

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES

January 20, 2009  
4:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Room 1E -109

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Finley, Commissioners Donkin, Holder, Kiselev, Ptacek, Shepherd, Tremblay

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Mary Pat Byrne, Emil King, Patti Wilma, Department of Planning and Community Development

OTHERS PRESENT: Scott Moore, Eva Stone, James Arzente, Gary Thrane

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:04 p.m. by Chairperson Finley who presided. All Commissioners were present.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A. Approval of Agenda

**Motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Holder. Second was by Commissioner Shepherd and the motion carried unanimously.**

B. Approval of Minutes

**Motion to approve the December 2, 2008, minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Donkin. Second was by Commissioner Tremblay and the motion carried unanimously.**

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Eva Stone said she serves as artistic director of the Stone Dance Collective, a modern dance company based in the greater Seattle area for the past 12 years. She said she also is the producer of *Chop Shop: Bodies of Work*, a contemporary dance festival scheduled for Meydenbauer Center. She provided background on her dance company and its current activities including programming in Bellevue in partnership with the Parks & Community Services Department (Parks).

Mr. Scott Moore said he interesting in getting more involved in arts in Bellevue. He said he started a fine art reproduction company two years ago focused on limited edition prints, primarily for local artists. The process begins with a color-corrected very high end digital scan of artwork. The company helps artists get themselves online and sell their products online.

Mr. James Arzente said he previously served on the arts council in Brookline, Massachusetts, and has been a full-time visual artist for the past 13 years. He said he has had shows in Boston, New York and Los Angeles. He said he recently moved to Bellevue and intends to become involved in the local arts scene.

#### IV. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

##### A. Newport Hills/Lake Heights Artist Selection Jury Recommendation

Commissioner Tremblay is chair the Panel for this project. She said the process through which the Newport Hills and Lake Heights residents came together was set up by Arts Specialist Mary Pat Byrne and Public Art Project Coordinator Tamar Benzikry-Stern. The process brought about consensus very quickly and easily. Works by a number of excellent artists were reviewed, and the consensus was that the work of Bruce Myers was the best fit for the neighborhood.

Mr. Gary Thramer, a resident of Newport Hills and a member of the panel, said he was impressed with the process. The chance to see all the great artists and offer comments brought the group to consensus very quickly.

Artist Bruce Myers said he has 14 years experience in public art. He shared photos of his works in Edmonds, Snoqualmie, Federal Way and Seattle.

**Motion to endorse the recommendation of the Panel and recommend the City contract with Bruce Myers to design and build artwork for the Newport Hills/Lake Heights neighborhoods was made by Commissioner Shepherd. Second was by Commissioner Tremblay and the motion carried unanimously.**

##### B. 2009 – 2010 Work Plan Partnering Opportunities, Part 2

Community Development Manager Patti Wilma shared with the Commission four projects that PCD in collaboration with other departments is taking on, each of which could have an art component. She said the first project possibility emerged in December and offers a gateway opportunity at NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street and I-405 on the site of the former Paragon Hotel. The City is working with WSDOT to complete the demolition of the building and have the site turned over to the city for landscaping and gateway installation. There is some funding available from the Transportation Department (Transportation), Parks and PCD for the initial layout and landscape design. Having an artist selected to participate in the design aspect would be desirable.

Ms. Wilma said because of difficult access for pedestrians, the site is not intended to serve as a park, so its primary audience would be cars and most viewing would be from

a distance. Depending on the available funding, the retaining wall could be removed and the site terraced, which would improve visibility further.

Commissioner Ptacek asked if the site could in any way be impacted by the proposed light rail running through the downtown area. Ms. Wilma said 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE is in the mix as an elevated option, though it is not a particularly favored option. Senior Planner Emil King added that the City Council is receiving regular briefings on the East Link project. The 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE elevated alignment is one option being studied in the Environmental Impact Statement. The Council is set to make a recommendation on alternatives to carry into the Final Environmental Impact Statement in February.

Ms. Wilma said a number of buildings look down on the site, which in itself should play into the landscape design of the site. The sidewalk along 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE will be enhanced with some landscaping.

Ms. Wilma said the second project came up only a week ago. She noted that the SR-520 corridor program will bring about improvements to the bridge and bring the toll booths back online. Bellevue Way where it intersects with the freeway is planned to become an enhanced interchange with a bike/multipurpose trail on one side and landscaping on both sides. Bellevue will be able to influence the aesthetics of the bridge, including lighting, planting, materials, and the guardrails, none of which has been designed yet. On the east side of the bridge is where the lion's share of landscaping and the path will be located. The guardrail or part of the landscape area are possibilities for some sort of a gateway or iconic installation or statement.

The third project involved downtown gateways. Ms. Wilma said the Downtown Implementation Plan identifies locations for gateways to the downtown. Some planning should occur to lay out thematic threads for all the downtown gateways and thematic concepts to distinguish each one. Currently there is a project under design at Main Street and NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to include additional lanes and other improvements. There is an obligation on the property owner of the site where the old Kentucky Fried Chicken building was to include a gateway treatment in its redevelopment. A landscape architect was brought on board to do some conceptual work. Staff, however, felt that all of the gateway sites should be studied at the same time with an eye on having something to link them all together.

Ms. Wilma said the fourth project is the downtown character study. She explained that when the Downtown Implementation Plan was adopted in 2003, one of its elements was the concept that the downtown is a compilation of neighborhoods or districts. The plan identifies seven such districts. Staff believes it is time to look at the identity issue and determine if the neighborhoods as previously defined are still valid or if they are in need of being better defined.

One product of the character study will be recommendations for refining the list of incentives. Because art is an effective tool for expressing identity and establishing character, it will certainly be on the list of incentives to study.

Mr. King said the Downtown Implementation Plan study which began in 2000 mainly involved business and surrounding neighborhoods interests. This time a concerted effort will be put into a public involvement process that will engage people living in the downtown. One of the planned outcomes will be neighbors knowing their neighbors better and better engagement on the part of downtown residents. A survey may be conducted up front to help inform the planning process; that survey could include questions about how art and culture are important to residents and property owners in the downtown.

Chair Finley asked if the notion of art will go beyond public art to include incentives for other kinds of cultural opportunities such as PACE and the potential Ten20 theater. Ms. Wilma said the issue is wide open. She noted that in the Bel-Red plan there are a number of amenities that have a fee in-lieu; nothing of that sort has been considered in the downtown and is worth considering.

Chair Finley asked how the projects should be prioritized. Ms. Wilma said in her estimation the priority order would be Project 1, Project 4, Project 3, Project 2.

Commissioner Ptacek asked if the group pulled together to do the study will involve someone from the Arts Commission. Ms. Wilma said the particulars have yet to be worked out. The survey will need to be done along with some neighborhood building in the downtown. The Bellevue Downtown Association certainly will need to be involved, and there will need to be input from Parks, Transportation, and the Arts Commission.

### C. Commendations and Letters of Support Administrative Policies

Chair Finley noted that from time to time the Commission has wanted to write letters of commendation or support. There is not, however, a process in place for the Commission to use in determining when and whom to recognize and for what kinds of reasons. A set of guidelines is needed.

Ms Byrne reviewed 3 draft guidelines in the Commission's meeting materials. In all instances where the City Council has taken a position, the Commission must be consistent with that position. Letters or commendations from the Commission must be approved by the Commission by majority vote. Thirdly, the reason for the letters or commendation must be consistent with the charge of the Commission. She suggested these as basic administrative policies and asked the Commission for refinements and additional ideas.

Commissioner Tremblay said one of the best ways to develop close ties with the arts and culture communities is to thank them for their contributions. Recently there was an article in the *Bellevue Reporter* about a group named Indian Community Eastside (ICE), and clearly that is a community with which the Commission should connect. Ms. Byrne said one way to accomplish that would be a letter inviting them to a Commission meeting to talk about their group.

Chair Finley stressed the need to be inclusive in reaching out to arts and culture groups. If the Commission singles out groups without careful consideration it could be detrimental to overall goodwill.

Commissioner Holder said ICE is a group of Microsoft employees who have strong cultural interests. They came together and raised one million dollars to support PACE. They should be applauded for their efforts. She agreed they should be invited to attend a Commission meeting so more can be known about where their interests lie. She questioned singling them out however, given how many people in the community have worked hard as well to see PACE become a reality. She suggested that the Commission consider sending a letter recognizing all donors once a naming gift is announced.

Commissioner Ptacek agreed with the notion of inviting the group to attend a Commission meeting. ICE has been active in developing ways to provide more art to the community and it would be good to know more about the organization. He said he would support periodically highlighting groups at work on behalf of the arts in the community.

There was agreement to adopt the three guidelines outlined in the Commission packet to form the basis for how to proceed when there is a desire to send a letter or commendation to an individual or group.

Ms. Byrne said she would invite representatives from ICE to attend a Commission meeting, and said that because of how full the schedule is, March may be the earliest that could be accomplished.

**Motion to adopt the three administrative policies for communication to individuals and organizations in the community based on their work in support of the arts was made by Commissioner Ptacek. Second was by Commissioner Tremblay and the motion carried unanimously.**

#### D. 2009 Committee Assignments

Chair Finley presented the Commissioners with a draft assignments list and asked the Commissioners to review it and offer comments.

Commissioner Donkin commented that the public art program update assignment is important enough to warrant appointing senior Commissioners. He recommended Chair Finley should be assigned to that task. Ms. Byrne noted that because the focus will be on policy it would not be a bad idea to have senior Commissioners on board.

Commissioner Donkin suggested that the Bellevue Sculpture Exhibition committee and the allocations committee are both appropriate for new Commissioners assignments.

Commissioner Kiselev said she would be happy to serve as the Cultural Compass lead.

#### V. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS – None

## VI. REPORTS

### A. Commissioner Reports

#### 1. Meeting with Councilmember Balducci

Chair Finley said Council member Balducci has returned from her leave of absence from City Council. Chair Finley took Council member Balducci on a tour of the TEN20 theatre space and She said a tour of the Ten20 building was arranged and Councilmember Balducci was impressed with the space.

#### 2. Bridle Trails NEP Project

Commissioner Holder reported that a panel has been selected and the first meeting will occur on January 22. A total of nine artists have submitted entry materials.

### B. Staff Reports

#### 1. Project Status Report

Ms. Byrne reported that the two remaining City Hall projects are nearly completed. Water for *Long Boat/Reed Rookery* will be put into the pond soon. The live reeds will not be planted in the pond until the spring.

The tiles will be completed soon for the *Root*. All of the tiles are scheduled to be in place by January 21.

As the weather improves and there is more light, a photographer will be hired to take the official pictures of the two pieces. How to celebrate the completion of the two projects and all the art development going on in the downtown will need to be discussed.

Ms. Byrne said she recently conducted a workshop for applicants seeking program funding. In 2007 a total of 16 organizations were represented, but this year only four organizations attended. She said she is considering scheduling a second workshop and advertising it more widely.

Chair Finley said she has been seeing private artworks pop up here and there in the downtown, such as the new piece at Bellevue Towers. She asked if the city should seek to keep track of all the new works. Ms. Byrne said that is being done.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Kiselev, Ms. Byrne said one of the ideas that came up in the program funding workshop was encouraging local arts groups to follow the example of regularly surveying audience members about their expenditures related to attending the event and using the data to make rough estimates of economic impact. She said Arts Fund is due to conduct another of its 2-county economic impact studies, and that data will also be helpful in showing the impact the arts have on the local economy.

Ms. Byrne distributed to the Commissioners a report on the Public Art Program commitments. She noted that as the Commission identifies projects to include in the work plan it will be possible to build a budget for the program for 2009.

The artwork for the wayfinding kiosks has been completed and will remain in storage until the signs themselves are made; they are under production currently and should be done in about five weeks.

Commissioner Shepherd asked for an update on the FTE position. Ms. Byrne said the position exists but cannot be filled just yet. Every department has been instructed to find ways to conserve on expenditures and leaving positions vacant for the time being is one way the departments are conserving.

## VII. INFORMATION AND UPCOMING EVENTS

### A. Written Correspondence

1. December 19 Pacific NW Ballet update
2. December 31 Village Theatre thank you
3. January 5 Pacific NW Ballet thank you

### B. For Your Information – As Noted

1. 2009 Arts Commission regular meetings schedule
2. Arts Day in Olympia information
3. Experience Dance project at Bellevue community centers
4. Upcoming Agenda Items
5. Calendar
6. CIP Public Art Program Commitments update (provided at meeting)

## VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Finley adjourned the meeting at 5:52 p.m.