

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES
(Approved as corrected 10-06-2009)

September 15, 2009
4:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E -110

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Mary Pat Byrne, Department of Planning and Community Development

OTHERS PRESENT: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m. by Chairperson Finley who presided. All Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Ptacek who arrived at 4:11 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A. Approval of Agenda

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

B. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Tremblay referred to her presentation at the July 7th meeting and asked to include "Brinck is a public/private catalyst and real estate development model for an arts and technology incubator that would build on existing cultural assets in the Bel-Red corridor and would align with the city's vision of Bel-Red as a livable, innovative and culturally rich district."

Motion to approve the July 7, 2009, minutes as amended was made by Commissioner Tremblay. Second was by Commissioner Ptacek and the motion carried unanimously.

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS - None

IV. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Work Plan Presentation to Council

Arts Specialist Mary Pat Byrne noted that Commissioner Ptacek recently presented the Commission's work plan to the City Council. She said he did a very good job of simplifying the presentation. The work plan has a lot of very small projects, including some that will not cost any money. The Council was shown the six main projects in the work plan, the three

downtown projects and the three neighborhood projects, and was told that overall the plan is within the limits of the City Manager's financial plan. The City Manager's financial management plan continues a series of aggressive actions to slow spending and defer many projects city-wide through 2010. Beyond that the Council will need to make significant cuts in the CIP to address the projected \$96 million shortfall over the seven-year period of the CIP. The revenue lost will likely not return, and that means downscaling the overall size of the CIP.

Ms. Byrne said the Council responded positively to the Commission's work plan. The Council was not asked to approve it that evening. On September 14 they will have the entire CIP before them and they will need to approve the Commission's plan in that context.

Ms. Byrne discussed the ongoing efforts within the city to plan project deferrals and other efforts to manage the city's budget. She said although some funds in the Public Art Program budget for 2009 - 2010 have been deferred, the amount was less than she'd previously been told. This information came to light as she was preparing for the Council's discussion of the Commission's proposed work plan.

Ms. Byrne said the work plan originally included only three kiosk art elements for Phase Two, but Transportation will be constructing five kiosks. Because the additional funds available in the Public Art Program could accommodate it, she said she bumped the number of art elements up to five in the plan, to make sure the option to include art with all five was there.

Commissioner Ptacek said his presentation to the Council demonstrated how the projects on the work plan are linked to the Cultural Compass. He said that message resonated with several members of the Council.

B. Bellwether 2010: Bellevue ArtWalk

Commissioner Shepherd, chair of the Bellwether 2010 committee, reviewed the goals for the coming exhibition. She said much of the committee's work on the project has been based on the vision of establishing a strong awareness of the art walk. The focus is on siting sculpture and art installations over the length of the art walk. The project will bring in new partners while continuing to work with past partners to help realize the exhibition's expanded vision and to support its theme of sustainability. One goal of the project will be to capture the imagination and talent of the city's young people.

Commissioner Shepherd shared with the Commissioners a working map of potential sites for the project. She suggested a slight name change to "Bellwether 2010: Artwalk Bellevue." Her suggestion was readily accepted.

Commissioner Shepherd referred to the installation artist line item in the budget and explained that some proposed sites along the art walk route appear to have a greater potential for a site-specific installation than for a traditional sculptural object. The artists working on those areas would need to be paid more because they would be creating something new with multiple components as compared to the usual entry which is a single object that already exists.

Ms. Byrne said the general strategy is to anchor the two ends of the exhibition at Downtown Park and city hall with sculpture. Along the route connecting the two the focus would be on both sculpture and installations.

Commissioner Ptacek pointed out that there is already a lot of art at city hall. He questioned whether or not adding more art to the site would serve as a fulcrum for the project, and

suggested the intersection near the transit center might be a better anchor location. He agreed with the notion of establishing an anchor at Downtown Park.

Commissioner Kiselev agreed that additional outdoor sculpture is not needed at city hall, but said she would encourage additional indoor sculpture at city hall. Commissioner Shepherd concurred; she said additional indoor art at city hall will serve to encourage more people to visit the building. She said she would like to see city hall open more in the evenings and publicize the fact that people could come by then to view the works on display.

Commissioner Shepherd said the committee had a lively discussion about presenting the exhibition along the entire length of the ArtWalk - i.e., from City Hall all the way to Meydenbauer Bay in our first year. In the end the conclusion reached was that the available resources should not be spread too thinly. The committee also understood that a completed design for the connection from the Downtown Park to the water has yet to be developed and as such it is too early to bring any attention to that area.

Ms. Byrne agreed in principle that the important thing will be to focus on getting a strong presence all along the walk. She reminded the commissioners that the City Hall plaza has been used for siting sculpture that was a priority pick but too fragile for the Downtown Park. She suggested that perhaps it would be better to wait and see what art is recommended before eliminating a site, still keeping in mind that the aim is to create an entire walk.

Commissioner Ptacek asked if there are opportunities to work with some of the building owners along the way, possibly involving indoor spaces. Commissioner Shepherd said the committee talked about obtaining outdoor spaces but did not discuss indoor spaces in private buildings. Ms. Byrne said assuming the primary objective is to create an outdoor walk, it would be challenging and more strain on the budget to add indoor sites. There is an opportunity to include existing indoor collections as a sponsored item on the map. Ms. Byrne said the intent is to work with a consultant to engage sponsors for the exhibition.

Commissioner Tremblay said she would love to see the glass pavilion by the plaza at city hall included as a venue for some works.

Ms. Byrne noted that a special project that could have strong ties to the exhibition has been suggested for the rider services building at the Metro site. Artist Cheryl Dos Remedios is dedicated to the idea of promoting the value of low-impact vehicles. She has been working with artists who have made interesting vehicle prototypes as art. Her ideas for the site would be an intriguing addition to the overall project. The proposal will come in as a Special Project application, so the allocations committee will review it and make a recommendation.

Commissioner Tremblay said she would like to see Ms. Dos Remedios's works folded in in that they send the same general message.

Ms. Byrne went through the list of potential sites compiled so far and briefly described what kinds of opportunities each might provide.

Commissioner Shepherd said the committee was particularly enthused about the Farmer's Market site. They will not be operational until May 2010 and it might be possible to work with them to identify a spot for art in advance of them setting up their ground plan.

Commissioner Shepherd said the committee identified the intersection of Bellevue Way and NE4th as a great opportunity. While it cannot be anticipated how artists will respond to the site, the committee likes the way the location transitions from the urban area to the park and believes that making the transition more visible is an interesting artistic challenge.

Commissioner Shepherd said the various sites together represent the conceptual framework upon which the budget is based. The numbers are predicated on prior experience and include a significant increase in installation costs because of the requirement to pay the prevailing wage and because the total number of sculptures is anticipated to increase.

Commissioner Tremblay asked how the various opportunities will be explained in the call to artists so that they will have enough to sink their teeth into, and how they will be managed. Ms. Byrne said it will be possible to include a limited amount of information in the printed materials, but far more information can be included online, including visual orientations and measurements.

With regard to the teen project, Ms. Byrne said while the intent is to move forward with it, it cannot be said yet just what direction it will take. Whatever is done, it will be fun and exciting. Seth! Leary, the artist who was instrumental during the last exhibition in making a success of the travel bug project, is also very excited about the new possibilities. He has suggested that there might be a way to get teens involved in the wayfinding aspects of the exhibition. Typically a call for proposals from teaching artists is put out for the teen project.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Ptacek, Commissioner Shepherd said the committee is exploring partnerships with the interactive media companies located on the Eastside who might want to get involved in utilizing technology in some way.

Commissioner Tremblay said the project called Bike Box is based on the concept of cities in Europe where everyone rides their bikes everywhere. The project has a station with bikes that can be checked out like books are checked out from libraries. The riders get a GPS unit with various points plugged in which they ride to. When they get to the end, the bikes and GPS units are checked in again. Something like that could easily be set up for the exhibition and could fall into the teen artist component with the teens creating the maps. Sponsors could be tapped to provide the maps.

Ms. Byrne stressed that the budget numbers are still preliminary, but said approval by the Commission will allow her to move forward. She said she would keep the Commission updated as the numbers solidify.

Commissioner Shepherd asked how much return there might realistically be on the investment in a consultant to develop sponsorships. Ms. Byrne said that cannot be predicted with any degree of certainty. It would be wonderful to be able to get \$50,000, but in the current economic climate that is not very likely. Even half that amount, however, would be a great benefit.

Motion to accept the draft budget and plan as presented and discussed was made by Commissioner Shepherd. Second was by Commissioner Tremblay and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Finley and Commissioner Tremblay left the meeting.

V. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS - None

VI. REPORTS

A. Commissioner Reports

1. Bellevue Arts Activities Attended and Other - None

- B. Staff Reports
 - 1. Project Status Report - As Noted
 - 2. Maintenance Projects List

Ms. Byrne said the list of artworks and maintenance activity this summer was included on page 20 of the Commission packet. Not much maintenance work has been done since 2005 and good progress is being made on working through the list of art works most in need of attention.

Commissioner Ptacek noted that at the City Council meeting a question was asked about the Lake Hills library project. He asked if the city has anything that could be identified for the corner. Ms. Byrne said the only piece in storage is *Woman Sketching*, a representational piece by J. Seward Johnson. She noted, however, that while it is a great work, it is a quiet one and perhaps not the best choice for that location. A work might be identified from the next exhibition, however.

Ms. Byrne reported that Council is very interested in having a process in place for how neighborhoods are selected for art projects under the Neighborhood Public Art initiative.

Commissioner Ptacek agreed with the need to have a process in place whereby the Commission can act should an offer be made to the city, or if the City Council wants to do something in particular related to art.

Ms. Byrne said the *New York Times* recently ran an article about how the Port Authority still has all the steel from the Twin Towers in a warehouse and that they are encouraging municipalities, police and fire departments across the country to request a piece of steel from which to create a memorial to the 9/11 event. She said she has received communications about the city acquiring a piece of the steel. She suggested, however, that the steel is less art and more sacred artifact. Parks has a policy regarding memorials, but it does not really cover requests like the Twin Towers steel. The city does need to have a policy in place for both Parks and the arts program to follow in evaluating and responding to such requests.

Ms. Byrne reminded the Commissioners that several years ago a temporary artwork was installed in the pond in Downtown Park as a memorial to 9/11. The work was not left in place because it was designed and built to be temporary. Interestingly, Guan Yin in City Hall plaza was donated by a sister city as a response to the events of 9/11 for the healing of the community.

Commissioner Shepherd said she recently was reminded by Councilmember Lee that at one time the Commission had talked about a water feature on the corner of NE 4th Street and 112th Avenue NE by city hall. He indicated that he recently saw an artwork that created water visually using light. He was very impressed with it and asked her to raise with the Commission the issue of having a similar feature at city hall.

VII. INFORMATION AND UPCOMING EVENTS

- A. Written Correspondence
 - 1. Eastside Heritage Center August 31, 2009 Thank You
- B. Information - As Noted

1. City Press Release, funding guidelines available
2. *Bellevue Reporter*, September 9 article announcing funding available
3. Upcoming Agenda Items
4. Calendar
5. CIP Public Art Program Commitments Update

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Holder adjourned the meeting at 5:45 p.m.