

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES  
(Corrected September 15, 2009)

July 7, 2009  
4:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Room 1E -109

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Kiselev

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Kate Wells Driscoll, Kathy Justin, Dane Johnson,  
Shelley Brittingham

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:11 p.m. by Chairperson Finley who presided. All Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Ptacek, who arrived at 4:13 p.m. Commissioner Holder participated via speakerphone. Commissioner Kiselev was not present.

Chair Finley welcomed newly-appointed Commissioner Brad Smith.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A. Approval of Agenda

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

B. Approval of Minutes

**Motion to approve the June 2, 2009, minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Shepherd. Second was by Commissioner Ptacek and the motion carried unanimously.**

With regard to the June 17, 2009, special meeting minutes, Chair Finley called attention to the second paragraph on page 6 and asked that it be revised to read "...continuing her comments on the Bel-Red area proposal, the Commission should look at social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter...."

**Motion to approve the June 17, 2009 special meeting minutes as amended was made by Commissioner Ptacek. Second was by Commissioner Tremblay and the motion carried unanimously.**

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Shelley Brittingham, assistant director of Parks & Community Services Department provided the Commissioners with copies of the department's summer brochure and gave an overview of the arts programs included in this summer's programming. She called special attention to the "Park Dance" event. The dance project is featured in the brochure and funded partly through a recommendation from the Arts Commission as part of the Special Projects program.

Ms. Brittingham reported that there were more than 400 participants in the Volkspart walk organized around public art May 31. The project was a collaboration among Parks, the Arts Program and Volkspart. She thanked the Commissioners for their continued support.

Commissioner Ptacek asked if there might be an interest on the part of Parks to partner with the Commission to do something in the Bel-Red corridor that would grab the attention of Bellevue citizens. Ms. Brittingham thought the department would be interested.

#### IV. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

##### B. Bel-Red Arts District Development Student Project

Commissioner Tremblay introduced Kate Wells Driscoll who participated with Commissioner Tremblay and others in the commercial real estate program at the University of Washington. The class first focused on product types and a survey of how the industry operates. Then student teams took on various projects. She said she and Ms. Driscoll, who has architecture and urban design background, had the only project on the Eastside, the only public/private partnership model, and the only pioneering project. The other team members included a financial person and a real estate professional with an interest in the Bel-Red corridor.

Commissioner Tremblay explained that the team created a proposal for a fictitious mixed use development project entitled "BRINK" in the center of the Bel-Red corridor and pitched it to an equity group. BRINK 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. She and Ms. Driscoll described the research done by the team, conclusions reached, and the design and financing proposals their team developed.

##### A. Burien Arts Space

Arts Specialist Mary Pat Byrne introduced Kathy Justin and Dane Johnson. She said they have been the driving force behind the Burien Interim Art Space, (B/IAS) a temporary outdoor sculpture display by local artists sited on a piece of property slated for future private development but currently vacant. Commissioners had expressed interest in a presentation by the pair in an earlier meeting after learning of the project and the large scale sculpture from Burning Man that it features.

Ms. Justin said she serves as chair of the Burien Arts Commission and that Mr. Johnson serves as chair of the Public Art Committee of the Burien Arts Commission. She said the temporary art project is focused on having artworks continually coming in and out of the city without being a significant strain on the city's budget. Ms. Johnson

said similar programs in Redmond, Port Angeles, Port Townsend and Kent were reviewed by the group following the revamping of 152<sup>nd</sup> Street in Burien's downtown.

The group focused on bringing in a very large-scale kick-off piece for the interim art display. A local developer became interested in the project and after months of talks agreed to a leasing arrangement that allows the artists to use a temporarily vacant lot for one year as an interim art space. The Arts Commission agreed to raise the funds and the City covered the insurance. The artists display art and hold events in the space.

Ms. Johnson described the January, 2009, opening event activities and activities planned for the year they will be able to use the site. The installation brought a great deal of positive press to the developer. The art display features the 30' tall sculpture, *Passage* featured at a Burning Man event and created by Dan Das Mann and Karen Cusolito. Also included are sculptures by local artists and high school students.

Ms. Johnson said the project is moving into a second phase. The business council, the city and the historical society are working together to develop another interim art space project. The project will place indoor art in the windows of empty storefronts along 152<sup>nd</sup> and 153<sup>rd</sup> streets. The works will be curated by local and outside arts organizations.

The project will be wrapped up with the creation of a set of documents aimed at helping other communities create similar projects.

Commissioner Tremblay asked how the artists involved have been compensated. Ms. Johnson said all of the works are on temporary loan. All of the installation costs, including delivery and insurance, have been paid through fundraising and in-kind contributions from the developer, the City, and others. The project required about \$28,000 cash and about \$68,000 in in-kind contributions.

Ms. Justin said installation of *The Passage* probably represented the biggest challenge for a variety of reasons, including inclement weather.

Chair Finley commented that in smaller cities the expectation is that projects will require fundraising and volunteer efforts, whereas in larger cities like Bellevue the expectation is the city will pay for it all. She suggested that Bellevue should think on a smaller scale for some projects and not be so dependent on city dollars for everything.

### C. Work Plan Prioritization and Recommendation

Ms. Byrne called attention to the work plan memo in the Commission packet. She said several projects under consideration were partnerships with other projects and dependent on those projects going forward. As the City works to deal with budget challenges and other factors, many projects are being deferred. The status of the projects included on the current list is based on her most recent information from key staff connected with the projects.

Ms. Byrne said it seems more likely than before that the downtown kiosks project will move forward, this time producing five kiosks. Currently the number of art elements to be included is three. If the number of kiosks increases to five the Commission may want to consider increasing the number of art elements as well. Regarding the Meydenbauer Bay project associated with the art walk segment between the

Downtown Park and the waterfront, it appears that the opportunity to include an artist on the master plan design team will not need to be discussed until 2011. The City is considering deferring most downtown capital projects until issues around light rail alignment are resolved.

Ms. Byrne said the projects represented are one possible set of choices for the work plan. Once the Commission comes to consensus, the plan will be taken to the City Council for review.

Commissioner Holder said she is a strong proponent of the art walk but voiced concern that there is nothing specific in the work plan to advance the art walk. There has been talk and general consensus, but there is no time or money allocated to it.

Ms Byrne discussed the work done to date regarding the art walk. A key planning effort to identify the route and themes for the walk was combined with the Great Streets project, art work was combined with 4 new kiosks installed along the pedestrian corridor, and the Commission is recommending reshaping the sculpture exhibition to be a temporary art walk.

Commissioner Holder said while it is true that several small steps have been taken, the project has been talked about for about three years and not much has happened. Commissioning the first big sculpture might be the kick start the project needs. Ms. Byrne said the Commission discussed one site as a potential site for a large scale signature work - the entrance to Downtown Park. In an earlier presentation from parks staff the Commission learned there is a master plan governing development of that site, and there are no Parks funds available at present for developing the site. The art sited at City Hall, along with the investment made in the Great Streets program, can be considered a good base from which to grow the art walk.

Commissioner Ptacek said the idea of having a signature piece at the intersection of NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Bellevue Way is integral to bringing people into the park. He suggested that even though Parks is not ready to move on that, the Commission could still start the process of identifying the piece and possibly locating it someplace else until the site is ready. Ms. Byrne said absent a place to put the art, whether temporary or permanent, work to identify candidate works is premature.

Commissioner Tremblay agreed with Ms. Byrne. She said having a site is a core aspect of selecting a work. The Commission should, however, broaden its thinking about a big-splash project; a big entry piece is not necessarily the right answer. What is needed is a temporary work that will activate the path of an art walk, something that would be removed after a couple of years when the city is ready to install other art works. It could be a series of interim temporal works happening all over the city.

Commissioner Holder said she is fully behind the approach identified by the Commission for the sculpture exhibition. She said there may be something that comes out of that down the road could lend itself to something more permanent. The idea of the art walk should not, however, be lost in the process.

Chair Finley suggested that the name "sculpture exhibition" should be changed to reflect the new direction - an art walk and more diverse forms of visual arts.

Commissioner Holder called attention to the Bridle Trails project in the neighborhood category of the work plan and asked if the \$35,000 is intended to be in addition to the Neighborhood Enhancement Program funding for the project. Ms. Byrne said the

funding will come from the Neighborhood Enhancement Program and not the Public Art Program. She proposed keeping the allocation in the work plan but split out among other neighborhood projects.

Chair Finley suggested that the Commission carefully consider whether the Bel-Red focus/initiative should or should not be included in Special Projects. There are already many projects coming in for funding that the Commission has traditionally wanted to support. She said she would rather see the Bel-Red project funded with public art money. Ms. Byrne clarified that if funded with public art dollars, there will be no opportunity for performance. Under Special Projects, artists manage their own projects, important to consider with the temporary loss of the second staff position.. Chair Finley said she is fully behind the Bel-Red project but suggested it should not have to be only about performance art and that it could include some temporary public art.

Commissioner Ptacek asked if public art money could be used to hire a group to develop a public art component for the Bel-Red area. Ms. Byrne explained how this approach would also exceed staff capacity. Commissioner Ptacek said that the processes in place do not always serve the Commission well. While many of the processes are not the choice of the Commission, the fact is the City is facing extraordinary times that require a great deal of flexibility. Before concluding that nothing can be done, new avenues should at least be explored.

Commissioner Holder added her support for the proposal to include the Bel-Red project in Special Projects. Something really exciting could be generated without going beyond staff capacity, possibly by working in collaboration with 4Culture.

Commissioner Shepherd pointed out that the matrix had a total public art projects total of \$395,000 even though the budget limit is \$400,000. She proposed adding \$5000 to the image and project resource library. Commissioner Holder concurred.

Commissioner Smith asked if the Bel-Red project could be listed as a neighborhood project with an allocation of \$20,000. Ms. Byrne said if the work plan calls for an public art project in the Bel-Red area, there will not be sufficient staff capacity to manage it unless a similar project was taken off the list. The Special Projects approach is a great way for the Commission to experiment with a seed project and learn something about what could happen in the area.

Commissioner Shepherd asked if funding could be earmarked for a neighborhood project just in case a cool idea shows up. Ms. Byrne said that an allocation could be made to "future neighborhood project." She suggested taking the \$35,000 from the Bridle Trails project and allocating it to a future neighborhood project.

**Motion to accept the budget with the image and project resource library item at \$10,000, and adding a future neighborhood project at \$35,000, was made by Commissioner Shepherd. Second was by Commissioner Ptacek and the motion carried unanimously.**

V. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS - None

VI. REPORTS

A. Commissioner Reports

1. Bellevue Arts Activities Attended and Other

There were no reports.

B. Staff Reports

1. Project Status Report
2. Maintenance Projects Lists

VII. INFORMATION AND UPCOMING EVENTS

A. Written Correspondence - None

B. Information - As Noted

1. Bel-Red Language in Special Projects Guidelines

There was consensus among the Commissioners to approve the guidelines.

2. Upcoming Agenda Items
3. Calendar
4. CIP Public Art Program Commitments Update

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Finley adjourned the meeting at 6:16 p.m.