

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES

January 9, 2018  
4:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Room 1E -112

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Commissioners Gulati, Jackson, Lau Hui, Malkin, Wolfteich

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners Lewis, Mandredi

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Ben Beres, Zac Culler, John Sutton, SuttonBeresCuller

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:39 p.m. by Commissioner Malkin who presided. All Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Wolfteich, who arrived at 4:43 p.m., and Chair Manfredi and Commissioner Lewis, both of whom were excused.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A. Approval of Agenda

**Motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Gulati. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lau Hui and the motion carried unanimously.**

B. Approval of Minutes

**Motion to approve the December 5, 2017, minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Lau Hui. The motion was seconded was by Commissioner Gulati and the motion carried unanimously.**

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

4. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Bellwether Program Update

Arts Program Manager Joshua Heim noted that planning for Bellwether 2018 was continuing. He noted that unlike past years in which a panel administered calls for sculptures and then made a section for the show, a curator in the form of SuttonBeresCuller has been brought on board. The artistic team has also been consulting on the Grand Connection plan.

Mr. Ben Beres with SuttonBeresCuller said the team envisions breaking down Bellwether into different sections, with murals, performances, installations, tech-based work, music, poetry and words, and music. The next steps will be to identify and solidify the various

spaces, including Compass Plaza and the Bellevue Arts Museum. Some work will be up for only ten days, while other works will be up for months.

Mr. John Sutton with SuttonBeresCuller added that much of the planning work was picked up from the strategic planning for the Grand Connection. A number of partnerships are being developed. Additionally, a number of artists have expressed their interest in participating.

Mr. Beres stressed the importance of incorporating a number of different genres and to make sure to incorporate locations along the Grand Connection. He shared with the Commissioners location opportunities for murals. He said there are a number of awesome mural artists in the region. Mr. Sutton said in addition to identifying locations, the logistics process will involve talking to the property owners. He added that murals can either be permanent or printed on large banners to be hung on building walls.

Commissioner Lau Hui asked about the longevity of murals painted on building walls. Mr. Sutton said the focus will be largely on making sure the murals will be made to last, particularly as they apply to the Grand Connection. The assumption is that those painted directly on the walls will be up for at least a year. Contacting property owners will be the next step. Not all of the mural artists will be local, but the majority of those contacted to date are in the region.

With regard to performance spaces, contacts have been made. Consideration is being given to adding a stage at Compass Plaza to accommodate the spoken word and music performances. Other locations include in front of the Bellevue Arts Museum and Bellevue Square.

Commissioner Jackson stressed the fact that diversity is extremely important to the Commission and the city. She pointed out that the artists on the list provided by SuttonBeresCuller were primarily white. She noted that the same was true of the listed musicians and added that more than half were male.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Gulati, Mr. Sutton said the team has been talking to the Bellevue Arts Museum about hosting a traditional exhibit that would be up for a period of time during and beyond Bellwether. It would be for artists not doing work out in the public space. Arts Program Coordinator Scott MacDonald added that permanent works cannot be hung on private properties for legal reasons, including the prohibition against the gift of public funds. The siting of permanent works require easements.

Mr. Sutton said ideally installations will be up for more than just the ten days of Bellwether. Much will depend on the complexity and budget for the project. Some may require security. Whether or not the selected works will be new or commissioned will come down to budget considerations.

Mr. Beres said the tech element of Bellwether involves opportunities for projection, interaction and installation art. Time would be needed ahead of time for setup and ideally the displays would remain in place for a month or two. They will also need to be self sufficient. Gary Hill, a big name in video art, is completely on board.

With regard to words and poetry, Mr. Beres said the team has been working with Seattle poet and author Chelsea Jean Werner-Jatzke. He said beyond the spoken word there will focus on projecting words and collaborating with sign painters to print words on windows.

Mr. Sutton said Creative Capital, an internationally known organization based in New York, is being looked at to help with promotion. The organization funds a lot of artists who do challenging and interesting work in the areas of visual, performing and literature arts. They operate on a venture capital model which might also work well in Bellevue, and the idea is that they would potentially partner with artists who will be working on projects for Bellwether and the Grand Connection. The organization conducts workshops annually all along the West Coast, including in Seattle and Portland, and having them involved in Bellevue could include a workshop for artists local and regional artists. The organization invests in artists, not projects.

Mr. Beres said the music element has yet to be fully fleshed out. Spaces are being looked at, including Compass Plaza, the Bellevue Arts Museum exterior, the courtyard and Downtown Park. Once temporary stages are erected it will be easy to schedule them. The stages will not necessarily be built structures but could include a lighted space with a public address system. Mr. Sutton said the music, poetry and spoke work performances will be programmed over the ten days of Bellwether, both on work days and weekends, with the bulk of them happening on Friday evenings and weekends.

Mr. Beres said chef Matt Dillon jumped at the chance to do something creative with food that involves kids. He is working with the Michael Bennett Foundation to show kids out food is grown and prepared. Exactly how he will be involved is not yet worked out. Food trucks will be part of mix of performances.

It is hoped that funding will be found for the Red Ball project, something that would provide a nice backbone for the exhibition. Funding would have to come from corporate sponsorship. Mr. Sutton noted that the project is a great one but far beyond the budget limits.

Commissioner Lau Hui voiced support for including a youth connection and said she would like to see kids involved in creating a project for the exhibit. That would help get kids and families excited about coming to the event. Mr. Sutton agreed and said once artists and spaces are selected the outreach effort will include places like KidsQuest. In addition to performances, the team has talked about including talks by artists and the Bellevue Arts Museum has offered up their auditorium space for that type of programming.

Commissioner Malkin suggested that the poetry and music elements lend themselves well to youth participation. Mr. Sutton agreed.

Commissioner Wolfteich asked what process has been used to bring musical artists onboard. Mr. Beres said most of the artists are people known by the team. The artists will also be asked for suggestions.

Commissioner Gulati commented that during the three-day arts festival at the Redmond Town Center there is live music on the stage. She said they may have a list of local musicians who play different kinds of music.

Commissioner Malkin asked if there will a particular thread or theme connecting all of the various mediums. Mr. Sutton said the theme that has been pursued by the team is connections. That theme has been discussed in all of the conversations to date.

Mr. Heim noted that the initial timeline has shifted to an opening the third week of September. While the exhibition has traditionally been a summer show, the fact is many families are out of town in the summer months and are back in town by September.

Commissioner Malkin pointed out that weather can be a factor in September. Mr. Sutton agreed and said there will need to be contingency plans for the outdoor stages.

#### B. Downtown Park NE Entrance Artist Selection

Mr. Heim said the project is focused on the entrance to Downtown Park at the corner of NE 4th Street and Bellevue Way. The artist recommended by the selection panel, which was chaired by Chair Manfredi, is Marc Fornes. Mr. Fornes is a French-born architect who lives in Brooklyn, New York. His work is sculptural and primarily involves pavilions. The panel was intrigued with the artist's approach to experiences. During his interview, Mr. Fornes was clear about not wanting to create objects but rather experiences, which fits well with the goal for the project to integrate art to the degree possible into the entrance. Many of his works are statements in and of themselves, but they also incorporate a level of interactivity and a lavish use of color.

Commissioner Malkin asked if the panel raised concerns about the works of Mr. Fornes fitting within the identified budget of \$275,000. Mr. Heim said the question did come up given that most of Mr. Fornes' works have had much larger budgets. However, most of those projects included addressing more than just the artwork, such as steps and landscaping, which in the case of the Downtown Park project would be covered by the overall project budget.

Commissioner Gulati asked if the style of work offered by Mr. Fornes will fit with the new look of Downtown Park. Commissioner Malkin said he assumed the artist will certainly want to take into consideration the design of the park.

Commissioner Jackson said the park has several large trees and given Mr. Fornes' works that involve tree root/mangrove root designs it is likely he would take that into account and avoid anything garish and out of place. Commissioner Malkin added that the Commission will see the proposal before any final decisions are made.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Gulati, Mr. MacDonald said there are six permanent artworks currently in Downtown Park. They are not, however along the street, rather they are adjacent to the walking path.

Commissioner Lau Hui asked about the timeline and Mr. Heim said the City Council has expressed a desire to see the parks department have the project completed by the end of 2018. That, however, will not be possible. Instead, the parks department hopes to be under construction by the end of the year. The design team is currently working on up to five alternative layouts and configurations for what the space might look like. The artist once on board will interact with the design team to identify the opportunities for integrating art.

Commissioner Jackson asked how long the project will take if construction begins in 2018. Mr. Heim said he did not know. Much will depend on the construction season and how complicated the work is. He suggested that completing the project in 2019 is aspirational.

A motion to accept Marc Fornes as the selected artist to receive the commission for artwork in the Downtown Park NE Entrance public art project was made by Commissioner Lau Hui. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jackson and the motion carried unanimously.

C. 130th Streetscape Artist Selection

Mr. MacDonald noted that the project runs on 130th Avenue NE from Spring Boulevard to NE 20th Street. The project will involve the interim streetscape with sections that will be permanent. The project is in the heart of what is being called the arts district. He said the selection panel was chaired by Commissioner Wolfeich. There were 86 total applicants and the panel ended up reviewing 68 different artists and artist teams from which three were selected to interview. The panel ultimately recommended Po Shu Wang whose works include a translation of natural phenomena, music and the human experience over time and space. The panelists felt strong that they wanted to select an artist they could be conceptually proud of given that the location is one in which artists will live and work and a place for the community to live and visit.

Commissioner Wolfeich said it would be a big win for the city to have artwork by Po Shu Wang. He noted that many of the artist's works involve the use of sensors that change the display in various ways interactively. The panel was moved by the connection the artist has with natural phenomena.

A motion to accept Po Su Wang as the selected artist to receive the commission for artwork in the 130th streetscape public art project was made by Commissioner Wolfeich. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gulati and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. MacDonald said the budget for the project is \$200,000.

D. Onsite Review Program

Mr. Heim commented that the practice of attending the programs of grantees and drafting reports was brought back online in 2017 and labeled the Onsite Review Program. Attempts were made to conduct an onsite review for all of the organizations that received grants through the Eastside Arts Partnerships program, though the goal was not fully reached. The intent is to help inform the grant process.

Mr. Heim provided the Commissioners a matrix containing the Eastside Arts Partnerships organizations and the special projects funded for 2018 along with printed instructions for how to conduct an onsite review. In addition to staff and Commissioners, residents who have applied for the open seat on the Commission will be invited to participate in the review process.

5. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS

6. REPORTS

A. Commissioners' Committee and Lead Reports – As Noted

B. Project Updates from Staff – As Noted

Mr. Heim informed the Commissioners that the City Council adopted the Grand Connection vision framework and the Grand Connection Arts and Cultural plan at its meeting on December 11, 2017. That puts the Commission on a path to pursuing opportunities as they arise. The next step will be for the planning department to do the fine grain work on the design guidelines side.

7. CORRESPONDENCE, INFORMATION

A. Written Correspondence – As Noted

B. Information – As Noted

i. Committees – As Noted

8. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Malkin adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m.