

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

May 3, 2016
4:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E -109

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Manfredi, Commissioners, Jackson, Lau Hui, Madan, Malkin, Wolfteich

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Lewis

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

OTHERS PRESENT: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:33 p.m. by Chairperson Manfredi who presided. All Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Wolfteich, who arrived at 4:36 p.m.; Commissioner Jackson, who arrived at 4:39 p.m.; and Commissioner Lewis, who was excused.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Malkin. Second was by Commissioner Lau Hui and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the March 5, 2016, minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Malkin. Second was by Commissioner Madan and the motion carried unanimously.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

4. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

There was consensus to revise the agenda to take up item 4.C first.

C. Draft Public Art Project List 2017-2012

Arts Program Manager Joshua Heim informed the Commissioners that all departmental budget proposals were submitted by the end of April. The final public art project list was submitted with four public art programs, namely Bellwether, Portable Art Collection, Street Arts and the Neighborhood Art Program; 12 standalone permanent outdoor site-specific commissions; four new permanent indoor commissions; seven new integrated NEP art projects; and 11 neighborhood areas to receive public art. The projects represent a total

investment of \$3.725 million. As proposed, the fund would be drawn down annually to a minimum of 7.5 percent to leave a fund balance to carry over to the next year.

Commissioner Malkin asked for a brief explanation of the high, medium and low integration level categories. Mr. Heim explained that in order to create a budget for future projects, it is necessary to identify a cost placeholder, something that is difficult to achieve without knowing the specifics of sites, the medium to be worked with, and the support that will be received from the capital projects themselves. Rather than identifying specific types of artwork, the budget estimates identifies types of sites to be activated with artwork. One example of a destination site is City Hall which has around \$1 million of public art in the form of four major installations. Half of the money came from the Public Art Fund and the other half came in the form of construction credits from the capital project. Signature works examples include Meydenbauer Bay Park and major streets that will serve as gateways. The integration level refers to the level of staff integration as projects get scoped.

Mr. Heim called attention to the spreadsheet in the packet outlining the budget and the programs and projects. He reminded the Commissioners that the arts program receives an annual allocation of \$350,000. Funds not allocated during the year are carried over to the next year. A new CIP proposal has been submitted to address specific art placement projects in Bel-Red and cultural district planning in both Bel-Red and Crossroads. It was explained that the collection management section of the spreadsheet represented fixed annual costs to cover administration, maintenance, and interpretation and outreach. The category for ongoing programs and temporary projects includes such things as the Bellwether exhibition, the portable art collection, and street art in the form of lights, murals, and wayfinding. The projects section entails permanently sited and integrated artworks and has the projects broken down by the categories designations, signatures, artwalks, landmarks, city galleries, neighborhood integrated art enhancements, and miscellaneous projects. Mr. Heim provided a brief overview of the outdoor projects included on the list.

Four city gallery opportunities have also been identified that could involve commissioned artwork for interior spaces. The locations are the Lincoln Center Impact Hub; the Bellfield courthouse; City Hall; and the Bellevue Youth Theatre lobby. The spaces would also be appropriate for portable artworks.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Madan, Mr. Heim explained that the city owns the Impact Hub at Lincoln Center in Wilburton. There are currently two buildings on the site, but the one occupied by the Impact Hub is slated to be demolished by Sound Transit. Impact Hub will then move into the other building, which is where the art opportunity exists, possibly in the form of a mural.

Commissioner Madan pointed out that other cities in the region, including Shoreline and Auburn, have galleries in their city hall buildings through which art is rotated. He suggested Bellevue's City Hall would be a good place to highlight works that are not necessarily part of the city's portable collection. Mr. MacDonald said the city of Sammamish shows works in their city hall as well and the program there is managed by their arts commission.

Chair Manfredi suggested the issue should be made an agenda item for further discussion. Any artistic treatment to the Impact Hub will be seen only by those who will work there and those who visit the space, whereas City Hall offers a much larger audience, as does the courthouse. Mr. MacDonald said staff would report back on what a program like that would entail.

Commissioner Jackson pointed out that the Bellwether exhibition as it is currently is described occurs every two years. She said the question should be asked whether or not an exhibition that occurs every other year is still the best use of the available funds. She suggested the budget would allow for Bellwether every two years, or a rotating smaller gallery.

Chair Manfredi suggested the Bellwether question is a separate issue. With the budget being discussed, the financial wherewithal exists to do both. Of course, the staff support needed to do both would be a contributing factor. He said he would like to hear from staff the logistical ramifications of having an exhibition space in City Hall, and would like the Commission to discuss the issue as well as the larger question about Bellwether going forward.

Commissioner Madan pointed out that the Bellwether exhibition is unique to Bellevue and is not something the other cities are doing. It has helped to carve out an identity for Bellevue.

Commissioner Malkin asked if a discussion by the Commission about the future of the Bellwether exhibition could have impacts on the budget process. Mr. Heim said there could be a consequence if an expense over and above what is anticipated gets added to the mix. The notion of having an exhibition space in City Hall will have financial ramifications that would need to be addressed in terms of where to take the funds from.

Mr. Heim said the category of neighborhood integrated art enhancements is based on an experiment that is currently under way in which art projects have been integrated into the Neighborhood Enhancement Program.

Mr. MacDonald said as part of the Neighborhood Enhancement Program, one of the top vote getters by the Eastgate community was to include pedestrian lighting within Lattawood Park to connect the neighborhood to the north to the neighborhood to the south. The Commission had planned to have a public art project as part of the park. When the lighting proposal came in, staff looked at it and saw an opportunity to look at integrating art with an existing community need. The Lattawood project is serving as a pilot project for integrating art with the Neighborhood Enhancement Program. Engagement with the community will be very high as part of the process and will be bolstered by starting with something the community wants.

A motion to endorse the Public Art Projects List 2017-2023 and the 2017-2018 budget was made by Commissioner Jackson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Malkin and the motion carried unanimously.

A. Cultural Compass Update: Vision Survey Results and Discussion

Commissioner Jackson shared that the survey results indicated that much of the vision is still relevant, though it needs some sculpting to separate out some ideas and combine others. It should be rewritten to improve clarity, and it needs to take into account diversity, the new real estate market, the Comprehensive Plan, the neighborhoods and the Council vision. The committee took that information and drafted an updated vision statement which reads:

Arts and Culture are visible and integral to the Bellevue experience:
Bellevue's creative identity is authentic and essential for enhancing our quality of life and sense of place

Diversity is celebrated

Creativity is nurtured everywhere, in each neighborhood

Innovation is encouraged

Cultural experiences are valued and accessible

The creative community helps to shape Bellevue's future.

Commissioner Jackson noted that the statements tie into the priorities of the Council in their vision for 2035. She added that Commissioner Wolfeich was working to take some of what was included in the previous Cultural Compass and adding statements made by the Commission to inform each of the bullets.

Commissioner Wolfeich noted that in addition to the vision statement, work was done to update the core initiatives as shown on page 9 of the packet.

Chair Manfredi thanked the committee members for their hard work. He stressed the importance of the process, particularly as the city works toward adopting a new budget that includes funding the arts at a higher level.

Chair Manfredi asked if cultural experiences are to be parsed from art or if they are to be blended. Commissioner Wolfeich suggested art would be a subset of cultural experiences. Commissioner Jackson added that an attempt was made to get away from the idea that cultural experiences are somehow tied to festivals and the like. The vision should be broadly construed and should not lay out exactly how to get there.

Commissioner Madan commented that in the past the vision talked about where the city wants to be 20 years in the future. As the vision is updated, it should continue with that focus. The members of the Commission will change over time, but the vision for the future should remain on celebrating diversity, creativity and innovation, on valuing cultural experiences, and the ways in which the creative community shapes the city's future.

Commissioner Lau Hui asked if the vision bullet points were listed in any particular order. Commissioner Madan said they were not except for the first one. Commissioner Lau Hui voiced her support for celebrating diversity. Cultural experiences shape people and help to move communities forward.

Commissioner Malkin said he liked the concepts of encouraging innovation and creativity. The Commission spends a lot of time talking about how to showcase art but very little time focused on encouraging the creation of art. He said the key to the vision will be to make Bellevue more attractive to artists as a place to live and create. Commissioner Madan commented that the notion of innovation is intended to move the Commission and arts organizations forward without doing the same things year after year.

Commissioner Jackson said the committee talked about how to elicit feedback from the public. The conclusion reached was that an email should be sent out to all survey participants to gain their input on the draft. The draft should also be posted to the city's website and the Commission's Facebook page, and it should be posted on the Next Door social media site. Additionally, an article should be written for *It's Your City* seeking feedback from residents, and the public should be invited to attend and provide comments at the June 7 Commission meeting.

With regard to the core initiatives, Chair Manfredi said he had not reviewed them with an eye on identifying what is missing, but said he liked the way they are set up. He said it was

his understanding that the initiatives would be coupled with the vision statement in a proposal for feedback. Commissioner Jackson said that is what the committee discussed. She added, however, that if the vision statement were to include one or two sentences under each bullet, it could come across as though the Commission were trying to define each. If left just as bullet points, it would be left to the public to say how each should be defined.

Chair Manfredi agreed but suggested the vision statement bullets could be tightened up even more. He proposed having the list read:

Arts and Culture are visible and integral to the Bellevue experience

Diversity is celebrated

Creativity is nurtured everywhere

Innovation is encouraged

Cultural experiences are accessible

The creative community helps to shape Bellevue's future.

Commissioner Wolfteich suggested "Creativity is nurtured everywhere" could be shortened to "Creativity is nurtured." Chair Manfredi agreed but suggested use of the word "everywhere" would encompass each neighborhood and all areas of the city.

Commissioner Lau Hui suggested revising the last bullet to read "The creative community collaborates to help shape Bellevue's future."

Commissioner Jackson proposed "The creative community is instrumental in helping to shape Bellevue's future."

There was consensus to move forward seeking public comment on the vision statement bullet points and the draft initiatives.

D. New Public Art Opportunity: Mini City Hall

Mr. Heim called attention to the draft selection policy for the Portable Art Collection. He noted that the existing policies were included in the packet and pointed out that they have made it difficult for the city to purchase artwork. The process is arduous and overly burdensome for artists. While all of the information is essential and applicable to a public art collection, there is a good portion of it that could be moved into what is usually a visual arts management plan document.

Mr. Heim pointed out that there is no mission statement for the Public Art Collection, or even for the Public Art Program. There is a set of three goals, namely to activate the artwalk, involve neighbors, and work with private development. There is nothing about what the purpose of collecting artwork is. He proposed "The City of Bellevue seeks to be a vital platform for cultural exchange and creative inspiration. The city turns to living artists to deepen the collective experience of Bellevue's public places through permanent commissions and a growing collection of movable artworks funded through the public art program. A segment of the collection is devoted to artworks that raise the civic discourse on the defining aspects of Bellevue's civic life, exploring the diverse identities of our residents, converging cultures, international and technological currents, and the interplay between nature and the urban experience that makes Bellevue's environment unique. Bellevue's art

collection helps document dynamic moments in and the complexity of Bellevue's cultural life and is an important resource for future generations."

Chair Manfredi said the statement was very well written.

Commissioner Jackson concurred but suggested "The City turns to living artists to deepen the collective experience..." would be better with "enrich" used in place of "deepen." Mr. Heim said the word "deepen" typically is understood to be about adding meaning.

Chair Manfredi suggested the two words are actually quite similar. Too often words are used repeatedly until they lose significance. "Enrich" is in fact accurate, but a word that has been used to the point of losing its meaning.

Commissioner Madan questioned the reference to living artists. Mr. Heim answered that the program is not about creating a historical collection, something which museums do, rather the program is about creating a collection relevant to the present time.

Commissioner Malkin asked if that was what was meant by the phrase "...help document dynamic moments..." and Mr. Heim allowed that it was. Commissioner Malkin questioned whether "raise the civic discourse" and "document dynamic moments" are actually the responsibilities of the artist. The statements likely would mean something different to the artists than it would to a jury selecting works.

Commissioner Jackson said she saw the mission statement as being applicable to the Commission and the Council, not the artists. Commissioner Madan agreed that it is not about the artists.

Commissioner Malkin said the question is whether the city is collecting art to mark the moment or to share the creative experience with the population. Mr. Heim suggested it is more the former, so someone 50 years out will be able to look at the collection and understand its context.

Commissioner Madan asked if the focus will only be on art that is considered contemporary. Mr. Heim pointed out that Bellevue participates in a sister cities program that has a sister cities collection that includes artifacts. He said he was not sure who actually manages the sister cities collection.

Commissioner Malkin said that brings up the question of who should manage the archive, should the archive be grown, and should it be part of the portable art works.

Mr. MacDonald said a common goal for the arts programs in most cities is to support artists. The overall Public Art Program statement is correctly geared toward serving the community, but the Portable Art Collection would enjoy a much greater flexibility.

Mr. Heim said the Mini City Hall project will offer the first opportunity to test the policy. He suggested getting to the point of having a workable draft that can be beta tested by that project. What is being sought is an inaugural purchase that exemplifies the mission that will first be displayed in mini City Hall.

Commissioner Madan asked if electronic art would fit the mission. Mr. Heim said it would if the vision includes encouraging innovation. Commissioner Madan said one thing that makes electronic art different is that it requires far more maintenance over time, something that would need to be factored in. Mr. Heim agreed and pointed out that all such equipment would need to be included in the purchase price.

In the application, the artist statement seeks a description of artistic intent, and a statement regarding their interest in wanting to be part of the collection. For most cities, artistic intent is all that is asked for.

Commissioner Madan suggested the third point should be revised to state that the selection committee will consider the artistic intent and how it relates to the discourse on key aspects of Bellevue civic life. The artist should not be required to address that issue.

Mr. Heim noted that the application also asks the artist to submit ten images of their works, images descriptions and a resume. The selection criteria includes artistic merit, compelling themes, appropriateness for a public setting and existing collection, and the artistic and cultural diversity of the collection. A disclaimer about challenging content will be included as well.

Commissioner Jackson questioned using the phrase “difficult to display” rather than just referring to appropriateness. Mr. MacDonald said that is a valid question. In the past Bellwether has included different representations of the human form that have been found to be acceptable to the community. Appropriateness is something that must be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Commissioner Wolfteich suggested changing “...are extremely difficult to display...” to “...may be difficult to display....” Commissioner Jackson said that would put the artist on notice that the collection is for display and that works will not be appropriate for all locations.

Mr. Heim said he would check the purchasing guidelines to see if religious content needs to be considered as well. Mr. MacDonald added that there have been questions raised in the past about the city purchasing or presenting religious artifacts. He agreed to put the question to risk management and the city attorney.

Commissioner Malkin suggested the issue should largely be left to the jury to decide. To do otherwise moves very close to censorship. Commissioner Jackson pointed out that as drafted works that are difficult to display because of their content are not disallowed, but the artists are put on notice that there may be issues. Commissioner Madan proposed adding language “appropriate to the public setting.” Commissioner Malkin supported the proposal.

With regard to the selection process, Mr. Heim said it will not be much different from the Bellwether process that includes a selection panel. The panel of arts professionals will be asked to come up with a roster. Because Bellevue does not have its own gallery, only walls that other people manage, once there is a defined roster in hand, staff will work with the site managers to decide the appropriate work for a space.

Commissioner Malkin observed that while the first piece is to be sited at Mini City Hall, the work will be part of the portable collection and as such it may in time be moved out to make room for another piece. Mr. MacDonald agreed and added that Mini City Hall staff will be allowed to offer advice, but the jury will do the grunt work of developing a roster and staff will make the final decision.

Commissioner Jackson called attention to the selection process section and proposed revising “...determine purchase artwork...” to read “...artworks to purchase...” or “...artwork that will be purchased....”

5. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS - None

6. REPORTS

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

Mr. MacDonald reported that he is working on a scope with artist John Fleming to complete the teen project. The Boys & Girls Club Ground Zero facility in Lake Hills has agreed to partner with the project and to work with artists in creating a work for the show.

- ii. Grand Connection Artist Call

Chair Manfredi announced that Commissioner Lau Hui had been chosen to serve on the panel to review artists for the Grand Connection.

7. CORRESPONDENCE, INFORMATION

- A. Written Correspondence – As Noted
- B. Information
 - i. Future Agenda Items – As Noted
 - ii. Committees – As Noted

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Manfredi adjourned the meeting at 6:43 p.m.