

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES

September 13, 2022  
4:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Virtual Meeting

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners Bhargava, Gulati

STAFF PRESENT: Manette Stamm, Lorie Hoffman, Sophia Gerrard, Community Development

OTHERS PRESENT: Councilmember Stokes

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:40 p.m. by Chair Lau Hui who presided. All Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioners Bhargava and 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 Martinez and the motion carried unanimously.**

B. Approval of Minutes

**Motion to approve the July 12, 2022, minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Gowdy. The motion was seconded was by Commissioner Aldredge and the motion carried unanimously.**

3. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – None

4. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Arts Commission Bylaws

Arts Program Analyst Manette Stamm reminded the Commissioners that the assistant city attorney attended the July 12 meeting and reviewed the changes needed to the bylaws. The Commissioners were informed that action to adopt the bylaws as revised was needed.

A motion to adopt the updated bylaws as previously discussed and recommended by staff was made by Commissioner Aldredge. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gowdy and the motion was carried unanimously.

B. Committee Assignment Updates

Manette Stamm noted that some of the committees meet more often than others, and some have a larger workload; the allocations committee, by and large, requires the biggest commitment and thus Commissioners are asked not to serve on it for more than two times.

Commissioner Aldredge volunteered to serve on the allocations committee. Commissioner Martinez and Commissioner Enomoto asked to be added to the allocations committee.

Commissioner Aldredge asked to be added to the public art committee.

### C. Continuation of Utility Box Wraps Program

Manette Stamm noted that Phase 1 of the program was focused on the BelRed area, and that Phase 2 was focused on the Downtown. All but one of the selected utility boxes has been wrapped; the last one will be installed soon. The comments and reactions to the Downtown wraps have all been positive. Arts Community Manager Lorie Hoffman noted that there have been very positive reactions to the wraps on social media.

Manette Stamm said the proposal for Phase 3 is to focus on students in Bellevue, possibly involving artwork from students enrolled in public and private schools. The children's tiles project along NE 8th Street was the last art project undertaken with the school district.

Councilmember Stokes suggested the school district would welcome the opportunity to see their students active in such a project.

Manette Stamm suggested the possibility of breaking the program into two different segments, a K-8 element and a high school and college students element, with the latter being done via a call.

Commissioner Aldredge proposed sending a notice to the high school art teachers asking them to encourage students to apply.

Commissioner Martinez said the program would offer a good opportunity to connect with BIPOC students in the Bellevue School District.

Manette Stamm allowed that there could be some compensation offered to the student artists. By working with the schools, the opportunity would exist to site the wraps all around the city, not just in a single neighborhood. It is, however, better to wrap new utility boxes rather than old one and it might be a challenge to find new boxes near the schools.

Chair Lau Hui suggested that the teachers should be involved in the selection process.

Manette Stamm added that if the program working with school children proves to be successful, it could be done again in future years. While it could be daunting for an eight-year-old to design a full box, it would make more sense to use a collage approach, utilizing the work of several students per box.

The budget for 2023 is \$40,000, most of which will be for production and installation. A panel could be put together to work with the teachers and students on themes. High school and college students could receive the same stipend paid to artists in the first two phases of the program: \$1100 for double boxes and \$1000 for the smaller boxes. That works out to about ten wraps per phase of the program.

Commissioner Aldredge suggested the program might be more successful starting with the high schools and the college. A call for working with K-8 schools would be much bigger and the budget may need to be increased.

Commissioner Enomoto suggested engaging with young students in the schools. Where there are 15 to 20 students in each class, the program will affect those students and their families, allowing for more hype to be built around the program and more support to be garnered. A lot of art has been cut from the public school system and having the wrap program could help to build the appreciation and love for the arts in young students.

Chair Lau Hui said the arguments in favor of rolling out the program with K-8 students and with high school and college students are both valid. Doing both at the same time, however, is probably not feasible given the budget. The Commission will need to target one group or the other.

Commissioner Aldredge suggested that while it would be great to cover more elementary schools, that probably would require more partnerships with the PTSA.

Councilmember Stokes said that could be explored. Once the program rolls out to a few schools, the rest of them will want to join in. The program will be an excellent way to form a better bond with the school district and will provide the students with the opportunity to be involved in decision-making. It will certainly catch on and everyone will want to be involved. Given the lessons learned from the first two phases of the program, it is clear that it would be doable to work with high school and college students without really having to tweak anything. It is also possible that the school district, once informed about the possibilities, might want to jump in as partners, even increasing the budget to some degree.

Commissioner Aldredge said it would be good to see the school district act in partnership with the program.

Arts Intern Sophia Gerrard allowed that while the available budget will largely determine whether the program should be rolled out with K-8 students or with high school and college students, the Commission might also want to look at the curriculum for arts classes year by year and grade by grade since that could translate into various prompts for the boxes.

Manette Stamm suggested talking to the school district about the program and seeing if they want to work it into their curriculum for the following school year.

Commissioner Martinez suggested the work of exploring a partnership with the school district would fall under the jurisdiction of the community partnerships committee.

A motion to initiate talks with the school district about possible participation in 2023 was made by Commissioner Martinez. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Enomoto and the motion was carried unanimously.

#### D. BelRed Arts District Update

Lorie Hoffman reported that it had been a busy summer for the arts district. BelRed has the highest concentration of arts and culture businesses in the city. It can truly be called a creative cluster. Arts districts usually start with creative clusters and once they have management, unified visibility and branding, they can emerge into actual arts districts. The city's 2009 subarea plan for BelRed envisioned an arts village. The arts district notion was further developed in the 2020 economic development plan. There have been lots of studies and reports over the years, and a concerted effort has been made during 2022 to move from

planning to doing by wrapping up a District Implementation Plan that builds off the past work. The plan provides a solid five-year road map outlining the things that need to happen, who needs to do them, and the timeframe in which they need to happen.

In the plan there are four strategic areas for getting to a critical mass: management, visibility, creative space and connection. Arts district growth should be thought of as concentric circles and creative thought process rather than as linear growth. All four strategic areas need to move in tandem together in order to achieve arts district growth.

Lorie Hoffman said with help from the city's economic development department, a presentation was developed and taken on the road and shared with the arts community, regional partners, stakeholder corporations, city governments, leaders, developers and the existing creative business owners in BelRed. The outreach efforts included door-to-door visits to distribute flyers and information.

Management of the district has seen a lot of action. The work has focused on setting up a non-profit and a board of directors under the working name BelRed Arts District Association. The members represent key stakeholders in BelRed, several business owners, several creative folks who have been involved in the arts district over the last decade, and property owners and developers. It has been exciting to see the level of engagement, including by the corporate partners. The meetings have been held in the T-Mobile G5 Innovation Hub. The association has been active on social media. An organizational charter has been started and it is about 80 percent complete in moving forward with getting the 501(C)(3) paperwork filed. There have been program exercises and planning work carried out. The BelRed Arts District logo and website is set to be launched on the fourth quarter of 2022.

The goal is to have the district be visible. To that end, there are a number of projects in the pipeline, including murals funded through the city's arts grants program. Window signage is also being looked at using the district log, as are street banners. Two major public art projects will come to the district within the next two years, one at 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Spring Boulevard, and the work that was originally slated for 121<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Spring Boulevard.

Creative space has been a busy category. A creative space market study is currently underway with Artspace. The study is the second phase of the feasibility study that was conducted in 2017 and it is focused on determining the need in the community for affordable artist housing and affordable commercial space. A one-acre parcel owned by the city and located adjacent to the 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue light rail station is earmarked for affordable housing, and the hope is to see it used by artists. The early results show a strong desire for affordable housing, and a strong desire for collaborative creative spaces. Artist housing tends to be different from regular housing in that it is usually taller, has slop sinks and no carpet. There are also increased sound dampening concerns. The economic development team members have worked to see changes made to the city's sound code. As a result, buskers are allowed on the streets after 5:00 p.m. and on Sundays. There is continued advocacy in favor of including creative spaces in new development, including in market-rate developments. A close eye is being kept on any future land uses in BelRed that might benefit the arts community.

Lorie Hoffman allowed that most discussions about the arts district tend to center around the 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue light rail stop. As far as the Land Use Code, however, the only designation relative to the arts district takes in the entire BelRed subarea, including the Spring District. Manette Stamm added that the Spring District offers a prime audience for a lot of the creative uses.

Councilmember Stokes commented that there are amazing opportunities in the BelRed district. The Arts Commission can make changes that have been under discussion for a long time.

Lorie Hoffman informed the Commission that the Council will be provided with an update on the BelRed Arts District in the first quarter of 2023.

#### E. Bellwether 2022 Update

By way of background, Lorie Hoffman noted that bellwether is a word that means “a sign of things to come.” In Bellevue, Bellwether is a free multi-disciplinary, multi-sensory and multi-day event that typically happens in September. For the current iteration, activities are planned from September 2 to September 29. The city has historically created and produced the event in partnership with the arts and culture community. The current event, scaled down from previous years, involves city staff with non-profit partners along with some individual commissioned artists.

The current approach requires a significant amount of staff time, which affects the ability of the staff to make progress on other arts goals and objectives. It also is not delivering the attendance impacts the event is capable of. The event is ready to take the next leap by shifting to a model primarily run by an outside organization with support from the city. An RFP for a future event management organization is scheduled to be released on September 29.

There are four main components to Bellwether 2022: digital residencies, augmented reality artwork installation, portable collection opening reception, and Techttober mini-teaser panel discussion. For the digital residencies, a call was put out earlier in the year and a pilot program was conducted during Black History Month where an artist came in and conducted a social media takeover. There was a schedule of content releases on the city’s social media channels, several daily posts, and cross-feeds with their own social media channels. Some tweaks were made to the format and a call was put out for Bellwether. The panel selected and the Commission approved four artists: Dustin Curtis, Commissioner TK Hancock, Xin Xin and Warren Armando Pope.

Regarding augmented reality, the one install for the year is GlitchGoddess. It will be located on the Grand Connection at Compass Plaza. Clicking on a QR code yields a female form that the user can shape and place. Clicking on the form triggers a change of shape from hourglass to rotund, from young to old, and otherwise very stylized. The installation will be in place through September 20.

The portable collection opening reception is slated for September 14 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at City Hall. More than 40 artists and almost 50 works of art will be entered into the portable collection, with the purchase funds coming from the canceled 2020 Bellwether event and the scaled-down 2022 Bellwether event.

The Techttober Mini-Teaser will be a presentation in partnership with PACE on September 17 from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Bellevue Art Museum. The event will involve a 90-minute panel discussion with artists in the tech field and will focus on recruiting practices, animation and the full relationship between art and tech.

Lorie Hoffman said at the conclusion of Bellwether 2022 there will be a sit down with all the partners for a debrief. The call for 2023 opens on September 29 and will run through the city’s vendor system.

## 5. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS

Manette Stamm reminded the Commissioners that Commissioner Bhargava had requested indefinite remote participation.

Commissioners Aldredge and Martinez asked to be allowed to participate remotely for the October 4 meeting.

A motion to allow Commissioners Bhargava, Aldredge and Martinez to participate remotely on October 4 was made by Commissioner Enomoto. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Aldredge and the motion was carried unanimously.

## 6. REPORTS

Sophia Gerrard reported on the arts and economic prosperity survey, noting that to date some 75 surveys had been completed. The goal is 800. Going forward, there will be a focus on getting the survey completed by BIPOC organizations and others.

Lorie Hoffman said the Downtown Park public art project is on track to be installed beginning the first week of November. Staff worked with the artist over the summer to amend the original contract to create a new delivery and payment schedule. The site will need to be roped off for the holiday season and the project will hopefully be completed in February. A public dedication will be slated for the summer of 2023.

Commissioner Aldredge said her continued concern with the work is the amount of maintenance it will require over time. Better guidelines are needed to address the maintenance of works in the city's collection.

Manette Stamm said there continue to be artists applying to be added to the Eastside Artists Roster. Also noted was that the portable art collection is currently on display in City Hall.

## 7. COMMUNICATIONS – None

## 8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Lau Hui adjourned the meeting at 6:10 p.m.