

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES

February 3, 2009  
4:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Room 1E -109

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Tremblay

STAFF PRESENT: Mary Pat Byrne, Department of Planning and Community Development; Glenn Kost, Parks and Community Services

OTHERS PRESENT: Laura Curry, Mithun Associates

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:09 p.m. by Chairperson Finley who presided. All Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Tremblay who was excused.

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

Chair Finley referred to the first paragraph on page 2 and said the first sentence should read "Mr. Scott Moore said he is interested...." With regard to the third paragraph on the same page, she noted that it should read "Commissioner Tremblay is chairing the panel...."

**Motion to approve the January 20, 2009, minutes as amended was made by Commissioner Shepherd. Second was by Commissioner Holder and the motion carried unanimously.**

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

IV. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Proposed Sculpture Purchase: *Water Precious Water*

Arts Specialist Mary Pat Byrne said the process of purchasing public art includes a panel review and a public hearing before the Arts Commission votes its recommendation. She said Chair Finley recently met with Cheryl Leo-Gwinn and Margaret Lowe as the panel.

Chair Finley said the panel reviewed images and other information regarding the sculpture and recommended that it go forward for purchase.

Ms. Byrne said the sculpture's theme is consistent with the strategic vision for the Public Art Program. It did not receive specific public comment while it was displayed during the sculpture exhibition. Its water theme coincides with one of several art themes for the downtown. The artist offered the art work to the city at a very good price. The sculpture is currently sited in Downtown Park; it can either stay there until another water-theme location is found, or, since its current site is in a water-themed location, it can stay where it is permanently.

**Motion to open the public hearing was made by Commissioner Donkin. Second was by Commissioner Holder and the motion carried unanimously.**

There were no public comments.

**Motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Holder. Second was by Commissioner Shepherd and the motion carried unanimously.**

#### V. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Purchase of Sculpture: *Water Precious Water*

**Motion to purchase *Water Precious Water* was made by Commissioner Donkin. Second was by Commissioner Shepherd and the motion carried unanimously.**

B. Sculpture Exhibition Cultural Audit – Part 1

Ms. Byrne said the Commission has never gathered public comment in a systematic way to understand the community's attitudes toward the Bellevue Sculpture Exhibition. Accordingly, the decision was made to conduct two limited surveys, a statistically valid telephone survey of Bellevue residents and a cultural audit via intercept surveys at and around the two exhibition sites.

For the telephone survey, 4 questions were purchased at the opening and after the exhibition's close from the Elway Poll, a monthly telephone survey conducted by Elway Research. Four hundred registered Bellevue voters were asked the same 4 questions both at the beginning and end of the survey.

The cultural audit included intercept surveys in which respondents were taped and photographed as part of their interview regarding their knowledge of and opinions about the exhibition. Laura Curry with Mithun Associates was hired to perform the cultural audit. Still to come is a sculpture exhibition stakeholders focus group. All of the information will be drawn together and reviewed in making a decision about the future of the Bellevue Sculpture Exhibition.

Ms. Curry explained that a cultural audit is a methodology of her own creation based on her work as an artist and her interest in urban planning and the built environment. She said she has been working with architects, urban planners and ecologists for the past nine years and chose to work with Mithun Associates because of its focus on sustainability. The cultural audit process is not about gathering people to participate in the public process but rather about taking the public process to the people.

In all, 107 external interviews were conducted. The interviews were conducted on two weekdays and two weekend days and were equally distributed between morning, afternoon, evening and night. The interviews took place in Bellevue Square, City Hall, the Transit Center, Downtown Park, and many places in between that could be reached on foot. Those not willing to talk were not compelled to do so; very few chose not to be interviewed. While it appears the data is purely qualitative, it is in fact quantitative as well. She provided examples of the feedback.

Ms. Curry played for the Commissioners a video of several people interviewed showing the answers they gave.

Commissioner Kiselev asked what the top answer was when people were asked about their preferred method for receiving information about cultural activities. Ms. Curry said the different answers given and the percentages could be found in the printed report, but noted that the largest grouping involved all forms of media, including internet, print media, radio/television, and direct mailers.

Commissioner Ptacek suggested that one of the best ways in Bellevue to engage the community and provide information about upcoming events would be through direct emails and asked if the City had a means to do so. Ms. Byrne said she would investigate the question.

Commissioner Kiselev pointed out that more than a third of Bellevue's residents are foreign born, and another large percentage are seniors; those populations may not be as plugged in to electronic communication.

### C. 2009 – 2010 Work Plan Partnering Opportunities, Part 3

Glenn Kost, manager of planning and development for the Department of Parks & Community Services, said the passage of the parks levy in November will provide funding for a variety of development projects, some of which may be feasible for Arts Program partnering.

Mr. Kost said a master plan update was completed for the Bellevue Botanical Garden. The update identifies three key projects that would represent the next stage of the garden: a wetlands sun terrace garden in the far western portion of the site; a ravine garden on a short loop trail with a 170-foot long low-impact suspension bridge; and expansion of the visitors center facilities that will involve the addition of two new small buildings and expansion of the parking lot. The cost of all three projects is about twice the amount of money available. The Garden Society is already informally working on fundraising.

Commissioner Kiselev asked if there is an estimated per-project cost. Mr. Kost said the ravine garden has been estimated at about \$1 million; the sun terrace garden has been estimated at \$2 million; and the buildings and parking have been estimated at \$8 million.

Mr. Kost said Bellevue Youth Theater is another project the department has been working on along with the Youth Theater Board and Foundation. He said the current facility at the old Ivanhoe school property has long been inadequate. After a long study, the conclusion was reached that new theater facilities should be added to Crossroads Community Park near the existing community center.

The Foundation is laying plans to embark on a capital campaign to help close the funding gap. It is a go-no go project that will either be constructed in whole or not at all. It will take the rest of 2009 and into 2010 before the project will be shovel-ready. The 10,000-

square-foot-plus black box theater will seat a little over 100. It will include a small rehearsal room and a green room.

Mr. Kost said the Downtown Park development project has been on the books since the mid-80s and involves completing the circle. The eastern portion of the circle is currently a parking lot. When the circle is completed the existing parking will need to be replaced, though not on a one-to-one basis. The project is fully funded through the levy and is ready for the formal design stage.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Donkin, Mr. Kost said the funding earmarked for the project will complete the canal but not a water feature included in entrance planned for the northeast corner of the park. However, if the dollars can be stretched, the water feature would be addressed sooner rather than later.

Commissioner Ptacek asked if underground parking could be created beneath a portion of the park. Mr. Kost allowed that while technically feasible, there are many challenges and issues associated with underground parking at the Downtown Park.

Mr. Kost said the master plan would likely result in the removal of the Ballet Arts building. The city owns the property and the tenant has been on a month-to-month lease for many years knowing the ultimate plans for the structure.

Commissioner Shepherd asked how rigid the master plan is for Downtown Park and how much opportunity still exists to involve public art. Mr. Kost said there is still some opportunity. Proposals that generally follow the intent of the master plan can be considered, and will need to go through a community review process.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Holder, Mr. Kost said plans for a neighborhood park in Bridle Trails are not yet settled as to a site. The most likely candidate is a place called the Atchison property, which is immediately across the street from Bridle Trails State Park.

Mr. Kost briefly reviewed the other projects on the list. They included projects in Lakemont, the Boeing site in Eastgate, Surrey Downs, synthetic sports fields, and various trail projects.

## V. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS

### A. Funding Panel Meeting Scheduling

Chair Finley said the committee consists of Commissioners Holder and Ptacek and herself.

Ms. Byrne said there needs to be about three weeks in between February 17 when the applications are due and the meeting date to permit adequate time to make the books and have the panel members review them. She proposed scheduling the meeting in the second week of March. She will follow up with the panel members.

## VI. REPORTS

### A. Commissioner Reports

#### 1. Bridle Trails

Vice Chair Holder said the panel conducted its first meeting, reviewing materials submitted by nine artists for the Bridle Trails public art project through the Neighborhood Enhancement Program. The list has been narrowed down to four artists.

The four artists who will be interviewed on February 4 are Stuart Nakamura, John Hoge, Bruce Meyers, and Adam Kuby. The panel intends to select a finalist after the interviews are complete.

Ms. Byrne said it is impressive to see how engaged the neighborhood is with the project.

Commissioner Holder said one of the challenges will be in finding a place to site the work. The area is forested, natural and beautiful, and people are concerned that the art blend well with its immediate setting and with the neighborhood.

## 2. New City Hall Art

Ms. Byrne said adding water to the pond where *Longboat Reed Rookery* is located has beautifully enhanced the sculpture, especially after dark.

The protective housing installed over *The Root* while tiles for the pond were installed is being disassembled. The pond will be tested for water-tightness and circulation on February 6.

The next step will be to put together the press materials for the two works and to determine what should be done to mark their completion. They will be submitted for Public Art Year in Review at the Americans for the Arts Conference.

## 3. Americans for the Arts Conference

Ms. Byrne reported that this year the national conference for Americans for the Arts will be held in Seattle and encouraged commissioners to consider attending. One of the tours the conference provides will be to Bellevue. Stops will include the Bellevue Arts Museum, Open Space and 989 Elements, and City Hall. She said she is checking to see if the City can help fund registrations, for Commissioners but said it may be difficult since the city is conserving funds, partly by cutting back on travel and training. She said she would send information out soon about the June event.

## 4. Wayfinding Project

The Commissioners were informed that the project is set to be installed in mid-March.

## 5. Neighborhood Art Projects

Ms. Byrne reported that the neighborhood art projects were originally timed to move along at a pretty good clip. Now that there public art project coordinator position is frozen, the timelines will need to be stretched out.

## 6. Public Art Development

Ms. Byrne explained that in an attempt to bring more citywide resources into public art development in the community, an interdepartmental team is being formed to focus on public art projects. The group members will include Glenn Kost, Nancy LaCombe, Patti Wilma and Emil King, all of whom have presented recently to the Commission regarding projects that might be suitable for Arts Program involvement. There are more projects on

the table than can be addressed by the Arts Program. The group will prioritize the projects in terms of readiness and to what extent they accomplish the goals of the program's strategic vision.

Ms. Byrne said she will be proposing to the Commission continuing to invest in city urban design planning processes wherever feasible.

#### 7. Ten20 Project

Ms. Byrne said Hanover was informed that the Council has decided not to invest in the project at this time. Hanover indicated it will pursue a contract with a commercial leasing organization to start generating interest in the space. Hanover will not give the city 60-day notice until there is someone ready to sign a commercial lease.

Ms. Byrne said there are still parties interested in developing the theatre, and those conversations will continue in hopes of finding a way to sign a lease before the space can be commercially let.

### VII. INFORMATION AND UPCOMING EVENTS

#### A. Written Correspondence

1. International Ballet theatre, January 12, Thank You
2. Seattle Opera, January 16, Thank You

#### B. For Your Information – As Noted

1. 2009 Arts Commission regular meetings schedule
2. 2009 list of Committees and Leads
3. Upcoming Agenda Items
4. Calendar
5. CIP Public Art Program Commitments update

### VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Finley adjourned the meeting at 6:09 p.m.