

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

October 3, 2017
4:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E -109

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners Hui, Lewis

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Zac Culler, Ben Beres, John Sutton, CullerBeresSutton; Cathy Springman, Victoria Titova, Sarah Jacobsen, Emerald Ballet Theatre; Wendy Tyner, Patrice O'Neill, Wintergrass

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 Commissioners Hui and 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 Malkin. Second was by Commissioner Jackson and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the September 12, 2017, minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Wolfteich. Second was by Commissioner Jackson and the motion carried unanimously.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

4. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Presentations by Organizations: Emerald Theatre and Wintergrass

Ms. Cathy Springman, a ten-year volunteer and current member of the board of Emerald Theatre, introduced co-founder and artistic director Viktoria Titova, and co-founder and program director Sarah Jacobsen. She said Emerald Theatre is celebrating its tenth anniversary. The organization is located in the Bel-Red arts district and serves primarily as an incubator for the arts by bringing education and affordable family friendly art to the community. Over the last year a little over 2000 children, adults and special needs dancers

were reached with the studio programs, full-scale productions and outreach programs. The Magic Bus school program is one of the organization's crowning achievements over the past couple of years. The program involves assemblies brought to the schools to bring academic curriculum to life through the arts. Over 1500 elementary school students enjoy the programs annually. The programs are based on state curriculum standards. The organization also partners with the Bellevue School District summer program inspiring some 250 underserved students with the arts.

Emerald Theatre has offered masters classes that involve bringing dance masters from around the world to Bellevue. The programs are open to the public and are attended by both kids and parents.

A program called the EBT Teaching Institute is for older teen dancers. The students are taught dance but also learn about production, producing a performance, costuming, careers in the arts, secondary education in the arts, and gain experience through a teaching practicum. The program offers the community a healthy environment in which to guide young people who are at a difficult age.

Ms. Springman said the organization has a number of partners, including the city of Bellevue, the Bellevue School District, the city of Mercer Island, the Northshore Performing Arts Center Foundation, the YMCA, Ballet West and Youth America Grand Prix, which is an international ballet competition.

Performances are themselves educational, not only to the audience but for the participants. Two full-scale productions are put on annually, including the Nutcracker, which offers the only live orchestral production of the performance on the Eastside. The production involves about 250 children, adults and professional dancers and 100 musicians in five performances over two weekends. The performances are held at Impact because it is not possible to get into Bellevue. The Emerald Theatre Nutcracker performance has been made a part of Impact's official season. New for 2017 is the Petite Nutcracker which will give younger dance students the opportunity to perform in a far less overwhelming environment.

The 2017 spring performance was *My Mama Had a Dancing Heart*, an adaptation of the book by Libba Moore Gray. There were a lot of youth performers involved, including pre-ballet students from the YMCA program and community centers.

Grant money from Bellevue is used by the organization to support boys programs. Most classes for boys are free given that they are an underserved population in dance. Diverse boys of all ages are involved.

Ms. Springman said the 2018 spring production *Peter and the Wolf* will in fact take place in Bellevue at Sammamish High School. There will be a meet the musicians introduction at the beginning. Musicians will be brought to the stage with their instruments to show how the ballet and music work together to create a performance. There will also be an act from Les Sylphides with the Chopin piano score played live.

Competition is an element of the organization's mission. Youth are motivated by a variety of things, and competition can really help them set goals and strive. Youth America Grand Prix is the big competition the organization participates in. It is an international competition with regional semi finals held around the world which culminate in New York City in April. Emerald Theatre's participation in 2016 was its fourth year, and the organization had dancers in the top 12 in every category of the semi finals and in the top three for an ensemble. One young man went on to the finals and is now one of the top six dancers in the world. One young lady is now also a top dancer.

Ms. Springman said Emerald Theatre prides itself on its collaboration with other arts organizations. Last year Bainbridge Island artist George Woodall and a Russian artist collaborated with the organization to create new scenery backdrops. The organization has also worked with Newport High School to create scenery and to teach the students choreography for their plays. Professional dancers are brought in every year to collaborate with local productions. Plans to collaborate with the Bellevue Youth Symphony are being made.

Ms. Patrice O'Neill said Wintergrass is a bluegrass music festival that takes place every year near the end of February. It is enjoying its seventh year in Bellevue and its 25th year in existence. Moving to Bellevue was the best thing the festival ever did, and the support of the city over the years has been appreciated. The festival occurs over a four-day period and features about 150 artists from around the world. There are seven different education programs attached to the festival; most occur during the festival though some take place throughout the year.

The festival starts with PintGrass which teaches small children to play bluegrass music through movement, dance and experimentation. The Youth Academy involves about 100 kids aged seven to fourteen. The kids work with adults and peer teachers through the Youth Academy Teacher Training program who are aged 14 to 20. Rhapsody Songsters is a program for high school kids and collaborates with The Collaboratory in Columbia City; the program deals almost exclusively with disadvantaged kids and is more broadly focused than just music education in that it gives kids an avenue into production, photography, writing, post making and community organizing. The Youth Orchestra program involves about 120 kids, mostly middle schoolers. The program pares classically trained students with aurally trained students and teachers. Those kids are provided music by headline artists who craft arrangements for middle school orchestras. For the upcoming festival, the artists providing the arrangements include Mark O'Connor, Darol Anger and Mike Marshall, and Rushad Eggleston. The artists will also work directly and perform with the kids.

The festival's biggest challenge is space. All programs and classes occur within the confines of the Hyatt Regency. The youth programs could handle far more kids if there were more space.

Ms. O'Neill said about 5000 people per day attend the festival. Some 300 volunteers help to make the festival flow smoothly. There are also a good many partners, including 4Culture, the Port of Seattle, Hale's Brewery and the city of Bellevue.

Ms. Wendy Tyner, Wintergrass development director, said she recently returned from the International Bluegrass Music Association music business conference in Raleigh, North Carolina. She said Wintergrass is well known both nationally and internationally; it has won their award as well as a Grammy for the education director. Beyond that, Bellevue is known for what is being done with the Hyatt Regency, and in fact it has won awards for how it treats customers and supporting the festival. The conference provides professional development for the Wintergrass organizers. The festival in Bellevue sells out 2400 hotel rooms in three hotels over the four nights of the event, and serves as a tremendous economic boon for the city.

Wintergrass is more than just a festival, it is a culture and community of people from all over and of all ages playing music together.

Commissioner Malkin asked about the partnership with Resonance at SOMA Towers. O'Neill said the Wintergrass organizers met with representatives of Resonance right after the last festival to discuss doing six bluegrass-based shows there. The venue is wonderful and is not far from the Hyatt. The intent is to continue with the partnership going forward. The bluegrass

festival held annually in Raleigh attracts about 5000 people, but the city produced street fair that occurs at the same time attracts another 200,000 people. Ultimately the hope is that Wintergrass will extend beyond just the Hyatt.

B. 2018 Bellwether Program Update

Arts Program Manager Joshua Heim reminded the Commission that the approach to Bellwether was different this time around in that it involves working with curators in the form of SuttonBeresCutler. Their first deliverable is a curatorial statement and an artist roster. Curatorial statements are points of departure rather than conclusions; the statements generally outline the questions and big themes the curator is interested in exploring. The curatorial statement submitted by SuttonBeresCuller represents their thinking about how to approach the 2018 Bellwether program. The associated artists roster is much larger than the Commission has traditionally worked with. A finalized artist roster as well as an actual proposal for what the program will look like will be developed in the coming months.

Mr. Beres said SuttonBeresCuller is in touch with each of the artists on the roster. Many of them have never been to Bellevue let alone shown any work in Bellevue. It is exciting thinking about the built environment and the connections that can be made to it.

Mr. Sutton allowed that the statement will be refined as conversations with artists occur. He said SuttonBeresCuller was interested in commissioning new works and performances, and some existing objects.

Commissioner Jackson asked if SuttonBeresCuller will aim primarily at Northwest artists. Mr. Beres said that will not be the case. He pointed out that more than 25 of the artists on the roster are not from the Northwest. Many of the artists will likely be regional or at least West Coast based, primarily for budgetary reasons, but there are a handful of artists who hopefully will be brought out from New York, Los Angeles and Chicago. Mr. Sutton agreed that the budget will to a large degree dictate tapping more local artists.

Mr. Beres said the group was excited to be moving away from just sculpture to including music and dance and performance, all with an eye on outlining where the Grand Connection will be and activating it. The thinking is that there will be some performances, some large-scale installations and some murals along the Grand Connection route, incorporating both public and private spaces in partnership with different organizations.

Commissioner Jackson asked if from a branding point of view the name will change to something like Bellwether Festival. Mr. Beres said there have been discussions about what to call it, though the word "festival" is a word the team wants to get away from. The word "Bellwether" will be retained but it will not be called just an exhibition. While the primary Bellwether event will run for only ten days, some of the works and installations likely will be left in place much longer, the murals for possibly many years.

Chair Manfredi asked if a date has been set for Bellwether. Mr. Sutton said the event has tentatively been slated to begin on July 20. Mr. Heim noted that the date overlaps with the Bellevue Arts Museum Arts Fair

Commissioner Malkin pointed out that the previous Bellwether was timed to coincide with the arts fair on the hope that there would be a boost in attendance. The boost did not occur, however. Arts Program Coordinator Scott MacDonald said that could be because the fair and exhibition audiences are separate. Mr. Beres said getting the artists on the list to participate, especially the bigger names, will increase the audience. Mr. Sutton added that there is no

intent to detract from the arts fairs, rather the desire is to make Bellwether work with the arts fairs. Good communication will be required.

Chair Manfredi asked if there will be logistical challenges with regard to the event as planned versus how the exhibition has been run in the past. Mr. MacDonald said the previous model included a three-week window in which artists could do installations. Having a compacted timeframe will reduce the time for installations to occur, but it will also reduce the maintenance aspect. The proposed approach will require a tremendous amount of coordination.

Mr. Beres said consideration has been given to holding the event the week after schools in back in session. The weather is still generally nice then and the event could stand on its own. Mr. Sutton said one disadvantage to having the event during the summer months is the days are really long, limiting opportunities for things like video projection and light art unless they are done in interior spaces. The days are much shorter in September.

Mr. Heim pointed out that the city participates in Welcoming Week in September. The event is specifically about welcoming immigrants and persons from diverse communities into the city. Mr. Beres allowed that there are yet many details to be worked out.

With regard to the artist selection process, Mr. Heim said there will need to be a Commissioner participating in the process. The process will not be as involved as it previously has been. The curators will largely make decisions around artists who do projects to a certain threshold. Projects over that limit must have at least three names submitted to staff, who in turn must solicit an application from the artist. The selection process will likely run along the same time as the work of the applications committee.

There was agreement to assign Commissioner Jackson to serve as part of the artist selection process.

C. Lattawood Park Artist Selection

Mr. MacDonald said the selection panel met on September 14 to select three finalists. The three artists selected were interviewed on September 27. The panel was made up of Commissioner Malkin representing the Commission and the Horizon Heights neighborhood. The president of the Whispering Heights/Collingwood Neighborhood Association, Steve Nicewarner served on the panel along with artist Nori Sato, an accomplished national and international artist. Any of the three finalists would have done a very good job, but ultimately the panel selected the artist team of Jim Hirschfield and Sonya Ishii. The artists, formerly from the Seattle area, now live in North Carolina. Mr. Hirschfield is a professor at the University of North Carolina in sculpture and until a month ago served as head of the school of sculpture. The two artists have worked collaboratively for the last 25 years. The panel liked the artist team's strong commitment to working with communities in a lot of different ways.

Commissioner Malkin noted that throughout their interview, the artists spoke at length about focusing on the path as the canvas. That resonated well with the panel. He allowed that the strengths of the artists interviewed made the work of the panel that much more difficult; all of them submitted very high quality works.

Mr. MacDonald shared with the Commission slides of work done by the artist team of Hirschfield and Ishii, including projects that involved the use of light.

A motion to approve the artist selection of Jim Hirschfield and Sonya Ishii as the artist team as recommended by the artist selection panel for the commission of an artwork for the

Lattawood Park art and lighting project was made by Commissioner Malkin. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jackson and the motion carried unanimously.

D. 130th Avenue Public Art Project

Mr. MacDonald noted that there had been some changes to the project information since the Commission packet was printed. He said the project runs from Spring Boulevard to NE 20th Street along what is called in the Bel-Red plan a designated shopping street. The 130th station will be located at the south end of the project area on Spring Boulevard between 130th Avenue NE and 132nd Avenue NE. The shopping street is envisioned as being lively and walkable with a pedestrian focus and with separated bike lanes and two lanes of traffic, one in each direction. The intent is for the street to be a lively place with no curb cuts for parking lots or access and a seamless pedestrian environment with lots of retail and restaurants and hopefully some galleries. The street lies in the heart of the arts district. The federally funded transportation project will take in all of 130th Avenue NE from Bel-Red Road to NE 20th. The art opportunity is specific to the northern half.

The budget was originally pegged at \$140,000 for a series of integrated artworks that celebrate 130th Avenue NE as a shopping street. After a plea from the assistant director of the transportation department for additional funding, the Urban Boulevards program will contribute an additional \$65,000.

Commissioner Jackson asked if there is any expectation that people will be able to park anywhere near the project area. Mr. MacDonald said Sound Transit will construct a large parking garage as part of the 130th station project. There will also be on-street parking along 130th Avenue NE and south on Spring Boulevard. Additionally, the local streets, which are not yet designed or built, will also have on-street parking. The Bel-Red plan calls for two green streets as well.

Mr. MacDonald said one thing being called out strongly in regard to the 130th streetscape public art project is the idea of using creative placemaking principles. The notion is to build off of the planned community's existing or future character and integrate it into public spaces, including streetscapes. A public art project is not necessarily a creative placemaking project unless it goes the extra mile toward creating identity of place.

The selection criteria is a key component that will be used in keeping the panel focused when making a decision between one artist and another. The artists will be judged based on the quality and strength of their past work. They will also need to demonstrate experience with integrating artworks into infrastructure and have command of creative placemaking. Preference will be given to projects that address corridors and/or walkability. There will be a public open call consistent with federal mandates given that the project is federally funded. The panel will include Commissioner Wolfteich representing the Commission, two community stakeholders, one a representative from a local arts organization and the other a local Bel-Red musician or teacher, a local arts professional, and an artist with experience working with large civic projects.

The selection process will kick off in mid-November, with finalist interviews occurring in early December. The transportation project will be at 30 percent design by early in December after which the selected artist will serve as a member of the design team. Final design is anticipated to be completed in June or July of 2018. Construction is not slated to start until 2020.

A motion to approve the 130th Streetscape Public Artist call as presented was made by Commissioner Jackson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wolfteich and the motion carried unanimously.

E. Downtown Park Public Art Project

Mr. Heim said the public art project is for the Downtown Park northeast corner entrance and is intended to provide an important physical and aesthetic connection to the downtown while providing access to the pedestrian corridor and serving as a focal point for the Grand Connection. The overall project budget is \$300,000, but the advertised opportunity is \$275,000. Half of the money for the overall project will come from partnering with the Grand Connection project. Additionally, through a partnership with the parks department, there is a desire to integrate art into the project. The site at the corner of NE 4th Street and Bellevue Way is highly visible.

Mr. Heim said the scope of work includes having the artist join the design team to assure art integration. The work will have to be done in accord with the existing park master plan, the vision for the Grand Connection, and the vision embedded in the arts and culture master plan.

The selection process will be somewhat more complicated. The project will be advertised and staff will do a qualifying review of the applications. That will give the opportunity for arts, the Grand Connection and parks to develop a pool of candidates that will then be given over to the art selection panel. Chair Manfredi will represent the Commission on the panel along with four other members, two community stakeholders and two arts professionals. The panel will settle on three finalists, each of which will participate in a half day orientation session involving concurrent sessions, possibly on site, at the Bellevue Arts Museum with stakeholders, and one with the actual design team. The format is intended to accommodate the fact that the design team is already on contract and has started its work and has initiated design alternatives based on the master plan principles. The alternatives will be winnowed down to a single option. The design team recognizes the need for integrating the art and the orientation will be timed such that all of the alternatives will be available for review by the three finalists. The next day, the finalists will go through an interview process with the panel. A recommendation and the final alternative will be before the Commission in December.

Commissioner Malkin asked if the panel will influence the decision about which of the design alternatives to choose or if it will simply be informed after the fact. Mr. Heim said that remains an open question. There is a full commitment on the part of all involved to fully integrate art in the project. Hopefully an artist will be under contract by mid to late December so they can have some influence on the design alternatives. Parks would like to have the design alternative in hand by the beginning of the new year, and to have a final design by spring.

A motion to approve the Downtown Park's northeast corner public art artist call as presented was made by Commissioner Wolfteich. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jackson and the motion carried unanimously.

F. Artspace Project Update

Mr. MacDonald explained that the preliminary feasibility report would be discussed more fully at the November Commission meeting. He encouraged the Commissioners to read the document ahead of that meeting. The document is organized with an executive summary, an overall community profile, a description of the preliminary feasibility visit and what was done, findings covering six different topics, a summary and the recommendations. Starting on page 46 are the appendices that include a bio, a description of all the process steps, a

recommendation to move forward with an arts market survey, and a description of five local projects.

Calling attention to the findings overview in the executive summary, Mr. MacDonald highlighted the three main strategies outlined by Artspace to create affordable space. He noted that the strategies were not specific to an artist housing development. He said they see a need for some sort of Artspace model live/work project that includes affordable housing, but they also believe the city should adopt new or expand the existing developer incentives to encourage creative spaces at below market rate rents in private developments. They also recognized the opportunity in Bel-Red with the Bel-Red look back. At the public meetings and the focus groups there was a consistent chorus of arts organizations and businesses wanting to see shared use or collaborative space, so Artspace included that as a strategy.

The executive summary includes a list of potential sites. Artspace highlighted the OMFE site across from the Spring District in Bel-Red as a great opportunity and also mentioned Wilburton as a great opportunity. The 130th station site does not yet have enough built for Artspace to buy in for a project, though it could be a good location in the future.

The high-level recommendations in the executive summary include conducting an arts market study, including a general survey of the artist community up to 15 miles from Bellevue. Artspace works from the premise that for every three artists indicating they would like to see an arts development, one artist is a potential occupant. The goes for those wanting studio space. For a typical project with between 70 and 100 live/work units, 210 to 300 artists must indicate an interest.

Mr. MacDonald said the next scope of work will see to answer some specific market demand questions, including what type of artist will the project serve, and what artists can afford to pay for studio workspace. He said the city of Tacoma also had a feasibility study done along with a market survey and a developer used the data collected to create an affordable housing development that includes setting aside six of the 14 units for creatives. A second development is currently in the planning phase.

Page 28 of the report includes a long list of different funding mechanisms. Mr. MacDonald drew attention to page 31 and the list of financing partners Artspace has worked with for their Seattle projects. While some of the partners are specific to Seattle, the majority are regional organizations or businesses. From 43 on, the report outlines a more in-depth summary of the Artspace recommendation.

Mr. MacDonald suggested that the report is really positive for Bellevue. There are still questions to be answered going forward, in particular who should have the large advocacy role for getting a project developed. The suggestion is made in the report that a core group be created that is outside of the city that could be comprised of someone from the Commission, different stakeholders, and community representatives who are tied into the arts. The message highlights the comments made that arts teachers cannot afford to live in the community in which they work, and that is something that should be addressed in the arts market survey and by any future development.

Answering a question asked by Chair Manfredi, Mr. MacDonald said at the time the Mt. Baker project in Seattle was done there was an arts market survey conducted. At that time they had a thousand people on the wait list. The arts market survey cannot be skipped even if a demonstrated need can be shown, in part because of doubts that Seattle-based artists would be willing to move to Bellevue. If the arts market survey goes ahead, it will yield valuable information and make it possible to better connect with more artists in the community.

Commissioner Malkin asked if the Artspace recommendation includes expanding the focus to include other areas on the Eastside such as Kirkland, Redmond and Renton to identify artists that might be willing to move into Bellevue. Mr. MacDonald said Artspace looks at what they call a region, which typically is up to 50 miles out. For Bellevue that covers a huge territory which in terms of travel time alone is untenable.

Commissioner Wolfeich asked what the usual criteria is for approving artists for live/work units. He asked if the artists must making a living specifically from their art. Mr. MacDonald said the artists must have an income that qualifies them for affordable housing, which for Artspace is no more than 60 percent of the area median income. The income does not have to be derived solely from art, but the artists must be able to demonstrate that they are committed to actively pursuing their creative art form. The definition of what constitutes an artist is quite broad and can include culinary artists and those in the healing arts.

5. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS

Mr. Heim informed the Commissioners about opportunities for site reviews on October 6 and 7.

6. REPORTS

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

7. CORRESPONDENCE, INFORMATION

- A. Written Correspondence – As Noted
- B. Information – As Noted
 - i. Committees

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Manfredi adjourned the meeting at 6:33 p.m.