

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

May 3, 2023
4:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Virtual Meeting

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Lau Hui, Commissioners Aldredge, Bhargava, Enomoto, Gowdy, Martinez

COMMISSIONERS REMOTE: None

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Gulati

STAFF PRESENT: Manette Stamm, Lorie Hoffman, Sophia Gerrard, Department of Planning and Community Development; Jesse Canedo, Department of Economic Development

OTHERS PRESENT: Councilmember Stokes

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:34 p.m. by Chair Lau Hui who presided. All Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Gulati.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Aldredge. The motion was seconded was by Commissioner Gowdy and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the April 5, 2023, minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Enomoto. The motion was seconded was by Commissioner Aldredge and the motion carried unanimously.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Wendy Tyner with Wintergrass Music Festival noted that when the event was moved to Bellevue in 2010, the city fully embraced it. Since then, the city has supported the festival, and the event organizers are truly grateful for the recent one-time grant, the annual Eastside Arts Partnership grant, and in the past Economic Development grants to help weather the COVID-19 storm. When funding is received, there is inspiration to do more. The festival has accomplished a great deal over the last 30 years. It has served kids and continues to do so. More than half of the students receive full scholarships, and many who attend cannot afford to stay in the hotel during the festival. Grant dollars are used for that purpose. Last year the City Council gave the festival a certificate of accommodation, and VisitBellevue awarded the festival the Inaugural Event of the Year. The Washington Festival and Events Association

handed the festival two awards: Event of the Year and Central Puget Sound Event of the Year. The event has been expanded into the Westin because of the need for more room.

Councilmember Stokes informed the Commissioners that five qualified candidates had filed to fill the seat to be vacated by Chair Lau Hui.

4. ACTION, DISCUSSION AND INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Arts and Economic Prosperity Study Update

Arts Intern Sophia Gerrard said the Arts and Economic Prosperity 6 national research study is administered by Americans for the Arts alongside over 400 municipal partners. The study is focused on understanding the economic impact of local arts and non-profit organizations. It utilizes audience intercept surveys to assess spending related to arts and culture events, requiring staff on the ground meeting with attendees and arts patrons to administer the surveys in person. The rules do not allow for conducting the surveys virtually. The study occurs every five years, and the sixth iteration is 2022-2023; it was delayed by two years due to COVID-19 thus, the current survey represents an opportunity to determine how the economy is bouncing back following the pandemic.

The study looks at the economic impact of the arts beyond ticket prices. It involves measuring the additional cost of going out to dinner, buying new clothes, purchasing souvenirs and other retail goods, all connected to an art or cultural event. The importance of the arts in terms of strengthening cultural and social bonds is clearly understood by the community, but less is understood by the community about the key economic role the arts play. It includes small events like Garden d'Lights, where attendees might be buying hot cocoa and spending only about \$10, to large events like Wintergrass, where a young man attending from West Virginia came prepared to spend \$10,000 on a new guitar.

Historically, Washington State has had low participation in the Arts and Economic Prosperity survey. In the last iteration of the study in 2015, Tacoma was the only city in the state that participated. Once the current survey results are in, spending in Bellevue is expected to be higher than what was recorded by Tacoma in 2015.

Continuing, Sofia Gerrard said survey collection began in August 2022. Since then, arts staff have been attending two to three arts and culture activities per week, which has allowed for interacting with more than 34 local non-profits and agencies, including many with which the city has not had a preexisting relationship.

The city has also been participating in an Eastside regional study with the cities of Renton, Issaquah and Redmond. Each city is collecting data separately and will be considered separately. There will be a single report at the end that will allow for consideration of the impact of the arts on the economy of the wider Eastside.

A minimum of 800 surveys must be collected for consideration in the study, and to date, 725 have been collected. There is also a requirement that 25 percent of the surveys must be from BIPOC organizations, which by definition are organizations whose mission statement centers on BIPOC cultures and communities. Nearly all of the events attended by staff have demonstrated the diversity of Bellevue. A diverse set of audience members has completed the surveys, and BIPOC organizations have completed 28 percent of the surveys to date. There are about three weeks of collection time remaining. The data analysis will be completed by

Americans for the Arts, and the results will be released in the fourth quarter of the year showing Bellevue's statistics, the Eastside regional statistics, and the national statistics. Americans for the Arts have also been doing surveys of the organizations as well, and information regarding that work will also be released.

Commissioner Bhargava asked why only Tacoma participated in the 2015 survey. Sophia Gerrard noted not knowing how heavily west coast cities were recruited to participate in the survey. There are also certain structural barriers, including a fee to participate and the number of hours it takes to collect the surveys. The west coast has historically had low participation rates.

Lorie Hoffman added that Washington State has low funding for the arts comparatively across the nation. There simply is a lack of resources. Many of the state's cities that might participate are in King County, which has a robust amount of data collected through ArtsFund. That data, however, cannot be directly compared to data from across the nation.

Commissioner Aldredge asked if one goal of the study is to argue for more arts funding from the state and to show the legislature that the arts are an engine for economic development. Lorie Hoffman said one outcome would be, for example, local cities' ability to take the data and demonstrate their economic impacts as they write grants.

B. Launch of Art Policies Review

Manette Stamm stated that the Bellevue City Code calls for the Commission to develop recommendations for acquiring public art and to review and make recommendations on the suitability of any work of art intended as a gift to the city. As such, policies were implemented to guide the work of acquiring artwork and the de-acquisition of works. However, the record is unclear as to whether all policies were ever formally adopted. In any event, the policies have not been reviewed or updated in a very long time. The key objectives are to ensure the policies reflect best practices in public art management and establish clarity on acquiring, un-acquiring, and evaluating new artworks and gifts to the city. Protocols are also needed for the loan of artworks. The art display policies should also be reviewed, and the policies should also ensure that artists will be fairly compensated and recognized for their contributions.

The specific policy areas to be reviewed include the accession policy and the associated procedures; the de-accession policy and its associated procedures; the jury selection policy; the artist selection process; the display policy; and the maintenance policy. The work will be lengthy and involve touchpoints with the legal and risk departments. Clear loan agreements and loan templates will need to be developed as part of the policy work. People can loan works to the city for display, and the city can loan its works for various purposes. Specific guidelines are needed.

Commissioner Aldredge suggested that maintenance should be a major consideration and one of the criteria when looking at acquisitions. Manette Stamm agreed.

Regarding de-accessions, Chair Lau Hui proposed considering the relocation of works as an option. Manette Stamm agreed that it should be included as an item on the checklist.

C. Public Art Demographic Survey Follow-up

Manette Stamm noted that following the presentation of the draft survey at the Commission's April meeting, the feedback received was used to craft changes to the questions. The survey was then launched, starting with artists in the Portable Art Collection. There are now more detailed questions on ethnicity and race. To date, 43 of the surveys have been sent out, and

there have been 25 responses. Since art has been acquired from galleries, the surveys have also been distributed to the galleries.

The survey will be kept open indefinitely to reach as close to a 100 percent success rate as possible.

Commissioner Enomoto asked if there would be an item in the acquisition policies that reflects Bellevue's population percentages. Manette Stamm said one approach would be to point to the mission statement in support of collecting a more diverse collection. The survey results will certainly be looked at in terms of how they reflect Bellevue.

Commissioner Martinez stressed the need to follow up regarding the identified gaps in terms of outreach and partnerships. The data can be collected, but it is pointless if nothing is done about it relative to fully representing the city's diversity.

Commissioner Aldredge said that could be addressed in the way the calls are written and how direct contacts are made when calls are issued.

5. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS – None

A. Remote Participation Approval

A motion to approve remote participation on June 7 for Commissioners Bhargava and Gulati was made by Commissioner Martinez. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gowdy and the motion was carried unanimously.

Commissioner Gowdy was nominated to serve as Chair at the June 7 meeting and the nomination was approved unanimously.

6. REPORTS

A. Project Updates

Lorie Hoffman thanked Chair Lau Hui for assisting in making the presentation to Council about the Commission's funding recommendations. All the awardees have been notified.

The BelRed Arts District community alliance is close to filing its incorporation with the state. Chair Lau Hui will be serving as a member of the board. There are plans to launch a website and to have a soft launch party in June.

The PACE Bellwether calls for artists closed on May 1. They are in the process of reviewing and making selections. The Commission will be provided with an update in either June or July.

The majority of the installation work for the Downtown Park art project is complete. The fence will be coming down in mid-May. A community celebration of the work is tentatively planned for June 24.

The final permits are in hand for the mural project. The contracting work is underway, and once the weather is better, the work will begin.

Regarding maintaining the city's public art collection, Lorie Hoffman informed the Commissioners that the sculpture Guan Yin in the City Hall Plaza would be removed soon. A

major crack has been discovered in the work and is set to be removed to a storage facility to be fully evaluated.

Councilmember Stokes reported that the most recent Eastrail meeting was good, and there was an opportunity to discuss the artworks and how they will be connected. There was a discussion of how all the trails lead into the BelRed Arts District. Kirkland and Redmond are doing things their own way, but the work in each jurisdiction is connected.

Manette Stamm reported that Scott MacDonald had been hired by the city to serve as a public art specialist.

Commissioner Martinez reported having attended the farmers market event in the Spring District. PACE was there with Arts Without Barriers. It would be good to see more arts and culture associated with the event, which occurs the first Wednesday of each month and every Thursday at the First Presbyterian church. Manette Stamm said the grant awarded by the Commission would be used to get more musical performances at the events.

7. COMMUNICATIONS – None

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Lau Hui adjourned the meeting at 5:17 p.m.