

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Special Meeting

December 2, 2024
3:30 PM

Conference Room 1E-113
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Robinson and Councilmembers Hamilton, Lee, Nieuwenhuis and Stokes

ABSENT: Deputy Mayor Malakoutian, Councilmember Zahn

1. Call to Order

Mayor Robinson called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

→ Councilmember Nieuwenhuis moved to excuse Deputy Mayor Malakoutian and Councilmember Zahn from the December 2, 2024, Special Meeting. Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 4-0.

Mayor Robinson noted that Councilmember Lee would be joining the meeting shortly.

2. Roll Call

Mayor Robinson welcomed the following state legislators in attendance and asked everyone, including Councilmembers, to introduce themselves:

41st District

Senator Lisa Wellman
Representative Tana Senn
Representative My-Linh Thai

48th District

Representative Vandana Slatter
Representative Amy Walen

Mayor Robinson noted that Senator Patty Kuderer was recently elected to serve as the next State Insurance Commissioner.

3. Discussion with State Legislators regarding Key 2025 Legislative Priorities

Mayor Robinson thanked the legislators for providing funding for the Mountains to Sound Greenway, Eastrail Wilburton Trestle, electric fire truck and Mini City Hall project.

Looking to 2025, Mayor Robinson suggested that as the state legislature considers progressive revenue, she hopes they will include Bellevue representatives in the discussions. She said residents do not recognize the difference between service delivery from cities and states so it is important to work together in providing effective government services.

Mayor Robinson referred the group to the 2025 Bellevue State Legislative Agenda for the City's key legislative priorities.

Councilmember Hamilton described the Grand Connection project, a pedestrian and bike crossing over I-405 to connect Meydenbauer Bay to the Downtown and Wilburton areas. He said the project is critical to supporting the housing growth needed in Bellevue, as well as environmental stewardship plans and multimodal transportation. The project adds park amenities in an area that currently has limited options. He thanked the Friends of the Grand Connection group for their efforts and support.

Mr. Hamilton said the City is seeking funding for two projects, one through a potential transportation package and the other to be funded in the capital budget. The Downtown integration project and reconfiguration of City Hall Plaza will serve 40,000 daily users upon the completion of the Grand Connection project. Councilmember Hamilton said the City is requesting \$900,000 through the capital budget for this project. The second request seeks funding for the Grand Connection I-405 crossing. Mr. Hamilton said the City and its partners are hoping to complete the project by 2028, depending on the availability of funding.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis commented on the importance of completing the SR 520/124th Avenue interchange project and the I-405 Master Plan projects. He noted funding shortfalls for I-405 projects, including the Coal Creek Parkway roundabouts that are currently delayed for 10 years.

Briahna Murray, Vice President/Lobbyist, Gordon Thomas Honeywell, acknowledged the significant need for resources to deliver transportation projects and said she can assist the City in finding solutions.

Senator Wellman expressed enthusiasm regarding the Grand Connection project.

Representative Walen expressed support for the project and the pedestrian amenities.

Councilmember Stokes said Bellevue is implementing and embracing state requirements around housing and affordable housing. The newly updated Comprehensive Plan envisions a welcoming Bellevue for all people and housing was a critical focus of the recent plan update. He noted the City's plan to create an Office of Housing. He said staff is currently updating the Affordable Housing Strategy.

Councilmember Stokes said Bellevue is addressing affordable housing through a citywide lens and how it connects to transportation options, jobs, schools and services. He asked state legislators to consider flexible funding options that support early planning, pre-development and acquisition to promote affordable housing development. He said Bellevue seeks additional resources to be invested in housing to serve individuals earning 0-50 percent of the area median income (AMI). He emphasized the need for state resources.

Councilmember Lee commented regarding digital permitting and its importance in supporting the local economy, housing and environmental protection. He said the City is requesting \$2.7 million for the regional digital permitting system. He said Bellevue is a leader in working with the development community, and the City's services are predictable with open access. He said the City's transparent timelines reflect direction from the state legislature to streamline and improve project permitting services. Mr. Lee said Bellevue is a founding member of the eCityGov Alliance, which serves 17 local jurisdictions with their online permit processing.

Councilmember Lee said the City is working to implement Senate Bill 5290. Mr. Lee said the City's funding request will be used to modernize technology for permit processing improvements, create standardization for customers, and to allow the software to be customizable to fit local conditions. He thanked everyone for their work.

Ms. Murray noted that the digital permitting funding request described by Councilmember Lee is a joint request with multiple communities.

Representative Thai commented on the value of Bellevue's strong school district and the importance of housing, including affordable housing for people who work in all types of jobs. She said she would like to learn more about what the City is doing to address housing.

Mayor Robinson said staff would provide additional written materials for the state legislators.

Representative Senn said the region and state should use its solid waste management for energy production. She expressed support for digital permitting efforts and encouraged expanding it statewide.

Representative Slatter acknowledged that Bellevue continuously works to improve its permitting system and timelines. Responding to a series of questions, Mayor Robinson said staff would follow up with more information.

The state legislators provided additional brief comments regarding some of their priorities.

Representative Thai highlighted a budget request to retain a position in the Office of Public Instruction focused on mental health literacy.

Representative Slatter noted her interest in potentially using college-owned land for affordable housing or workforce housing. She commented on the critical need for mental health care workers statewide.

Representative Walen expressed concern about gun storage and guns being stolen from vehicles.

She noted her current work addressing condominium liability, medical debt, consumer protection, financial scams and pet insurance.

Senator Wellman said a primary responsibility of the state is to fund education. She commented regarding digital equity in terms of internet access.

4. Overview of Bellevue Grand Connection, including tour of City Hall Plaza

Mayor Robinson directed the group to the concourse to begin the tour of City Hall Plaza and the Grand Connection project.

5. Adjournment

Following the tour of the City Hall Plaza and presentation of the Grand Connection project highlights, the meeting adjourned at 4:54 p.m.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC
City Clerk

/kaw