

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

May 2, 2017
4:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E -109

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Manfredi, Commissioners, Lau Hui, Lewis, Madan, Malkin

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners Jackson, Wolfteich

STAFF PRESENT: Joshua Heim, Scott MacDonald, Department of Planning and Community Development; Mayor John Stokes

OTHERS PRESENT: John Sutton, Ben Beres, Zac Culler, SuttonBeresCuller

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:34 p.m. by Chairperson Manfredi who presided. All Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Madan, who arrived at 4:36 p.m., and Commissioners Jackson 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 Lewis. Second was by Commissioner Lau Hui and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the April 2017 minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Lau Hui. Second was by Commissioner Lewis and the motion carried unanimously.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Chair Manfredi reported that he attended the Bellevue Youth Symphony garden party along with Commissioner Lau Hui. He said the event was excellent.

Mayor Stokes thanked the Commissioners for their long and continuing experience on behalf of the city. He said the contributions made by the Commissioners to the community and the arts community are appreciated.

Mayor Stokes presented to Commissioner Madan a plaque recognizing his service on the Commission. Commissioner Madan urged appointing an artist to take his place on the Commission.

4. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Draft Action Plan for Art and Culture in the Grand Connection

Arts Program Manager Joshua Heim said the artist consultant team of SuttonBeresCuller has been working on developing a Grand Connection plan for what art and culture programs might look like in the Grand Connection. He said the team has been working with the Commission on goals and strategies and was present to share the draft action plan. He urged the Commissioners to take the document home, get familiar with it, and to provide staff with feedback within a week.

John Sutton explained that the draft action plan combines all of the goals, strategies and opportunities that have been previously presented to the Commission. Mr. Heim pointed out that a new context page had been added to provide a quick outline of the process to date, the goals developed for art and culture in the Grand Connection, which are really all about making it a special place, identifying it with the arts, improving the civic experience and those sorts of things.

Mr. Sutton called attention to page 24 of the packet and the map of the Grand Connection. He noted that the route connects from the Eastside Rail Corridor to Meydenbauer Bay. He pointed out that one of the strategies is to connect with minor points of interest, including planters and benches and elements incorporated into buildings that are already in existence along the pedestrian corridor. Where there is a lack of minor points of interest, the idea is to locate small discoverable sculptures and other elements. At the five hubs indicated on the map, the idea is to integrate artwork, include a major public sculpture, or incorporate different cultural plinths around which the community can gather for major programming events. The opportunities for large signature artworks were also indicated on the map.

Mr. Sutton said both the Eastside Rail Corridor and the I-405 connection are major developments that will be happening over the long term. He said the plan is to take some small actions to activate those spaces in the interim. He proposed installing one of their sculptures, an inherently mobile, large-scale and colorful work. Given the visible site lines and the connectivity of the site, the opportunities associated with the I-405 connection will be very important in the future. The idea is to activate the space with a big, bold and colorful presence and to program some small community events to begin building the identity of the Wilburton area at the future Eastside Rail Corridor connection. The project as proposed would be visible from the downtown core.

Commissioner Malkin asked how soon the Eastside Rail Corridor will be turned into an active trail. Mr. Sutton said it will not be completed until the Sound Transit light rail station is completed in 2020. Mayor Stokes added that the plan is to have the Wilburton bridge done in about four years. Mr. Sutton said he has had multiple meetings with folks from King County parks who are open to activating the space. Currently there is an ugly chain link fence separating the corridor from Uwajimaya and Mutual Materials and the proposal is to construct a wall to block that off and to activate the wall with murals, light projections and temporary projects that could eventually be incorporated into the permanent design of the site.

Commissioner Lau Hui pointed out that the Eastside Rail Corridor is not easily accessible and asked how that will be addressed. Mr. Sutton said there are details yet to be worked out, but there is access from the Uwajimaya parking lot and from REI. People are using the site currently for overflow parking even though King County has posted No Parking signs. Activation of the site could occur as part of Bellwether 2018.

With regard to the I-405 crossing, Mr. Sutton noted that the city is pursuing a couple of different options, including a lid and a sculptural bridge. The recommendations for the crossing are necessarily more general given that there is no specific plan of action. The short-

term recommendations include integrating an artist into the design team for whichever option is chosen; to partner with Sound Transit to identify opportunities for artistic treatments to the underside of the guideways and columns on the Lincoln Center property where light rail will be crossing over the freeway, and activating the Lincoln Center property in the interim with cultural programming, temporary installations and/or related activities to build a cultural activity, possibly in tandem with the Eastside Rail Corridor interim activities. For the long term, the recommendation is to commission a major new artwork to be incorporated into the future crossing, developing the area as a cultural plinth, and artistic treatments to the guideways, columns and wayfinding.

Commissioner Lewis asked where things stand in regard to making a decision about the I-405 crossing. Mayor Stokes said the Council has received a briefing on the different options but no decisions have been made. One thing under consideration is the potential extension of 106th Avenue NE across to 116th Avenue NE. He said hearing about the plans and opportunities to activate the spaces and incorporate art was helpful in understanding how the various pieces fit together.

With regard to the civic center, Mr. Sutton said the first move will be to collaborate with the Meydenbauer Center to develop programming specific to the Grand Connection utilizing their lobby space, stairs, windows and so forth. The recommendation includes expanding the Storefronts program which currently utilizes only four midblock windows. There will be a lot of construction work happening on the City Hall site so there will not be opportunity for many short-term actions. Accordingly, starting a partnership with Meydenbauer Center will be a great first step. In the short-term, Meydenbauer Center has plans to redesign its front entryway and has expressed a desire to include integrated artwork. Also in the short-term, an artist should be commissioned to create concepts for enhancing the transit center, and the City Hall and Meydenbauer Center lobbies should be activated with rotating exhibitions, readings and cultural events that coincide with evening art walks. The three plazas surrounding the transit center should also be utilized for various programmed events, small art fair pop-ups, food trucks and craft vendors. For the long term, there should be a signature artwork at the intersection of 110th Avenue NE and NE 6th Street, and artwork should be integrated into the transit center and the surrounding intersections.

Mr. Beres said the team also envisions a signature sculpture at the top of the hill in front of the transit center to serve as a beacon drawing people to the location.

Chair Manfredi said it was his understanding that Sound Transit would be including some art in the plaza as part of the station. Mr. Sutton said their plan calls for incorporating artistic elements in the railing and fencing rather than siting a big visible work.

Mr. Sutton said Compass Plaza and the Garden Hillclimb is the most fully realized section the pedestrian corridor. There is no vehicular traffic and it has a small and intimate scale. The site offers great opportunity to start programming immediately. The first move would be to integrate an artist into the design team for the raised intersection at Compass Plaza. Semi-permanent rotating artworks could be sited there. The recommendation highlights seven large-scale art opportunities as well. Compass plaza is also ripe for temporary projects and performances at lunch time and in the early evening aimed at encouraging workers and residents to stay in the downtown longer. In the short term, the recommendation includes a mural on the DOXA church wall, a mural on the American Eyeglass building, and programming in conjunction with the DOXA church. There are small advertising displays associated with the Galleria that could be tapped as part of an emerging artists program. Establishing year-round farmers and food markets, cultivating a café culture, wayfinding and incorporating art into existing structures is also part of the short-term plan for the space. For

the long term, a new major sculpture should be sited as part of an expanded Compass Plaza if the surrounding properties all get developed.

For the Street as Plaza section, which lies between Compass Plaza and Bellevue Square, Mr. Sutton noted that there would be another new raised intersection between the Bellevue Arts Museum and Bellevue Square with an artist-designed surface treatment. For the short term, the blue tiles artwork along NE 6th Street will need to be deaccessioned and an artist should be commissioned to design new pavement treatments or inlays for incorporation into the repair work. The short-term plan also includes developing and commissioning new and unique pedestrian lighting and sculptural seating elements, pursuing mural opportunities in collaboration with the Bellevue Arts Museum, claiming the Street as Plaza as a cultural plinth and activating it year round with cultural programming in partnership with the Bellevue Arts Museum, area merchants, private landowners and the Bellevue Downtown Association. Much is already in place through the art fairs, Snowflake Lane and the like, and they occur in a location that is claimed by the greater community as a place for community gatherings. There is a need to design and implement traffic control measures that allows for closing the street down for the bigger events. Moving fairs out of the interior spaces of the mall and onto the streets would be a good move, as would partnering with private development to commission artist-designed canopies and wayfinding. For the long term, as the area redevelops a new major sculpture should be commissioned in partnership with the Bellevue Collection.

There will also be a raised intersection by Downtown Park. The city is already planning it along with a gateway sculpture to be visible from that intersection. The work to complete the circle in Downtown Park is under way and concepts for opening the park to the street are being designed. For the short term, an artist should be made a member of the entry plaza design team. Programming the sets for Bellwether 2018 is on the list of short-term recommendations along with fabricating and installing the gateway sculpture, commission an artist to design the raised paving treatment for the new raised intersection, develop programming around the cultural plinth and community hub at the entrance to the park, incorporate artist-designed wayfinding, and conducting a site analysis after the park is completed of where other small-scale sculptures and the like might draw attention to the route. The entryway where the large gateway sculpture will be is a clear cultural plinth and community hub. Programming at that location would not necessarily impact other activities in the park.

With regard to Meydenbauer Bay Park, Mr. Sutton said redevelopment of the site will include arts and cultural elements. Main Street already has a strong identity and does not need much by way of grand actions, but it does need to be more culturally activated in partnership with merchants, business owners and property owners. The minor points of interest leading to the park are largely taken care of, but there is a clear need for strong wayfinding. An artist should be integrated into the design team for the new Meydenbauer Bay Park, and programming events should be developed in collaboration with merchants and property owners to activate the neighborhood. There are short-term opportunities for potential placemaking interventions and small-scale artworks for incorporation into existing infrastructure. Long term, there are opportunities for a large-scale sculpture at the intersection of Main Street and 100th Avenue NE to bring awareness of the proximity to the new park.

Mr. Sutton said the art walk is currently largely a lunchtime walk. There is a desire on the part of the community, however, to have more evening events, so expanding the art walk program into the evening hours makes sense. Eventually it would be ideal to see activation of the entire route, but Main Street is a place where activation can occur more immediately.

Commissioner Lewis said the draft action plan captures the essence of what needs to be done in order to keep people in the city after hours. Mayor Stokes said a lot of people have expressed a desire to have reasons to stay after work. Bellevue has a population of almost 140,000, but the downtown sees 45,000 come in every day to work, many of whom do not live in the city and who then leave after work. Many of them have it in mind that if they want a night on the town they have to go to Seattle. Things are changing, but more needs to be done to make Bellevue after hours an attractive place. Mr. Sutton agreed that Bellevue should be a cultural destination in its own right.

Commissioner Lau Hui pointed out that it will be many years before the Grand Connection and all that is envisioned for it comes to be. She asked if thought has been given to how to engage the public more in the process and interested in the short-term solutions. Mr. Sutton said the team has been looking at Bellwether 2018 as the big platform for that engagement. Between now and then, there are some moves to be made to start implementing the programs along the route.

Chair Manfredi asked how the Commission will be involved in making decisions about how sculptures along the route will be funded. Mr. Sutton said he did not have an answer to that question. With regard to the wall at the Eastside Rail Corridor site and other locations, Chair Manfredi suggested it would be a good idea to include a large image so those in attendance could gain an overall understanding of the Grand Connection and how the individual locations play into the larger scheme of things.

Commissioner Malkin asked if there is a public relations element to the Grand Connection project that will involve a press release put out as significant milestones are met. Mr. Heim said there is and it is driven by the overall project manager Bradley Calvert.

Mr. Heim said the immediate next steps will entail firming up the draft and incorporating it into the vision framework that will go out to public comment beginning in about two weeks. The feedback will be synthesized before the Council is presented with an updated version of the document, possibly as early as July. The Council will then undertake the process of determining whether or not to adopt the plan.

Mayor Stokes suggested a meeting should be scheduled to talk about the role of the Commission relative to the Grand Connection process. He said the Commission should play a leadership role by gathering information from the public and making recommendations to the Council.

B. Artspace Project Update

Mr. Heim noted that Artspace, an affordable housing developer based out of Minneapolis, was slated to be in Bellevue May 9 to May 11. They have over 45 housing projects and arts facilities around the country. Responding to a long history of artists and arts organizations having trouble finding space to practice, perform, and create their artwork in Bellevue, the city is in the initial stages of understanding whether or not it would be feasible to do an affordable arts development in the city to help meet some of these needs. Four different focus groups have been set up, and some of the Commissioners will be participating. The Commissioners were urged to attend the public meeting slated for 7:00 p.m. May 10 in Council Chambers and to bring to the meeting artists who need housing or who want information about what an arts facility can do for a community.

Commissioner Malkin asked what the next steps will be after Artspace completes its information gathering process. Mr. Heim said they will synthesize the information and then draft a report within six to eight weeks. The report will outline their assessment relative to

feasibility. The report will represent a roadmap for what an arts development may look like for Bellevue's unique needs.

Mr. Heim said development of a multicultural center is a project currently being addressed by the city's diversity team. The project is supported by Councilmember Conrad Lee. He said he along with Arts Program Coordinator Scott MacDonald and Diversity Outreach and Engagement Administrator Mark Manuel is involved in engaging the community in a conversation about space and vision for the arts.

Mayor Stokes said there are a lot of different views about what the cultural center should be. The Council put a small amount of money in as a placeholder to look at how the center should be described. There is a clear need for performing space by different cultural groups. The initial steps are to decide if a cultural thing is something the city needs and if so how to get behind it and make it work. The city is putting \$20 million into the Tateuchi Center, which will buy the city a lot of say in the programming of the facility. Even after that facility is online, there will still be a need for performance space in the city.

Mr. Heim said he attended the coffee chat along with Commissioners Lau Hui, Jackson, and Mayor Stokes. The need for cultural spaces was raised by the group so steps are being taken to figure out a proper research program. After a determination is made on feasibility, the next step would be a market study.

Commissioner Malkin said one question to be answered is whether or not Artspace works in suburbs or only in urban centers. Bellevue is an edge city. Mayor Stokes said Bellevue is in fact the urban center of the Eastside; it is not a suburb. While Bellevue would not be what it is without Seattle, the city is not an adjunct of Seattle.

Mr. Heim said Artspace defines feasibility in terms of a financial model. Often financial models are predicated on gifts of land, but overall feasibility is a very complex equation that often encompasses assessments and market studies. The process under way represents only the first steps.

C. Level Up Bellevue Project Update

Mr. Heim said Level Up Bellevue is a new capacity building program that is focused on responding to the needs of Bellevue's arts and heritage non-profits. The idea grew out of the coffee chat. He said he has been talking with a couple of consultants who would be good at setting up the Leaders Series, which is the first step. The idea is to conduct the educational leaders series in the fall focused on space security and capitalization. In talking with 501 Commons, the suggestion was made to include a third track focused on volunteer management. The Power Up grant funding program is for organizations that demonstrate readiness and a commitment to implementing a capacity building project, and the C Suite project would engage corporate and tech volunteers to participate in very specific projects.

Mr. Heim said he hoped to have more program details and a budget for the Commission's June meeting.

D. Bellevue Creative Edge Project Update

Mr. Heim said the Bellevue Creative Edge project was previously known as the Creative Economy Strategy. He said the goal of the project is to understand what Bellevue's creative edge is, what the city's niche is and where growth and investment be concentrated, and how the city can help. The result of the project will be a partial update, if not a full update, of the Cultural Compass. Creative Edge is specially focused on picking up the vision conversation

regarding cultural organizations and artists. The study part of the project will zero in on the math in the form of what will essentially be a labor market study. Data will be pulled regarding specific firms. The workforce will also be studied. Cultural resources will be looked at along with potentially administrative infrastructure.

Mr. Heim said a Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued and was recently closed. The RFP sought a consultant to help do the process and there were three who applied. Each will be evaluated and hopefully by the end of May a consultant will be on board who will be tasked with seeking answers to the questions “What is the nature of Bellevue’s creative industries?” and “What role do they play in the local and regional economy?” Once those questions are answered, and once there are some base recommendations in hand based on the best practices of index cities, the program will move on to addressing strategies based on priorities, what Bellevue wants to be known for, and how to make it all happen. Public engagement will be part of the process.

The consultants that submitted proposals as part of the RFP have set forth ideas such as doing a leadership forum utilizing both national and local leaders; maintaining an interactive website throughout the process; and incorporating a blog to explore ideas.

Commissioner Malkin asked if the City Hall concourse would be suitable to hosting a speaker’s forum and community conversation. Mayor Stokes said the concourse is an excellent event space that has been utilized many times.

Mr. Heim said the sequencing of the main program phases were spelled out on page 18 of the packet. He noted that the first step will be to build a task force composed of arts leaders, business leaders, design professionals, philanthropists and educators. Chair Manfredi will chair the task force. The task force will be directed to have a conversation about cultural values and why the arts matter in Bellevue.

Chair Manfredi noted that the focus of the project will be more on the business side of things rather than the non-profit side, which is primarily the focus of the Commission. He asked where the connection between the two will occur. Commissioner Malkin pointed out that there is a clear business side even for non-profit organizations and as such they are part of the economy.

Commissioner Lau Hui asked what steps will be taken to involve the smaller organizations in the process. Mr. Heim called attention to page 19 of the packet and the definition of the creative economy. He explained that the creative economy is a segment of the larger economy whose principle orientation is to provide creative ideas and processes to generate goods, services and innovations that provide both economic and aesthetic value. Three distinct groups will be looked at: industries, which are the companies; the workforce, which is made up of the creative people; and non-profits as defined by the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities. How the three are linked will be determined by the project.

Mr. Heim explained that every company that files a tax return is given a category code. He noted that the codes were shown pages 20 and 21 of the packet. The project will show what share of Bellevue’s economy comes from the various companies. The data will be shared with the Council and the community to show how important the arts are to the local economy. The RFP included as an option expanding the study area to include Kirkland and Redmond to show the degree to which Bellevue acts as a regional leader in the arts economy.

Chair Manfredi asked if the study will differentiate between those in the workforce who live in Bellevue and those who work in Bellevue. Mr. Heim said the distinction will occur between

the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes and the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes. The latter is tied to place of residence. If it is determined that people work in Bellevue but do not live in Bellevue, it could bolster the argument in favor of an Artspace project.

E. Onsite Review: May & June Opportunities

Mr. Heim referred to the matrix in the packet and explained that the highlighted projects were those that will happen before the end of June. The Commissioners took a moment to indicate which events they would like to attend.

5. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS

6. REPORTS

A. Commissioners' Committee and Lead Reports – As Noted

Chair Manfredi asked when the process of recruiting from the community for the Lattawood project would start, and just what the process would be. Mr. Heim said staff would work with the neighborhood leaders in putting out the call.

B. Project Updates from Staff – As Noted

Mr. Heim reported that on May 3 the King County Council approved having Access for All on the August ballot.

7. CORRESPONDENCE, INFORMATION

A. Written Correspondence – As Noted

B. Information – As Noted

i. Committees – As Noted

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Manfredi adjourned the meeting at 6:37 p.m.