

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

May 7, 2019
4:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E -109

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Councilmember Stokes; Jill Anholt via Skype

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Chairperson Manfredi who presided. All Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioners Malkin and Wolfteich, both of whom were excused.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A. Approval of Agenda

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

B. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Lewis referred to the third paragraph on the last page of the minutes and pointed out that the reference to “Joe McBride” should read “Joan McBride.”

Motion to approve the April 9, 2019, minutes as amended was made by Commissioner Jackson. The motion was seconded was by Commissioner Lewis and the motion carried unanimously.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

4. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Bel-Red Streetscape Plan Draft Public Art Element

Arts Program Coordinator Scott MacDonald explained that there is an urban design plan for all streetscapes in Bel-Red. There is also a chapter addressing public art, though it is very lean and it has not proven to be exceptionally useful for developers or the city in getting a vision on the ground. The work to develop a streetscape plan for the public art element is intended to be derived by a planning and working artist. The focus is on Bel-Red as a whole but there are also will be themes for public art along with principles artists can use to develop

their ideas. While evoking a unified vision for the area, the plan will also allow for unique expression.

Mr. MacDonald said the streetscape plan will primarily be used by private and public developers as a tool for driving projects, both from an urban design and public art perspective. The plan will also identify priority locations for potential projects. Changes to the Land Use Code may be required in order to implement the streetscape plan once it is adopted.

Artist Jill Anholt said she was excited to be working on the project. She said she has been working with Mr. MacDonald for some time trying to understand the very complex neighborhood and on determining how art could help shape it in the future. She noted that the public art section in the original Bel-Red streetscape plan was first reviewed to determine what was missing. It was determined that it lacked a strong and cohesive vision for public art. There was no thematic framework for tying together the art opportunities for the Bel-Red area. There were no principles to inform, refine and shape the way art could take place in the district. There was no mention of the public art already installed or planned. There was no listing of meaningful or impactful opportunities for artists to create work. There was no mention of implementation or funding, or even the idea of Bel-Red as an arts district and how public art might support that idea.

Continuing, Ms. Anholt said the concepts she identified as being important included the notion of the public art in the Bel-Red area reflecting the distinct character and experience of the district along with its diverse communities. Additionally, public art should strive to unite geographical, social and cultural contexts, enriching the experience of residents and visitors to Bel-Red. Works should have trigger interests across time and repeat visits for a broad range of audiences, insuring relevance as the district transforms going forward.

Ms. Anholt said to ensure rich and meaningful art opportunities, the plan takes the steps of developing a thematic framework, establishing art principles, determining public art typologies that make sense for the area, and goes so far as to suggest potential art locations. The plan makes mention of the Bel-Red public art collection mission statement. Echoed in the draft are ideas about cultural exchange and creative inspiration, enriching the city's public art collection of both permanent and movable works, and art that raises discourse, explores diverse identities and converging cultures, international connections, technological currents, and the interplay between nature and urban experiences. The plan outlines how the art collection can help document the dynamic movements and complexities of the cultural life of the Bel-Red district.

The thematic framework developed for the plan came from an in-depth investigation of the context of Bel-Red, both past and present. The thematic framework is not prescriptive, rather it is inspirational, allowing artists a jumping off point from which to develop their own responses. There are, however, four thematic themes intended to tie all of the works together. Change is critical and inherent in transformation is time in terms of how slowly or quickly things change. The four themes are 1) analog/digital; 2) natural reclamation; 3) intertwining cultural dialogs; and 4) intermediary/in-between.

Ms. Anholt said analog/digital is a theme that reflects the change the Bel-Red district is currently undergoing. The area is moving from being the place where physical products were once grown, farmed, made and stored to a digital industries and information are developed. It is interesting to think about examining the tangible in relation to the ephemeral, the concrete in relation to the fleeting, and the digitization of the analog world. In terms of the natural reclamation theme, Bel-Red's history describes the process of clearing one land use to make way for another. Things have now come full circle as the city works to restore the natural creek systems and forests the area was home to a hundred years ago. There is opportunity to

explore the relationship between the natural and human industry. The intertwining cultural dialogs theme reflects on the growing cultural diversity of the Bel-Red area. The focus is on how cultures become intertwined over time, what it takes to live in a new place emerging within a space where cultures, ideas and people from around the world meet, what happens to the memories of other places and cultures, and how the next generation will be affected. The theme also reflects the notion of displacement stemming from the displacement of Japanese-Americans during WWII and current businesses being forced out by new development. The intermediary/in-between theme rests on the notion of public art being the physical space between buildings and mechanisms through which transformation is taking place in Bel-Red, and the ways in which public art can mitigate the transformation of a neighborhood.

Ms. Anholt explained that the art principles are intended to inform, refine and shape the way art can take place. They form the foundation of the conceptual framework and are meant to be integral to every opportunity while also allowing artists to challenge and explore broad possibilities. Five art principles have been identified that should be part of every work that occurs in the district. First, art should be reflective of contemporary practices, which means that programs and works created should reflect contemporary art and the many ways in which artists practice and are informed by consideration of best practices and approaches internationally. Second is the notion of being context specific. Art in the area should be based on the geographic, historic and social contexts of a site. The unique context will form a foundation of art opportunities and create a base of knowledge that will encourage interpretation and creative approaches that are unique to context and place. Third, the idea of a response to time, duration and change is an important principle. Art should not be static but rather should encourage and reflect the reality of change, evolution and transformation occurring in the district. Opportunities should focus not just on space but time, allowing for an active and potentially evolving relationship with works. Ideas about exchange, dialog and discussion are important as well, so the fourth principle is that the works created should evoke the energy, ideas and connectiveness that characterize innovative learning communities and channeling encouragement for social exchange, dialog and discussion. The fifth principle, labeled a considered future, denotes being mindful of the overarching theme of sustainability and environmental impacts.

In starting to think about appropriate public art typologies, the criteria identified included choosing locations that are visible and accessible, timing relative to opportunity for artist involvement, reflecting planned principles, and opportunity for impact for the art. Four specific public art typologies have been identified: 1) thresholds; 2) crossings; 3) platforms; and 4) mobile. The thresholds typology relates to artworks that mark a transition or change in character. They are often places that mark significant nodes in the district, such as parks, plazas, intersections and transit hubs, all of which help lend identity. Most are seen by cars or transit, but there are some that offer more opportunity for engagement with cyclists and pedestrians as well. The thresholds can do more than just mark a location; they can immerse viewers in a unique experience that incites pause and reflection, and they can serve as an invitation to interact, respond or engage in a new perspective or way of thinking about a particular place and time. Photos of such works were shared with the Commissioners.

Ms. Anholt explained that the crossings typology involves works that interpret the intersection of natural and urban systems, bring attention to human systems below ground, and allow for the understanding of how networks that extend through the district overlay on top of one another. Photos of example works were shown to the Commissioners. She explained that the platforms typology is less developed but could be important in helping assure that Bel-Red becomes an arts district that is interesting and transformative. The consultant's plan included the notion of having a series of public gathering spaces created by developers. She said the idea is to require developers to create platforms for temporary works as part of the development of gathering spaces. That would allow for having a dynamic layer of interest in

the district that could change and contributing to placemaking. Such platforms could take any number of formats. Finally, the mobile typography is drawn from the notion of having permanent works in temporary locations. The idea could be implemented to bring attention to areas that are under construction or in the midst of a transformation. Examples were shared with the Commission.

Ms. Anholt said in order to think through how the typologies work within the context of Bel-Red, it was necessary to map the projects that are current and coming up in the district. She noted that many of the locations are connected to the East Link light rail transit stations, including the 130th Avenue NE and 120th Avenue NE stations, the Wilburton station, and the Eastside Rail Corridor. A map was drawn up of different thresholds, crossings and platforms could be located to occupy the various zones within the district. She noted that seven specific threshold locations have been identified and she pointed them out a map. She said the potential for plazas exists along pedestrian streets, each of which can be activated with temporary artworks that will create a sense of continual renewal and fresh perspectives. Plazas along local streets will allow for integrating art into the urban fabric, provided that there is a requirement for developers to provide platforms and a budget for temporary works. The idea of creating a work that moves to different locations has the potential for serving as an indicator that change is going to come. It can be an important factor in how streets are first activated, giving a unique entity to Bel-Red.

Councilmember Stokes said he was excited to see the work. He asked if the proposal takes into account the changes that are already occurring in the district, particularly the Global Innovation Exchange and the headquarters for REI. He also noted that the Eastside Rail Corridor, now called EastTrail, is a very important part of the east-west border of the Spring District and the Bel-Red corridor. He commented that the very thorough review of the Bel-Red district should somehow be leveraged to step up the game for the rest of the city. He stressed the need to move forward with the proposal before the opportunities are lost.

Commissioner Jackson said she wished the study had been done five years ago. It addresses the issues facing the district and provides a structure as opposed to the current random approach. If utilized, the proposal will influence the culture of the area.

Commissioner Lewis said the plan helps to make sense of the notion of having the arts district in Bel-Red.

Commissioner Lau Hui asked if the process for selecting artists was considered as part of the study. Ms. Anholt answered that it was not part of the scope of work. Mr. MacDonald explained that the streetscape plan will be an appendix in the Transportation Design Manual, which means developers both public and private must adhere to it as they build out their streets. The Land Use Code includes incentives for public art, and there are design guidelines for integrating public art into projects. There is a definition of what constitutes public art, and there is an established approval process that involves the arts program. In selecting artists, developers will need to seek out those who address the ideas housed in the plan.

Mr. Heim asked if there is an action plan of next steps that will be included in the scope of the plan. Mr. MacDonald said there will not be anything beyond the locations and technologies. As part of the Transportation Design Manual, the plan will have implementation built into it.

Chair Manfredi thanked Ms. Anholt for her good work.

B. Public Art Collection Care and Management Plan

Mr. MacDonald reported that at the beginning of the year a contract was entered into with 4Culture for the development of a collection assessment and maintenance plan. As part of that work 4Culture was to look at every city owned artwork and a few that are owned by the Bellevue Botanical Garden. Public artworks are generally considered to have a lifespan of 25 years, but with proper maintenance they can be made to last much longer. There has been no regular maintenance schedule for the collection since 2009 and maintenance on the city's works has been carried out semi-sporadically since then, largely due to major renovations that have sapped much of the maintenance funds that were set aside. The renovation work on John Young's *Temple of the Stones* at the South Bellevue Community Center cost \$26,000.

4Culture is currently working its way through assessing the works. They have developed a draft maintenance schedule that is based on the materials of works, and they have developed a priority list based on the amount of damage or condition of each piece. Works given the highest priority are those with conditions that represent the imminent danger of significant loss or accelerated deterioration, or with life/safety issues that require immediate redress. The pieces in that category include *Gandhi* at Ashwood Park, *Art With 4 Forms* at Downtown Park, *Nike's Shadow* at Enatai Beach Park, *Salmon Woman and Raven* at Highland Community Center, *Two Blues* at Kelsey Creek Park, *Garden of Alternatives* at McCormick Park, *Wild in the City* at Robinswood Park, *Longboat.Reed.Roockery* at City Hall, and *Sluggo 2002* at Hidden Valley.

Mr. MacDonald stressed that *Art With 4 Forms* needs fairly significant restoration and will likely become a standalone project outside of the contracted maintenance plan. At least half of the high priority works will be either standalone items or specifically scoped items in the maintenance contract.

Noting that the damage to *Art With 4 Forms* was likely caused by skateboarders and she asked if after it is repaired it will simply be damaged in the same way again given that raised horizontal surfaces are targets for skateboarders. Mr. MacDonald stressed that the city is mandated by the Visual Artists Rights Act of 1995 which dictates that living artists must be consulted prior to making any changes to their public artworks. He allowed that the question is a valid one and should be debated, but the discussion would need to include the artist.

Mr. MacDonald said the second half of the contract scope with 4Culture, which they have not yet started on, will develop a scope of work for going out for a contractor to do the required maintenance to bring the works into the good category. How that will play out is still to be determined.

Chair Manfredi asked if the maintenance work will fall within the arts program budget. Mr. MacDonald said that remained an open question. He reiterated that *Art With 4 Forms* likely will need to be a separate project. The vast majority of the work likely will fall into the established maintenance budget.

Chair Manfredi asked what mechanism would need to be used to increase the maintenance budget if there is a need to do so. Councilmember Stokes said the first helpful step would be for the Commission to raise the issue. He allowed that maintenance is one of those issues where if something is not done now it will cost more later. Mr. MacDonald said the Commission should have the conversation after the second phase of work is completed by 4Culture.

C. Trudi Jackson Appreciation

Chair Manfredi said the contributions of Commissioner Jackson to the city have been quite extraordinary. He noted that she serves as the leader of a major arts organization, the

Bellevue Youth Symphony, which offers an educational and developmental experience and which serves as an cultural anchor for the future. He said she has served the city in other ways as well, including working on the Downtown Livability Initiative. He observed that upon his arrival on the Commission he noticed her input as a model for what a Commissioner should be in terms of asking precise and pertinent questions, including questions that are difficult to ask. He said it would be very hard to replace her influence and wisdom. He thanked her for her service and said he was sorry to see her go.

Councilmember Stokes said his experience in working with Commissioner Jackson went back all the way to the Bellevue Schools Foundation. He said the attributes she brought to the Foundation were brought to the Commission. Her work leading the Bellevue Youth Symphony has been strong and she has made the organization into something much better. He said her contributions to the Commission were of the same high caliber and he added that she would surely be missed.

Commissioner Jackson said she was touched by the comments and said she has loved the people she has worked on the Commission with over her eight-year tenure. She said she would miss working with the Commission, having learned so much about the city, about public art, and about the work of developing and communicating about art. She said the experience has been wonderful and she praised the city for having an Arts Commission to give voice to arts and culture in the community.

Chair Manfredi presented Commissioner Jackson with a certificate and a token of appreciation.

Mr. MacDonald said his first impression of Commissioner Jackson was very high. He said he came on board to work on Bellwether in 2012. Former Arts Program Manager Mary Pat Byrne asked the Commissioners if they would be willing to host any of the artists. At the time Commissioner Jackson was prepping her house to sell but even so she invited an artist to stay with her during the event. He said that was evidence to him of the willingness of Commissioner Jackson to open herself to the mission of establishing and supporting the arts in Bellevue.

Mr. Heim thanked Commissioner Jackson for her leadership. He said she not only asked the hard questions, she always showed up to be a team member. He said she was the first to throw her hat into the ring to change and update the vision for the Cultural Compass. It is always helpful to have someone in the field keeping everyone accountable to best practices and the needs of the community, which is a role that Commissioner Jackson played well.

6. REPORTS

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

Mr. Heim informed the Commission that on May 13 he would be making a presentation to the City Council about updating the Cultural Compass. He said at the study session the Council will be asked for direction on a scope and approach, which as discussed will include focusing on the strategic vision and the core initiatives.

Mr. Heim confirmed that the planned joint meeting between the Arts Commission and the Parks and Community Services Board has been slated for June 11. He said the logistics are still being worked out but it is likely that the Commission will have its regular meeting from

4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., at which time the Parks and Community Services Board will join in for a presentation on Downtown Park.

Mr. MacDonald announced that there is a tentative agreement in hand from the owner of the DOXA church site to install a large mural on the side of their building facing the pedestrian corridor as part of Bellwether. The mural will live on beyond the show, though the building is slated to be torn down at some point as part of redevelopment of the site. He also informed the Commissioners that Meydenbauer Theatre has offered to partner on two Saturday events during Bellwether and has agreed to waive its rental fee allowing for a full musical lineup on both Saturday nights. An arts market is also being planned out front of Meydenbauer during the Saturday night concerts with works priced at \$100 and under.

Mr. Heim said applications have been received to fill the opening on the Commission triggered by Commissioner Jackson's leaving.

7. CORRESPONDENCE, INFORMATION

A. Written Correspondence – As Noted

B. Information

i. Committees – As Noted

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Manfredi adjourned the meeting at 6:09 p.m.