

Cultural Commission January 23, 2012

STATE OF TEXAS §

COUNTY OF TARRANT §

CITY OF BEDFORD §

The Cultural Affairs Commission of the City of Bedford, Texas, met in regular session at 6:30 p.m. at the Bedford Public Library, 2424 Forest Ridge Drive, Bedford, TX on the 23rd day of January, 2012 with the following members present:

Alicia McGlinchey, Chair
Thomas Jacobsen
David Medina
Barbara Speares
Lee Koch
Dr. Paul Davis

Constituting a quorum

Others present included:

Ray Champney, Council Liaison
Beverly Griffith, Staff Liaison
Mirenda McQuagge-Walden, Staff Liaison
Jeanette Cook, Park Board Chair
Rick Peters, Library Board Member
Joe Bangert, Senior Center Board Member

Absentees:

Elyse McNabb

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairwoman Alicia McGlinchey called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m.

Introductions were made between the board members and invited guests.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- 1. Consider approval of the following Cultural Commission minutes:**
 - a. January 9, 2012 regular meeting**

Lee Koch made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of January 9, 2012; the motion was seconded by David Medina. The motion passed 6-0.

OLD BUSINESS:

- 2. Conduct interviews with focus groups regarding the Cultural Assessment process.**

Introductions were made between the Commission members and invited guests. Ms. McGlinchey stated that this would be very informal and Mr. Jacobsen said they would do a great deal of listening.

Ms. McGlinchey provided background on why the invited guests were there and the purpose of the Commission. Council has established the Commission to develop a strategic plan for the cultural district, and, right now, they were conducting a cultural assessment. She said there was a lot of synergy now as Council has hired Kimley-Horn to work on a feasibility study and visioning of the redevelopment zone.

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Ms. Griffith explained that the pink section of the map is the Cultural District as designated by Council, which includes the Boys Ranch Park, Library and Old Bedford School. She also stated that this does not mean that the boundaries are fixed and that other areas can be added to district. She explained that the blue area was the initial area envisioned for the Central Bedford Development Zone (CBDZ). This encompasses an area of Bedford east of Forest Ridge to Central Drive and Bedford Road south to S.H. 183. The process for designing the Zone has just started so the final area may end up with different boundaries.

Ms. McGlinchey said that the development of the Cultural District and the CBDZ are parallel processes and she gets the impression that Council wants culture to play a role in the Zone. She also explained that the City has previously tried to get the State designation as a cultural district and was not granted this status. She said right now the Commission is focusing on the strategic plan and cultural assessment. The interview of this group is the first meeting in this process. The Commission has brainstormed a few questions for these sessions and the first one is: In thinking about the cultural activity in our community, what are the major strengths and what challenges or barriers exist?

Ms. Cook said that that she thought the two biggest cultural assets were OnStage and the Old Bedford School (OBS). She also mentioned the ArtsNET building in the Boys Ranch Park. However, she wasn't sure if there was a need for a cultural zone. She said cultural can be defined very broadly and some of our older buildings could be used like the Fort Worth Fire Department has used their old fire station.

Mr. Bangert asked if Bedford was big enough to have a cultural district.

Mr. Peters said that he thought a cultural district could be a continuum from the kids in school. There are great ISD programs and several venues for art in the City including the OBS, Arts Guild, local artists and OnStage. He indicated he had visited the HEB ISD web site and found over seven pages of fine arts activities. He felt that the focus should be to support the art and cultural activities that are currently in place and working well because it is harder to create something new.

Ms. Cook said that there was under-utilization or under-attendance of some programs. She felt that the activities need to be advertised more. She said to start with what you have and build it up and then the artists will come. She described a visit to London where there was a long hallway in a building that was used to display art. She said this is an example that art can be used in available space every day, not just official art spaces.

Mr. Bangert indicated that he felt the Senior Center had good attendance and lots of activities.

Mr. Peters said that getting the word out is tough sometimes. We want to grow but need to appreciate what we have. He told how when he first moved to Bedford, he needed a beer stein made with a crest on it from a German village. He was introduced to local artist Bud Koons and he made the crest. When he took it with him to Germany, they were amazed at the craftsmanship so there are many great local artists in Bedford. The plan should integrate all age groups and needs a communications element.

Mr. Jacobsen wondered if art could be incorporated into the Library because, when he visited the Southlake Library, they were displaying youth art and that made an impression on him.

Ms. Cook suggested partnering with groups themselves, similar to the Granbury Tour of Homes with the nativity scenes or the Empty Bowls program.

Councilman Champney stated that what was exciting about what he was hearing from the stakeholders is that they were all on the same page. The challenge is finding a catalyst, to find that central idea. He said he had envisioned a redevelopment something like the Santa Fe outdoor open air mall.

Mr. Peters said one idea might be to modify the acoustics in different buildings to attract performances or to put an amphitheater at the OBS or BRAC.

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Ms. Cook suggested starting with the current facilities and analyzing what we have to see which would work best. The old library has the potential to be renovated for a different purpose. She thought it would be nice to see redevelopment similar to Fort Worth.

Councilman Champney asked what is our focal point or catalyst?

Mr. Peters said that the catalyst should be multigenerational and we need to offer something people would want. He suggested being an incubator for artistic businesses.

Ms. Cook suggested a calendar of events to promote not just City events, but other events in the community. She said we like to be siloed in Bedford. She said she doesn't see Go Trojans signs in Bedford like she does in Euless. She also mentioned the example of Bedford not letting the Trinity March-A-Thon come through, unlike Euless. She said Bedford needs to be more community minded and the Go Trojan signs would go a long way. She mentioned activities like the Twas the Night Before Christmas, Drive Through Nativity and 6Stones and asked why weren't these activities being promoted. She also said the cultural district zone looks as if it is leaving out south Bedford.

Mr. Peters said we must build something that draws people.

Councilman Champney said we need a point of differentiation while embracing the region.

The question was raised about how the information gathered in the cultural assessment would support their board(s).

Ms. Cooke said it was all about quality of life. The Boys Ranch and OBS are the biggest venues that everyone knows about and we could use ideas from the assessment to partner with other activities to create more visitors.

Mr. Peters said there would be synergy that might make us eligible for more grants and to develop new programs like a coffee house night. He mentioned how the Library uses their annual survey to enhance programs and the cultural assessment would be useful in that way.

Mr. Bangert said that he thinks that a cultural district is plausible and thinks the monthly calendar of events is a good idea.

Ms. McGlinchey asked who else the cultural commission should be speaking with.

The suggestions included:

- Churches, specifically the music director at Martin United Methodist
- Irving Orchestra
- Suzuki Strings
- Mike Dean with the Trinity Choir
- Jewelry Teacher at Trinity
- Michael Hit
- Artisan Theatre
- Maria Redburn
- Karen Kersey
- Claire Komego,
- Ralph Chaney

After the guests were excused, the group discussed the format of the interviews and structure. They agreed that they liked the free flow of information.

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The group was reminded of the upcoming meetings at noon on Wednesday, January 25 at the Old Bedford School and at noon on Monday, January 30, at the Hurst Conference Center.

ADJOURNMENT

Paul Davis made the motion to adjourn the meeting and the motion was seconded by Lee Koch. Motion passed 6-0.

Chair McGlinchey adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Approved:

Alicia McGlinchey, Chair