

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

March 1, 2011
4:00 p.m.

Music Works Northwest
14360 SE Eastgate Way, Bellevue , WA

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Michel Martel, Scott Ketron, Music Works Northwest, Sona Atanesya, Nuné Hov, Sergay Novikov

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:20 p.m. by Chairperson Holder who presided. All Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Ptacek, who arrived at 4:28 p.m., Commissioner Shepherd, who arrived at 4:35 p.m., Commissioner Kiselev, who arrived at 4:42 p.m., and Commissioner Finley, who arrived at 4:57 p.m.

Music Works Northwest Artistic Director Scott Ketron added his welcome. He reported that things are going well for the organization and noted his appreciation for the support received from the Commission over the years. He said the organization has a total of 45 faculty and up to 650 music lessons are given each week.

Executive Director Michel Martel welcomed the Commissioners as well. He provided a brief history of the organization. Mr. Martel agreed with Mr. Ketron's statement that the group is doing well. He added that by renting the facility to compatible organizations such as Pacific Sound Chorus and the Bellevue Children's Music Program, and by offering summer music camps, additional funding is brought in, helping them to make ends meet in this difficult economic climate.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A. Approval of Agenda

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

B. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the February 1, 2011, minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Ptacek. Second was by Commissioner Tremblay and the motion carried unanimously.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Sergey Novikov, founder and president of the Russian American Community Association explained that the organization assists those from the former Russia to adapt to American culture and society.

Ms. Nuné Hov, also with the Russian American Community Association, provided the Commissioners with invitations to attend a fashion show that brings together a variety of creative artists such as young fashion designers and musicians and gives them an opportunity to share their talents with the public. In addition, the event will be used to promote the Northwest Networking Umbrella event, which will be held in November.

4. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Eastgate Land Use Update

Senior Planner Mike Bergstrom explained that the Eastgate land use study was given the go-ahead by the City Council in 2010. Their first action was to approve the planning boundaries which were drawn to capture the employment portions of the corridor and avoiding the surrounding residential areas. When drawn on the map, the boundaries appear to be fixed, but the citizen advisory committee (CAC) working on the update understands that there are impacts that go beyond the study area, especially with respect to traffic; for that reason, both the planning and transportation departments are involved in the study.

Mr. Bergstrom said the Eastgate area is one of the city's major employment areas. It is home to almost 25,000 jobs, or 17 percent of the total employment in the city. A number of major businesses are located in the study area, including Verizon, Microsoft, T-Mobile and Bellevue College. One of the largest park and ride facilities in the region is in the corridor, and a future park is proposed for the former Boeing site.

The Council at its meeting on February 28 authorized moving forward toward the annexation of the unincorporated areas in the corridor. That issue is not, however, an element of the land use study given that the unincorporated areas are primarily residential.

Council approval of the study area included approval for a set of nine principles to guide the study. The overarching principle recognizes that the city does not have much money to work with. Accordingly, the recommended plan should not require a lot of infrastructure to support it. The CAC is currently working to convert the planning principles established by the Council into evaluation criteria against which to measure all proposals.

The fifteen-members of the CAC were appointed by the Council. They represent property and business owners as well as the surrounding residential areas and Bellevue College. Representatives from some of the city's boards and commissions are also seated as members of the CAC. The group has been meeting monthly and to date has primarily been focused on gathering background information. The schedule calls for wrapping up the work of the CAC by the end of the year.

Mr. Bergstrom described some of the specifics of the background information gathered.

Mr. Bergstrom said the CAC is tasked with envisioning what the corridor should look like in 2030, the horizon year for the study. The work of the CAC will wrap up with the presentation to the Council of a preferred alternative. Once approved by the Council, the work of implementing the vision, which will involve changes to the Land Use Code, the Comprehensive Plan and other planning documents, will be carried forward by staff and the appropriate commissions.

Commissioner Ptacek asked what is meant by the principle aimed at working to improve the performance of state facilities in the area. Mr. Bergstrom said the focus of the principle is on I-90.

The city has no control over the state facility. However, the principle recognizes that there is increasing congestion along the freeway. It paves the way for the city to dialog with the state which for a number of years has been studying I-90 from I-405 to North Bend seeking solutions for how to reduce congestion. One of the state's ideas is adding auxiliary lanes along portions of the freeway constructed on a portion of the shoulder; the lanes would be allowed to be used only during peak periods. The practice is a departure from federal standards, however, so getting approval will be iffy at best. Additional interchanges are not likely.

Commissioner Tremblay said she lives in the Eastgate area and commented that the weakest aspect of the neighborhood is that there is no place for the residents to come together as a community. Mr. Bergstrom said that notion certainly will come into play under the notion of extending the boundary.

Chair Holder asked what role the Arts Commission might play down the road relative to cultural or public art opportunities. Mr. Bergstrom said where opportunities present themselves, the Commission will be given a heads up. He added that culturally it would be difficult to ignore the presence of Bellevue College, an asset which for too long has been deemed isolated.

B. Acquisition of Works from Sculpture Exhibition

Commissioner Shepherd explained that she chaired the panel that was reconvened to look at two works, *Truth* and 107063. The panel members were Rachele Cawaring, a downtown Bellevue resident, and Amy Spassov of Hallway Gallery, also in the downtown; the level of participation was inspiring and the comments offered were all very thoughtful. The recommendation of the panel was that both pieces be acquired by the city. The site recommended for 107063 is the upper level entry area to City Hall; the site recommended for *Truth* is the gathering space at the intersection of the two meeting room hallways.

Ms. Byrne added that it will be an easy matter to reposition the works when the sculpture exhibition is underway.

Motion to accept the recommendation of the jury to purchase both *Truth* and 107063 for placement in the city's permanent collection was made by Commissioner Shepherd. Second was by Commissioner Finley and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Byrne said \$6000 plus tax would be paid for *Truth* and \$15,300 plus tax for 107063. She said there will be additional expenses related to transporting and installing the works. Atomic Art will be tapped to do the installations; they are well-suited to making sure the works will be displayed in the right way.

C. *Cultural Compass* Limited Update

Ms. Byrne said the Budget One proposal included two components: the Public Art Program funded through the CIP and the arts core program which includes everything else in the and is funded through the Operating Fund. The Arts Core Program's proposal as accepted includes a limited update of *Cultural Compass*. The update was described as limited because it will be done with existing resources. To carry out the project, Chair Holder appointed a committee consisting of Commissioners Finley, Ptacek, Shepherd and Tremblay.

Ms. Byrne suggested the best way to kick off the process would be to have a general discussion about where and how to focus the update efforts. She raised four questions around which to brainstorm answers.

1. The last plan was developed 2003/2004 and approved by Council in 2004. What are the significant changes in arts and culture in Bellevue that you see today?

Ms. Byrne started with an example. She said one change since 2004 has been the growth of a neighborhood in the downtown, which is now home to more than 2000 residents. She asked how that new reality could be addressed in to the update.

Ms. Finley said she attended the opening of the current show at the Bellevue Arts Museum and was amazed at both the turnout and the quality of the show. She said the museum clearly has become the heart of culture for the downtown; they are doing fabulous work and everything points to their continued success.

Commissioner Kiselev commented that visibility for the arts has increased substantially since 2004, with artists playing much more significant roles.

Chair Holder observed that there are some significant works of art sited in the downtown that did not exist in 2004. Ms. Finley added that in part that fact can be attributed to developers incorporating art into their projects.

Commissioner Kiselev pointed out that cultural diversity has been officially recognized and is influencing the variety and quality of the arts. Ms. Byrne added that according to the new Census figures, the city's population has reached the 40 percent diversity mark.

Commissioner Shepherd noted that the city is moving forward with the Meydenbauer Access project, which it was not doing in 2004. Chair Holder and Commissioner Smith added that the revisioning of the Bel-Red corridor was only being considered in 2004.

Ms. Tremblay commented that the economic picture is completely different from what it was in 2004.

Commissioner Kiselev said more and more arts organizations based in Seattle are holding events on the Eastside and particularly in Bellevue.

Commissioner Smith commented that the Tateuchi Center project is helping to show that the arts and culture scene in Bellevue maturing.

2. What are the most important questions, issues and opportunities the limited plan update should address?

Commissioner Shepherd said the barriers to action should be identified along with what can or should be done to remove them. She added that the Commission has worked hard over the years since the *Cultural Compass* was first developed to engage stakeholders and to produce excellent plans, but there has been a lack of traction that has prevented things from moving forward as planned.

Commissioner Kiselev highlighted the need to develop a tool to accurately measure the economic impact of the arts in the city. Chair Holder commented that while that may not be something to include in the plan, the document should include as a goal explaining to the community the economic value the arts bring to Bellevue.

Commissioner Ptacek suggested that consideration should be given to how the changed economic realities will or should change the plan. The Wintergrass bluegrass festival chose to

come to Bellevue because the city offers a good audience as well as a good venue. There are a lot of people either living or working in Bellevue, and there is a lot of space available even without the Tateuchi Center being online; the plan should seek to leverage those facts in a manner that will generate more arts-related activity.

Commissioner Shepherd said she would like to see something in the plan about the Bel-Red area, particularly with regard to what the Commission can do to help move forward the vision of the area as an arts center. Commissioner Ptacek concurred and suggested the plan should specifically seek to ensure that the arts will be represented throughout the Bel-Red area via public art and artistically enhanced infrastructure improvements.

Ms. Byrne pointed out that the current plan includes a provision calling for relating cultural development to the city's business centers. She suggested that ideas for how to do that without getting spread too thin should be discussed.

3. What do you see as the key outcomes for this process?

Commissioner Kiselev proposed borrowing some of the evaluation criteria from the Eastgate/I-90 study, particularly partnerships, sustainability and integration of arts organizations.

Commissioner Finley suggested it would be helpful to develop a template for how to do things in a stripped down manner and without a lot of money. Such a template could be applied to any project anywhere in the city.

Commissioner Ptacek said some time should be spent on developing outcomes and specific action steps to be taken and the goals to be achieved. Consideration should be given to specific things the Commission should do, things the residential and business communities should do, and things the Council should do.

Chair Holder commented that in some ways the original *Cultural Compass* was too complex and reached for everything instead of focusing on doable outcomes that could move the community forward.

Commissioner Kiselev countered that while in some aspects that might be true, the plan was intended to be multifaceted. She added that in the update there should be some focus given to qualitative outcomes in addition to quantitative outcomes. There should be some understanding of how the arts express Bellevue as a community and how they help the community present itself to the world.

Chair Holder said the Commission has always held the general belief that the arts are for everyone, not just those with the resources to visit museums and attend concerts. That can occur through a variety of cultural events that are open to the public.

Commissioner Smith agreed that the outcome of the update should be to have specific outcomes and measurable goals and actions.

4. Understanding there is no additional budget for the update, what kinds of things would you like to see happen during this update – kinds of processes, events, activities, or...?

Chair Holder said the gathering of funded arts organizations was very effective. It is unlikely the Council would have elected to provide funding without their input. The groups should be tapped again to gain additional insights and information.

Commissioner Tremblay said she would like to see some steps taken to activate some social media technologies in a way that will help to bring the community together.

Commissioner Ptacek said he would like to see something done with younger artists that would help to provide a broader perspective about what it will take to enliven the arts scene in Bellevue.

Commissioner Kiselev proposed getting the school districts involved.

Commissioner Smith suggested talking with active arts groups that are not engaged in Bellevue to understand why they are not coming to the city, or what is preventing them. Commissioner Ptacek commented that 4Culture might be able to help in that regard.

Commissioner Finley commented that Wintergrass, the recent bluegrass festival, would have been a very good opportunity to hand out surveys and gain some insights. The Commission should be on top of events that will bring arts groups together and should use them as an opportunity to gather information.

Mr. Martel said Music Works Northwest is constantly looking for opportunities to grow its activities and operations. The *Cultural Compass* is an excellent document but is not clear with regard to what practical opportunities it creates. Engaging in dialogs with both local and non-local groups and arts organizations would be an excellent first step. He said Music Works Northwest would welcome the chance to provide input and talk about the opportunities that would be useful to the organization, and it is likely that many other groups would be willing to do the same.

5. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS – None

6. REPORTS

A. Commissioner Reports

Chair Holder thanked Commissioner Smith for representing the Commission before the Council. Commissioner Smith said his presentation was focused on asking the Council to approve the 2011 funding guidelines for Eastside Arts Partnerships and Special Projects. The Councilmembers were all complimentary about the Commission's work. They offered a few tweaks but appeared to be generally in agreement.

B. Staff Reports

Ms. Byrne reported that she had been working on final refinements for the funding guidelines; she stressed these latest refinements changes will not be substantive. She said she would post the guidelines to the web on March 2. She added that she also had scheduled an optional workshop for arts groups to discuss and explain the guidelines.

Ms. Byrne said the allocations committee can expect to be very busy in the month of April.

With regard to the Bridle Trails public art project, Ms. Byrne reported that the panel met recently and sent the artist back to the drawing board to continue his work on some of the designs.

7. CORRESPONDENCE, INFORMATION

A. Written Correspondence

1. 4Culture Funding Award for 2011-2012

Ms. Byrne reported that the award from 4Culture would be \$13,000 per year for the next two years.

B. Information

1. Commission Committees and Leads

Commissioner Finley urged the Commissioners to see the new works at the Bellevue Arts Museum. She said she also attended the entire weekend Wintergrass Festival and had a great time, and saw the opera *Don Quixote*.

Chair Holder reported that she attended the Chop Shop Dance Festival and enjoyed it. She noted that Commissioner Kiselev attended as well.

2. Projects Timeline February through June – As Noted
3. Calendar – As Noted
4. Upcoming Agenda Items – As Noted
5. Public Art Program Budget Update – As Noted

8. COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATIONS

9. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Holder adjourned the meeting at 5:46 p.m.