

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES

March 5, 2013  
4:00 p.m.

KidsQuest Children's Museum  
4091 Factoria Mall SE, Bellevue, WA

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Smith, Commissioners Cole, Jackson, Liljebblad, Manfredi, Tremblay

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Fateeva

STAFF PRESENT: Mary Pat Byrne, Mike Kattermann, Scott MacDonald, Department of Planning and Community Development

OTHERS PRESENT: Putter Bert, KidsQuest Museum

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Chairperson Smith who presided. All Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Fateeva, who was excused.

2. WELCOME FROM MEETING VENUE HOST

Previous to the Call to Order, KidsQuest Museum director Putter Bert welcomed the Commissioners and provided them with a tour of the facility. After the Call to Order she explained that the museum is a non-profit organization and 60 percent of the general operating funds is derived from earned income, including membership and classes. Fundraising makes up the balance.

Ms. Bert informed the Commission that the museum has entered into a purchase and sale agreement with the Rosalie Whyel Museum of Doll Art to acquire the building located at NE 12th and 108th Avenue NE in the downtown across from the library. The move will give the museum a very prominent presence. The plan is to be in the new building in the spring of 2015.

Commissioner Liljebblad asked if the move will be away from a significant part of the museum's membership. Ms. Bert said the museum has a strong draw from Renton, so a lot of programming is being done in that city currently to get the word out about the upcoming move. Hopefully they will be willing to drive just a little further north. The downtown location certainly will be more accessible via transit and will be generally easier to get to.

Ms. Bert said KidsQuest is the most visited children's museum per square foot in the nation and has received many national accolades and awards for its educational programming. The museum offers over 700 programs, some 80 percent of which are art driven. The museum also operates a van in which it takes its show on the road offering art and science programming in schools, libraries and housing authorities; that program has proved so popular that a second van is now in service.

Commissioner Tremblay asked if the new building will offer an outdoor space. Ms. Bert allowed that it will. While it will be only about 1200 square feet, much can be done with it.

Commissioner Liljebblad asked how many staff the museum has and Ms. Bert answered that she has 12 full-time employees and about 15 part-time employees. The museum is also rented afterhours

to partner organizations which also requires staffing. In looking to hire employees, the most important character traits are an inner excitement and a willingness to interact with children.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A. Approval of Agenda

**A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Liljeblad. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jackson and it carried unanimously.**

B. Approval of Minutes

**A motion to approve the January 15, 2013, and the February 5, 2013, minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Cole. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jackson and it carried unanimously.**

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

5. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Bellevue Arts Museum Fair Collaboration

Arts Specialist Mary Pat Byrne said from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s the Commission worked collaboratively with the Bellevue Arts Museum on a program during the annual fair in which children created tiles that were later mounted on the sound walls along NE 8th Street. The Commission contracted with an artist who provided the clay and then glazed, fired and mounted the tiles. When all the insets in the wall were filled with tiles, the program ended. Then during the fair in the summer of 2011 the museum and the Arts Program collaborated on a project that put art in front of Macy's during the fair and all the way up along the pedestrian corridor to the transit center. The program was not repeated during the 2012 fair because Pedestrian Corridor sites were used by Bellwether, but the conversation has been regenerated concerning the 2013 fair.

Ms. Byrne introduced Meredith Langridge, fair manager for the Bellevue Arts Museum. Ms. Langridge said she is looking forward including the program as part of the 2013 fair. In 2011 the museum worked with the Arts Program, Kemper Development, the Westin and the Bellevue Downtown Association to piece together the funding necessary to make the program happen. The plan is to put out a call to artists for two projects, the entrance project focused on Bellevue Way directly across the street from the museum, and the lamppost project, which will involve temporary outdoor installations to creatively highlight 16 lampposts along NE 6th Street between Bellevue Way and 108th Avenue NE. Permission from the respective property owners will, of course, need to be obtained.

Ms. Langridge said the call to artists for both projects will be released on March 15, and the application period will close on April 15. The proposals will be reviewed by a panel and notification of the selected artist will be made on May 1. The work will need to be completed and installed by the first day of the Bellevue Arts Museum Fair. The project in front of the entrance to Macy's will be in place for the Fair only and will be paid for by The Bellevue Collection. The Lamp Post project art will be left in place for a couple of months into the Fall.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Cole, Ms. Langridge said the amount budgeted for the lamppost project is \$2500, inclusive of the artist's work and materials. She agreed that that is not much money and said she would love to be able to offer up to \$5000. Commissioner Cole said she did not know how many artists would be able to deliver something outstanding for \$2500.

Ms. Byrne said the project is a temporary visual art display and as such could be funded out of the Public Art Program. As proposed, the budget includes funding from the Commission in the amount of \$1900. To increase the overall budget to \$5000, it would be necessary to allocate \$4400 from the public art program.

Commissioner Manfredi asked if the intent was to select a single artist to decorate all 16 lampposts. Ms. Langridge confirmed clarified that a single artist will be chosen for the project.

Commissioner Cole voiced support for the project which she said would be a good profile event for the city. She suggested that if increasing the funding will leverage a larger pool of viable candidates, it can be assumed that the installation will be that much more exciting.

**A motion to recommend that the Arts Program participate as a 2013 funding partner in the lamppost summer art installation project in partnership with the Bellevue Arts Museum Fair, and to allocate \$4400 for it, was made by Commissioner Liljeblad. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cole and it carried unanimously.**

It was noted that the artist will need to understand that taking down their artwork and restoring the lampposts to their original condition will be included in the budget. The work will also need to be approved by the city.

#### B. Comprehensive Plan Update

Ms. Byrne introduced senior planner Mike Katterman who said the discussion at the January 24<sup>th</sup> Commissioners' forum was very good and provided solid information on which to help define the scope of the Comprehensive Plan update. He said clearly arts and culture are important aspects of the Comprehensive Plan given how they are integrated into the current document, including the vision statement and several of the elements.

Ms. Byrne asked the Commissioners to keep in mind all of the program direction the Commission has been developing over the years, especially the Cultural Compass, and to think about what is already included in the Comprehensive Plan and what still needs to be folded in.

Commissioner Tremblay said she continues to want to see artists living and working in Bellevue. While difficult to deliver on, the notion should at least be highlighted in the Comprehensive Plan. Those who are already living and working in Bellevue should in some way be celebrated.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Jackson, Mr. Katterman said the goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan are the main thing; the associated explanatory texts exist only to help elaborate on the policies and provide background, and as such do not have the same standing as the policies.

Commissioner Jackson noted that the introduction section to the current Comprehensive Plan states that the city has not yet developed a clear sense of what a more mature cultural center sector should look like or how to get there. She said she would not want to see that sentence included in the updated document. Ms. Byrne said that concurrent with the work to update the current Comprehensive Plan in 2004, the Commission was working to develop the Cultural Compass. At that time the language was consistent with what was in the Cultural Compass. With the current update of the Cultural Compass, the Commission has the opportunity again to make the statements consistent between the Plans.

Commissioner Cole said a great deal has happened by way of arts and culture in the city in a very short period of time, yet there is still a sense that the city is poised for something fantastic to

coalesce. The Comprehensive Plan update process offers the perfect opportunity to strengthen the connection between the arts and economic development. Mr. Katterman said one way to do that is to draw attention to how the arts encourage tourism; another way would be to highlight the positive impact the arts has on the city's economic base.

Commissioner Cole said her sense is that Bellevue is far more evolved than other cities when it comes to the arts; there is at least in theory a readiness to support the arts, and the Comprehensive Plan should in some way reflect that. Things like creating art districts where rents are affordable for artists and tax incentives that help artists succeed are not directly within the purview of the Commission, but when included in the Comprehensive Plan could provide a base on which to build a thriving arts community.

Ms. Byrne pointed out that the existing Cultural Compass makes mention of arts, culture and entertainment districts. The original focus was on the Downtown, Factoria and Crossroads, but the vision can be expanded to include the Bel-Red corridor and may expand again to include the Eastgate area. She said this is also an example of bringing more definitively what already exists in the Cultural Compass into the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Cole pointed out that in cities across the nation where thriving arts communities have taken root, they predominantly have located in impoverished areas where land values and rents are low. That certainly was the case in Providence, Rhode Island. The problem is that there are very few such places in Bellevue, and there are fewer every year. Mr. Katterman said the appropriate thing would be to talk about direction in the Comprehensive Plan, for example doing things that would encourage an artist community and keeping areas affordable for marginal economic activities and highlighting the economic payoff. The Comprehensive Plan will not, however, identify specific tools for implementing the policy language.

Commissioner Liljeblad noted that on page 282 under public art and cultural activities there are three policies, 35, 36 and 37, that offer a very narrow snapshot of public art and cultural activity in terms of what the Arts Commission actually does. In fact the work of the Commission goes beyond the language of those three policies and includes supporting, fostering and financially contributing to arts and culture. The language of the policies should be redrafted to be more in tune with what the Commission actually does. Mr. Katterman pointed out that the three policies are all specific to urban design. He said the points made are well taken, however, and suggested that part of the challenge will be in making sure the way arts and culture are integrated throughout the Comprehensive Plan is done in such a way that people will be able to see the connection.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Cole, Mr. Katterman said the Comprehensive Plan is an overall policy document. It does not get specific with respect to implementation, except where capital projects are concerned. The various functional plans are where the specifics are housed, and the Cultural Compass acts primarily as a functional plan that informs various work plans.

Ms. Byrne pointed out that theoretically speaking, the Cultural Compass and the human services functional plans are on an equal level. In the way they are implemented, however, they are not. The city has a much deeper investment in human services than it does in the arts. Mr. Katterman added that the Comprehensive Plan has legal standing under state law, but the associated functional plans do not always have the same standing at the state level. If adopted by the Council as a supplement to the Comprehensive Plan, functional plans have legal standing at the city level.

Chair Smith noted that the Land Use Element does not specifically talk about the notion of arts districts. He suggested it would be interesting to weave the idea into that element. Commissioner Liljeblad added that because an arts district is specifically identified in the Bel-Red plan, it would be valuable to include some policy standing on which to base any public investment. The Commissioners concurred.

Commissioner Tremblay referred to page 185 and the pie chart breakdown in the Economic Development Element of types of jobs in Bellevue. She said undoubtedly the chart will look different in its next iteration. Within the interactive and social media, and even in the design fields, there is a relationship with the applied arts. She added that while Bellevue is green and as such can rightly be called a city in a park, the city is also entrepreneurial and pioneering, elements that also should be celebrated with branding.

Commissioner Manfredi asked when the drafts of the various Comprehensive Plan sections will be coming forward. Mr. Kattermann said the staff has not begun writing yet; the work currently under way is focused on scoping on what changes are needed to the plan.

Commissioner Tremblay suggested the city should consider making the Comprehensive Plan into more than a one-way document. It should become a living document and a strategic tool for gathering information from the community. Mr. Kattermann assured her that ways to make the document more interactive are being investigated.

Ms. Byrne said the scoping process will yield a collection of themes, ideas and general directions that will ultimately be forwarded to the Planning Commission. At that point the policy language crafting will begin to crystallize. There may come a point in the process where it will make sense for the Commission to talk directly to the Planning Commission about ideas and suggestions.

### C. Cultural Compass

Commissioner Tremblay said the committee met following the last Commission meeting. The group discussed whether an advisory body should be brought in as part of the process.

Ms. Byrne said the committee concluded that it needed to be clear about the steps that will need to be taken to complete the update. The committee agreed it should be augmented by including a couple of people from the community who could add in a rich way to the conversation. There was also agreement to move forward with an online survey, an open community forum, and a series of smaller focus groups to drill down more deeply into certain questions.

Ms. Byrne explained that whenever a board or commission wants to set up a committee with people who will meet more than once, the Council needs to bless the action. To that end the desire of the committee was shared with Councilmember Balducci on February 19. She in turn took the issue to the full Council that night and gave a quick report. There was general consensus which has been taken to be a green light to go ahead with the process as described.

Commissioner Tremblay suggested there is much to synthesize before additional people can be brought in. What is needed is an overall story of the arts over the last ten years in Bellevue that can be told succinctly. The list of key stakeholder groups include current and former Commissioners, staff, those who served as members of the steering committee, and contacts from 4Culture that have followed the process.

Ms. Byrne said the focus groups should review briefly the progress made in the last decade and then be asked to look ahead to the next 15 years and comment on future direction of arts development in the city.

Commissioner Cole asked what steps the update process will take. Ms. Byrne said the purpose is to understand what has been achieved relative to the four goals included in the update, how circumstances in the community have changed, and, with community support and information, to indicate the direction things should be going. The plan will help to guide the Council in making

investments in the arts. Council needs see that the community agrees with the vision and strategies, before they will give their support.

Commissioner Liljeblad said the update process offers a great opportunity for the Commission to be recognized for the successes achieved to date. It will be critical going forward to identify the need to respond to the diversity issue and the reality of an international audience for Bellevue. There are some major infrastructure and facilities opportunities coming up in association with the East Link project and the Bel-Red corridor redevelopment, as well as areas within the downtown, where mixed use districts are on the cusp of major redevelopment; the Commission should identify its intent to see art integrated.

Chair Smith suggested that the story of how the arts have progressed in Bellevue is relevant to how they will continue to progress into the future. Commissioner Cole agreed, adding that the back story and the goals met to date in fact serve as the foundation for the things yet to come.

Commissioner Manfredi pointed out that things have changed in Bellevue over time, including the population, and the goals and policies as written may no longer even be applicable. They certainly should be thoughtfully revisited.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Tremblay, Ms. Byrne said the Commission will want to reach out to the steering committee members, but only as part of the effort to reach out to the broader community. The steering committee itself will not be reconstituted.

## 6. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS

Ms. Byrne referred to the allocations timeline on page 31. She pointed out that between the timing of Council meetings and their heavy schedule and the monthly Commission meetings, the current timeline shows it will not be possible to get Council approval for this year's recommendations until June. However, if the Commission were to schedule an extra meeting late in April, the schedule could be shortened by a month. She proposed April 23 for the extra meeting at which the Commission would vote on the allocations recommendations. There was general consensus to schedule the extra meeting.

## 7. REPORTS

### A. Commissioner's Committee and Lead Reports

#### i. East Link Public Art Process

Commissioner Liljeblad reported that Sound Transit, working through 4Culture, issued a request for qualifications for a lead artist for the East Link project spanning the distance from Seattle through the Rainier Valley, across Mercer Island, on through Bellevue and all the way out to Overlake. The idea is to have a lead artist to assist Sound Transit in identifying art opportunities along the corridor and at stations. The artist selected will also work with Sound Transit in recommending individual artists for specific opportunities. He noted that he and Ms. Byrne participated on two day-long screening sessions to review artist presentations, create a short list and then conduct interviews. A recommendation has been made that should be public within the next couple of weeks.

Ms. Byrne said a call has already gone out to artists requesting qualifications to be included on an artist roster for East Link. Of the ten East Link stations, six will be in Bellevue.

### B. Staff Reports

#### i. Project Status Report -- As Noted

- ii. 2013 Funding Process Calendar Updated -- As Noted

7. CORRESPONDENCE, INFORMATION

- A. Written Correspondence -- None

- B. Information -- As Noted

- i. Minutes of BAC Regular Meeting, November 6, 2012, Approved as Corrected
- ii. Upcoming Agenda Items
- iii. Commission Committee Chairs and Leads for 2012-2013

Commissioner Liljeblad reported that he has been extended an offer to direct the planning and development functions for Akron Metro in Ohio. He said he has accepted the position but is still working through a great deal of red tape. He said if all goes through he will be moving and will have to resign from the Arts Commission.

The Commissioners gave Commissioner Liljeblad a card and a small gift in recognition of his service on the Commission.

Commissioner Liljeblad said serving on the Commission has been a great experience.

- iv. Cultural Compass Update Basics
- v. Public Art Program Budget Update

8. COMMISSIONER UPDATES ON LOCAL ACTIVITIES

9. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Smith adjourned the meeting at 6:28 p.m.