

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

DATE, 2023
4:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Virtual Meeting

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Councilmember Stokes

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:45 p.m. by Chair Lau Hui who presided. All Commissioners were present.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A. Approval of Agenda

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

B. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the December 6 minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Enomoto. The motion was seconded was by Commissioner Martinez and the motion carried unanimously.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

4. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. 2023 Work Planning

Arts Program Analyst Manette Stamm reviewed the 2023 arts program work plan with the Commissioners, including the ongoing grants programs, a new one-time program to use up the conversion of CIP to General Funds, the launching of the 2024 program later in the year, and some research regarding the cultural facilities program. The BelRed Arts District work plan includes the mural program, ongoing work with engaging stakeholders and organizing the district association, work on the arts district implementation plan, the Kelly parcel, and the BelRed look forward. The Commission will be working with PACE during the year on the Bellwether event.

Manette Stamm said a number of public art projects will be addressed during the year, including the installation of the Downtown Park NE corner work. The Commission will be looking at some existing pieces and considering where they might be relocated to, and hopefully will kick off Phase 3 of the utility box wrap program. With regard to planning projects, the list includes reviewing and updating the public art policies, as well as the Eastrail, Wilburton and Japanese American Cultural Legacy projects. Work on the arts and economic prosperity survey is also on the list. There will be work done relative to tourism, including formation of the Tourism Promotion Area (TPA) advisory board. Funds from hotel fees will be collected in conjunction with Redmond.

Commissioner Aldredge asked if there had been any follow-up on the Commission's previous discussion regarding the PACE contract. Manette Stamm indicated that because the RFP was advertised as being for two years, the contract specified two years. However, language was included that allows for extensive review after the first year, and a 30-day notice period for canceling the contract.

Commissioner Aldredge asked if the Commission still had a Bellwether committee. If so, it would be logical for that committee to participate in the review after the first year and to comment on whether or not to continue the contract for the second year. Chair Lau Hui said the committee remains active. Arts Community Manager Lorie Hoffman agreed to bring to the next Commission meeting a review of the Commission's role moving forward.

Commissioner Enomoto asked if the new arts staff will be tasked with working with PACE. Manette Stamm said the new staff will primarily be focused on public art projects and tourism. The consultant Scott MacDonald has the responsibility of working with PACE.

Chief Economic Development Officer Jesse Canedo said Bellevue and the convention center will be working in partnership with Redmond on the creation of a TPA. An entirely separate commission will be established to oversee the funds, which will be entirely focused on supporting tourism generating activities, including cultural tourism. The details of the work plan are still being worked out but the intent is to bring tourism under the portfolio of Lorie Hoffman. Funding for the tourism staff will come from the TPA funds.

B. Artspace Market Study Final Report

Lorie Hoffman noted that the report draft and technical report were included in the Commission packets. The city last worked with Artspace in 2017 at which time they conducted a preliminary feasibility study around the questions of if there is space and Bellevue and whether it makes sense for the city to have affordable artist housing. It was determined that the answer to both questions was yes and that it would be feasible. Since then the city has gained ownership of the Kelly parcel at 130th Avenue NE and Spring Boulevard in the heart of the BelRed Arts District. New discussions were opened with Artspace in 2021 and a new contract was signed with them in 2022 to move forward with the arts market study.

The arts market study consisted of two parts, the first of which was an artist survey, an online survey, notice of which was sent out to every listed artist and was also heralded via social media, advertising in traditional media, and post cards and posters. The second part involved a series of focus groups with creative businesses and arts organizations.

Two members of the Commission served on the core group, Chair Lau Hui and Commissioner Gulati. The core group members helped get the word out about the arts market study. The goal was to have between 300 and 400 responses, but in the end there were 437 responses. A very high interest was expressed in affordable artist housing and affordable creative spaces, both shared and private; of the 437 responses, 400 indicated an interest in one of the three types of

affordable spaces. The survey respondents were broadly diverse in terms of artist backgrounds and ethnicity. There were respondents from all around the greater Seattle region, though most were specific to Bellevue. There were 21 different organizations that participated in the focus groups, from which an additional 19 questionnaires were completed.

Artspace is recommending that the city create up to 66 affordable artist live/work housing units affordable at or below 60 percent of area median income, and an additional five units for those between 60 and 80 percent of area median income. Artspace is also recommending focusing on one- and two-bedroom units, and creating up to 74 private creative studio spaces. Organizations made a fairly strong request for rehearsal space. There is a very strong dance community in Bellevue so that element came up repeatedly.

Lorie Hoffman said the recommendations and findings will be handed off to the Kelly parcel management team which is comprised of economic development and affordable housing, finance and asset management staff who will develop an request for proposals for developers. The Kelly parcel still has some hoops to jump through before it can be deemed fit. The most likely scenario is that it will be 2028 before ground is broken.

Chair Lau Hui asked when the RFP will be advertised. Lorie Hoffman said the last estimate heard was the end of 2023 at the earliest.

C. Budget Update

Lorie Hoffman explained that the public art CIP fund is used to purchase large works of art and to pay for installations and other support services. The funds roll over year to year, which allows for saving up for larger purchases like the Downtown Park artwork. The annual allocation to the fund has been \$350,000. That will increase to \$500,000 in 2023 and then will increase by \$50,000 every two years until it reaches \$650,000 in 2028. The public art CIP is particularly vulnerable to inflation given that construction inflation is much higher than the inflation rate that gets the most attention and the budget increases are intended to address that issue.

The cultural facility CIP fund is new for 2023 though it has been used in the past to pay for cultural facility investments in larger institutions, including the Bellevue Art Museum, KidsQuest Museum and the Pacific Northwest Ballet. The fund will be administered by arts program staff. The fund comes attached to Council-determined priorities and staff will take time in 2023 to review those priorities and develop a program for how to use the funds. The fund will see allocations of \$962,000 annually through 2027, and \$2.4 million in 2028 and 2029. The funds can be used for many things. Most likely they will be allocated through a competitive grant program. The funds could be used for things like the Kelly parcel and the construction of affordable arts housing.

During the public hearings on the 2023-2024 city budget, the Council heard comments from the community about the need to increase support for arts grants. In response, the Council approved a one-time conversion of \$85,000 from the public art CIP into the arts grants fund for 2023. As part of the upcoming mid-biennium budget process, staff will look at ongoing sustainable increases to the general budget, which is updated every two years, as opposed to the CIP, which budgets out seven years.

D. 2023 One-Time Project Grants Guidelines

Manette Stamm reiterated that the Council recently approved a one-time conversion of the arts CIP budget to the general fund totaling \$85,000. That gets added to a small remainder of a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grant for a total of \$100,000. Both the NEA and one-

time conversion funds will expire at the end of the year unless allocated to grants for the arts and culture community. The easiest way to do so would be to reopen an existing program for applications. To do so, however, would require making a few changes. The easiest grant to reopen, and the only one eligible for NEA funds, is the project grants program. EAP grants are not eligible due to the element of operational support.

The first change that would need to be made to the existing project grant program would be to modify the timeline to accommodate a fast turnaround given that the funds expire at the end of the year. The second change would be to create a one-time exception allowing EAP grantees to apply for the funds. Under the normal operating rules, EAP grantees cannot apply for project grants as well. Additionally, NEA funds cannot flow to individual artists, they must go through non-profits. The third and fourth changes would be to increase the granting amounts to \$3000, \$5000 and \$7000 and have them be ranked in the application instead of selected as a static request.

Manette Stamm said one approach could be to create a whole new program just to allocate the funds. However, given the steps involved in that approach and the time-limited funds, there simply is not time to go in that direction.

Chair Lau Hui asked if one month will be enough time to review all of the applications. Manette Stamm allowed that most submit their applications close to the last day. A month should be sufficient time. Word about the program will be spread via the list of grantees, via 4Culture, social media and through other conventional means.

A motion to approve the guidelines as presented was made by Commissioner Aldredge. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gowdy and the motion carried unanimously.

Manette Stamm noted the notice would go out on January 11.

Councilmember Stokes said it would be interesting to get a better sense of what the need really is and what it would take to advance the arts in Bellevue. Too often the Council just thinks in terms of what the budget will accommodate. Arts and culture advocates could help in the process of identifying the true need and the possibilities.

Chair Lau Hui suggested it might be helpful to have grantees provide the Council with a detailed summary of the needs. Councilmember Stokes said what would help the Council most would be anything that would help the Council better understand the scope of arts and culture in the community and the impact they have. Once the possibilities are known, it becomes easier to determine the tradeoffs.

Commissioner Aldredge added that the city may be missing some opportunities. A corporate donation stepped forward on its own and funded the Downtown utility box wraps. There is a huge appetite in the corporate community for art and the city should not be sitting back waiting for the corporations to offer up funds. The city should be going to them with a catalog of opportunities in which they could get involved financially for the benefit of the creative environment. Jesse Canedo said there is about a year's worth of work left in building that type of catalog of public/private partnership opportunities across the city.

Chair Lau Hui suggested it would not have to be a city-supported program. Local businesses and organizations could offer matching grants for arts and culture projects. The approach could both support local businesses and provide the arts community with more resources.

5. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS

A. Remote Participation February 7

A motion approve the requests of Commissioners Gulati, Aldredge and Martinez to participate remotely was made by Commissioner Gowdy. The motion was seconded by Chair Lau Hui and the motion carried unanimously.

6. REPORTS

A. Project Updates

Manette Stamm reported that the Arts and Economic Prosperity survey collection was going well, with 350 surveys already collected toward the goal of 800.

It was also noted that the Downtown Park art project would be under construction soon and that the work will take an estimated six to eight weeks.

7. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Written Communications

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Lau Hui adjourned the meeting at 5:44 p.m.