

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

September 12, 2017
4:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E -109

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Manfredi, Commissioners Jackson, Lau Hui, Malkin, Wolfteich

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Lewis

STAFF PRESENT: Joshua Heim, Scott MacDonald, Department of Planning and Community Development

OTHERS PRESENT: Lauren Millier, Greg Baeker, MDB Insight

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:39 p.m. by Chairperson Manfredi who presided. All Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Wolfteich, who arrived at 4:42 p.m., and Commissioner Lewis, who was excused.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Malkin. Second was by Commissioner Jackson and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the August 8, 2017, minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Jackson. Second was by Commissioner Malkin and the motion carried unanimously.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Chair Manfredi reported that the WASA International Art Center opened on September 10 in downtown Bellevue with a focus on contemporary Chinese art. The first exhibit includes art from the Shandong Art Museum. The opening was well attended and included Shandong officials and the Consular General from San Francisco as well as Councilmember Lee.

4. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. 2018 Grant Program Guidelines

Arts Program Manager Joshua Heim said the Allocations Committee, which is comprised of Commissioners Lewis, Lau Hui and Wolfteich, reviewed the 2018 grant program guidelines and formulated a recommendation that included no changes to the Eastside Arts Partnerships and special projects guidelines, and the inclusion of the Power Up Bellevue project. The Committee also recommended no changes to the application. He briefly reviewed with the Commissioners the Power Up Bellevue guidelines, noting that the project grant funds will be

capped at \$5000 and that hopefully four of those awards will be made. In addition there will be funds to support those participating in the Springboard program, and for some consultation work. Power Up Bellevue grants will only be awarded to those organizations in the Eastside Arts Partnerships program to avoid having organizations having to submit two separate applications. The deadline is two weeks after the main Eastside Arts Partnerships and special projects grants application deadline.

Commissioner Malkin said the program is very exciting.

Mr. Heim clarified that the granting budget consists of \$110,000 from the city's general fund and a combination of the \$15,000 annual award from 4Culture. The Power Up Bellevue program funding will come from 4Culture.

A motion to endorse the 2018 Grant Guidelines for the Eastside Arts Partnerships, special projects and Power Up Bellevue funding programs was made by Commissioner Jackson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wolfeich and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Power Up Bellevue Update

Mr. Heim said the Power Up Bellevue workshop is slated for September 30. He said a flyer had been sent out to every organization that over the last three years submitted an Eastside Arts Partnerships or special projects application. He noted that to date some 15 people had already registered for the four-hour event, which will begin at 9:00 a.m. at WeWork, a coworking space at Lincoln Square. Stories will be shared by some who have engaged in capacity building exercises, and three experts will provide an overview of the key issues of capitalization, space security and volunteers. During the power lunch segment, the attendees will split into three groups with the experts to focus on problem solving scenarios. At the end of the event, a few moments will be taken to highlight the Power Up Bellevue program and to encourage folks to apply.

C. Creative Edge Project Update

Mr. Heim reminded the Commissioners that the Creative Edge project is a partnership between the arts program and the economic development department. He said it is focused on learning about Bellevue's creative economy. The consultants have largely concluded the economic analysis phase and the first part of the stakeholder engagement phase, and they are ready to transition into the strategy development phase.

Lauren Millier with MDB Insight said she and Greg Baeker were two members of the consultant team who have been working on the Creative Edge project on behalf of the city of Bellevue. She noted that the team had been asked to identify how arts, culture and the creative industry contribute to the sense of community in Bellevue as well as to the broader economy. Both a quantitative and qualitative analysis has been done which will ultimately inform a strategy document and an actionable implementation plan that will help the city develop and retain a thriving creative sector through a sustainable level of support for arts and culture.

Ms. Millier explained that the research component has looked at the performance of the economy, including the creative economy. The phase included engagement with a select number of stakeholders and city staff, and a telephone survey of the business community. Based on the qualitative and quantitative work that has been done, some gaps in emerged that highlighted the need to circle back with some agencies, organizations and businesses to identify what can be done what can and should be done in terms of positioning the strategy. Once that is done, the team will begin looking at what the strategy for the creative economy and creative industries will look like. Specific focus will be given to what the city can be done over the next three years and where the city sees itself in the next ten years. Two narratives

have emerged, one on the for-profit side and one on the not-for-profit side. There is the traditional arts and culture as it has been understood, and there are the creative industries that employ the artisans and creative talent. How to support the two sides from a policy and implementation perspective is what is being grappled with currently.

Ms. Millier said the creative economy definition being used mirrors the definition being used in assessments by jurisdictions across North American, the United Kingdom and other countries in Europe. The data that has been sought at both the Bellevue and regional levels is needed to help understand the types of businesses actively engaged in the creative economy and the types of people and occupations employed in the various sectors. In Bellevue and regionally there is a clear dominance by the software community.

It is important to recognize that 88 percent of all existing jobs in Bellevue are held by people who do not live in Bellevue. That of course means commuting into the city every day. The order of magnitude is significant and has implications for how local businesses recruit and retain talent, and it has implications for the gridlock the city and the region experience. Overwhelmingly the bulk of those who come into Bellevue to work come from Seattle rather than from Redmond, Kirkland or other jurisdictions.

In looking at the performance of the city, a 14 percent growth in population can be expected, which means an additional 20,000 people by 2035. Additionally, those between the ages of 25 and 34 account for 85 percent of all new jobs regionally. How the workers in that age group want to live, where they want to live, the types of jobs they want to have and what they want to do after hours all has a direct bearing on some of the questions that need to be answered moving forward.

Ms. Millier informed the Commissioners that creative occupations have outperformed all other occupations within the region. There has been a 37 percent growth in the creative occupations as compared to 11 percent across all other occupations. The creative industries definition takes in businesses and occupations that underpin sectors of the economy beyond just those in the software and gaming sectors. Like creative occupational growth, creative industries have outpaced all other industries by an order of magnitude. That is important because the jobs are high-value jobs and are more likely to be resilient in times of economic downturn.

Ms. Millier said there is data in the report that looks at how the different subsectors within the economy have performed in terms of employment growth. It specifically points out the growth in software programmers and artists relative to other jobs.

Mr. Baeker said when focusing on creative economy strategies it is helpful to compile an inventory or database of all businesses, including non-profits; all festivals and events; the spaces in which creative expression and cultural participation take place; and all natural heritage features. In addition, it is helpful to know where they are located. By utilizing geographic information systems, each entity along with its information, location and contact information can become part of an interactive map. For planning purposes, the exercise yields information relative to distribution and concentration of the assets, including data about where they are not located.

Mr. Baeker said information has been gathered through a number of different channels, including a telephone survey of 100 creative businesses. The same survey was made available online for those not specifically contacted but who still wanted to contribute. In all, 214 businesses were reached, yielding statistical validity in the results. One of the big findings was that small businesses find it difficult to establish and grow a creative enterprise in Bellevue because space is too expensive; the same issue is faced by non-profits and individual artists.

In addition to the surveys, stakeholder interviews were conducted with members of the City Council, city staff, businesses, and with those in cultural communities.

In the values framework report there is a narrative around each of eleven themes drawn primarily from the interviews. The appendices provide specific and often very actionable kinds of things that can be done relative to each of the themes. It came as no surprise to anyone that affordable space was at the top of the list relative to the production side of the arts, namely artist studios and workspaces. Housing as an issue came up as well, though the report does not deal with it to any significant degree. People talked about cultural infrastructure, which was defined as the places where cultural activities take place. While that certainly included the Bellevue Arts Museum, the children's museum, and PACE, there was also the feeling that there is a need for other spaces in which people can participate in cultural activities, both in the downtown and distributed throughout the neighborhoods. Community centers, recreation centers and schools were highlighted as places in which to accommodate cultural participation space.

People talked a lot about partnerships and collaborations relative to strengthening the arts, culture and creative industries sector. Sustainable and resilient organizations can come about through sharing resources and spaces, and through collaborating on activities. No one has any illusion that the city could ever mobilize enough money to meet the needs of the entire sector, but the positioning of grants to organizations as economic assets as well as community assets might help make the case for an increased level of investment from the city.

There are challenges being faced relative to giving by individuals, foundations and corporations, namely that more such funds flow primarily to Seattle. Many are wanting to see that shift by arguing a sense of community.

Many believe there is a need to strengthen leadership and shared governance in light of mechanisms to support the collaborations and partnerships needed. Shared governance mechanisms exist in other cities and serve to connect the creative sector to the philanthropic and corporate communities in effective ways. There are also those who believe there is a need to broaden the city's acknowledgment of the leadership role Mr. Heim has brought to the city while at the same time recognizing there is a broader role to be played that cannot be filled by just one person.

Mr. Baeker said there is a need to connect Bellevue's diversity with the creative economy. There are in Bellevue communities with rich cultural traditions that are celebrated. The communities that have been in Bellevue for some time and feel as though their own culture has been secured are the ones who are willing and eager to engage other cultures in intercultural conversations.

There is a need to embed the arts and creativity throughout the city according to the survey results and stakeholder conversations. The focus of the comments was on public art in addition to pop-up places in the community where performances could happen. They were also talking about major projects the city is taking on, such as the Grand Connection and the Bel-Red district where the vision is to make art and creativity a central focus.

Comments were also made about the need to leverage the strength of the gaming industry. There are musicians, visual artists and writers who are employed in that sector, so ways should be sought to leverage connections between the non-profit and for-profit sides.

Comments were also made about the need to shift Bellevue's civic image, identity and brand. Bellevue is a relatively young city, and the downtown in particular was only recently built and is viewed by many as still being shiny, pristine or even sterile. Having arts and culture activities and indeed people on the streets in the evening will begin to shape a different

perception and brand for the city, which will also connect with tourists and draw people to Bellevue to spend their money.

Commissioner Malkin commented that all of the Commissioners have at various times talked about the points made. He asked if the data triggered any “ah hah” moments. Mr. Baeker said in his conversation with Councilmember Robinson he found her to be very articulate about all of the issues. She highlighted the need to talk about the city’s strengths in virtual reality and augmented reality. That certainly was a telling moment.

Ms. Millier said it is well known that the gaming and software industries dominate in terms of sheer order of magnitude. But in drilling down into the creative value chain, which involves those who create, produce, manufacture, distribute and provide support services, it was found that there are as many businesses in the creation segment as there are in production. Notwithstanding the level of employment, which is far greater on the production side, there are an equal percentage of businesses on the creation side, and overwhelmingly businesses on the creation side have less than five employees.

Commissioners Lau Hui and Jackson commented that there is not necessarily a connection between the creatives in the community and the production side of things. The creatives are not always feeding into the production industry, rather they are small one- to two-people creatives that are not providing content for production, rather they are providing content for sale. Ms. Millier pushed back on those comments on the basis of what was heard from the stakeholders. For instance, in video game design there is a level of animation, sound production, music and voiceovers, and much of the production relies on local artists. The stakeholders say there is a symbiosis between the creatives and production.

Mr. Heim commented that in Los Angeles there is a direct link between the theater community and the comedy clubs with the film industry. There are countless stories of people who made it in the film industry who practiced their craft at the comedy clubs. In Bellevue, however, the host museum does not show local artists, and the local musicians are not necessarily being employed by the production side of things. Commissioner Jackson said it goes without saying that any given gaming company has a creative department, and those are creatives that feed into production. The fact is, however, that there are a lot of creatives in Bellevue who are not feeding into those things. The local creatives certainly are contributing to the local economy, but the flow indicated in the chart is not necessarily as strong as it implies. It is not overly surprising to learn the high percentage of folks who commute in to Bellevue every day; Capitol Hill offers the 25-35 year olds a yoga studio on every street, a nightclub or two on every street, and a constant flow of innovative things in the bar/entertainment/restaurant categories. Downtown Bellevue simply does not offer the same incentives for people in that age group. Additionally, the rental market is much friendlier in Seattle.

Commissioner Malkin asked if any of the research found local artists being displaced by the growing economy. Mr. Baeker said the research had not uncovered any empirical evidence of that, but the notion was mentioned by several. Commissioner Malkin commented that Bellevue has organically grown into an artist enclave, but as the area redevelops the artists there are being displaced. Ms. Millier said the issue could be implied by the survey results that indicated the cost of space is problematic.

Chair Manfredi commented that the comparable cities in the analysis have similar relationships to larger cities. Capitol Hill in Seattle is clearly a main metropolitan center beside which Bellevue is a satellite. Becoming like Capitol Hill would be very difficult. The five strategic themes as outlined is good, but in many respects the data bolsters what the Commission has been saying for a long time. Going forward, the focus needs to be on developing a strategy. There is a need to expand creative spaces; the question is how to go

about accomplishing that. The upcoming workshop will serve as an example of what the Commission and the arts program can do in a leadership role. He said clearly the anchor arts organizations like the Bellevue Arts Museum and the Tateuchi Center will be key to Bellevue's success going forward, but the smaller organizations are important as well.

Commissioner Jackson asked if any of the comparable cities are as young as Bellevue is. Mr. Heim said Four Corners outside of Washington, D.C. is a classic edge city where there was nothing 40 years ago and which has become home to a number of corporate headquarters. The need to focus on arts and culture was picked up a decade ago and a performing arts center was constructed, but it failed miserably. The problem was that as a satellite the area did not have the needed arts ecosystem. Commissioner Jackson said a question asked in the orchestra business is has the audience died. The Tateuchi Center may in fact be a solution for 20 years ago. Orchestras around the area, regardless of how good they are, are having difficulties in getting people to come to concerts, and those who do attend are primarily gray haired. No one wants to see the Bellevue Arts Museum fail, but it may be teetering on the edge because of a monolithic central structure that no longer is viable in the era of Netflix.

Chair Manfredi pointed out that Benaroya Hall is operating at capacity and those who are attending are not all Seattlites. Many come from Bellevue and the Eastside. Arts Program Coordinator Scott MacDonald agreed but noted that the Benaroya Hall audience is typically not made up of 25-34 year olds. Mr. Heim said tastes change over time and as people age they mature in terms of content. All institutions are struggling with an evident generational break. The Seattle Art Museum Re-Mix project is trying to get the 25-34 year olds into the museum, the Seattle Repertoire has a similar focus. Commissioner Wolfteich said the same is true of the ballet and the opera. Mr. MacDonald noted that the big shows being done by the Seattle Art Museum are being skewed more toward culture and away from fine art; they are clearly trying to tie into cultural references that span generations.

Commissioner Malkin asked how Bellevue could embrace the same approach. He also questioned whether any of the tide of economic development is overflowing into the non-profit sector, pointing out that the Commission is certainly not seeing it when groups seek funding and call out the fact that their budgets continue to be flat. Mr. Baeker said there are a lot of questions being asked about conventional facilities. He said it remains to be seen what constitutes a cultural facility in a highly diverse community; it may not be a gallery at all, it may something that serves several functions.

Chair Manfredi pointed out that Meydenbauer Center is operating at capacity and many local arts groups wanting to get into the space simply cannot do so. Ms. Millier asked what it is about that venue that makes it so attractive, and Chair Manfredi said chiefly the reason is it is the only one. Commissioner Jackson added that while the Kirkland Performing Arts Center is not as large, it also does not have the backstage space, so groups wanting to put on large productions turn to Meydenbauer Center because it can accommodate them.

Commissioner Malkin commented that the Tateuchi Center will offer the advantage of having both a large theater space and a small theater space, but it offers no gallery space for visual artists. Chair Manfredi said there is clear evidence of need in the community.

Mr. Heim said earlier in the day he put in front of the task force the updated vision statement for the Cultural Compass. He shared it with the Commissioners as well and said the intent is to integrate the vision into the Creative Edge work.

Commissioner Jackson said the question is what should have the lead in the Creative Edge, economics or arts and culture. The city wants more tax revenues and more jobs, so the question is how the stimulating, connecting or nurturing the creative industries can make that happen. Chair Manfredi commented that once there is a vibrant community as defined by

cultural elements, people will want to come and work in that community. The natural result is that workers do better, companies do better, and there are more tax revenue and jobs. One option would be to support a creative space that focuses to some degree, maybe even to a large degree, on the gaming industry. Under the scenario, however, there would be no space for painters and the straight-up musicians; those artists would be pushed out and would no longer have any place in Bellevue. There is a lot going on within the creative industry within technology, so much so that the argument can be made to support it, the only question is whether or not in doing so will trigger the loss of the fine artists. He said the solution would appear to lie in connecting the creative/technology industry with fine artists in a productive way. The question remains what strategy will be needed to see that happen.

Mr. Heim said he has heard about cities that are separating the cultural industries from the creative industries and asked if that is what Bellevue needs to do. Ms. Millier said it would be better to define the big blob rather than try to focus on two smaller blobs. The city should resist the urge to try to be all things to all people. Trying too hard to tease the two sides apart could result in losing the opportunity to look at where the intersection can happen. There is an intersection and the focus needs to be on how to support it through programs, initiatives or policies, or through making stronger the narrative around what already exists in Bellevue. Bellevue has artists, musicians, photographers, videographers and a whole range of talent, all of which needs to be given attention in ways that will derive the best outcomes for the city.

Mr. MacDonald suggested the Cultural Compass vision actually does that in that it provides the why behind the work being done and the strategies being drafted. He said by pulling it all apart, the “why” will get lost. The vision is really a comprehensive look at a creative community. The discussions have included conversations about innovation and technology.

Mr. Baeker said it came to him while writing some of the narrative that people would read “creative sector” and think about the enterprise and industry side of things. While they may not necessarily be the case, the message should broadly be about the arts, culture and creative industries in order to span the continuum of activity. There is clearly a different narrative on the non-profit side that cannot be jettisoned. In the end, everyone should be able to find themselves in the document.

Mr. Heim said the task force offered feedback about adding a bullet point around encouraging the participation of businesses in the support of non-profits and artists. Ms. Millier pointed out that it is not that businesses do not give, it is that they do not give in Bellevue. It is not good enough to just give to the region and have it all end up in Seattle.

Mr. Heim pointed out that there is a great deal of good information in the reports. He said the original intent of drafting the vision statement was to make sure it is very pithy, but he suggested that adding some shorter nesting paragraphs would be in order, similar to what was done for the strategic initiatives. Commissioner Wolfeich said initially there was some text added to some of the themes that could still be expanded on. Mr. Heim said one good addition would be a clear definition of what is meant by the creative community.

Commissioner Jackson cautioned against creating a definition that is overly broad and thus no longer meaningful. The idea is to set a way forward while leaving room for growth and change. That which is the creative community currently will not be the creative community five years from now, and what is perceived as creative could well be quite different in the years to come.

Mr. Baeker said he came out of the non-profit side of the sector working for museums and in government drafting art policies. He said he resisted for a long time taking on economic arguments but eventually came around to sophisticated economic arguments, not short-term

profit margins. Community aesthetics is the second most important thing that draws people to a community. Quality of place is in fact an economic argument that should be embraced.

Mr. Heim said there is a clear relationship between businesses and non-profits and artists. The value chain is completely siloed. In visual terms, there are a number of non-profits operating in Bellevue that are satellites, including Pacific Northwest Ballet, the Pacific Science Center and Village Theater. At the same time there are the homegrown non-profits, including the Bellevue Arts Museum and Music Works Northwest. In many ways, the satellite approach is panning out better than the homegrown model, but it is the homegrown model that is the community development long-term game. One thing the Commission might focus is on what homegrown plus satellite equals.

Commissioner Jackson said one reason the satellite model is more success has to do with infrastructure, facilities and administration costs. One element of capacity building that the small local groups have is a bunch of spread sheets used to contact everyone who has previously been to one of their performances. The step up to a full-blown database requires a large investment. An organization like Pacific Northwest Ballet can simply add a school in Bellevue and all the attendees and parents can seamlessly be slipped into their contact system.

Ms. Millier said both the homegrown and satellite models have responded to a demand. She said it would be interesting to characterize the types of organizations that have developed as satellites and homegrown. The exercise could yield information about what the city needs to do.

Commissioner Jackson noted that Vancouver's film industry definitely started out as a satellite but has over the last 20 years become much more homegrown. The growth has primarily been economically driven. It was less expensive to film in Vancouver, and from there it was realized it would be cheaper to cast in Vancouver, and then to establish production companies there. Ms. Millier said the same thing plays out in any type of business. Economics and critical mass play clear roles. Bellevue has a significant critical mass in a wide variety of creative industries and occupations that have yet to be fully leveraged. She said the University of Waterloo in Ontario is a tech mecca. They are renowned for their computer science programming, they are the home of Blackberry, and they are where research in motion got its start. All kinds of firms have been spun off. San Jose and Silicon Valley started recruiting graduates from the University of Waterloo before concluding it would be better to put a satellite operation in Waterloo. The satellite operation has become profit centers in and of themselves, and a whole homegrown approach has emerged.

Mr. Heim suggested the city of Waterloo would make a good case study in light of what they did was leverage their strength as a satellite to create a genesis around homegrown. One short-term strategy for Bellevue might be to embrace satellite operations in a move to create a critical mass and ultimately leverage it into a homegrown scenario. In the middle is the question of whether or not Bellevue can have both homegrown and satellite, and if there is a strategy that can tie the two together.

Commissioner Jackson said education is one reason people want to live in Bellevue, and it is also an amenity that ties together the art groups. The Bellevue School District has a strong arts program throughout all 12 grades. Mr. Baeker said he had heard that a lot in doing the research.

Mr. Heim said Seattle's Creative Advantage program is essentially an artist in residence or teaching artists program. It is like a registry that works in partnership between the city and the school district. The program vets artists to serve as teaching artists, and the schools draw from the pool.

Ms. Millier said the question is how to leverage the graduates coming out of their high school educations so their talents can be used in the broader creative industries. Chair Manfredi commented that they are gone the moment they gain their diplomas. Ms. Millier said that is where the problem lies. The likelihood is that once they head on to higher education they will not stay in the arts. It would be wise to leverage the talent coming out of the high schools to entrepreneurial work or apprenticeships in businesses who are looking for talent and cannot find it.

Ms. Millier asked if there is a college of art and design in the Seattle region. She was informed by Mr. Heim about Cornish University in downtown Seattle. She said where there are conversations around satellite versus homegrown, and when the focus turns to where some of the gaps are in terms of fostering and developing linkages between arts culture and creative industries, the idea of trying to get a satellite art and design campus in Bellevue should be explored.

Chair Manfredi suggested such a satellite campus would make a good addition to the Spring District. Commissioner Lau Hui pointed out that it might be easier to incorporate an art and design component into the collaboration between Tsinghua University and the University of Washington.

Mr. Heim said a version of the presentation will be shared with the City Council in early October along with economic development staff.

5. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS

Commissioner Wolfteich reported that he attended the opening of the Francia Russell Center. He noted that the studio space is even more expansive than the Seattle facility and is much better than the former facility.

6. REPORTS

- A. Commissioners' Committee and Lead Reports – As Noted
- B. Project Updates from Staff – As Noted

7. CORRESPONDENCE, INFORMATION

- A. Written Correspondence – As Noted
- B. Information
 - i. Committees – As Noted

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Manfredi adjourned the meeting at 6:44 p.m.