. She said the committee came away with the general feeling that arts groups are facing a more positive situation than they were in 2013. Even so, the need for space came across as an overarching theme facing the groups.

Commissioner Jackson noted that the number of Eastside Arts Partnership applicants has remained steady at 12 for the past several years. With the move of Bellevue Civic Theatre to Renton, however, the pool has been reduced to only 11. However, the number of applications for Special Projects increased over 2013, a trend that has been evident since the outreach efforts were launched. The committee hopes that one or more of this year's Special Projects funding applicants will transition to EAP in the next few years.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Fateeva, Ms. Byrne said the number of applications from culturally diverse groups increased as well. She explained that immigrants and people of non-Caucasian races fall into the category of cultural diversity.

Commissioner Jackson said she works for one of the organizations on the list of EAP applicants for which the committee recommended funding. She recused herself from participating in the deliberations and left the room. Ms. Byrne noted that Commissioner Jackson took the same action during the committee discussions relative to that organization and during the organization's EAP interview.

A motion to approve the recommendations of the allocations committee for 2014 Eastside Arts Partnership funding and present the recommendations to the City Council was made by Commissioner Cole. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Malkin.

Ms. Byrne explained that the Eastside Arts Partnership groups are considered Bellevue's core groups. They do almost all of their programming in Bellevue, have been around for a while, and are strong organizationally. The applications they fill out are longer and more detailed allowing for a more thorough examination of each organization. The aim of a program like EAP, which is an organizational funding type of program, is to give organizations some predictability year to year regarding their funding. Unless the dollars available for allocation are reduced or increased, or unless there is a concrete reason to reduce or increase an organization's allocation, their funding is going to remain fairly level year to year. Special projects, however, involve zero-based budgeting and the decisions with respect to funding are made without regard to prior year funding.

Commissioner Cole explained that the proposed funding allocations for EAP applicants closely mirrors the 2013 allocations. Funding increases were recommended for three applications, and a funding reduction was recommended for one application. In the case of Music Works Northwest, the committee concluded that the organization is truly viable but seriously challenged. Their current space will be leased to a local business and they must find another space. The committee concluded a one-time increase in the allocation for the organization was warranted.

Ms. Byrne said the award letter sent to Music Works Northwest will specify that the funding increase of \$5000 is to be used for moving expenses.

Commissioner Cole said the committee recommendation for Pacific Northwest Ballet represents a decrease from 2013 due to the fact that the organization has cut its Dance Chance in-school program in the Bellevue School District.

Ms. Byrne said Pacific Northwest Ballet (PNB) occasionally opens rehearsals of its professional dancers at the Seattle school to the public. She said she made the suggestion to the organization's executive director, David Brown, to do the same thing in Bellevue, making it available for residents, and Mr. Brown answered that while it might be complicated it is possible a way could be found to make it happen in Bellevue.

Chair Tremblay questioned lowering support for PNB at a time when it will be facing the upheaval associated with having to move to a new facility. Commissioner Cole said the committee discussed that fact but did not see it as a driving factor in the committee's recommendation. Ms. Byrne added that the organization is still in negotiations with Sound Transit about being made whole for their moving costs. The organization will undoubtedly face programming complications around which some patience will be warranted.

Commissioner Cole said the committee praised the good job Wintergrass is doing and chose to increase their funding over the 2013 allocation. Ms. Byrne added that during the interview it was noted that the organization is starting to show a bit of a surplus which their board has moved to a reserve fund. That is evidence of prudent growth.

The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Jackson returned to the room.

Ms. Byrne pointed out that there never has been a year with more applications for special events.

A motion to approve the recommendations of the allocations committee for 2014 Special Projects funding and present the recommendations to the City Council was made by Commissioner Jackson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cole.

Commissioner Jackson said the application for the Onda Contemporary Art Museum project was for €450,000, which translates to about \$615,000. The museum is located in Italy and the application seeks funds to construct a building to house an arts museum in Bellevue. There is no requirement for an organization seeking Special Projects funding to be located in Bellevue. It is the project that must take place in Bellevue. The committee recommended not funding the application because the funds needed to make the project successful were too high and the project plan did not appear to be feasible.

Commissioner Jackson said Dance School Infiniti is a ballroom dance studio in Kirkland that teaches in both English and Russian. She said there were some factors that argued against funding the project. Of the requested amount, \$8000 would be used as scholarships for two people to be taught ballroom dance, or as scholarships for four people to be taught modern dance. The committee recommended against funding the application because it did not satisfy the requirements.

Ms. Byrne said there was no contact with the organization prior to the submittal of the application. She said she would like to reach out to the group to see if a better project proposal could be formulated for 2015.

Commissioner Fateeva said she is familiar with the group and added that they put on very good performances.

Commissioner Jackson said applications were submitted for two different projects at the Newport Hills Shopping Center. The temporary project proposed by video artist and Newport Hills resident Bruce Hanson involves connecting with the neighborhood's collective imagination by requesting their memories of the shopping center and wishes for its future. Their responses and responses from the artist would be written in water-soluble paint on the white stripes separating parking places in the shopping center's parking lot.

Robb Kunz, a sound artist, wants to broadcast in the shopping center parking lot short and poetic observations from local professionals, interspersed with classical music performed by a local ensemble, and local bird songs.

Both projects will need further development and permission from the owners of the shopping center to move forward. The committee found them both to be very creative.

Commissioner Jackson said the Seattle International Film Festival submitted their first-time application for a special project. They will screen 50 movies at Lincoln Square and bring in ten guest filmmakers.

Chair Tremblay said Bellevue was the home of one of the first independent film festivals in the nation. The women who started the Bellevue Art Fair put the event together in 1946. She said the project would be a great way to celebrate the city's deep history with film.

Commissioner Jackson explained that McAlister Merchant is a visual artist who is scheduled to display art at the Bellevue Regional Library this May. His proposal is for funding for this exhibit. Commissioner Malkin said Mr. Merchant is an African-American originally from Chicago but now residing in Bellevue. His art tells the interesting story of his life through pastels, sculpture, and written narrative. Most of the requested funds would cover materials.

Ms. Byrne said the Asian American Performing Arts Theatre and Hengda Dance Academy applications were submitted by the same person. She said the Asian American Performing Arts Theatre involves putting on an extravaganza at Westminster with a large number of performers; the performance is always packed. The Hengda Dance Academy is the artist's school for dance students and the performance involves a dance performance that he has choreographed. The same two projects received Special Projects funding in 2013.

The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Jackson noted the need to endorse the committee's recommendation to allocate the \$13,000 Sustained Support Funding from 4Culture to Special Projects because of the record number of applications.

Chair Tremblay said she would prefer to see some or all of the funds set aside to address projects that may arise during the year but would support the committee's recommendation.

A motion to approve the recommendations of the allocations committee to use all of the \$13,000 of 4Culture Sustained Support funding for Special Projects funding was made by Commissioner Jackson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cole and it carried unanimously.

Commissioner Jackson said the committee discussed finding a way to celebrate all of the people and organizations that applied for Eastside Arts Partnership and Special Projects funding. In reviewing the applications the need to network was clear to the committee and inviting them all to a gathering would be an excellent way to both celebrate their successes and get them all together in one room talking to each other.

Commissioner Malkin reported that as a Puget Sound Energy employee he can request the use of the auditorium space in the Puget Sound Energy building and the space would not cost anything. The large open-space room can accommodate 250 people. There would be costs associated with catering, if that is desired, and for setup and cleanup.

Ms. Byrne said if a site away from City Hall is used, wine can be served at the event. However, a room could be reserved for the event at City Hall and there would be no charge for it.

Commissioner Cole said she was not convinced that a party is needed to mark the fact that the city has awarded a large sum of money for programs and special projects, but certainly there should be a press release. Ms. Byrne said a press release is always sent out but agreed more could be done to draw attention to the awards.

Commissioner Jackson proposed going with the traditional press release.

Commissioner Ludeña pointed out that the event would not have to be a party in the traditional sense. It could just as easily be a simple gathering to highlight the awards, maybe with the mayor present to mark the occasion, along with a press release.

Responding to several questions from the Commission, Ms. Byrne said the city has staff who put together excellent press releases and who can get stories into newspapers. It also might be possible to get some television coverage on BTV, possibly with an interview with a few of the grant recipients. She said because of workload issues she was not willing to commit to any kind of event, however.

C. 2015-2016 Work Plan Review

Ms. Byrne briefly reviewed the ideas discussed by the Commission at its meeting on January 21. She noted that there was agreement favoring a general initiative to spark the development of the Bel-Red arts district. She said it is safe to assume other priorities will arise from the work to update the Cultural Compass, including challenges relating to facilities, sustaining local arts groups, the relationship of the city's public art goals and Sound Transit's major public art program, and a continuing focus on cultural diversity.

Ms. Byrne provided an update on the challenges specific arts groups face regarding facilities.

Commissioner Cole said her instincts were telling her to take an entrepreneurial approach to dealing with the issue, but said she understands that that would be outside the scope of the Commission's assignment. It is not, however, outside the scope of economic development.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Cole regarding the possible creation of an overlay district for Bel-Red having special incentives for the arts, said there is an incentive system in place that applies specifically in the corridor; arts are in the mix, but they are in the second tier. Any developer wanting to take advantage of an arts-related incentive must first use all incentives in the first tier. There have been discussions over time about treating Bel-Red as a more experimental zone, but what that meant was never defined. She said she was willing to talk with knowledgeable staff regarding what that might mean. Commissioner Cole suggested that the Commission should be actively involved in the process in some way.

Chair Tremblay commented that what is missing is the connective tissue between the real estate community, the development community, and the arts community. Commissioner Cole agreed and said every opportunity should be taken to discuss the needs and opportunities facing the arts community. Ms. Byrne agreed as well and said she has for some time envisioned the need to put together a presentation on the subject for groups like the Rotary where developers and property owners meet. Chair Tremblay said another element would be to invite the head of the local real estate association to attend a Commission meeting to have a short conversation about the challenge of finding facility space.

Ms. Byrne said she would schedule a continuation of the topic for the next meeting.

6. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS – None

7. REPORTS

A. Commissioners' Committee and Lead Reports

- i. East Link Artist Selection - As Noted
- ii. Downtown Livability CAC

Commissioner Jackson said the committee at its January meeting divided the group into two tables to look at each of the issues, including parking, affordable housing, and the incentive system. There were some interesting observations made. For the February meeting the staff will present its synthesis of the comments.

B. Staff Reports

- i. Project Status Report - As Noted

8. CORRESPONDENCE, INFORMATION

A. Written Correspondence - As Noted

B. Information

- i. Upcoming Agenda Items
- ii. Committees and Leads
- iii. Cultural Compass Update Basics
- iv. Public Art Program Budget Update

9. ADJOURNMENT

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