

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

May 3, 2022
4:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Virtual Meeting

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Bhargava

STAFF PRESENT: Manette Stamm, Lorie Hoffman, Kate Nesse, Community Development Department

OTHERS PRESENT: Councilmember Stokes

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:33 p.m. by Chair Lau Hui who presided. All Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Wolfteich, who arrived at 4:35 p.m., Commissioner Aldredge, who arrived at 4:36 p.m., and Commissioner Bhargava.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A. Approval of Agenda

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

B. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the April 20, 2022, minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Gulati. The motion was seconded was by Commissioner Martinez and the motion carried unanimously.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

4. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Periodic Update to the Comprehensive Plan

Senior Planner Dr. Kate Nesse informed the Commissioners that on February 28 the City Council launched the Comprehensive Plan periodic update and directed the city's boards and commissions to contribute to the work in their specific areas of expertise. The Arts Commission has expertise in a number of areas.

Dr. Nesse explained that the Growth Management Act requires cities like Bellevue to plan for growth in the community, looking 20 years out. The Comprehensive Plan periodic update must be passed by 2024 and will have a horizon year of 2044. All comprehensive plans have specific required elements, including land use and transportation, and there are some optional

elements, such as urban design and parks. The Comprehensive Plan sets policy that guides city actions and decisions as well as capital investments. All city plans must align with the Comprehensive Plan. The work is currently focused on updating the Vision chapter to align with the Council's revised vision. Each element includes narratives describing the important features, and goals and supporting policies. Also included in the Comprehensive Plan is a map of land uses. Volume 2 of the Comprehensive Plan houses the subarea or neighborhood plans which will not be updated as part of the process.

State law requires cities to update their comprehensive plans every ten years. Previously the update time period was eight years. The update work is intended to address the changing regional requirements, including changes to the GMA, changes to the Puget Sound Regional Council's Multicounty Planning Policies and King County's Countywide Planning Policies and growth targets. Council's updated vision, which emphasizes housing options and housing affordability, maintaining economic innovation and protecting the environment, will also be reflected in the update.

Every time the Comprehensive Plan is updated, new growth targets are set for housing and employment. The targets are based on projections created by the state. The PSRC divides out the projections to the four-county area, and then each county works with the cities within its boundaries to divide their share of the growth and the share to the unincorporated areas. Bellevue participated in the negotiation process. The Comprehensive Plan must plan to achieve the targets of 35,000 housing units and 70,000 jobs. The city's current capacity for jobs is 26,859 and for job is 117,241, means the capacity in both categories will need to be increased. There should be at least one housing unit for every new job to avoid perpetuating sprawl and to reduce traffic congestion.

While planning for growth, housing options will be expanded. At the same time, there will be a focus on making sure the neighborhoods are vibrant. There is a mandate to employ equity in how the planning process is carried out and in addressing impacts from the revised policies. The work will also include planning for environmental sustainability and resilience. Overall the update will set the stage for future planning.

Dr. Nesse said there two elements in which the Arts Commission will be involved, Urban Design and Arts, and Economic Development. Additionally, there are policies in several element the Commission will want to weigh in on. When thinking about art, the focus extends beyond physical art to include the integration of arts, heritage and sciences; arts districts; and infrastructure in support of the arts.

There will be several streams of engagement ranging from public engagements events, surveys and discussions; strategy team engagement; public comment at city boards and commissions as well as before the City Council; and board and commissions comments. The strategy team is comprised of folks with expertise or lived experience in particular areas. All of the engagement work will feed into the work of the staff in drafting updates to the various elements. The various boards and commissions will make recommendations to the Planning Commission, and the Planning Commission will ultimately make a recommendation to the Council for adoption.

The community engagement strategy is currently in the first phase which is focused on affirming the vision in terms of the big picture and direction. The community is being asked if they want to see changes made. Beginning in June, exploration of livability will begin. During that phase the public will be taken on a deeper dive into some of the issues, such as the connection between housing and transportation, and how people recreate in Bellevue. The work will continue through the summer months. In the fall updates will be drafted for the policies that are not closely linked to growth, then in the first half of 2023 the focus will turn

to exploring the growth alternatives. In the second half of 2023 the work will focus on refining the draft plan and the policies.

Dr. Nesse explained that there are several ways in which the outreach activities are being carried out. There is a page on the engagingbellevue.com website. There are also in-person and virtual workshops planned in the community. Presentations will be made on request. There have already been some tabling events at area grocery stores. Questionnaires were sent out via direct mail in March and there have been several announcements made. There will also be a statistically valid survey conducted later in the year. The focus on equity has involved employing several cultural outreach assistants with connections to specific cultural communities, and all is being offered with translation and multi-lingual outreach.

The Arts Commission will be involved with the update again in the fall of the year when there will be some draft policies to review. The Commission will also be involved in the summer of 2023 once the full draft plan is in hand.

Chair Lau Hui asked if the Commission suggest housing prototypes for artist residences as part of the Comprehensive Plan update. Dr. Nesse said feedback of that sort will be welcomed. There is no deadline for gathering information. Most of the initial drafting work will happen over the summer months and into the fall.

Arts Community Manager Lorie Hoffman asked at what point should the Commission offer suggestions. Dr. Nesse offered to hold additional study sessions with the Commission to hear feedback. Arts Program Analyst Manette Stamm and Lorie Hoffman are being kept in loop as the staff team works on the drafts of the Urban Design and the Arts and Economic Development elements.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Gulati, Dr. Nesse said the Comprehensive Plan addresses a wide variety of issues ranging from housing to transportation, commercial uses, economic development and capital facilities.

B. Bellwether Call

Lorie Hoffman noted that Bellwether is the city's free multi-disciplinary arts experience that has been produced by the city in collaboration with the arts community and with guidance from the Arts Commission. The event began as a biennial sculpture exhibition in 1992. Since 2018 Bellwether has been held annually to harness the city's growth and to support artists year-round. As previously determined, the Bellwether event in 2022 will be smaller as staff and the Commission work to bring forward a new vision for Bellwether 2023 and beyond. The 2022 event will include the new digital residency along with in-person or hybrid events produced in partnership with local area arts non-profits to round out the event.

Lorie Hoffman said there will be four digital residencies in the month of September. The artists will be selected through a competitive process. During their week-long residency, the artists will post artistic content on social media channels, including the city's Arts Program channel as well as their own channels, bringing new arts content to the community. The four selected artists will be given a stipend of \$1800 for each of the residencies. The call as drafted will be open to all artists in King County, though at the direction of the Commission that can be changed.

Once the Commission approves the call, staff will begin work on an outline for the online application before advertising the call, collecting applications, and forming a panel for reviewing the applications.

Commissioner Aldredge expressed an interest in opening the call to the tri-county area. Doing so would likely increase the number of artists submitting applications. Lorie Hoffman said it could go either way. On the one hand, Bellwether is viewed as a sign of things to come for emerging local artists, but opening it to the wider region would offer a broader reach.

Manette Stamm added that for the past three years, calls have not extended beyond King, Snohomish and Pierce counties. There have not been any calls that were limited just to King County with the exception of the Eastside Artists Roster.

Chair Lau Hui pointed out that artists participating in digital residencies would not need to do so locally; they could do it from their homes or studios. Commissioner Aldredge said that argued in favor of opening the call to the tri-county area, adding that the stipend is not large enough to take the call nationally.

A motion to approve the 2022 Bellwether digital residency call as written and with the modification to extend the call to the King, Snohomish and Pierce counties was made by Commissioner Aldredge. The motion as second by Commissioner Wolfeich and the motion carried unanimously.

C. Utility Box Wraps Final Design

Manette Stamm said the call that went out was for artists to wrap a series of signal and utility boxes, primarily in the Downtown. In February the Commission approved ten artists to submit drafts and final designs for ten locations. Since then staff have been working closely with the artists and now has a comprehensive set for all ten boxes. One of the ten boxes is located outside the Downtown between Downtown and BelRed, making a nice connection between the first call and the current call. The project is funded by Amazon but by request the company will not be listed on the boxes, leaving the full credit for the project to the city.

All of the artist submissions were shown to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Aldredge commented positively on the diverse artwork selection, noting that they are all colorful and suggesting that they will be well received by the public.

A motion to approve the final designs as presented was made by Commissioner Gowdy. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Martinez and the motion carried unanimously.

D. Portable Artworks for Purchase

Manette Stamm explained that the selection panel met twice to work through all of the artist submissions. There were 200 submissions in all, though two did not qualify, amounting to over a thousand artworks made available for purchase. The selection panel consisted of Commissioner Wolfeich and Lane Eagles, Associate Curator for the Bellevue Art Museum, and Sudeshna Dixi, Director of Cultural Connections for EastHUB. The total budget was \$38,000 plus sales tax, with a maximum price of \$3800 per artwork and artist. Additional budget dollars are available for framing and installation costs.

The recommendation of the panel was to purchase 29 artworks from 24 artists for a total of \$39,315, exceeding the budget by \$1315. Manette Stamm said the additional cost can be covered by the separate framing and installation budget. The recommended works were shown to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Gulati stated that the recommended works are all stunning.

Commissioner Wolfeich allowed that in the end the selection committee came up with a fairly wide range of works spanning a number of different media and art forms. The panel worked very well together in reviewing the submissions and making recommendations. There was a lot of give and take and the outcome was a very diverse collection.

Chair Lau Hui asked if the works will be rotated throughout the city. Manette Stamm said the works will first be sited at City Hall along the second floor. Hopefully some works will be sited in community centers and other venues and will be rotated. Over time both temporary and permanent locations will be found for the portable works.

A motion to approve the purchase of the recommended artworks by the Portable Art Selection Panel was made by Chair Lau Hui. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Aldredge and the motion carried unanimously.

E. BelRed Mural Artists Selection

Manette Stamm noted that the selection panel met to review the 55 artist submissions for the mural pilot program in BelRed. The panelists were Commissioner Gulati; Angelina Villalobos, muralist and Seattle artist; and Kathleen Warren, owner of a creative firm that facilitates mural installations.

Over the course of a number of discussions, the panel drew up a ranking of artists based on the selection criteria. The ranking order was selected due to the unique wall opportunities in BelRed and other possible walls under review by staff, including transportation staff, regarding future murals. Some walls in BelRed are textured, which means they may not be suitable for all works and all artists. The panel ultimately recommended ten artists and thirteen alternates for other mural opportunities. Works from each of the artists were shared with the Commissioners.

Commissioner Gulati said a number of great works from excellent artists were submitted, making the work of the panel more challenging. The pilot project hopefully will be only the beginning of something fabulous for the city, especially as a way of highlighting the BelRed Arts District.

Manette Stamm pointed out that the panelists had previously worked with some of the artists and spoke highly of their work.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Gulati, Manette Stamm said the selected artists will be designing murals specific to their chosen sites. Staff will work with the artists on their draft designs which will be submitted to the Commission for review and approval. The projects that exceed \$5000 will need to be contracted or otherwise addressed within the confines of state law. Permits for each of the murals will need to be obtained. Only city-owned walls were selected to avoid also having to have agreements from private property owners. Installation will occur during the summer and fall months when the weather is good.

Manette Stamm said ten different walls have been identified for murals by the ten artists. The hierarchy that has been established will be followed in assigning walls to artists. The artist drafts are slated to be before the Commission in July. Final designs will be needed before seeking the permits.

A motion to approve the commission of mural designs from the selection of artists recommended was made by Commissioner Gowdy. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wolfeich and the motion carried unanimously.

5. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS – None
6. REPORTS
 - A. Commissioners’ Committee and Lead Reports – As Noted
 - B. Project Updates from Staff

Lorie Hoffman reported that the contract with ArtSpace has been finalized for the study artist housing and commercial space. The work to contract for the arts market study is continuing with an eye on having an deliverable from the study in the fall.

Lorie Hoffman reported that (inaudible) with Americans for the Arts to begin data collection during the summer on the arts and economic prosperity study. The national study will involve the participation of 400 municipalities across the nation. The focus will be on the economic impact of non-profit arts and culture organizations, audiences and (inaudible).

The Commissioners were informed that an intern from the Seattle University arts leadership masters program will be brought on board to assess the study.

Lorie Hoffman updated the Commission regarding the BelRed Arts District, noting that there have been a number of recent meetings between staff and developers and landowners, creative businesses and other stakeholders. The focus has been on orienting folks to upcoming projects and issues specific to the BelRed Arts District. The opening of the light rail line will represent a seismic change for the neighborhood and there is a desire to get ahead of that and to be prepared.

The fabrication and installation contract for the 130th public art project is slated to be before the Council on June 21.

Manette Stamm marked the fact that the meeting was Commissioner Wolfteich’s last as a Commissioner, who has been on the Commission since 2014. Manette Stamm stated that it had been an honor to work with Commissioner Wolfteich over the years.

Commissioner Wolfteich expressed that it had been a privilege to serve as a member of the Commission alongside so many talented persons. Serving on various panels over the years was very enjoyable and helped to elevate the experience. The leadership brought to bear by the staff has been exemplary in keeping things organized and the Commission on track.

Chair Lau Hui thanked Commissioner Wolfteich for his service on the Commission. Not counting work on panels and the like, Commissioner Wolfteich likely spent some 280 hours in Commission meetings over eight years as a Commissioner.

Lorie Hoffman praised Commissioner Wolfteich for always giving a hundred percent to the work of the Commission and when reviewing artist submittals.

Commissioner Gulati expressed looking forward to seeing Commissioner Wolfteich at the art fairs. Commissioner Gulati thanked Commissioner Wolfteich for serving on the Commission.

Manette Stamm stated that the staff are working with Council liaison Councilmember Stokes on getting a replacement for Commissioner Wolfteich.

Manette Stamm also reported that the Commission would soon be moving to the Legistar system, which is used by the City Council and many other boards and commissions. All

meeting materials will be made available electronically through Legistar. The Commissioners will be issued iPads as well to access the system.

Asked if the Commission would soon be meeting in person again, Manette Stamm said as things stand meetings will for the foreseeable future continue to be held remotely. The city is working on the details of how to move forward with a hybrid approach.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Lau Hui adjourned the meeting at 5:54 p.m.