

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

May 7, 2013
4:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E -109

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Commissioners Cole, Manfredi, Tremblay
COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Chairperson Smith, Commissioners Fateeva, Jackson,
STAFF PRESENT: Mary Pat Byrne, Scott MacDonald, Mike Kattermann,
Department of Planning and Community Development
OTHERS PRESENT: None
RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting began without a quorum at 4:48 p.m. and was not officially called to order due to the lack of quorum. At the time Commissioners Cole, Manfredi and Tremblay were present. A quorum was reached when Commissioner Jackson arrived at 5:47 p.m. Commissioner Tremblay presided.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A. Approval of Agenda

Because a quorum was not present, no action was taken to approve the agenda.

B. Approval of Minutes

Because a quorum was not present, no action was taken to approve the minutes.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

4. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Storefronts Bellevue Update

Shunpike Storefronts manager Matthew Richter reported on progress since the Commission recommended moving ahead with the program. He said an international call for proposals was sent out to artists in April. A panel made up of Isaac Alshihabi of Su Development, Nora Atkinson, curator at Bellevue Arts Museum, and Arts Specialist Mary Pat Byrne was established to review the 130 entries, to create a roster of potential projects.

Mr. Richter reviewed program basics with the Commission. He said the Storefronts Program locates displays of art in vacant stores. Each installation has a small tenant improvements budget to allow for painting and minor repairs to the storefront. The opening of a group of storefront displays is celebrated with a series of small sidewalk receptions in front of the storefronts, usually consisting of a table with sparkling cider, cheese and grapes.

Mr. Richter said that a variation of the storefront display is a Creative enterprise, a “popup” business. If these are sited they stay in place on three-month rotations, and possibly up to six months to give them a chance to stabilize. The popup businesses will have regular operating hours and will have the opportunity to grow into something permanent.

Mr. Richter continued, saying that the panel chosen to create the Bellevue roster came up with some very strong projects, and he showed images of several of the proposals. Mr. Richter said property owners and manager are being contacted to make arrangements for displays, and if the planned-for five storefronts can be found, three projects will be put in each space over the course of a year for a total of 15 projects overall. The roster includes about 25 projects from which to choose.

The spaces are leased for a dollar a month on a 30-day renewable lease. Once the landlord finds a higher and better use for the space, the project vacates the space. Thus projects may have a planned run of 90 days but they may actually run for only 30 days. The Storefronts Project pays all the utilities for the space, provides liability insurance coverage, and the property owners and managers can without prior notice show the spaces to prospective clients while the projects are in place.

Commissioner Manfredi asked what the average success rate percentage is when it comes to obtaining permission to use a storefront. Mr. Richter answered that it averages between 10 and 15 percent in Seattle. Interestingly, even with this rate, of the 30-some storefront programs operating in the country, the Shunpike program is the largest. There are 22 spaces in the Seattle program, and with an additional five in Bellevue, the total number of people walking past and being exposed to art every day will be impressive.

Commissioner Cole asked if the Storefronts Program tracks sales by the artists. Mr. Richter said the Program does not charge the artists fees and does not take a cut of sales, so the sales are not tracked. Each artist is provided between \$250 and \$500 to be used to set up displays and the like; how those funds are used is up to the individual artists.

Commissioner Tremblay commented that Bellevue is very consumer driven, particularly in the downtown core. The idea of picking artists who will play with that fact is intriguing and should be considered by the panel. Mr. Richter said the next step for the Bellevue program will be to get spaces leased. Once that is done, consideration will be given to the type of art that would be perfect for each space. Artists may decline to use an offered space once, but if they do so a second time they may be shifted to the bottom of the list.

B. East Link Public Art Opportunities

Ms. Byrne reported progress with Sound Transit’s East Link public art program. She said a roster of artists has been selected, and a lead artist team has been hired by Sound Transit. Artists will be selected from the roster to work with a panel on each station. The lead artist team, Meta Arte, identifies art opportunities, themes that can tie in to the whole system and unify the East Link extension. They oversee all of the art projects for East Link and work with the selected artists.

Ms. Byrne explained that the lead artist team has not yet made any decisions regarding themes, so the time is right for the Commission to take a look at the six Bellevue stations, consider the art opportunities and possible themes, and pass on a recommendation to Meta Arte, the lead artist team. She stressed, however, that the Commission will not have an official decision-making role.

Senior Planner Mike Kattermann was introduced by Ms. Byrne as the City staff member overseeing the public outreach team, in partnership with Sound Transit. She said he has a good sense of the current design for the stations and rail alignment.

Mr. Kattermann noted that East Link will have ten stations, six of which will be in Bellevue. Nearly half of the entire East Link system, six of 14 miles, will be located within the city limits of Bellevue, and just about every possible type of profile for the trackway will be encountered. The design work will occur over the next couple of years now that the work has moved into the final stage. An open house for the downtown station and the hospital/Wilburton station is slated for May 16 at City Hall. On May 30 an open house for the two stations in the southern part of the city will be held. An open house for the two stations in the Bel-Red corridor was previously conducted. Construction of the East Link line will begin in 2015 and will continue through 2022; that will be followed by a year of testing. Full system operation will not begin until 2023.

The City has a commitment to supporting the use of public art in East Link. Several years ago the city formed a committee comprised of representatives from the various boards and commissions to study light rail best practices. The group researched a number of systems and visited San Jose, Portland and San Diego. Their final report included the recommendation to design light rail facilities and stations to be an extension of the community, and the station-area planning work done to date has operated on that principle. The committee was clear in indicating that one of the best ways to do that is through the incorporation of art in and around the stations.

Mr. Kattermann shared with the Commissioners some pictures taken on the tours of the light rail systems in San Jose, Portland and San Diego.

Commissioner Cole said the elevated portion running from the downtown station near City Hall to the hospital station will have a dramatic impact on the skyline. Mr. Kattermann said the effect could be dramatic depending on how it is designed.

Mr. Kattermann suggested that the opportunities for art include architectural features; aesthetic features such as railings and furniture; contextual features; gateway features; and informational features.

Ms. Byrne said the 130th Avenue station is one of the two stations in the Arts District. The architects are aware of the Arts District status and are incorporating artistic elements into station architecture and materials selection.

Commissioner Jackson arrived and a quorum was achieved.

Mr. Kattermann shared with the Commissioners concept drawings of what the downtown and 120th Avenue NE stations could look like but stressed that the concepts are intended to serve only as a discussion starting point.

He also explained that at the time the Council amended the Land Use Code to allow for light rail they created the design and mitigation permit, and a citizen advisory committee, the members of which have not yet been appointed. The CAC will serve as the reviewing body for the issuance of the permit. Their focus will be on the Sound Transit facilities.

The City is also engaged in station area planning which involves land use and urban design planning for an area within about a half-mile radius of the stations. In a couple of cases some upzoning may be done to allow for transit-oriented development, but the Council is on record as saying no such changes will be allowed in single family residential areas.

Mr. Kattermann said the station area planning work program going forward will be presented to the City Council on May 13.

Ms. Byrne commented that station area planning offers the Commission opportunities relative to commissioning art through the Public Art Program.

Mr. Kattermann said the overall East Link theme will cross the boundaries of four different cities and will be chosen by the lead artist team. Each station in Bellevue could have its own theme that takes into account the context of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Commissioner Manfredi suggested that something with untranslated language would reflect the diversity of Bellevue. Untranslated text as an aesthetic part of the experience of arriving in Bellevue would be powerful.

Commissioner Cole asked if colors or wayfinding elements have been defined yet. Ms. Byrne said those particulars have not yet been determined.

Commissioner Tremblay said the Bellevue identity subject will be raised during the process. The overall themes that always seem to come up include innovation, technology, the entrepreneurial spirit, and sustainability. It seems obvious, however, that Bellevue as a cultural melting pot should be recognized. She said the floor in City Hall created by Linda Beaumont is inspirational, organic, and porous, and it has the aesthetic of Bellevue; it would be great to somehow extend it throughout the system as a blanket. Bellevue also has a strong history of craft.

Commissioner Manfredi commented that Bellevue is a consumer culture and that is something that could be referred to in the themes.

Commissioner Jackson pointed out that the Spring District station will be created in a place where there is no established neighborhood identity. The station itself will in many ways define the neighborhood and as such great care will need to be put into the design work. Mr. Kattermann said that will be the case for both stations in the Bel-Red corridor. There will be people living and working in the area, and the early work will help to influence what the neighborhoods will become. He cautioned against moving too quickly into defining details, however; what is needed are general directions.

Ms. Byrne pointed out that both stations in the Bel-Red corridor will be in the Arts District. Commissioner Cole said in that case consideration should be given to treating both stations with commonality that will indicate they serve as bookends for the district. Ms. Byrne said that would be a good way to look at it so long as they are not designed to be twins.

D. Commission Elections

Ms. Byrne pointed out the need to conduct Commission elections prior to Commissioner Manfredi having to leave the meeting. She briefly explained the nomination process and said the new officers would take over as of June 1, 2013.

A motion to nominate Commissioner Tremblay to serve as Chair was made by Commissioner Cole. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jackson and the motion carried unanimously.

A motion to nominate Commissioner Jackson to serve as Vice Chair was made by Commissioner Cole. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Manfredi and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Manfredi left the meeting.

B. East Link Public Art Opportunities (continued)

Commissioner Jackson voiced her support for the notion of using language that was mentioned by Commissioner Manfredi. She suggested that artists from outside the area, and even some residents of Bellevue, are unaware of how diverse the city is.

Commissioner Cole said she would not want to see a people who speak a certain language to feel locked in, nor should the idea that there are pockets of ethnicity be highlighted in any way. Ms. Byrne pointed out that the system will not be online until 2023 and said no one knows who will be living where by then.

Commissioner Tremblay reiterated the notion that nothing in Bellevue that speaks to the city's cultural tapestry better than the terrazzo floor in City Hall, which is made up of so many colorful bits and which lies at the heart of everything.

Commissioner Cole agreed. She said Bellevue can be viewed as a homogenous throwback with glass and concrete and simple geometric lines, yet it is really not that at all. It is built in a beautiful location with greenery and streams. The city is a living, breathing and growing entity.

Commissioner Tremblay suggested an artist or a team of artists could easily take that theme and meld it into a very exciting thing.

Commissioner Tremblay said the idea of play and game boards is one way spaces could be playfully activated. The forward thinking technology theme could be mapped to personal experience in fun ways.

Mr. Kattermann encouraged the Commissioners to purchase a day pass and ride the light rail system in Seattle, getting off at every station to see how they have been designed. In some stations art has been incorporated into the architecture. A standard template was used as the base but even so the various stations have a different look and feel.

Ms. Byrne asked the Commissioners to ride the light rail system then write down what works well and come prepared to discuss ideas at the next meeting.

Commissioner Cole asked if there will be any hierarchy to the stations in Bellevue and if so which one will be at the top. Mr. Kattermann said the Council has been very clear about wanting the downtown station to be the signature station.

C. Cultural Compass

Ms. Byrne said the Commission is slated to update the Council in June on progress in developing the Cultural Compass update. She suggested the majority of the June meeting should be used in developing the update.

Ms. Byrne reported that Chair Smith had agreed to take former Commissioner Kris Liljeblad's place on the Cultural Compass committee.

5. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS - None
6. REPORTS
 - A. Commissioners' Committee and Lead Reports - None
 - B. Staff Reports
 - i. Project Status Report

Ms. Byrne reported that the Bridle Trails project will likely be fully installed by mid July. A dedication ceremony could be held in August.

Ms. Byrne said the Commission will be before the Council on May 20 with the construction contract for Newport Hills/Lake Heights; the allocations recommendations; and for the bestowing of a commendation by the Council on Ruth Brewster, the executive director of the Bellevue Youth Symphony Orchestra, on the occasion of her retirement and in recognition of her many years of success in building a strong and vibrant arts organization.

Ms. Byrne said Arts Program Assistant Scott MacDonald is, among other things, is working on the city limits art map. A publication date in June is anticipated.

Commissioner Cole asked if the city's bicycle map could somehow reference the ArtMap. Mr. MacDonald said that would not be a bad idea. The same people who pick up the downtown map are also picking up the pedestrian map, and the same could be true of those who pick up the bicycle map. It would be good to have a series of overlays that interact with a core map.

7. CORRESPONDENCE, INFORMATION
 - A. Written Correspondence
 - i. 4Culture Sustained Award Support, letter, March 8, 2013
 - B. Information - As Noted
 - i. "The Ultimate Bucket List" article, *Bellevue Reporter*, April 11, 2013
 - ii. ArtMap mention, AAA Journey Magazine, May-June 2013
 - iii. Upcoming Agenda Items
 - iv. Commission Committee Chairs and Leads for 2012-2013
 - v. Public Art Program Budget Update

8. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Tremblay adjourned the meeting at 6:36 p.m.