

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES

December 3, 2019  
4:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Room 1E -109

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners Aldredge, Lau Hui

STAFF PRESENT: Jesse Canedo, Manette Stamm, 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 4:38 p.m., and Commissioners Aldredge and Lau Hui, both of whom were excused.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A. Approval of Agenda

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

B. Approval of Minutes

**Motion to approve the November 5, 2019, minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Malkin. The motion was seconded was by Commissioner Lewis and the motion carried unanimously.**

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

4. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. 2020 Grant Applications

Arts Program Assistant Manette Stamm noted the Allocations Committee met following the last Commission meeting to discuss the scoring process, to score the applications, and to develop a recommendation for allocating the available funds. She presented their recommendation to the full Commission on behalf of the Allocations Committee. The Committee elected not to fund one of the applications after deeming that it did not qualify under the criteria. The award amounts for the balance of the applications were determined by how well they scored. With regard to the Power Up applications, the Committee chose to award \$5,000 each to three applicants based on the strength of the applications, the purpose of the application and the resulting level of impact. The amount of the Special Projects

allocations, which focus on individuals and smaller organizations wanting to do a specific project in the city, were also determined based on the scoring criteria. The Committee chose not to fund four of the applications for various reasons.

Commissioner Gulati commented that the amount of grant dollars should be increasing every year. Instead, the available funds have actually decreased. The city is growing, but the allocation amounts are not growing. Ms. Stamm agreed that the funding to the program has remained fairly consistent over the years and has not increased in line with growth in the economy. The larger organizations always score well and therefore get the most money, while the smaller organizations get very little. The city needs to step up give more funding to the arts program.

Chair Manfredi asked if there is possibility that funding to the program will be increased going forward. Ms. Stamm said an increase has been sought for the program every funding cycle for the last several years to no avail. Economic Development Strategist Jesse Canedo pointed out that 2020 will be a budget year. He said once again an increase in the arts program budget will be sought, but the conversation will be a difficult one given that the city is looking to develop a flat budget.

Commissioner Malkin asked what the timeline is for the Commission knocking on the Council's door to ask for more funding. He pointed out that there has been no increase for many years even though there is data in hand showing the community wants to see the arts funded at a higher level. Mr. Canedo said the budget process will officially kick off at the end of March. Any communications regarding an increase for the arts should be had prior to the official start of the budget process. Commissioner Malkin recommended putting together a proposal based on data to show the Council. Mr. Canedo said he has been working with Arts Program Coordinator Scott MacDonald and Ms. Stamm to collect data, and has also been collecting general economic data, in preparation for strengthening the budget proposal for the arts. He stressed that administratively all budget proposals come from the staff and the City Manager's Office for presentation to the Council, which ultimately approves the budget.

Commissioner Wolfteich asked what percent of the city's budget is the current allocation of \$145,000 to the arts program. Mr. Canedo said the city's biannual budget is \$1.4 billion. Commissioner Wolfteich asked if the allocation to the arts is based on a percentage and if there was a point in the last few years at which the percentage was cut. Mr. Canedo said the arts budget is a flat number and not an index percentage of the city's budget. The allocation has remained flat. Ms. Stamm said the amount available for allocation to special projects for the coming year is less than it was for 2019. Chair Manfredi said it was his understanding that is due to a reduction in funding from 4Culture.

Commissioner Malkin commented that the grant allocations were based on the applications. In years past the opportunity was taken to meet with and interview the applicants, a process that is no longer used. He asked if there is an opportunity for applicants to gain support from the consultants hired by the city. He added that in reading over the applications, especially the Power Up applications, he got the sense that there was uncertainty with regard to what they were actually applying for, which is supposed to be capacity building. Ms. Stamm said she had spent hours on the phone with applicants explaining the process and the purpose of the grant funds.

Commissioner Malkin clarified that the reason several special project applications were not funded was because the applicants were not clear about what they would do with the funds and had not put together good budgets.

Chair Manfredi pointed out that in the special projects category the maximum funding awarded was 44 percent of the applicant's ask. He asked if that was due simply to not having enough money to go around. Commissioner Wolfeich said that is exactly the reason. The relatively low allocation percentage is not a reflection of the criteria. The only other option would have been to not fund several more of the applications in order to free up funds for the applications that scored the highest.

Ms. Stamm pointed out that last year there were 35 applicants and this year there were 46, a 30 percent increase. Eleven of the applicants were new to the process and several of them were not funded, which is an indication that new applicants could use more help.

Commissioner Malkin stated that overall the process is fair and the Committee did its work well. He suggested that those who are put on the Committee should commit to attend and participate. Commissioner Wolfeich concurred, pointing out that two of the appointed Committee members, who were paid for their work, participated in the full process; one participated in reviewing only one of the 46 applications. Commissioner Malkin also pointed out that two of the Committee members were not residents of Bellevue, though both do work in the arts in Bellevue. While residency is not a requirement, selection of non-Commission Committee members should be very carefully made. Ms. Stamm agreed, pointing out that the timing of Mr. Heim leaving the city made it difficult to get Committee members selected. Next year the selection process could be started earlier to allow for more time and could include input from the Commission.

Commissioner Wolfeich asked if the applicants are privy to all the comments made by the Committee on their specific applications. Ms. Stamm said they are sent the comments only if they ask for them.

A motion to endorse the Allocations Committee's 2020 funding recommendations for Eastside Arts Partnerships, Special Projects and Power Up as presented for City Council approval was made by Commissioner Malkin. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wolfeich and the motion carried unanimously.

## B. Creative Consultancies Overview and Update

Ms. Stamm informed the Commissioners that last year the city applied for a project called Creative Consultancies. Offered by 4Culture, the project is in its second year. While not funded last year, the city worked closely with 4Culture on a King County Library System makers space project. She said a new application has been submitted that is focused on the arts district. The way the program works is cities apply and then 4Culture shares the applications with different consultants ranging from artists to architects who then decide which projects they are interested in. The selected cities can then choose up to five different consultants to interview. After the interviews the list is narrowed to three consultants after which 4Culture matches the city with one of the top three consultants. The Bellevue application has been going through the process for the last two months. Five consultants were interviewed, the top three were identified, and 4Culture chose to match the city with the consultant that stood out above the rest. The project is not, however, funded yet and remains in the scoping phase with the consultant. 4Culture will review the scoped project and will then decide whether or not to fund it and at what level.

Ms. Stamm said as envisioned the arts district project would look very much like a capacity building coalition of arts organizations in the district. A project is being looked for that will bring out a voice in Bel-Red where currently there are not a lot of voices calling for an arts district.

Commissioner Malkin asked if the selected consultant has proposed any ideas. Ms. Stamm said the process has not yet moved into that phase. It likely will be January before that process is started.

Chair Manfredi commented that the scoping process should include a focus on a project that will be successful. He said if there were any sense of what 4Culture is looking to fund, the project could be moved in that direction. Ms. Stamm said last year 4Culture essentially gave a project to the city before deciding not to fund it. They are still working out the kinks in the program, but it can be viewed as a good sign that the city has gotten as far as it has in the current process.

Chair Manfredi said he certainly was intrigued by the notion of giving the arts district a voice. Ms. Stamm said she did not see the consultant advocating on behalf of the district, rather the consultant would seek to magnify and articulate the resident and business voices and to bring them together. Mr. Canedo added that the ultimate deliverable could be anything from a piece of art that becomes a symbol for the neighborhood to a plan for how the city could support the arts district.

Commissioner Malkin asked if the project fits with the art space concept that was highlighted when a consultant was brought in to build a facility in the city, with Bel-Red being one of the candidate districts. He allowed that that project was put on hold pending the gathering of data from other consultants hired to show that there is a need and desire on the part of the arts community for a facility. Ms. Stamm said the art district concept could certainly be part of the consultancy project. Mr. Canedo added that there certainly is an opportunity to explore the art space concept with the consultant. Bel-Red and the 130th Avenue NE corridor was identified during the art space study and it could be considered for inclusion in the scope of the project.

Mr. Canedo said consideration has been given to allocating part of the economic development grant from the Port of Seattle as a matching contribution to the consultancies project. That could show 4Culture that the is serious about moving forward. The match would be at a 2:1 ratio.

Ms. Stamm commented that as the Spring District continues to get built out, there are some who are thinking the time is ripe and it may be a now or never situation. Affordability within the district is not what is used to be and artists are often the first to go.

Commissioner Gulati mentioned the possibility of Redmond and Kirkland working with Bellevue in creating an Bel-Red arts district. Commissioner Wolfeich allowed that Redmond borders Bel-Red but pointed out that Kirkland does not. Ms. Stamm said she did not know if either of those cities had also applied to 4Culture for the creative consultancies program. Mr. Canedo added that Bellevue works very closely with Redmond and Kirkland on cross-border economic development issues. He stressed, however, that there have been no discussions with arts staff or commissioners from either of those jurisdictions.

Chair Manfredi said he personally visited the Kirkland arts center where he discussed the issue of working together. He said the level of interest expressed was quite high and suggested the same could be true of Redmond. If 4Culture funds the Bellevue project, it would be worthwhile to talk with both cities about working together.

### C. Public Art Collection and Maintenance

Ms. Stamm called attention to two works in the city's public art collection, beginning with *Bellgate*. She noted that the piece is located on the pedestrian corridor in the downtown on 106th Avenue NE and was one of the first pieces in the city's collection. The property it sits

on is being redeveloped and the developer has asked that the artwork be removed or repositioned on the site, and possibly moving it to storage until the redevelopment work is done and then bringing it back. One issue is that the city owns only 23 percent of the sculpture, with the balance owned by the Bellevue Allied Arts Council whose only living member, Janice Van Blaricom, is terminally ill. The piece is a pinnacle piece for the pedestrian corridor and was designed to be interacted with by pedestrians, which means it cannot simply be relocated to just anywhere.

Ms. Stamm said Ms. Van Blaricom is interested in gifting her ownership of the piece to the city. There is a process involved in receiving gifted public art. A jury of three Commissioners and some outside persons must be formed to review the work and vote whether or not to accept it.

Another issue lies in the fact that under an agreement that is in effect, should the Bellevue Allied Arts Council dissolve, ownership of the work would transfer to the Bellevue Arts Museum. Ms. Stamm said she contacted the museum which indicated surprise at learning that fact. The museum does not have a public collection and therefore does not want the work. It is likely the city will end up with the piece.

The work was moved once before when Compass Plaza was developed. At that time someone asked that the work be removed altogether, but the argument was made that it could be removed but it could be repositioned.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Gulati about the intent of the developer relative to the piece, Ms. Stamm said the developer has not made their position clear, but the fact that the work is on included in any of their plans is a sign that they do not want it. Commissioner Gulati asked who would be on the hook to pay for the removal and storage of the piece and Ms. Stamm said under the agreement whoever requests its removal or repositioning must pay the costs. An executed version of that agreement, however, has not been found, so that remains an open question. Mr. Canedo said the city's attorneys are working to help resolve that issue.

Commissioner Wolfeich asked if the work is entirely on the developer's property or if some portion of it is on city property. Mr. Canedo said it is all on private property. The city property runs up to the curb; all of the sidewalks are on private property. He added that 80 percent of the Grand Connection is on privately owned property, with the city only owning the public spaces that are Downtown Park, Meydenbauer Bay and City Hall. The city is working with the development community to realize the vision for the Grand Connection. The developer of the Compass Plaza site is planning to include a large public plaza but has not counted on *Bellgate* being included. Resolving ownership is a critical element, but it is still possible that through negotiations the work will remain close to where it is.

Commissioner Wolfeich asked if there is a location in Downtown Park where the piece might fit in. Commissioner Gulati said she had the same question. Mr. Canedo said the parks department will be engaged to talk about that possibility. Downtown Park is part of the Grand Connection, as is Meydenbauer Bay, either of which could possibly have space for the work. There is also the potential of finding a place for the piece in Ashwood Park.

Chair Manfredi asked about the rationale behind having to form a jury to make a recommendation as to whether or not a donation should be accepted by the city. Ms. Stamm said there are issues to be considered with any work of art, including maintenance. The requirement to form a jury is adopted policy.

Ms. Stamm said the second work to be discussed was *Longboat Reed Rookery*. The work is located outside City Hall and was originally in a reflective pond. The pond, however, was found to have a major leak and thus the work has sat in an empty pond for quite some time. Additionally, concerns about drought conditions in the state made having the work sited in a pond yielded an incongruent image. The conversation now that the plaza and the entryway is being redesigned has turned back to whether or not piece should be restored back to working condition with working lights and in the pond. Depending on the redesign of the plaza, the piece may also need to be moved to a new location. Artech is working to develop a variety of options for the city to consider. If full restoration will be overly expensive, it is possible the city may want to deaccession the piece. The Commission will be kept up informed as the background work continues.

With regard to maintenance of the city's public art collection, Ms. Stamm noted that Mr. MacDonald had worked with 4Culture to assess the collection and propose a maintenance schedule. Their recommendation has been delivered to the city but advertising the work needed has not yet been done. She said staff hopes it will be published in December and that a vendor can be selected and onboard by the beginning of 2020. There are some major maintenance issues in need of attention.

5. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS – None

6. REPORTS

A. Commissioners' Committee and Lead Reports – As Noted

B. Project Updates from Staff – As Noted

Ms. Stamm informed the Commissioners that the final cohort meeting of Power Up Bellevue would be held in December. She said a survey will be sent to the cohort members for their feedback on the program to help shape next year's cohort.

Ms. Stamm shared with the Commissioners an email received from the organizer of the student art project through which the city acquired a piece from a student artist from Renton \$100.

Commissioner Malkin said he felt embarrassed that the city made a commitment to the student artist but did not close the loop and the work has never been displayed in City Hall as promised. He noted that the email was in regard to the Commission again being part of the program and he suggested it should, but stressed that if a commitment is made there should be follow through.

Commissioner Wolfteich volunteered to participate.

7. CORRESPONDENCE, INFORMATION – As Noted

A. Written Correspondence – As Noted

B. Information – As Noted

i. Committees – As Noted

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Manfredi adjourned the meeting at 5:53 p.m.