BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

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| June 1, 2021 | Bellevue City Hall |
| 4:30 p.m. | Virtual Meeting |

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Commissioners Aldredge, Gowdy, Gulati, Lau Hui, Martinez, Wolfteich

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Manette Stamm, Philly Marsh, Department of Planning and Community Development

OTHERS PRESENT: Councilmember Stokes; Mike Ogliore, Apryl Battin, Bellevue Downtown Association

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:31 p.m. by Commissioner Lau Hui who presided. All Commissioners were present.

2. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Commissioner Lau Hui nominated herself to serve as chair.

There were no additional nominations.

The nomination of Commissioner Lau Hui to serve as chair carried unanimously.

Commissioner Wolfteich nominated Commissioner Gulati to serve as Vice Chair.

There were no additional nominations.

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

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

 A. Approval of Agenda

**Motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Martinez. The motion was seconded was by Commissioner Wolfteich and the motion carried unanimously.**

 B. Approval of Minutes

**Motion to approve the May 4, 20201, minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Aldredge. The motion was seconded was by Commissioner Gulati and the motion carried unanimously.**

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

5. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

 A. Bellevue Downtown Arts Market Update

Mike Ogliore, Vice President of Events and Operations for the Bellevue Downtown Association, said the 6th Street Fair had been renamed the Bellevue Downtown Arts Market. He also noted that the original name of the event in the 1970s was Funsville and it was comprised of a collection of artists who did not make it into the Bellevue Arts Museum Arts Fair. He introduced his colleague Apryl Battin who oversees marketing and partnerships for the BDA. He said the mission of the BDA is to strengthen the economic and cultural vitality of the Downtown. The organization was established in 1974 and it supports is members with best-in-class advocacy, major community events and strategic programs that help the Downtown area thrive. The last year under the pandemic shifted dramatically away from events and toward a program that elevated and spotlighted local businesses in and around the Downtown core. The BDA helped support the el fresco dining program in Old Bellevue during 2020 and continues to do so in 2021. The organization is excited to get back to in-person events, including the Bellevue Downtown Arts Market.

Continuing, Mr. Ogliore said neither the Bellevue Arts Museum Arts Fair and the 6th Street Fair occurred in 2020. Now in 2021, the Bellevue Arts Museum Arts Fair has elected to hold only a virtual marketplace, though with some in-person experiences occurring over a ten-day to two-week period of time in late July through early August. The Bellevue Downtown Association has chosen to delay what is now called the Bellevue Downtown Arts Market to Labor Day Weekend, September 4 to 6. The event will be once again held in late July in 2022.

Ms. Battin said the decision to update the name to the Bellevue Downtown Arts Market because it feels more inviting than “fair,” which can be interpreted as something very large. The term “market” was chosen to allow for different applications, such as pop-up markets, throughout the year. Additionally, the 6th Street name has had staying power, but the new name will allow for expanding the arts market to other areas in the city. Keeping “Bellevue Downtown” in the title helps to promote the Downtown. She shared with the Commissioners the new colorful and bright logo for the event.

Mr. Ogliore said applications for participants in the event were opened early in the new year and was encouraging to see the number of artists wanting to participate. Artists are excited to have in-person events again. Over 140 applications were received, including from every artist who applied for the cancelled 2020 event and from artists around the country and local artists. With the restrictions that are currently in place, the event footprint will allow for artists along 106th Avenue NE on the Pedestrian Corridor on the north side of the former California Pizza Kitchen, and in the south end of the DOXA church parking lot. With the July 1 reopening, there is the potential that the six-foot buffer between artists booths could be eliminated, which would allow for bringing in another 30 or so artists. The Special Events Committee has vetted and approved the date, time and location of the event, and details are still being worked out with the police and fire departments. It will be interesting as it will be the first time the BDA will be putting on its arts event on Labor Day weekend and without the Bellevue Arts Museum fair going on at the same time. It is anyone’s guess as to how large a crowd will be generated.

The BDA has combined forces in sharing details and planning methods with a handful of other arts fairs around Western Washington. The Downtown Arts Market will occur on the sixth of six consecutive weekends in August and September in various cities. The events are being marketed as opportunities for people to come out and support local artists. Of the 83 artists signed up, more than a quarter are from the greater Eastside. Less than half are from out of state, and all have been juried and ranked based on a number of criteria.

The BDA is excited about the event name change and about being able to hold an in-person event again, and is looking forward to seeing what kind of a draw the event will have. The timing is exciting in that it allows for partnering with the Bellwether event.

Mr. Ogliore noted that the BDA also co-produces the annual Bellevue Family Fourth event at Downtown Park. The organization is holding out its last vestiges of hope that somehow it will be possible to hold the event, but the go/no-go deadline is rapidly approaching. The backup plan would be to possibly delay the fireworks celebration to Labor Day weekend and combine it with the Arts Market event.

Commissioner Gulati asked if there are concrete advertising plans to let the community and surrounding cities know about the Arts Market. Mr. Ogliore said the BDA is a member-based organization with a robust list of members that help promote events throughout the year. He said that resource will be tapped into first and foremost. He reiterated that the BDA is working with other arts events regionally to advertise, and there will be plenty of regional and local promotional postings.

Ms. Battin said a robust campaign is being planned that squares up in part with people returning to the workforce. The event will be promoted in the office towers. A residential outreach is also planned that will include dropping cards off at apartments and condominiums. Connections are being made with small businesses and restaurants around town where posters will be put up. The marketing campaign involves a combination of grass roots actions, paid advertising and trade. Press releases will also be released in the community, and some radio and television coverage is expected given that it will be an in-person event.

Commissioner Wolfteich observed that a significant portion of the event is planned to occur in the DOXA church parking lot. He asked if the redevelopment of that site will cause a conflict. Mr. Ogliore said his first draft of the 2021 Arts Market did not include that location because of the pending redevelopment activity. However, after circling back with the property owner it was learned there will be some delays, and full permission to use the site was given. The property owner has also given permission to utilize any monthly parking spots for artists.

Councilmember Stokes asked about the tie-in with the Bellwether event. Mr. Ogliore said his team is still in talks with Ms. Stamm. He said it is the combination of what has been created with the Heart of Bellevue and the timing of the Arts Market that anticipates supporting each other with marketing and promoting. What it will ultimately look like is yet to be determined. Ms. Stamm added that by coordinating each event can avoid stepping on the other’s feet. She agreed that talks between the parties are continuing.

Ms. Battin said the focus has been on the Heart of Bellevue grand celebration, which ties to the Grand Connection, but using the September timeframe as a welcome back campaign. The yellow lanterns will be put up and there will be over 600 of them this year. There will be live music going on every Wednesday during September, and there will be a resident lingo event, most likely at the Bellevue Arts Museum. There are also talks of putting together some fun walking tours.

Commissioner Lau Hui asked if the BDA will be offering subsidies to artists to encourage more participation. Mr. Ogliore said the booth fees across the board have been reduced by just over 30 percent. The DOXA sites have been reduced by almost 50 percent. The artists pay an up-front booth fee to the BDA but nothing else.

 B. Utility Box Wraps Final Designs

By way of reminder, Ms. Stamm noted that in April the Commission approved the selection of six artists chosen by a panel to wrap 15 utility boxes in BelRed, primarily along the new portion of NE Spring Boulevard. She said staff worked with the artists in drafting their designs. Box wraps usually are replaced about every ten years. Some of the boxes will be seen from the light rail line.

Ms. Stamm reviewed with the Commissioners the final designs from each of the selected artists Larine Chung, Juiliana Kang Robinson, Marsha Rollinger, Molly Keen, Raili Jänese and Vikram Madan. She noted that each work will include a QR code for people to scan and learn about each artist and the back stories.

The Commissioners were informed that if the designs are approved, staff would begin the process of permitting the work on each box, and work with the installer to schedule and install each work during the summer.

Commissioner Gulati asked if all of the boxes will be covered and if some artists will have their works repeated. Ms. Stamm said the budget is sufficient to only address 15 boxes. Each box will have a unique work covering it. In the next phase if utility box wraps, which will likely focus on the Downtown, a new set of artists and designs will be selected.

Answering a question asked by Councilmember Stokes, Ms. Stamm said the wraps not only make the public realm more interesting and inviting, they help to cut down on graffiti. Each will be coated with a material that makes it easier to remove graffiti.

Commissioner Gulati said she found the designs to be very charming and hoped the community will as well.

Commissioner Aldredge said she liked the diversity of artwork, noting that they do a great job of expressing the different parts of the community.

Commissioner Lau Hui asked about the installation schedule and Ms. Stamm said the installation process will have to happen during the summer when the weather is good.

A motion to approve the final designs was made by Commissioner Lau Hui. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wolfteich and the motion carried unanimously.

6. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS – None

7. REPORTS

 A. Commissioner’s Committee and Lead Reports

Ms. Stamm pointed out that with the departure of Chair Malkin the Funding and Grants Committee has an open seat that will need to be filled soon.

 B. Project Updates from Staff

Ms. Stamm reported that she was working with the facilities staff to get works from the city’s portable art collection placed in City Hall. There have been talks about possibly doing something along the catwalk on the second floor for the public to enjoy once City Hall is open again to the public and staff. Other places to site the works include mini City Hall and the King County district court.

Ms. Stamm said she was working with the vendor for maintenance on the work *Arc With Four Forms*, *Garden of Alternatives* and two other pieces that are in need of some attention.

Ms. Stamm took a moment to introduce Philly Marsh who will be filling in for Mr. MacDonald on an interim basis.

With regard to filling the vacant Commission seat, Councilmember Stokes explained that as the Commission’s liaison he will work with the Chair and staff on reviewing the applications, conducting interviews, and making recommendations to the Council for approval.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Lau Hui adjourned the meeting at 5:25 p.m.