

**CITY OF BELLEVUE
PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday
July 16, 2025
6:00 p.m.

Via Hybrid

BOARDMEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Clima; Chianglin, Clark, Drever, Kronoff, Valverde

BOARDMEMBER ABSENT: Vice-Chair Chou

COUNCILMEMBER PRESENT: Dave Hamilton

PARKS STAFF PRESENT: Sofia Fall, Pam Fehrman, Ernie Podaca, Mariam Sarwary, Michael Shiosaki, Ryan Walker

OTHERS PRESENT: Ron Binden, David Bonathan, Alex Tsimmerman

1. **CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:**

Chair Clima called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Motion by Boardmember Kronoff and second by Boardmember Clark to approve the meeting agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Motion by Boardmember Clark and second by Boardmember Valverde to approve the May 21, 2025 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

4. **ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:**

Chair Clima reviewed the guidelines for Oral Communications (Ordinance 6752).

David Bonathan, Meydenbauer Bay Association Boardmember, expressed concerns about Phase 2 of the Meydenbauer Bay Park expansion and urged the Parks Department to adopt a more transparent, neighborhood-first approach, noting that survey results were misrepresented by combining “satisfied” and “somewhat satisfied” and warned that the proposed design ignores neighbor’s priorities and will exacerbate traffic congestion.

Bonathan's preferred approach is moving parking to the eastern parcel behind the Chevron station, retaining marina parking, and simplifying the park design into a passive green space better suited to the residential neighborhood. Meydenbauer needs balanced development that preserves its historic character rather than a city-wide expansion that burdens the community.

Alex Tsimmerman expressed strong concerns regarding community services and City Council procedures. Tsimmerman criticized the city for not consistently showing speakers' faces during meetings, calling it discriminatory and noting that multiple complaints have been filed with the police, with plans to file more. Allegations were made that City Council has restricted the right to speak by issuing no-trespass orders and dismissing appeals, which undermines freedom of speech.

Rod Binden, president of the Meydenbauer Bay Neighborhood Association, spoke on behalf of about 1,300 households, including waterfront residents, yacht club members, and nearby highland residents. Binden emphasized concerns about 100th Avenue traffic, parking availability, and safety, stressing the importance of sufficient parking for park users. While noting no immediate objections, MBNA will closely monitor the process, report back to members, and raise issues if necessary to ensure neighborhood interests are protected.

Joe Kunzler objected to the Chair's failure to remove Alex Tsimmerman for offensive remarks and campaign signs, describing some comments as antisemitic and disrespectful. The speaker urged stronger leadership from the Chair and stated they plan to file a complaint within seven days.

5. **CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION:**

Councilmember Hamilton welcomed newly appointed Boardmember Drever to the Board. He also reviewed other Council-related activities.

6. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

A. **Parks CIP Project Status Report**

Michael Shiosaki, Parks Director, provided a summary of the Parks CIP Project Status Report and highlighted some of the upcoming community events.

7. **BOARD COMMUNICATIONS:**

Boardmember Chianglin said that he enjoyed Bellevue's 4th of July celebration. He also called attention to the email that was received regarding the commemorative gate that was accepted for

the new park. He does not want the gate to overshadow the Japanese-American experience in Bellevue.

Boardmember Kronoff shared a story about recent bobcat activity in her neighborhood. She also expressed gratitude for Bellevue's parks and waterways, which she and her family especially enjoyed this summer. Crossroads' Whale Park is a wonderful community hub. Bellevue's parks and open spaces aren't just amenities—they truly enhance quality of life. As an avid paddleboarder, Boardmember Kronoff also values Phantom Lake, but current access is limited and not disability-friendly, leading some to enter illegally because it's easier. She looks forward to improving that access so more residents can enjoy the special, motor-free lake.

Boardmember Valverde thanked staff for the well-planned July 4th event and shared her family's frequent use of local parks. She highlighted her interest in Eastgate community events, noted her family's input on park planning, and recommended the Bellevue Botanical Garden's "Story Time in the Garden" program as a great free activity for toddlers.

Boardmember Clark expressed support for the Chair's handling of a disruptive participant and confidence in her leadership, while also welcoming Boardmember Drever to the Board and encouraging attendance at the Eastgate meeting. He raised concerns about unpermitted vendors selling unhealthy products at Downtown Park, unsafe e-bike use on park paths and sidewalks, and an off-leash dog incident involving a child. He also inquired about the "Old Hearthstone Property," which staff clarified was former utility land now maintained by the city and informally used by neighbors.

Boardmember Drever expressed appreciation for joining the Board, noting his family's long involvement in local parks through youth activities. He looks forward to contributing to ensure future generations can enjoy the same experiences.

Chair Clima thanked the city and organizers for the successful July 4th Downtown Park celebration, highlighting the "Quench Buggy" hydration station. She also attended the Eastgate Neighborhood Block Party, noting residents' enthusiasm for the new park and praising community facilities like the South Bellevue Community Center. Lastly, she reported community interest in the pickleball pilot on tennis courts, with staff indicating the trial has been successful so far.

8. **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:**

A. **Sustainable Bellevue Plan Update**

Sofia Fall, Sustainability Coordinator, reported on progress updating the Sustainable Bellevue Plan, originally adopted in 2020 and set to run through 2025, with the new version covering 2026–2030. The overarching goal is to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, aligned with the city’s Comprehensive Plan, through strategies in transportation, land use, energy, waste reduction, and natural systems. Engagement so far has included youth dialogues, surveys (with 470 responses and a second survey underway), and community events, with findings showing 81% of respondents indicate that they are already experiencing climate impacts and there is strong support to invest in sustainability.

The draft action plan prioritizes high-impact actions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, build long-term carbon neutrality, and enhance climate resilience. Proposed strategies include piloting “Resilience Hubs” for climate emergencies, expanding and maintaining the tree canopy (especially in heat-vulnerable areas), transitioning from gas-powered to electric equipment, strengthening stormwater management, and reducing per capita water consumption. The draft plan will be released for public comment in August, with City Council adoption targeted for November 2025. Feedback was requested on the strategies, alignment with Parks Department priorities, and additional high-impact items to consider.

Discussion:

- Good to think of climate resilient hubs.
- Is there data that demonstrates the need/headcount for heat-related resilience hubs? *Response: It is difficult to evaluate the demand. Usage will be evaluated to determine any gaps and who currently isn’t being served.*
- “80% of people felt the impact from climate change”—it would be helpful to understand what impacts are being felt.
- The number of people that responded to the survey seems low. Is this response typical for Bellevue’s surveys? *Response: Yes. This is a typical response rate.*
- What is a “resilience hub?” *Response: It is a physical location that can be easily accessed and provide services during extreme weather events.*
- In regard to tree canopy, what is the recommended tree list? *Response: Development Services is working on guidelines and a resource list for the recommended species.*
- If electric yard care is desired, does Bellevue only have electric powered equipment to maintain parks and open spaces? *Response: There is not a plan to eliminate gas equipment—just evaluating pilot programs and considering trade-in events.*
- Are there different projections on the High Impact Context slide and how these assumptions were determined?
- The proposed Sustainable Bellevue Plan covers many of the Parks Board’s priorities.

- The city has aggressive goals and should be mindful of staff resources and bandwidth.
- How does the city balance community growth and the desire to decrease emissions? *Response: Density is an emission reduction solution. It is energy efficient and part of the emission reduction solution in Bellevue.*
- Consider rainwater harvesting as an option for sustainability.
- Need to remember that tree canopy and density are not related, when considering tree canopy.

B. Renovation & Refurbishment Program

Ernie Podaca, Capital Projects Manager and Pam Fehrman, Planning & Development Manager, said that the Renovation and Refurbishment Program guides the systematic upgrading of park facilities, while allowing flexibility for unexpected needs, ensuring safety, accessibility, and evolving recreational opportunities. It covers capital renovation projects typically costing \$100,000 to \$1 million—beyond routine maintenance—such as roof and siding replacement, HVAC and accessibility upgrades, restroom and kitchen improvements, and enhancements to landscaping, irrigation, and natural areas. Managed by city staff across multiple divisions, the program ensures parks remain safe, functional, and aligned with community needs.

Discussion:

- Based upon the funds available, what would be different if there were additional funds? *Response: Could do more projects if the city had additional staffing resources.*
- Exciting to see the level of operational excellence and the investment in the community.
- How many of the projects have already been funded and how far into the future has money been allocated? *Response: This is an ongoing program. It is a priority in the CIP budget with funding budgeted consistently for the six years that the CIP covers.*
- The new turf and playground at Newport Hills look beautiful.

C. Chair and Vice-Chair Elections

Chair Clima explained the process for Board elections. Nominations for the Parks & Community Services Board Chair position were opened.

Motion by Boardmember Clark to reappoint Chair Clima for the Parks & Community Services Board Chair position. Chair Clima accepted the nomination.

Boardmembers commended Chair Clima for her past leadership and involvement in the community.

Chair Clima requested other nominations for the Parks & Community Services Board Chair position. There were none. Therefore, nominations were closed.

At the question, motion carried unanimously (6-0) to reappoint Chair Clima as the Parks & Community Services Board Chair.

Chair Clima opened nominations for the Parks & Community Services Board Vice-Chair position.

Chair Clima nominated Boardmember Valverde for the Parks & Community Services Board Vice-Chair position. Boardmember Valverde accepted the nomination.

Chair Clima requested other nominations for the Parks & Community Services Board Vice-Chair position. There were none. Therefore, nominations were closed.

At the question, motion carried unanimously (6-0) to appoint Boardmember Valverde as the Parks & Community Services Board Vice-Chair.

9. **NEW BUSINESS:**

Ryan Walker said that the September Board meeting agenda will include an update on Eastgate Park and a quarterly memo to Council.

10. **ADJOURNMENT:**

The August Board meeting has been canceled. The next regularly scheduled Board meeting will be held on September 17, 2025. Boardmember Kronoff requested remote participation.

At 8:24 p.m. Chair Clima declared the meeting adjourned.