

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

March 4, 2014
4:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E -109

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Tremblay, Commissioners Cole, Fateeva, Jackson, Malkin, Manfredi

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Ludeña

STAFF PRESENT: Mary Pat Byrne, Scott MacDonald, Paul Inghram, Department of Planning and Community Development

OTHERS PRESENT: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:39 p.m. by Commissioner Jackson who presided until the arrival of Chair Tremblay. All Commissioners were present with the exception of Chair Tremblay, who arrived at 4:43 p.m., and Commissioner Ludeña, who was excused.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A. Approval of Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Cole. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Malkin and it carried unanimously.

B. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the January 21, 2014, minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Manfredi. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Manfredi and it carried unanimously.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

4. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Arts Policy in the Comprehensive Plan

Comprehensive Planning Manager Paul Inghram briefly reviewed the community outreach efforts that have gone into the Comprehensive Plan update process. He said he and Arts Program Assistant Scott MacDonald have been working on the Urban Design Element, the document that affects design review, the development of public projects, and the arts program.

Mr. MacDonald said there are references to cultural and community programs in other parts of the Comprehensive Plan, but the policies reside primarily in the Urban Design Element. For the most part, the policies are focused on public art. The last update of the Comprehensive Plan in 2004 included only minor tweaks to the arts policies in the Urban Design Element, so the policies are largely as they have been since 1994 and could use some updating to make them more

representative of what the arts program does and the kinds of things the people have said they want. Other boards and commissions will review the policies as will the staff and that input will be shared with the Commission.

Mr. MacDonald noted that the first two policies are intended to evoke broad ideas about the arts in Bellevue, and that the third and fourth policies are specific to facilities at the regional level as well as small facilities such as black box and rehearsal spaces.

Commissioner Malkin asked how a policy like the fifth one calling for a lifelong engagement in the arts gets realized. Mr. MacDonald said the intent is to meld lifelong arts education with engagement in the arts for all ages. Mr. Inghram said one tangible example is the Bellevue Youth Theatre venue that is currently under construction. In that instance the city actively participated in bringing online a cultural facility that will be targeted toward the youth. At the same time, the city offers art classes for seniors at the city's community centers. Policy support for these desirable activities help ensure the City will continue to support them.

Mr. MacDonald pointed out that policies six and seven are specific to public art, with the first specific to the city's public art program and the second more general about public art in Bellevue. Policy eight is about supporting art and arts groups and includes a tie-in to the Cultural Compass.

Commissioner Jackson suggested that the notion of supporting arts activities in public places is not really covered by the language of policy eight. Language is needed that encourages the use of public space for arts activities.

Commissioner Manfredi asked if something stronger than "encouraged" could be used in policy, particularly in policy nine. Mr. Inghram said "encourage" gives the city flexibility in the next steps, which involves what is done to encourage in the Cultural Compass and in the Land Use Code. The policy language could be changed to something like "require" but in the past the city has not been prepared to go to that length.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Fateeva, Mr. Inghram said staff is proposing to reorganize the order of the policies in a way that will make more sense. Essentially they will start big and then get down to a finer grain.

Commissioner Cole commented that there is nothing in the policy language that addresses critical mass or an arts scene, which has to do with crossover and networking. She said the policies are sterile and housed in silos, and agreed that is not uncommon. Taking passive public space and applying policies that support a wide array of artistic expression can make neat things happen, and there should be some language in the policies that makes that clear.

Commissioner Jackson pointed out the need to be more conservative in wording intentions when the focus is on a 10- to 20-year timeframe. Change comes slowly to upper level documents and it is unadvisable to think only of the here and now in drafting them. The use of words like "invest" may be seen by the Council as calling for monetary actions they are not willing to take and as such may trigger the loss of the policy altogether. Mr. Inghram said there will be opportunity to refine the language in ways that will, as policy language is supposed to do, direct city programs and actions.

Chair Tremblay said she would support policy language aimed at establishing a percentage for the arts, particularly in building construction. Mr. Inghram said to go down that path the Commission would need to entertain language along the lines of "Explore innovative funding tools to provide additional support for the arts." Arts Specialist Mary Pat Byrne pointed out that under state law that could only apply to the city itself. The City can incentivize using public art in private developments, but it cannot require it.

Commissioner Malkin said he would like to see language in the policies that encourage the city to be proactive. Chair Tremblay agreed and suggested the word lies somewhere between "encourage" and "require." Mr. MacDonald said there are a range of directive words that could be used, including "activate" and "explore," for example. He added that preceding the policy section there is a paragraph describing the vision that the policies are intended to support. The potential exists to draft the vision to outline the desire to have a vibrant arts scene, and the policy language could be written to allow enough room for change over time.

B. Cultural Compass Focus Group Planning

Ms. Byrne reported that the Cultural Compass committee met and worked on some concrete plans for a series of focus groups to be conducted toward the end of April. She outlined how the focus group process has been used recently by the city to gain comments on a variety of topics and suggested the model has proved to be successful. The committee has identified four goals and has forwarded the idea of having four focus groups, with each focus group zeroing in specifically on one of the four goals; attendees would be asked to address five questions about the specific goal and one question each for the other three goals. There will be a need following the focus groups to talk with specific persons and groups given their specialties or responsibilities; they will be sought out for conversations either in small groups or individually. The focus groups will be held in four different locations and at different times on different days of the week to afford opportunity for as many people as possible to attend.

Ms. Byrne encouraged the Commissioners to attend but said those who do attend should have a function other than passive observing or participating in the conversation. She said it would be easy to have the Commission be a fifth focus group. Chair Tremblay said if that is done previous Commissioners should be asked to join in.

C. Photography by Hugo Ludeña

Ms. Byrne informed the Commissioners that a family emergency had kept Commissioner Ludeña from attending the meeting.

A motion to amend the agenda to discuss a proposal from the Bellevue Arts Museum Fair was made by Commissioner Jackson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cole and it carried unanimously.

D. Bellevue Arts Museum Fair Proposal

Ms. Byrne said she received from the organizer for the Bellevue Arts Museum Fair a request for the Arts Program to collaborate with the Fair on a lamp post project for the pedestrian corridor during the fair and for the entire summer. She noted that the Arts Program has partnered twice with the Museum on this kind of project, in 2011 and 2013. The fair organizer was specifically asked not to follow up on the lamp post project in 2012 because the sculpture exhibition was under way and installations were sited along the corridor, but the project was launched again in 2013 with support from the Commission. She said the thinking at the time was to keep the pedestrian corridor reserved for Bellwether (which occurs biennially in even years), but rethought that approach this year. If the idea is to give temporary public art a strong presence in the Downtown, more partners with more projects is more desirable.

Ms. Byrne went on to say that said no proposals have been seen to date for sculpture exhibition installations along the pedestrian corridor that involve using lamp posts. She suggested the lamp post project during the exhibition could add liveliness, and there is no downside in having people think the project is part of Bellwether. What's most likely is that people will simply enjoy the art and not think about who's program it is.

Answering a question asked by Chair Tremblay, Ms. Byrne said Meredith Langridge Anderson, Bellevue Arts Museum events manager, will administer the project, so the impact on Arts Program staff is very little. She said she will serve as a juror representing the city when it comes time to pick an artist.

A motion to recommend that the Arts Program provide up to \$5000 for the Lamp Post Project in partnership with the Bellevue Arts Museum was made by Commissioner Cole. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Manfredi.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Jackson, Ms. Byrne said the 2013 installation was kept up until September; to keep it up longer runs into scheduling challenges and rain. The intent is to keep it up as long as possible, but it is meant to be a temporary installation.

Chair Tremblay commented that it was only coincidental that two of the pedestrian corridor installations involved knitting and crochet. However, Bellevue has been hosting the Vogue knitting event and there may be something to staying with the fiber theme.

The motion carried unanimously.

5. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS - None

6. REPORTS

A. Commissioners' Committee and Lead Reports

i. City Council Approval for Allocations

Commissioner Jackson said she made the presentation during the Council's study session. The detailed questions asked were evidence that the Councilmembers had reviewed the materials in detail. The Councilmembers were very interested in the issue of diversity and liked the fact that the Seattle Film Festival organizers have been asked to choose films that reflect the diverse population in Bellevue. Clearly the Council is open to and sees the value in the arts.

Ms. Byrne noted that Chair Tremblay attended the presentation and Mayor Balducci called her out and thanked her for her service on the Commission.

Ms. Byrne said notice has been sent to all of the groups chosen to receive funding. Information has also been posted to the city's website along with links to the various organizations.

ii. Livability CAC Update

Commissioner Jackson said the CAC members realize that the incentive system in the Land Use Code is all about giving to developers in order to get from developers. The CAC is currently looking at building height and form; the Office/Limited Business area between 112th Avenue NE and the freeway; the major pedestrian corridor; public open space; the amenity incentive system; design guidelines; downtown food trucks; and downtown parking. A range of strategies for each item has been reviewed and commented on. Ultimately the recommendation from the CAC will be forwarded to the Planning Commission and the City Council.

Chair Tremblay asked if the CAC is addressing the issue of signage, particularly digital signage. Commissioner Jackson said the issue has not been brought up and discussed by the group. Ms. Byrne mentioned that Bellevue has a very restrictive sign code on the books.

B. Staff Reports

i. Tateuchi Center Update

Ms. Byrne said one of the items discussed by the Council at its annual retreat was how to interact with PACE. The Council remains united and determined to find a way to support the project. Councilmember Stokes has been appointed at the Council liaison to the project. Ms. Byrne said Councilmember Stokes will be working with Planning and Community Development director Chris Salomone. Ms. Byrne said she will serve as project manager.

ii. Project Status Report

Ms. Byrne commented that the Bridle Trails art project is nearly completed. Things are turning out beautifully. A dedication can be expected during the month of May.

The Commissioners were updated on progress with obtaining easements for the Newport Hills/Lake Heights public art project. The easements have been obtained for all three of the sites. The sculpture elements to be attached to the bus shelters are being finalized by the artist Bruce Myers; the installation work will actually be done by King County Metro facilities staff.

With regard to East Link public art, an artist has been chosen for the 130th station and a selection process will take place in March for the City Hall station.

Ms. Byrne said the current storefront project that is located in the pavilion will be moving out soon and another will be coming in later in the month of March. The new one will be related to the Jewish culture.

Ms. Byrne reported that the Wintergrass Festival was once again a big success.

The Commissioners were informed that to date 65 entries have been received for the Bellwether sculpture exhibition. By the end there could be as many as 75.

7. CORRESPONDENCE, INFORMATION

A. Written Correspondence - None

B. Information - As Noted

- i. Upcoming Agenda Items
- ii. Committees and Leads
- iii. Cultural Compass Update Basics
- iv. Public Art Program Budget Update

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Tremblay adjourned the meeting at 6:03 p.m.