

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

April 9, 2019
4:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E -109

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Manfredi, Commissioners Gulati, Jackson, Lewis, Wolfteich

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners Lau Hui, Malkin,

STAFF PRESENT: Joshua Heim, Scott MacDonald, Manette Stamm, Department of Planning and Community Development

OTHERS PRESENT: Marc Fornes, artist; Jesse Canedo, Economic Development; Manette Stamm, City Manager's Office; Councilmember John Stokes

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 Jackson, who arrived at 4:33 p.m., and Commissioners Lau Hui and Malkin, both of whom were excused.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A. Approval of Agenda

There was consensus to amend the agenda to include a brief arts fair update under Commission Quick Business.

Motion to approve the agenda as amended was made by Commissioner Lewis. The motion was seconded was by Commissioner Wolfteich and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the March 5, 2019, minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Wolfteich. The motion was seconded was by Commissioner Jackson and the motion carried unanimously.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Betsi Hummer said she was not present representing the East Bellevue Community Council, of which she is the chair. She thanked the Commissioners for their community service. All who have been elected or appointed have a duty to put aside biases and to represent the community. She commended the Commission on the artwork in Meydenbauer Bay Park, all of which is beautiful. She said she was surprised to hear the reduction of the arts fairs in the city. The utility box covers enhance the neighborhoods and reduces both graffiti and damage to them and the graphics arts teacher at

Sammamish High School is excited about having his students involved in that, which would be a great way to have local art out in public places. The Neighborhood Enhancement Program is coming up and on April 6 there will be a presentation at Sammamish High School. Hopefully the Commission will visit the various Neighborhood Enhancement Program meetings to get an idea of what the citizens are thinking about, and to consider ways the Commission could incorporate art it has available in some of those programs. The Lake Hills installation on 148th Avenue SE is very enjoyable. The Commissioners were invited to attend the East Bellevue Community Council's annual retreat at City Hall on July 9.

4. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Downtown Park NE Entrance Public Art Concept

Arts Program Manager Joshua Heim pointed out that the northeast entrance to Downtown Park is significant in that the entire entrance is to be rebuilt as part of the Grand Connection. A signature element of the new design will be integrated artwork. He said earlier in the day there was a meeting with the design team from the parks department that included a walk-through of the site.

Artist Marc Fornes said his priority was not just to display art but rather to get people to interact at different scales and from different distances from the piece. He stressed the importance of social media in understanding how and when people interact with and experience art, which can be understood in part by the number of selfies taken in front of works. He said his works encourage people to spend time with them and in them, and to come back. Many of them are activated at night. The individual works are made up of many individual parts, all of which can be carried by a single person, thus there are never any cranes or other large equipment needed for installation. He said his works often deliver most than just art by including some sort of function such as seating elements. The works are organic in terms of their structure and they all have stories to tell in the ways in which they stir the imagination, particularly of children.

Photos of projects by Mr. Fornes were shared with the Commissioners.

Mr. Fornes said art incorporated at the northeast entrance to the park should drive people to walk in the park and the larger Grand Connection connecting the downtown to the waterfront. The work should be visible and attract people both from the street and from the other side. He shared with the Commissioners drawings of a proposal that would create a playful experience and be programmable for events. He noted that the proposal plays with light and shadow and will be visible from the tower developments around the downtown.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Lewis, Mr. Fornes reiterated that the goal is to create a piece that will attract people into the park from the street. As envisioned, people will also be able to see through the structure, and it will be visible from all parts of the park. The piece is not intended to serve as a playground feature, but it will elicit interaction with kids as well as adults. It is likely that during the week more adults will access the site.

Mr. Heim clarified that there are two things going on simultaneously, specifically the design and development of the art piece and the design and development of the northeast corner of the park. The aim has been to be innovative to the degree possible in regard to both tracks. The overarching theme and feature of Downtown Park is the circle. The spaces around the circle, however, all have identities unto themselves. The entry

plaza is being designed using that approach and the design team is focused on creating a very urban entryway into the park.

Chair Manfredi asked if materials for the work are still being contemplated. Mr. Fornes said no decisions have been made yet. Once the concept is refined, it will be time to determine what materials should be used.

Mr. Heim noted that the drawings shared with the Commission represent early concepts only. He said it would be helpful to hear from the Commissioners comments on the direction of creating an experience in the form of a pavilion. He also noted that the preliminary design has a perforated roof to allow for some playful shadowing and said he would like to hear comments from the Commissioners about the importance of providing for weather protection.

Commissioner Jackson pointed out that structures that create shadows are often not effective in Seattle, both because there are fewer sunny days and because the area is so far north that the angle of the sun is quite low. Additionally, during the winter months things that are exposed to the elements often turn green, so if a perforated roof form is used, all the places through which water would drip would harbor green scum. The challenge is whether the work should be open to the rain, or more like being under a tree and not quite so open to the rain, or completely impervious to the rain, providing refuge from the rain.

Commissioner Lewis said she liked the idea of somewhat but not fully open to allow the rain to fall through.

Commissioner Jackson said the Commission has in the past talked about creating gathering places and third places where people can come together. She said she liked the idea of creating a pavilion, noting that it would make good use of the space while providing something the rest of the park does not have. A pavilion would provide some respite during inclement weather while also serving as an introduction to the park.

Councilmember Stokes commented that it is unfortunate that there are commercial buildings intruding on the space and he asked how they are being dealt with. Mr. Fornes pointed out that along the west-facing wall of the commercial buildings there is a dense vegetated area with fairly tall trees. The intent is to keep as much as the vegetation as possible. A waterwall installation is planned for the north-facing wall. Overall the design work being done seeks to block out the commercial establishments while being as open as possible and retaining a human scale space.

B. 130th Avenue Public Art Concept

Arts Program Coordinator Scott MacDonald reminded the Commissioners that artist Po Shu Wang had been selected to work with the design team.

Participating via Skype, Mr. Wang said at the time the site visit was conducted no one could figure out what the character of the street would ultimately be. He noted, however, that he was inspired by the simple identity of the site. He said he determined the magnetic declination of the site and related it to geographic north. The precise relationship pinpoints on 130th Avenue NE. Given that the site is quite long and there is a limit to the budget for artwork, it was necessary to identify a high-profile focal point, which early on was determined to be Spring Boulevard, with a declination of 15.66, which served as the number identity. He said he superimposed true north on a color wheel and

a tone circle. On the tone circle, true north is the inner circle on which all music is based. The other circle was drawn slightly off because of the international identity Bellevue has. As a result, the two circles do not quite match; they go in and out of synch. Using every fifth note on the tone circle starting with the note C, which is the principle of the circle of fifths, every 12 iterations brings one back to the top of the circle, or C. Following around the circle using the magnetic declination of 15.66 degrees does not quite get back to C, and when drawn out the product is a spiral rather than a circle. Using the two together would create unique music for the place. He explained that the tuning fork and the hemisphere resonator were invented for tuning purposes. While a tuning fork yields a single tone, a hemisphere resonator can be tuned by changing the volume of air inside and the size of the opening.

Mr. Wang explained that Bellevue's identity will be made to sing by using a finite element analysis to calculate the gauge of pipe to be used on the tines of the tuning fork so that when the wind, traffic or other mechanical energy on the site will be absorbed and translated into a tone. At about the height a child could reach on the tuning fork will a push button that will activate a custom-tuned chime. One side of the hemisphere resonator will house the electronic music that will be activated by proximity sensors. Mere proximity to the hemisphere resonator will be enough to trigger the music, with each new person evolving the music by carrying on what the previous person triggered, creating a collective community piece of music. Actively ringing the tonal center on the other side, or the identity of the place, is the other interactive possibility. Information explaining the work and inviting the public to interact with the artwork will be posted in bronze or possibly stone. There will be two identical sets. One will be aligned with the magnetic declination and the other aligned with true north and south. Each will embody both wheels, one red and one green, turning together and playing against each other.

Mr. Wang said the project architect is very enthusiastic about the artwork and open to collaboration in designing the paving to implement the concept of the artwork into the site, beginning with a focus point and expanding north and south. Superimposition onto the pavers yields some very interesting patterns. At the same time, it is the music of the place itself, essentially as sheet music written in an old-fashioned computer language using punch holes, with each measure in ratio with each other's tones. Very little adjustment will be needed to make the bike ramp correspond to the magnetic declination line. A marker, possibly a stone with a stainless triangle as a marker, could be located on the sidewalk along with information about the direction one is facing.

Mr. Wang said he has also talked with the architect about colors. One option would be to have every four steps closely related to the two steps of equal temperament, making it possible to find the seven notes of the scale spelled out in corresponding colors from the color wheel, expanding the concept to the entire site.

Mr. MacDonald reminded the Commissioners that the 130th project extends from Bel-Red Road to Northup Way. The portion pertinent to the art installation is from Spring Boulevard to Northup Way. He suggested the Commissioners should voice their questions to be sent to Mr. Wang in writing and having him respond with answers, after which the Commission will be asked to recommend or not recommend the concept.

Mr. MacDonald allowed that Mr. Wang's presentation was technical. He explained that essentially the concept is to develop a tonal and color scale that is specific to Bellevue. The work includes two opportunities to create music, one which is responsive to the inhabitation of the space, and one which involves the pushing of a button. Mr. MacDonald said he would question just how loud the music would be given that the site will be at the heart of a development that will be up to 80 percent residential.

Mr. MacDonald said there will be a midblock gathering space on each side of the roadway to which the paving pattern would exist. With regard to the paving pattern and the color treatment along the entire streetscape, he said it would be separated out in terms of seeking the Commission's approval. That detail work is being done as part of the transportation project and outside of the public art project budget.

Commissioner Gulati asked about the work of planning artist Jill Anholt for the BelRed. Mr. MacDonald said she will be looking to create a public art plan for streetscapes within the BelRed district. Commissioner Gulati expressed concern about randomizing art projects without having a connection between them. Mr. MacDonald stressed the fact that the BelRed area covers 900 acres in total, almost two and a half times the size of the downtown. A project at the 130th station will be almost three quarters of a mile away from a project in the Spring District. Commissioner Gulati said she would like to see something that ties all of the artworks together, evoking the notion of belonging to one city. Mr. MacDonald said one option would be to take a citywide view of public art and work with specific themes. In trying to develop the character of different areas, however, even areas within Bel-Red, the approach has been to come up with different treatments that are specific to locations. That is the approach Ms. Anholt will be taking with her public art plan that will seek to build character within the different parts of the overall area, allowing for the different characteristics of the BelRed area. There is a lot of tech happening in BelRed, and there are also a lot of musicians working in the area, and that played into the proposal by Mr. Wang.

Mr. Heim noted that a new mission statement for the public art program was adopted a couple of years ago that addresses the entire city. Within it there is a series of themes based on a territorial framework. All artists are asked to respond in some way to the larger mission while also being site specific.

Commissioner Wolfteich commented that magnetic declination changes over time and he asked if that is incorporated into Mr. Wang's design. Mr. MacDonald said it was his understanding that the tonal scale does change over time. Because that can be programmed in, the tone generated by a person pushing the button would represent a moment in time. He said he was not sure, however, that the push button element would be in the final design.

Councilmember Stokes agreed with the need to make works identifiable and cohesive, but also stressed the importance of diversity. He commented that while every neighborhood is the same in some ways, every neighborhood is also different.

Chair Manfredi said there was much about the proposal that he simply did not understand, including where the color factor enters in given that the work will have a reflective surface. Mr. MacDonald said the color will be worked into the streetscape but not in the artwork itself.

Commissioner Jackson commented that the idea of a tuning fork and an echo chamber catching and reflecting local sounds back to the listener in a way that is aesthetically pleasing is not objectionable. Some people likely will like knowing the calculations behind how the work was derived, but others will simply be lost. One major sound the location will experience will be coming from the trains rumbling through.

Chair Manfredi pointed out that few will even know the background calculations.

Bel-Red Arts District Update

Public Art Intern Manette Stamm pointed out that while the arts district exists in policy in Bel-Red, there is no implementation plan and there never has been one. Some work was done five years ago when a Leadership Eastside class did some outreach, but no additional steps were taken afterward. It was thought the issue should be raised as part of the Bel-Red look-back, however that project is currently on hold. The question is how the arts district can live in reality rather than just in policy. She said she has been engaged in research that has included a survey that is coming to a close soon. The research includes looking at the implementation plans of other jurisdictions have used for their arts districts. She said it was too early to say whether or not her work would translate into an implementation plan that could be used in Bel-Red, but hopefully it will get things moving in a positive direction.

Mr. MacDonald said the event on March 22 called Coffee and Conversation at GIX saw 122 attendees. Projects that are being worked on in Bel-Red by the city, King County and Sound Transit were shown to give folks a sense of everything that is happening. The crowd represented a mix of developers, current and prospective property owners and residents from adjacent neighborhoods. He said he came away from the event with an understanding that developers and property owners are excited about the arts district idea, as are residents from adjacent neighborhoods. The survey, however, has generated somewhat contrary information with more of a lackluster level of interest. That seems to be particularly true of people from Bel-Red.

Ms. Stamm said she reached out to some 50 businesses but made actual contact with only half of them. She said she delivered the survey to eight of those businesses. Many were clearly not interested while others had ideas about not wanting to interact with government. Some fatigue was clear in regard to continued outreach in the area about the arts district. Mr. MacDonald clarified that Ms. Stamm was working to contact creative and arts organizations and businesses located in Bel-Red.

Ms. Stamm said she spoke to some who have moved out of the Bel-Red area and to others who are in the process of closing up their operations in the district. As with any area that is growing and changing, there are fears the changes will result in being displaced or priced out. Clearly there needs to be attention given to how to support those already in the area so they can continue to operate there. Many indicated they liked the direction of the planning, but said they could not see how it would impact them directly.

Councilmember Stokes stated that change is inevitable for the district. He added that arts districts are very difficult to create. Santa Monica spent a lot of money developing its arts district even though it has involved surplus land. The people are psyched about it but many are wondering if the district will ultimately be successful. The city may have missed the opportunity in Bel-Red. The change is going to be so drastic with the coming of light rail, which is a reality that was not even thought about at the time the arts district notion was first envisioned.

Mr. Heim pointed out that currently the arts district idea applies to all 900 acres in the Bel-Red district. He said there was some hope that the look-back process would include an effort to draw some actual boundary lines. Shrinking the area could help to raise and prioritize the incentives associated with the arts district. He said the current project will deliver a set of recommendations that the Bel-Red look-back team, once it starts its work, can look at on the policy end. It will be up to the Commission and the partners in the community to come up with an action plan for implementation.

Councilmember Stokes said one reason there was a call for a look-back exercise several years ago was given the effects of the recession the city should not have such an expansive and aspirational view of Bel-Red. The look-back was intended to consider, among other things, if the city had in fact over-reached. With the economy brighter, outlooks are changing and the look-back, when it is done, will be much different from what was first contemplated with more of a focus on whether or not the city is keeping with the area as it changes.

Councilmember Stokes took a moment to introduce Jesse Canedo, newly appointed director of the economic development division and a proponent of the creative economy. He said the creative economy study placed great value and importance on the arts and culture and stressed that steps need to be taken to make sure that is not lost in Bellevue. Mr. Canedo said the arts program is an integral part of the city's economic development strategy. He said he looks forward to integrating it more into the economic development framework of the city going forward.

D. Arts Commission Bylaws Discussion

Mr. Heim noted that the draft bylaws had been revised in accord with the suggestions made by the Commission during the previous study session. He briefly outlined the changes that were made to the bylaws.

A motion to approve the bylaws as revised was made by Commissioner Jackson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lewis and the motion carried unanimously.

5. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS

A. Arts Fair

Commissioner Gulati said she recently had a meeting with Bellevue Arts Museum executive director Ben Haywood who agreed it was sad that the long-running arts fair was shut down seemingly overnight and that the city had apparently done nothing about it. She said Mr. Haywood indicated he would like to see the Bellevue Arts Museum fair grow in size and include more artists. However, the museum is tied to Kemper Development Company which pays for space and security for the arts fair. Mr. Haywood said he did not know how enlarging the fair would be taken by Kemper Development Company. She said she suggested to him that help could possibly come from the city in terms of funding.

Chair Manfredi said it was his understanding that the issue with expansion is primarily tied to the need for more space. Commissioner Gulati said that is the case, noting that any expansion would include using more of the garage area of the Bellevue Square mall where the fair is currently held. It is believed that there is room for expansion in the garage.

Chair Manfredi asked if the arts fair organizers are interested in continuing with the event if additional space could be found. Commissioner Gulati said she did not know. She said she wanted to see the Bellevue Arts Museum take on the task of increasing the number of artists by allowing more artists to submit applications and be accepted.

Councilmember Stokes clarified that it was the Bellevue Arts Festival that shut down. That event was held at the Cost Plus site. The Bellevue Arts Fair has not shut down.

Answering a question asked by Chair Manfredi, Commissioner Gulati said her desire was to find a way to better accommodate artists who were formerly part of the Bellevue Arts

Festival. She said she hopes Mr. Heywood will have some suggestions to bring to the Commission in the coming weeks.

Councilmember Stokes took a moment to inform the Commission that Margaret Meister, Symetra CEO, and her partner Joe McBride, former state legislator and former mayor of Kirkland, have joined the board of the Bellevue Arts Museum, which is a very good step.

With regard to the Grand Connection, Councilmember Stokes said the city is moving the project forward. The Council has approved the larger and more aggressive option for the crossing. He also informed the Commission that the advisory committee has settled on East Rail as the new name for what has been called the Eastside Rail Corridor. He said there will be opportunities for more art and connections along the way. There is a substantial amount of money included in the King County parks levy for the trestle and for other elements of the trail.

6. REPORTS

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

7. CORRESPONDENCE, INFORMATION

- A. Written Correspondence – As Noted
- B. Information
 - i. Committees – As Noted

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Manfredi adjourned the meeting at 6:33 p.m.