

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

April 5, 2023
4:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Virtual Meeting

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Commissioners Aldredge, Enomoto, Gowdy, Martinez
COMMISSIONERS REMOTE: Chairperson Lau Hui, Commissioner Bhargava
COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Gulati
STAFF PRESENT: Manette Stamm, Lorie Hoffman, Department of
Planning and Community Development
OTHERS PRESENT: Councilmember Stokes; Annie DiMartino, PACE
RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:32 p.m. by Commissioner Gowdy who presided. All Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Aldredge, who arrived at 4:34 p.m., and Commissioner Gulati.

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 Bhargava and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the March 7, 2023, 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, DISCUSSION AND INFORMATION ITEMS

A. New Room Orientation

Staff took a moment to assist the Commissioners in working through information technology issues.

B. Bellwether

Annie DiMartino, deputy director, Performing Arts Center Eastside (PACE) noted coming on board at PACE in 2019 as the education director just ahead of Covid. The Arts Without Barriers program was launched in 2021 and in the first year, there were 75 performances in five different cities, all free and all in high foot-traffic areas, bringing life and sound back to

the Eastside after having been so quiet for so long. The program employed artists who had been out of work for so long and worked with local businesses. PACE's Techttober event launched in 2022 in partnership with DigiPen Institute of Technology. It explored the idea of how the arts and tech are symbiotic. A mini Techttober teaser was offered as part of Bellwether last year.

During the first year, the Arts Without Barriers program operated from April through June. However, the location site partners asked to have the program expanded through August, then through November and December. For the current year, the program will start in May and will run through August 31, and at two of the Bellwether location sites, there will be musicians in place leading up to the Bellwether spectacular. A new program, Brain Break, will involve different campuses and allow employees 60 minutes of whatever arts experience they want, allowing them to reset and recharge before returning to their office mind frame.

Bellwether 2023 will truly celebrate the intersectionality of art and tech, culminating in the heart of downtown Bellevue. Annie DiMartino reported having attended three different arts festivals and noting that many of the festival directors are creating curated spaces that fit the art in their space. The idea that Bellwether will have multiple locations with in-person artistic experiences meshes well with the curator notion and aligns with Art Without Barriers. Hopefully, audiences will be built by collaborating with teachers and students.

All contracts were officially signed by mid-February. PACE has hired a new executive director, Laura Unger, who previously ran the symphony orchestra and pops program in Pasadena, California. Laura Unger will officially begin work for PACE on May 1 but has already been working on identifying and starting conversations with potential Bellwether sponsors. To date, \$11,000 in donated services and goods has already been secured. Additionally, a new social media manager has been hired who has put together an impressive social media plan for Art Without Barriers that includes tracking to allow for gaining engagements, which can continue with Bellwether.

Annie DiMartino said the call for artist proposals was put out in early March. It was sent out to the general arts community via email and social media channels, and it has been posted to the website. The proposals are due by May 1.

Work is underway with a graphic designer to create two Bellwether logos, one used mainly for social media and the other for print. Three of the four Bellwether location sites have also been identified. Cross-promotion collaborations are planned with Bumpershoot. Conversations are underway to showcase a new documentary followed by guest speakers in the Spring District parks, where there already is a movie night. The Marketplace at Factoria has been confirmed as a location site, another high-foot-traffic area. DigiPen students form teams and then create and build game consoles with their original video games. There are talks underway about having several of their teams display their video games along with their storyboards so that people can see the artistic side of what goes into creating video games. The idea is for the teams to pitch their games and give a cash prize to the most popular one based on audience engagement.

It is exciting that Downtown Park will be open on September 30. The idea is to include food trucks and a stage for the Lake Washington Symphony Orchestra to perform a concert under the stars with a blend of digital and contemporary.

Commissioner Aldredge noted that there has almost always been a connection with the Bellevue Art Museum and the community gallery in past years. Annie DiMartino allowed that conversations with the museum are happening, though it is not yet apparent what the outcome will be. The hope is that the call for artist's proposals will not just be driven by PACE but also

be driven by the community. To that end, the artists are being asked to suggest locations that will fit with the arts they want to do.

Commissioner Gowdy asked if the call for proposals included the use of the artist roster. Annie DiMartino allowed that the roster was indeed utilized.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Enomoto, Annie DiMartino said it is hoped that the call for artist's proposals will yield some good location ideas. The Bellevue Art Museum is one idea, and consideration has also been given to Robsinswood Park and Crossroads Park, but unfortunately, neither of those sites is available on the dates they would be needed. The sites chosen will to a large extent, depend on what the art is. There will be four in-person events on Saturdays, and every Wednesday will be digital Wednesday.

Commissioner Martinez asked if Meta would be involved, given their location in the Spring District. Annie DiMartino said conversations are underway with the organization.

Commissioner Bhargava asked if the school district would be involved. Annie DiMartino reported having reached out to the various robotics clubs. Unfortunately, the students are not likely to be able to pull something together by September, given that the end of the school year is fast approaching. The hope is that the DigiPen video game consoles will be a source of inspiration for students. Hopefully, they will gear up to be involved next year.

C. Public Art Demographic Survey

Arts Program Analyst Manette Stamm informed the Commissioners that a public art demographic survey would soon be launched of all artists in the portable and public art collection. The questions are based on a standard set of questions used in external surveys, with a few that are tailored to knowing who the artists in the collection are. The survey is voluntary, but there will be individual outreach to most artists.

Commissioner Bhargava asked what is the ultimate aim of having all the information. Manette Stamm said the data will be used internally only by staff. It would be helpful when something like Black History Month comes up to know which artists identify as African-American or Black or to identify artists to highlight during Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month. It would be informative if we could say the collection confidently represents Bellevue's demographics. The data will also help to identify any holes in the collection due to not having any works by a certain community. The DEI team has been contacted to ensure the survey questions align with how the City asks demographic questions.

Commissioner Aldredge suggested it would be a good idea to talk to their artists about how the works have been maintained. Manette Stamm said an open-ended comment box could be included in the survey.

Commissioner Enomoto asked if the survey language would focus on what is recognized as disabilities. Manette Stamm said there would not be any specific language, leaving it open for the respondents to self-identify. This aligns with how the City asks this question in other surveys.

Commissioner Enomoto also asked the survey respondents to indicate whether or not they are military veterans. Manette Stamm agreed to research if other City surveys include that.

Chair Lau Hui asked if the respondents will be asked to indicate their City of residence. Manette Stamm allowed the survey could ask about the artist's primary location. Chair Lau Hui suggested it would be helpful information to have.

Commissioner Martinez said it will be very helpful to have all the data from the survey, adding that some clarification from the DEI team would be helpful in regard to those who identify as Latino/Latina versus Chicano/Chicana, and specifics about what constitutes Asian.

5. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS

A. Remote Participation Approval of the Next Meeting

A motion to approve remote participation on May 3 for Commissioner Gulati was made by Commissioner Martinez. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Aldredge and the motion carried unanimously.

6. REPORTS

A. Commissioners' Committee and Lead Reports – None

B. Project Updates from Staff

Manette Stamm reported that the one-time grants would be presented before the Council on April 17 for approval. Chair Lau Hui will make the presentation.

It was noted that a total of 571 of the needed 800 arts and economic prosperity surveys have been received.

The BelRed Arts District community group is working on its 501(C)(3) designation and have decided on the name BelRed Arts District Community Alliance. The group meets weekly for two hours and is very enthusiastic.

The Downtown Park art project is about 65 to 70 percent complete. The installers are hoping to be done in a matter of weeks.

There have been a total of 136 artist roster applications submitted, only 34 of which are in progress.

Manette Stamm reported working with the school district regarding partnering on the utility box wraps. While there is no timeline yet, the hope is that in time there will be some student artwork in the public realm.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Gowdy adjourned the meeting at 5:18 p.m.