

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES

September 9, 2014
4:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E -110

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Jackson, Commissioners Lewis, Ludeña, Malkin, Manfredi, Wolfteich

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Barbara Luecke, Sound Transit; John Haynes, PACE

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:33 p.m. by Chairperson Jackson 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 Ludeña. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lewis and it carried unanimously.

B. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the August 5, 2014, minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Wolfteich. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Manfredi and it carried unanimously.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Mary Ellen Hundley, executive director of Ballet Bellevue, reported that the company is gearing up to celebrate its 30th anniversary. The school, which has been operated by Ballet Bellevue for 17 years, has been in existence for 50 years. The city's longtime plan to further develop Downtown Park, which was funded through a voter initiative, has resulted in notice being received that Ballet Bellevue must vacate its current space by March 1, 2015. Every effort is being put into finding a new space, hopefully in the downtown area. For the upcoming season, plans are being made to transform the company structure into the City Opera Ballet Company, with Ballet Bellevue as one division of the institution. There will be two ballet productions and one opera production for the upcoming season.

Maurice Cooper, Ballet Bellevue board member, said Ballet Bellevue is the preeminent performing arts company in Bellevue and has been for quite a while. The aim is always for a very high level of performance. High-level performing arts organizations around the world seek to locate in the heart of cities, and the fact is that non-profit groups require subsidies of one kind or another, either public or private.

4. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. East Link Station Design Update

Barbara Luecke, Manager of SStart, Sound Transit's public art program, first addressed the 130th station. She noted that the contracted lead artist team, Meta Artè, was given the direction based on the comments heard from the Commission about the importance of the Bel-Red corridor and the desire to see components that feel handmade and well crafted. The 130th station will be at-grade in the center of the street and it will change the tone of the neighborhood. Early design concepts for the station included the use of CorTen steel, but the current station design utilizes a cast concrete wall with aggregate and color with blockouts that will allow light into the ticket vending machine area. The waiting platform is 380 feet long. A surface-level park and ride is planned to be located adjacent to the station, but for the long run the park and ride will turn into a multistory transit-oriented development. The station will include a bike facility which ultimately could be located inside a multistory transit-oriented development building. The artist selected for the station will be focusing on the railing on both sides of the track.

Continuing, Ms. Luecke said to the west of the station there will be a large signal house and substation that will be screened with patterning designed by the architects. The bike cage facility, if not housed in a multistory building, will be located on the station property.

A call was put out to artists using the short list roster that Arts Specialist Mary Pat Byrne helped to establish. The artists were told they could consider the entire platform. On the south side of the station the grade is dramatic, and if the new street does not ultimately get developed the drop-off will need to be accommodated. The code requires a 42-inch railing increasing to 60 inches near any seating areas.

The chosen artist, Patrick Marold, is at work on designing the platform the railing. His preliminary design creates a shadow play and light reflection. During the day the light patterns will change and the light playing on the platform will appear animated as people walk past. Mr. Marold is proposing that the generic seating be swapped out for a bench system he is working to develop. Ms. Luecke explained how Mr. Marold will be finishing the stainless steel verticals to be used in his design.

Ms. Byrne asked if the station lighting at night will create line shadows. Ms. Luecke said the platform lighting has not yet been worked out. Mr. Marold will be coming to town to participate in the next open house and also to work with the design team. Having lighting aimed at the rail could enhance it during the evening hours.

Commissioner Malkin indicated his support for the proposed design for the rail. He noted that the polished stainless steel will reflect light and colors. Chair Jackson concurred but said she would not want to see too many colors introduced in that they could detract from the subtle elegance. She said the design represents a very interesting solution.

Commissioner Manfredi asked if the artists chosen to work on other stations might want to take a cue from Mr. Marold for their designs as a way of creating some continuity between the stations. Ms. Luecke said it has been her experience that artists want to chart their own course and make their own statements.

Ms. Luecke briefly reviewed with the Commissioners the work being done relative to the other stations. The artists are just beginning design work for the South Bellevue station and the Downtown station.

B. Neighborhood Public Art Program

Ms. Byrne explained that the information in the packet represented a combination of guidelines sketched out several years ago relative to the Neighborhood Public Art Program, experiences gained from the last two public art projects, and the experiences of Arts Program Assistant Scott MacDonald gained by a training course he took at The Pomegranate Center.

Mr. MacDonald said The Pomegranate Center uses a strongly community-driven process. Their projects typically involve the creation of community gathering spaces. Within their projects there generally is an art element woven in. The organization works its projects at remarkable speeds and for simpler projects can go from breaking ground to completing a project in four months. They are able to accomplish that by being completely transparent and establishing tight schedules from which there is no veering. City of Bellevue projects typically take much longer to bring to fruition, but they involve public funds and city processes, and it would not be possible to match the speed at which The Pomegranate Center works. The elements of having an open process that involves as many people as possible can, however, be adopted.

Ms. Byrne said there are Council-adopted goals for the Public Art Program. The goals were developed through a year-long process the Commission went through after completing work on the Cultural Compass in 2004. The Commission explored the historical uses of public art over the centuries, and identified the key roles public art can play in this city. They prioritized in broad terms locations, partners, and content.

Three strategic goals were identified. The first supports the major city priority of creating a walkway through the downtown via the pedestrian corridor to Downtown Park and on to the waterfront. As properties along the pedestrian corridor develop there are requirements to follow. More development is coming to Downtown Park, and there is a master plan for developing the entire waterfront from 100th Avenue NE to Meydenbauer Bay Beach Park. From a policy standpoint, public art will be included in each of the individual plans.

The second strategic goal was focused on facilitating private investment in public art. There is a substantial amount of privately commissioned public art in the downtown, which is a clear indication that developers believe public art is important. The goal will involve reaching out to work with developers in other parts of the city to include public art in their projects. The third strategic goal was aimed at engaging neighborhoods in commissioning public art.

The idea of going out into the neighborhoods was predicated on the notion of a focused method for bringing the experience of public art home to people where they live. When people get the opportunity to work directly with an artist, the experience is far richer and they feel a great deal of ownership in the work.

Working with neighborhoods is a high priority for the City Council. The city has an entire division that focuses only on neighborhood services and they coordinate with every other department in making sure the city is very responsive to the interests and needs of the neighborhoods.

Ms. Byrne noted that after adopting the goals two neighborhood projects were taken on, one in Bridle Trails and one in Newport Hills/Lake Heights. While located at opposite ends of the city, the two projects had a surprising number of similarities. Both neighborhoods felt an expression of nature made the most sense to them. In Bridle Trails the desire was for something quiet that would express the identity of the community, while in Newport Hills the desire was for something that would make a strong statement in an effort to call attention to a revitalized neighborhood commercial district.

Both the Bridle Trails and Newport Hills projects followed on the heels of Neighborhood Enhancement Program projects, and both projects were slowed for a variety of reasons. The lessons learned, however, were all valuable. The budgets for both projects were initially too small; adjustments were made as needed, but going forward Neighborhood Public Art Program project budgets should start in the \$75,000 range rather than \$35,000; depending on the scope of a project, the budget could be as high as \$150,000. The Commission receives an annual allotment of \$350,000 for the Public Art Program, which can easily accommodate a Neighborhood Public Art Program project.

Ms. Byrne said one thing learned from The Pomegranate Center process is the need to emphasize the neighborhood outreach element from the start in figuring out what the goals of each project should be and some possible sites. Mr. MacDonald added that the goal ultimately is to have the community make as many

of the decisions as possible, though the community cannot make decisions relative to budgets and code compliance.

Ms. Byrne said the role of the artist must be balanced with the desire of the communities. The public art projects require collaboration between the artists and the local community. That can be accomplished by having strong groundwork in place. The community should not design the artwork for the artist, but should set the goals and objectives for the art. In the case of the Bridle Trails project, the community voiced its desire for an equestrian theme, which left the artist open to interpret the theme artistically.

The community plays a strong role in selecting the artist. The Commission will bring to the community a roster of artists with experience in public art and with a variety of aesthetics. A panel comprised of neighborhood representatives and one or two arts professionals is given the task of articulating the project goals and determining which artist on the list can best deliver on those goals. Neighborhood representatives comprise the majority of panel members and an arts commissioner chairs the panel.

Chair Jackson suggested the program procedures should articulate the relationship between the steering group and the panel of neighborhood residents. Unless that is done, the assumption could be either that the steering group will serve as the artist selection panel, or that the steering group is doing one thing and the panel is doing something else. Mr. MacDonald said the intent is to have the steering group serve largely as an informational body but not a decision-making body. The work of the steering group will primarily be to get the word out about the public process and how people can engage with the project, but also to identify possible roadblocks and problems. The panel will be the decision-making group. Panel members could also serve on the steering group, but it is absolutely necessary for the panelists to attend every single meeting with the artist because of the education component and the need to avoid having one group of people make a decision at one meeting only to have that decision countermanded by other group of people at the next meeting. The panel provides for continuity and should be a smaller group.

Chair Jackson suggested that identification of a site should be among the first things done. Ms. Byrne answered that one can go into a neighborhood and not immediately identify a project location, while in other neighborhoods there may be four or five obvious locations. It is often necessary to feel one's way through.

Commissioner Malkin asks what process is used to select which neighborhood should be targeted. Ms. Byrne said she would bring to the next meeting a big map denoting the specific neighborhoods and where public art exists in the neighborhoods. By inference the map will also indicate which neighborhoods have no public art. She said she would also present at the next meeting a couple of compelling opportunities.

Mr. MacDonald added that people in the community often bring to light opportunities for art projects in the city. The transportation and parks departments also recognize and pass along opportunities for art in association with their projects.

Chair Jackson suggested that the second key objectives bullet could be somewhat confusing as drafted. She proposed replacing "successful public art commission" with "successful public art commissioning process."

Commissioner Malkin suggested it would be helpful to have the Neighborhood Outreach staff come and visit with the Commission at a future meeting.

A motion to adopt the recommendations for updating the Neighborhood Public Art Program was made by Commissioner Lewis. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Manfredi and it carried unanimously.

C. Next Neighborhood Public Art Projects

This item was rescheduled to the next Commission meeting.

D. City/PACE Partnership, Arts Commission Role

Ms. Byrne reminded the Commissioners that PACE is an acronym for Performing Arts Center Eastside. She said the idea of having a large performing arts center serving the Eastside and located in Bellevue has been a dream of the community for a very long time. The dream has never been closer to reality than it is currently. In the mid-2000s the PACE group told the City Council they would like to develop the center at a site adjacent to the Hyatt Regency and said they would raise the funds privately. John Haynes was hired to serve as executive director and CEO almost immediately after that and just prior to the nation plunging into a recession, dramatically slowing down the ability of the group to raise the major funds needed to build and operate the facility.

Continuing, Ms. Byrne explained that several months ago PACE board representatives approached the City Council to request funding from the City. One of the reasons is a message they'd heard repeatedly from the donor community and other public agencies that the City must lead with a significant investment; to do otherwise would send the message that the City does not support the project. The Council indicated it does not have funds set aside and that it would have to figure out where to find the money, and noted that there would be legal requirements that would need to be better understood. The Council also said it wanted to be sure the community would support a major investment of public dollars in a performing arts center. The Council proposed collaborating with PACE so that the City could do its "due diligence" while PACE took steps to re-invigorate its fundraising campaign and assist the City by providing the information it would need to inform its decision.

Council assigned the Commission the task of hosting the public outreach effort on behalf of the city. The Commission is to act as the city's voice in talking about the value the city sees in having the performing arts center in the community, and as the city's ears in listening to what the community has to say about the city investing in the project.

Ms. Byrne noted the outreach sessions will involve an Arts Commissioner, a representative from PACE, and a staff representative. The Arts Commissioner will introduce and frame the discussion; the PACE representative will provide information about the Tateuchi Center building, programming and outreach; and the staff representative talking about what the city is exploring and why the city believes the benefit to the community will be.

Ms. Byrne said at the last meeting Commissioner Ludeña talked about needing a better understanding of what the public benefit of the Tateuchi Center will be. Ms. Byrne said PACE is already committed to providing substantial public benefit in return for \$2 million the City invested in the building's design. These commitments are itemized in an agreement the city signed with PACE in 2010. State law requires that public agencies such as cities receive something in return for the allocation of public funds. The city ended up with an ownership interest in the actual designs and also elicited a series of commitments from the PACE board regarding what they would offer the community once the center is operational.

Ms. Byrne asked Mr. Haynes to give his presentation to the Commission and invited the Commissioners to ask him questions they have or that they anticipate the community might ask.

Mr. Haynes said he is a professional non-profit performing arts center CEO. Community benefit lies at the very heart of what performing arts centers are all about. Such facilities are not organized merely to provide entertainment, and every opportunity is taken to benefit the public. The Eastside has developed to the point where its commercial, residential, educational and environmental excellence has reached the level where it deserves a world-class cultural institution. The Eastside, which has downtown Bellevue as its core, is emerging not as a spread-out suburb but rather as a major city. A performing arts center will expand the cultural opportunities for all Eastside residents. It will transform the cultural life of more than just Bellevue or Eastside residents but for residents in the entire region. It will create significant economic growth for Bellevue and it will enhance Bellevue's emerging identity as a great city. A vibrant cultural scene is what separates good cities from great cities. Great cities are known far and wide as cultural centers.

Mr. Haynes said Seattle is generally thought of as being the dominant in the region, but, interestingly, Bellevue is at the center of the region. It certainly is in the center from the standpoint of transportation on the Eastside. Bellevue is the most accessible city on the Eastside and is perfectly placed to be the location for a performing arts center.

Mr. Haynes proceeded with his draft presentation for the outreach sessions, covering how local demographics, geography favor a large performing arts center in Bellevue. He described the building and parking, and gave examples of the top tier performers one could expect to see based on his past experience.

Mr. Haynes said the projections anticipate more than three million patrons over the first ten years. The facility will host a tremendous diversity in programming in genre, size and price. One hundred and fifty days per year will be set aside for regional and local users. A major commitment will be made to arts education and outreach on the order of \$600,000 annually, mostly with existing youth-serving agencies. To date the community has invested \$65 million in the project in 10,000 individual gifts.

Commissioner Manfredi asked if there is a center elsewhere in the United States that is similar in complexion and variety of programming. Mr. Haynes responded that there are quite a number of them.

Commissioner Malkin asked if there are concerns about not having a resident performing group as part of the Tateuchi Center. Mr. Haynes said that actually frees up the calendar and allows for making decisions that are more equitable for the community. Typically a facility with something like a symphony orchestra must raise a lot of money for development and once they do they control the calendar.

Commissioner Wolfeich asked how many employees will work at the center. Mr. Haynes said there will be 38 full-time employees and many more part-time employees working as stagehands and on the loading dock. Various economic impact studies have predicted a benefit to the local economy approaching \$500 million over ten years.

Commissioner Lewis asked how the Meydenbauer Center will be impacted. Mr. Haynes said the business model for the Tateuchi Center is very different from that of the Meydenbauer Center. The biggest difference is that the Meydenbauer Center has a flat floor; when a large company like Microsoft wants to have a big meeting, they want a flat floor. Additionally, Meydenbauer Center is considered to be a midsize convention center; their theater has only 410 seats. The two facilities simply will not be in the same business.

Commissioner Malkin asked what strategy will be used to keep ticket prices affordable for the broad economic diversity the community has. Mr. Haynes said there are three elements that control the price of a ticket: the artist fee, the number of seats in the house, and the overhead costs. The facility has been designed to be comfortable for 400 as well as for 2000, so the business model does not depend on selling 2000 seats every time the door is opened. The diversity of programming means that some events will have tickets selling for as little as \$25.

Commissioner Ludeña asked if youth-serving organizations such as the YMCA, Bellevue School District and others will benefit from having the facility. Mr. Haynes said in his opinion it will be critical that they will be benefited. The building will be beautiful, but it will be successful only insofar as it serves the entire community.

Commissioner Lewis asked if there will be rooms for conducting master classes and the like. Mr. Haynes said there will be a few but master classes may also be conducted on stage and out of the building. There will not be any rehearsal rooms in the building.

Ms. Byrne said no outreach meetings have scheduled to date. Word has been sent out and more will follow highlighting the opportunity. The expectation is that meetings will be slated beginning in late September.

5. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS

Commissioner Manfredi announced that an exhibition will be opening on September 13 at the Ryan James gallery in Kirkland. He said the focus will be on folk art from a small town in China. Those works will be supplemented with a contemporary artist poet.

6. REPORTS

- A. Commissioners' Committee and Lead Reports - As Noted
- B. Project Updates from Staff - As Noted
- C. Bellwether Update - As Noted

7. CORRESPONDENCE, INFORMATION

- A. Written Correspondence - As Noted
- B. Information
 - 1. Event Announcement: Art Rhythm - As Noted
 - 2. Upcoming Agenda Items - As Noted

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Jackson adjourned the meeting at 6:40 p.m.