

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES

May 1, 2012  
4:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Room 1E -109

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Ptacek, Commissioners Finley, Jackson, Kiselev, Liljebblad, 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 4:11 p.m. by Chairperson Ptacek who presided. All Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Smith who arrived at 4:13 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A. Approval of Agenda

**A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Finley. Second was by Commissioner Tremblay and the motion carried unanimously.**

B. Approval of Minutes

**A motion to approve the April 3, 2012, minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Tremblay. Second was by Commissioner Liljebblad and the motion carried unanimously.**

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

4. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. 4Culture/Tamar Benzikry-Stern Public Art Project Update

Arts Specialist Mary Pat Byrne introduced Tamar Benzikry-Stern, public art project manager for 4Culture. She noted that Ms. Benzikry-Stern used to work for the city's Arts Program and currently has a local public art project under way she has come to describe.

Ms. Benzikry-Stern introduced Jordan Halland, also a project manager at 4Culture, and said Ms. Halland would be supporting the local project while she took maternity leave. She explained that the project is for the new King County Metro RapidRide B Line service between Bellevue and Redmond. Called *B Line Pulse*, the project is an artist-designed mobile game aimed at exploring and enhancing the experience for the B Line riders, and deepening the understanding of the public regarding the potential for games to be artistic and culturally significant. Percent for art dollars and grant dollars from the National Endowment for the Arts will be used to pay for the project.

Ms. Benzikry-Stern provided general statistics on the rising number of game users and how they are accessing the games they play. Games are becoming part of everyday experiences; books are coming out on the topic, and the Smithsonian Museum recently had a show about video games and their art.

Chair Ptacek pointed out that there are also games that are assisting with civic engagement and education. Recently the city of Bothell launched a game on wetlands, and Kirkland is talking about using a game to get people involved in discussing what should be done with their portion of the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe corridor. The University of Washington folks have come up with games focused on education and helping kids learn math.

Ms. Benzikry-Stern said Metro has been unrolling a series of rapid transit bus corridors. There will be six in total that launch between 2010 and 2013. She described the bus's route through Redmond and Bellevue, noting that the line has been operational for six months and has already seen a 20 percent gain in the number of riders over the lines that are previously served the corridor.

The *B Line Pulse* project is geared toward the riders the service attracts, many of whom are tech savvy individuals. The buses are wi-fi enabled and the project provides an opportunity to highlight that feature. The project will offer a positive reflection, complement the high tech intention, and enhance the rider experience. The project will be up for a year and will help to generate interest in riding the B Line.

Ms. Benzikry-Stern described the selection process and the firm that was selected for the project, the Seattle-based design firm Hornall Anderson. The design team is led by a strategist, a writer, a designer and multiple developers. She acknowledged that it is unconventional for 4Culture to commission a branding and design company for an art project, and said it has been interesting to work through the opportunities and challenges that presents. The team decided to focus on what they describe as the tension. People are introverted on the bus, yet it is fundamentally a shared experience. People may not want to be intruded upon, but they might be curious about their fellow riders and might be willing to be engaged in a playful way that makes the ride feel more like a shared experience.

Commissioner Liljeblad commented that to some degree personal electronic devices have helped push transit into more of an introverted experience. Ms. Benzikry-Stern said the artists for the game have done a very good job of playing with that tension.

Ms. Benzikry-Stern said playing this game participants can see how everyday thoughts and actions can contribute to something bigger and more artful and how those interactions form a narrative about the community. They see how data or information can become art and how art can also inform. She explained that the game has weekly themes and daily "asks." Every day players will have a prompt to respond to questions, and the game captures the answers, where they are put, how fast they were put there, where the rider is on the line and what time of day it is. All of the data gets translated into a visualization which appears on an artistically rendered map based on the route. Each individual gets to see their own responses in relationship to the response of all the riders. Over time the pulse of the community on the particular topic will be evident.

Commissioner Tremblay asked if the game is locative and if the data is being minded, aggregated and spit out in different ways by the designers. Ms. Benzikry-Stern said the game is B Line specific in the sense that it was designed for the route and the B Line buses. The game will be in play for 52 weeks, with a different question each weekday and one per weekend. There will be a significant percentage of the themes and questions directly related to Bellevue and Redmond history, current trends and forward projections, but there also will be a wide variety of more general topics. All of the data will be mined and stored over the course of the year. Consideration is being given to

hosting events at which people can come in and play with the data and create things out of it. Each day the data will be transformed into a visualization.

Ms. Benzikry-Stern presented an early look at the game which she noted would be launched on May 10. She described the interface as very simple; the design will change regularly to keep the game interesting. There will be visual prompts at the stations and on the buses, and in time the game will be incorporated into the wi-fi slash page. Players who access the game portal will be taken to a list of scenes; they will always be able to look back but will only be permitted to participate in the scenes of the current week. After answering the selected question, the player will be able to see their spot on the visualization. They will be able to see what data was pulled in order to make the visualization. The players will be invited to share the game on social networking tools, which could attract additional players.

The mobile experience is designed for play, especially quick play. The desktop experience will be more for exploring and seeing the visualizations in more views and greater detail. The data will be more accessible, and players will be able to suggest ideas or ask questions.

Commissioner Liljeblad said as a transportation planner he could see the potential for getting customer feedback on how to improve service and the like. Getting people to participate in that kind of activity has traditionally been very difficult. The game tool certainly could have other applications.

Commissioner Tremblay asked about the budget for the project. Ms. Benzikry-Stern said the call was put out at \$95,000, which by industry standards is pretty low. An additional \$5000 was allocated for outreach, and the NEA grant brought in an additional \$10,000.

Chair Ptacek invited Ms. Benzikry-Stern to return at a later date and give the Commission an update after the game has been in play for a while.

B. Commission Elections

**A motion to elect Commissioner Smith for the position of Arts Commission Chairperson for the period of June 1, 2012 to May 31, 2013, and to elect Commissioner Tremblay for the position of Arts Commission Vice Chairperson for the period of June 1, 2012 to May 31, 2013, was made by Commissioner Finley. Second was by Commissioner Kiselev and the motion carried unanimously.**

5. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS

Ms. Byrne explained that Councilmember Balducci, who serves as liaison to the Commission, is unable to attend Commission meetings because the time of day they are held creates a conflict with her job. What she has done is set up a regular meeting with staff and the Chair and Vice Chair in order to keep updated with regard to Commission activities.

Ms. Byrne reported that ten persons had applied for the three seats on the Commission to be vacated and said the interview process would be conducted on May 16. The new Commissioners could be seated in time for the June meeting of the Commission.

6. REPORTS

A. Commissioners' Committee and Lead Reports

Commissioner Finley said she enjoyed watching the jury process for Bellwether 2012: reGeneration. The interaction of the three artist/panelists was fascinating in that they all had very different ways of looking at art. Their process was very deliberative and took quite a while.

Commissioner Jackson said that while some of the submissions were dismissible, most were very interesting. The panel process brought to bear a much different voice and certain will enhance the quality of the exhibition.

Ms. Byrne said the panel selected five installation works for the stretch between City Hall and Downtown Park, 27 indoor pieces, and 21 outdoor pieces. During the technical review some of the works may have to be rejected. The selected works will be shown to the Commission at its June meeting.

B. Staff Reports

1. Project Status Report – As Noted
2. Budget Update

Ms. Byrne said staff is still in the process of writing the budget proposals. She said the way the one-time budget cut the art program has to shoulder will play out by starting the 2013 budget proposal at the \$110,000 level. The results team may still recommend a budget cut, but they will have to start from the full funding level.

Responding to a comment made by Chair Ptacek, Ms. Byrne said the work the Commission has done with arts groups and making sure they feel heard and responded to has paid off in many ways, including a better relationship with the Council.

3. *Bellwether 2012: reGeneration* Planning Update – As Noted

Ms. Byrne reminded the Commissioners that she has been giving art tours to travel writers. *Northwest Travel* has listed the opening for the sculpture exhibition and that will provide some good exposure.

With regard to social media and the Commission's Facebook page, Ms. Byrne said there was a spurt at the beginning but the activity has fallen off somewhat. What is needed is core contributors and getting others to like the page.

Commissioner Kiselev said the first issue of *In Time* magazine and press releases have been issued. She said she has served on multiple diversity task force and council groups over the past few years and has been collecting data all that time. The magazine is not about diversity per se but rather about the role of diversity and it is for diversity. Many groups are computer and internet savvy, but due to their cultural backgrounds and certain religious beliefs prefer something tangible. Language is not the main barrier; the lack of information and resources is. People struggle with feeling as though they must introduce their whole culture before they can introduce themselves in a community. The magazine is not for or about newcomers but rather for those who came to the United States some time ago, have established themselves, and who have leadership roles and who look to change the face of their communities.

Continuing, Commissioner Kiselev said an advisory council has been created to cover all aspects of ethnic groups. Several diverse communities have been covered to date, including Indian, Jewish, Latino and the Chinese communities. Each issue of the magazine includes a calendar indicating the holidays celebrated by the various ethnic communities, as well some history about the various holidays and how they are celebrated.

The hope is that the magazine will fill a niche and become the bridge for getting ethnic communities to work together. The rolls of different organizations will be highlighted showing their relationship to the various communities. The plan is to include an article on Bellwether 2012 and the roll of the Commission.

Commissioner Jackson reported that the Bellevue Schools Foundation has a set of small educational lunches called *Educational Connections*. The most recent one was focused on art in the schools and arts education. Arts Ed Washington executive director Una McAlinden spoke, as did Pam Schroeder, the person who is in charge of developing the arts curriculum for the Bellevue School District. Some 50 persons attended the event. The event provided the opportunity to provide some information about the work of the Arts Commission as well.

## 7. CORRESPONDENCE, INFORMATION

A. Written Correspondence – As Noted

B. Information – As Noted

1. Minutes for the March 13, 2012, Special Meeting Approved as Corrected on April 13, 2012
2. Projects Timeline April through June
3. Upcoming Agenda Items
4. Commission Committee Chairs and Leads for 2011-2012
5. Calendar
6. Public Art Program Budget Update