

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Regular Meeting

June 24, 2025
6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Robinson, Deputy Mayor Malakoutian and Councilmembers Bhargava¹, Hamilton, Lee, Nieuwenhuis, and Sumadiwirya

ABSENT: None.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m., with Mayor Robinson presiding.

2. Roll Call; Flag Salute

City Clerk Charmaine Arredondo called the roll and all Councilmembers were present. Deputy Mayor Malakoutian led the flag salute.

(a) Disability Pride Month Proclamation

Councilmember Lee read the proclamation declaring July 25 as Disability Pride Month in Bellevue. He encouraged everyone to honor the ongoing work of disability advocates and to join in creating a more inclusive, accessible community.

Stephanie Walsh, mother of a Kindering child, thanked the Council for the proclamation. She commented on the challenges of raising a child with disabilities and the benefits of having a supportive community. She praised the staff of Kindering and similar organizations that provide services to disabled children and their families. A Kindering representative thanked the City and the community for their ongoing support and for the proclamation.

Sharon Cini, ADA/Title VI Equal Opportunity Officer, Human Resources Department, thanked the Council for the proclamation.

(b) Parks and Recreation Month Proclamation

Councilmember Hamilton read the proclamation recognizing July 2025 as Parks and Recreation Month in Bellevue. He encouraged everyone to explore, celebrate and support the many benefits of our parks, trails, natural areas and recreation programs for people of all ages.

¹ Councilmember Bhargava participated remotely.

Toni Esparza, Assistant Director, Parks and Community Services Department, thanked the Council for the proclamation. She said there are many opportunities to enjoy Bellevue's parks, beaches, sports fields, trails, day camps, recreation programs and special events this summer.

3. Approval of Agenda

Mayor Robinson requested the addition of an item to consider the appeal filed by Alex Tsimerman in response to a notice of exclusion issued by the mayor on June 16.

- Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to approve the agenda, amended to add item 7(a), Consideration of Appeal of Notice of Exclusion. Councilmember Nieuwenhuis seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

4. Oral Communications

City Clerk Charmaine Arredondo said the total time for oral communications is for a period not to exceed 30 minutes and topics must relate to City of Bellevue government. Persons speaking to items on the agenda will be called first and if time remains, others will be called. The presiding officer is authorized to give preference to individuals who have not spoken to the Council within the past 60 days or who are speaking to items that will come before the Council in the upcoming 60 days. Ms. Arredondo said each speaker is allowed up to three minutes to speak and a maximum of three speakers are allowed to speak to any one side of a particular topic. In compliance with Washington state campaign laws regarding the use of public facilities, no speaker may support or oppose a ballot measure or candidate.

Mayor Robinson suggested that if anyone is unable to speak tonight, they are encouraged to submit their comments via email to Council@bellevuewa.gov.

- (a) Ryan Gillis, a builder, noted that he emailed the Council the previous day regarding middle housing. He said the current economic conditions are not favorable for builders. He said the market indicates that buyers want at least three bedrooms in two-story homes with at least a one-car garage, private yard and guest parking. He suggested that cottages are a preferred product on the Eastside. He expressed support for an earlier proposal to allow 1,750 square feet for a cottage plus additional footage for a garage.
- (b) Kyle Sullivan noted that he previously emailed the Council. He read excerpts from the state legislature's HB 1110, which addresses the continued need for the development of housing at all income levels, including middle housing options. He said traffic congestion could be mitigated somewhat if people could afford to live closer to their jobs. Middle housing can also allow some people to downsize and stay in their neighborhood. He asked the Council to allow six units per lot within one half-mile of a major transit stop, as recommended by the Planning Commission. He said the one quarter-mile threshold significantly limits the potential sites for middle housing.

- (c) Jonathan Kurth thanked Councilmembers for their thoughtful discussions in working through a number of issues related to housing. He concurred with Mr. Gillis's comments above about how to make housing affordable and attainable for residents. Mr. Kurth said he studied urban planning and has developed cottages over the past 10 years in Seattle. He would like to develop cottages in Bellevue that are larger than accessory dwelling units (ADUs) or detached ADUs.
- (d) Anne Rittenhouse said she spoke with Mayor Robinson at the Eastgate Community Association picnic over the weekend regarding Ms. Rittenhouse's concerns that the neighborhoods are mistreated by certain Councilmembers. Ms. Rittenhouse said the mayor suggested that she articulate her concerns to state legislators as well. She said the House bills were out of balance and that any vote in excess of the State's standards is a vote against the livability and vitality of Bellevue neighborhoods. She said residents were not informed about the new state housing laws. She expressed concern that the Council is allowing the safeguards provided in state law to be eliminated through the City's Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA).
- (e) Nicole Myers said she appreciated connecting with her neighbors over the past couple of months to discuss the middle housing LUCA. She said many residents are interested in building ADUs or moving to middle housing options within Bellevue. However, she said many are not aware of the middle housing state laws or LUCA. Ms. Myers thanked the Council for taking this issue seriously and understanding the importance to the community. She thanked Deputy Mayor Malakoutian for his leadership in suggesting improvements to the City's outreach process. She thanked Councilmember Lee for his efforts to balance the stakeholders' interests.
- (f) Martin Seelig said the City wants to replace a sanitary sewer pump station with a gravity fed sewer. He said the engineer who maintained the station has retired. He said the sewer easement would cross over their seven-acre site zoned O (Office). He said his family has owned the site, adjacent to and 60 feet below the Eastrail, for more than 60 years. He said the sewer easement will reduce the amount of housing, especially affordable housing, that could be built under the proposed O zoning. He said City staff continues to oppose their proposal to implement zoning modifications. He said his engineers are investigating buffer reduction from the slope to further increase the potential for housing. He asked the Council to direct staff to meet with his team to accommodate the City's conflicting goals and refine their proposal.

Mayor Robinson asked the City Manager to follow up with Mr. Seelig.

- (g) Timothy Siegel recalled that he commented last year about the use of gas-powered leaf blowers and weed whackers. He asked whether the City has addressed the issue.

City Manager Diane Carlson said the leaf blower issue is on staff's land use planning initiative work plan for 2026.

Mr. Siegel expressed concern that the City cannot move forward more quickly. He said several cities have taken action to ban gas-powered leaf blowers. He expressed concern about the pollution generated by gas-powered equipment.

Mayor Robinson encouraged the public to email the Council at Council@bellevuewa.gov regarding concerns and suggestions.

5. Reports of Community Councils, Boards, and Commissions: None.
6. Report of the City Manager: None.
7. Council Business and New Initiatives

(a) Consideration of Appeal of Notice of Exclusion

Mayor Robinson said this item is to consider the appeal of a Notice of Exclusion from attendance at Council meetings issued on June 16, 2025, pertaining to Alex Tsimerman. The exclusion is for the period of June 16-August 15, 2025. As the presiding officer and in accordance with Council Rules, Mayor Robinson said she had the authority to issue a Notice of Exclusion to any individual who repeatedly disrupts, disturbs or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of a Council meeting. She said Mr. Tsimerman has repeatedly disrupted, disturbed or otherwise impeded the orderly conduct of meetings and has been previously excluded from public comment at Council meetings from October 14-November 13, 2024 and from attending Council meetings from February 28-April 29, 2025. Mayor Robinson said Mr. Tsimerman continued to violate the rules of decorum at the May 6 and June 10, 2025 Council meetings. He was warned that his behavior violated the rules of decorum at each of the meetings, and he was escorted out of the meetings when he continued to violate the rules.

Mayor Robinson said Mr. Tsimerman's violation of the rules of decorum and refusal to correct his conduct after being warned caused actual disruptions and disturbances and impeded the orderly conduct of meetings.

Trisna Tanus, City Attorney, said that under Council Rules, any person excluded from participation or attendance at future Council meetings may appeal the exclusion by submitting a written appeal. She said Mr. Tsimerman submitted an appeal, which the Council will consider tonight. She said the Council should not solicit any testimony and after their review, Councilmembers will need to decide to either deny the appeal, upholding the Mayor's exclusion order, or grant the appeal, which means overturning the order.

- Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to deny the appeal of the Notice of Exclusion issued to Alex Tsimerman on June 16, 2025. Councilmember Nieuwenhuis seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

8. Consent Calendar

- Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to approve the Consent Calendar, and Councilmember Nieuwenhuis seconded the motion.
- The motion to approve the Consent Calendar carried by a vote of 7-0, and the following items were approved:
 - (a) Council Minutes
Minutes of June 10, 2025 Regular Meeting
 - (b) Resolution No. 10505 authorizing execution of the 2025-2028 Interagency Agreement between the Washington State Department of Natural Resources and the City of Bellevue for wildland fire or other emergencies.
 - (c) Motion to approve payment of claims and payroll for the period May 1, 2025 - May 31, 2025.
 - (d) Ordinance No. 6850 amending Section 4.36.030 of the Bellevue City Code - Damage Claims Against the City, to increase the settlement authority of the City Manager from \$75,000 to \$350,000; and establishing an effective date.
 - (e) Resolution No. 10521 authorizing execution of an updated Interlocal Agreement with the City of Redmond authorizing the City of Bellevue Fire Department to conduct joint training and fire recruit academies.
 - (f) Resolution No. 10522 authorizing execution of a Professional Services Agreement with HNTB in the amount of \$1,443,841.37, plus all applicable taxes, to provide Project Manager and Owner Advisor services for the Bellevue Grand Connection: I-405 Crossing - Downtown to Eastrail project (CIP Plan No. PW-R-216).
 - (g) Resolution No. 10523 authorizing execution of an interlocal agreement with the City of Kirkland and City of Redmond to implement the use of a shared homelessness outreach data system.
- 9. Public Hearings: None.
- 10. Study Session
 - (a) King County State of the Court and Bellevue Community Court Update

City Manager Diane Carlson introduced the update on the King County District Court and the status of the Bellevue Community Court. She said Bellevue has a long partnership with the District Court for municipal court services.

Judge Rebecca Robertson, King County Chief Presiding Judge, introduced Judge Lisa O'Toole, Judge Matthew York, Chief Administrator Othniel Palomino and City Operations Director Kim Howells.

Judge Robertson said the King County District Court has 25 judges by electoral district, nine district court locations, and 13 contract cities. She said the courts handle gross misdemeanor and misdemeanor criminal cases, protection orders, civil litigation matters, small claims, infractions and other civil matters. In 2024, 41,111 cases were filed in Bellevue District Court and more than 35,000 of those cases were parking infractions. Judge Robertson highlighted Bellevue's case history since 2019, when there were 50,321 cases.

Craig Fritz, Probation Manager, Parks and Community Services Department, said the Bellevue Community Court will begin operating on July 15 at the Bellevue downtown library. The community court is an alternative to traditional courts for eligible misdemeanor participants and Judge Lisa O'Toole is the presiding judge.

Judge Robertson said most of the eligible misdemeanor cases involve theft and other quality of life charges. Participants are offered a four-month agreement and if they successfully meet their obligations under that agreement, the case will be dismissed. Judge Robertson said they anticipate 75-100 cases per year in the Bellevue Community Court. The Community Resource Center provides substance use disorder treatment, mental health disorder treatment, housing resources, social services, meals, hygiene products and employment services.

Mr. Fritz said the goal of community court is to increase overall safety by focusing on early intervention, accountability, and access to supportive services. He said this is a collaborative model between the City, King County District Court, King County Library System and the community. He noted that any community member may access services at the Community Resource Center. Mr. Fritz noted the collaboration within the City of the City Manager's Office, Bellevue Police Department, City Attorney's Office, Homelessness Outreach Program and the Probation Division of the Parks and Community Services Department.

Stephen Penner, Chief Prosecutor, City Attorney's Office, said the community court is a proven model to reduce recidivism for certain defendants. He said all the participants must be approved by the City Prosecutor and the community court will not handle domestic violence, DUI, assault or other violent crime cases. The community court will focus on the individuals most likely to benefit from the intervention and services to prevent future criminal activity. Mr. Penner said King County has similar diversion programs through traditional courts. However, those programs take longer (12 months to 18 months) and the intent of the community court is to process cases more quickly. If a participant does not comply with the conditions of their agreement, they will be found guilty. Mr. Penner said he believes the program will be beneficial for the community.

Councilmember Hamilton thanked everyone for the presentation and for their work with the courts. He said he looks forward to the opening of the community court and resource center, which has been a successful approach in other jurisdictions. He said he looks forward to an update in the next year or so.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis thanked everyone for attending the meeting and supporting the community court. Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Mr. Penner said the community court will operate every Tuesday afternoon. In further response, Judge Robertson said bus passes are available for participants to access the court.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian thanked everyone for their work and collaboration. He said it is great to see how the City and King County are enhancing access to justice and addressing the root causes of low-level offenses. Responding to Mr. Malakoutian, Judge Robertson said nationwide and regional data indicates positive outcomes with community courts. In further response to Mr. Malakoutian, Mr. Penner said it is possible for individuals to participate online. However, part of what makes the community court model work so well is the in-person engagement and assistance.

Councilmember Lee thanked everyone for the update to the Council. He said he looks forward to seeing the positive impacts of the community court. Responding to Mr. Lee, Judge Robertson said the community court model attempts to address cultural differences among individuals toward the criminal justice system. The parties, including the judge, are seated in close proximity and the proceeding is structured more like a conversation. Judge Robertson said King County's community courts are based on national best practices related to therapeutic courts and cultural-based communication.

Councilmember Sumadiwiryia expressed support for the community court model and for providing a second chance for individuals to get their lives on track while holding them accountable. Responding to Ms. Sumadiwiryia, Mr. Fritz said the supportive services include mental health, substance abuse, housing, general health care, transportation and others. Judge Robertson said she will follow up with the list of providers. In further response to Ms. Sumadiwiryia, Ms. Robertson said the courts use an AI translator, Language Line, and interpreters to communicate with individuals who speak other languages.

Councilmember Bhargava thanked everyone for their work on this initiative. He believes the community court and resource center will reduce recidivism, enhance public safety, strengthen trust and equity, and provide valuable services. In addition to recidivism, he suggested tracking completion rates for treatment plans. Responding to Mr. Bhargava, Judge Robertson said the Bellevue Community Court will have case managers who track the status and progress of cases and individuals. Councilmember Bhargava encouraged outreach to educate the public about the community court. Ms. Robertson said their communications plan and media subcommittee will provide information through a number of sources and locations throughout the community. Mr. Penner said an open house is scheduled for September after the court has been operating for a couple of months.

Responding to Mayor Robinson, Mr. Penner said approximately 28 percent of the crimes responded to by the Bellevue Police Department involve full-time residents and two percent involve part-time residents. He said 42 percent of the individuals are not residents of Bellevue and the residence status for 28 percent of the individuals is unknown.

Mayor Robinson said the Council has discussed mandatory minimum sentences for certain crimes. She asked how the community court would coordinate with mandatory minimum sentences. Mr. Penner said there would not necessarily be a direct connection. He said a repeat offender subject to a mandatory minimum sentence is not likely to be a good candidate for community court. However, it is possible there would be cases that would overlap.

At 7:36 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared a short break. The meeting resumed at 7:52 p.m.

11. Land Use: None.

12. Other Ordinances, Resolutions, and Motions

- (a) Ordinance No. 6851 relating to middle housing and accessory dwelling units; Implementing HB 1110 and HB 1337 from the 2023 Legislative Session; Providing for the development of middle housing densities in residential land use districts; Providing for the development of accessory dwelling units; Amending Chapters 20.10, 20.20, 20.25, 20.30, 20.45A, 20.45B, and 20.50 of the Land Use Code; Amending Section 90 of Ordinance No. 6839; Authorizing amendment of the City's Land Use District Map established under LUC 20.10.040; Providing for severability; and setting an effective date.

City Manager Diane Carlson introduced discussion and Council action regarding the middle housing code amendments. She recalled that on June 10, the Council reviewed the Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) recommended by the Planning Commission. She said the Council has received significant public input and has revised the proposed codes in certain areas based on that input.

Rebecca Horner, Director, Development Services Department, said staff is seeking Council action on the final ordinances this evening to meet the state deadline for taking action related to the new state laws.

Nick Whipple, Code and Policy Director, recalled that the work on middle housing began when the work on the Comprehensive Plan periodic update began in February 2022. The Council initiated work on middle housing and accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in January 2023 as part of the Next Right Work program. House Bills 1110 and 1337 went into effect in July 2023 and the Planning Commission began working on middle housing codes in October 2024 following the adoption of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan periodic update.

Kirsten Mandt, Senior Planner, said House Bill 1110 requires cities to allow four units on single-family lots by right or six units when within one quarter-mile of a major transit stop or when two of the units are affordable housing units. Parking requirements are reduced and a city cannot apply more restrictive regulations. HB 1337 requires cities to allow two ADUs (attached and detached) on all lots and sets minimum size and height requirements, reduces impact fees, and provides exemptions related to parking and frontage improvements.

Ms. Mandt said state law establishes the baseline density requirements, parking restrictions, and ADU and floor-area ratio (FAR) minimums. The laws provide flexibility on middle housing types. The Washington State Department of Commerce model ordinance would take effect if a city does not adopt a local ordinance. Bellevue's LUCA is tailored to implement state law, align with the Comprehensive Plan, and address Bellevue's lot size context and housing needs.

Ms. Mandt recalled the Council's direction regarding the LUCA during the June 10 discussion:

- Allow 4 units by right citywide, or 6 units when two are affordable or fee in-lieu paid.
- In-lieu fee option: \$150K per extra unit to exceed 4-unit cap (up to 6 total) citywide.
- Allow 6 units by right within one quarter-mile walking distance of major transit stop.
- Allow 6 units by right within one quarter-mile walking distance of growth centers.
- Count detached ADUs toward unit cap; exempt attached ADUs.
- Allow all 9 middle housing types.
- Adjust height limits (excluding cottage housing).
- Allow 35-foot height (pitched roof), 32-foot height (flat roof), down from 38 feet.
- For cottage housing, maximum height reduced to 24 feet. Maximum unit size is now 1,500 square feet plus 300 square feet for garage. Cottages are not subject to unit cap, and FAR will govern instead.
- Require a minimum of one parking stall per unit, with no parking required near major transit.

Bellevue City Code Amendments (BCCA) update the transportation code where frontage improvements are required and address access considerations for middle housing. The clearing and grading code amendments are revised to align with the tree code in the Land Use Code and to reduce the grading buffer from the critical areas setback.

Ms. Mandt said staff is seeking Council action on the proposed LUCA and BCCA to meet the State's June 30 deadline for complying with HB 1110 and HB 1337.

Mayor Robinson said approximately half of the feedback from the public wanted the Council to be more aggressive in the regulations while half wanted more restrictive regulations. Her long-term goals are to increase housing at all affordability levels, increase opportunities for more families to live in neighborhoods, increase opportunities for more children to be enrolled in the Bellevue School District, and to provide options for people to live closer to work and to live in Bellevue without owning a car. Ms. Robinson said she wants to retain and expand the tree canopy. She wants senior-friendly housing for people to downsize and starter homes for first-time homebuyers. She wants to retain neighborhood character and to create a sustainable, equitable and accessible community.

Ms. Robinson said the Council heard comments in favor of a larger cottage size. She said there can be larger home sizes on existing lots, including 1,750 square foot homes even if they are not called cottages. She spoke in favor of the one quarter-mile distance to transit and growth centers in the proposed code revisions above. She encouraged offering pre-approved cottage designs, which has been done successfully in Kirkland. She would like to reassess the Council's decision in 2-3 years or sooner if action is warranted.

Mayor Robinson wants to ensure there is enforcement of the City's transient/short-term rental law. She also would like to look into enforcement measures to address empty rental housing units. She said it is important to educate the public about what can be done on their property. She expressed support for the LUCA regulations outlined above.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian thanked the Planning Commission, City staff and the public for their hard work and engagement throughout the planning process. He thanked his fellow Councilmembers for their discussions and consideration of options. He concurred with Mayor Robinson's request to review the outcomes and effectiveness of the regulations in 2-3 years. Deputy Mayor Malakoutian expressed support for the amendments as described above.

Councilmember Bhargava thanked the public, including developers, for the strong community engagement throughout the process. He thanked the Planning Commission for their work. While this has been a challenging and complex process, he said the City's middle housing goals have remained consistent. He expressed support for multiple middle housing options, walkable neighborhoods and small businesses. He spoke in favor of extending the one quarter-mile walkshed to transit and growth centers to a half-mile radius. He said one half-mile is a 10-minute walk and increasing density is a practical way to foster walkability. Mr. Bhargava said he believes the LUCA and BCCA reflect a well-balanced approach. He said middle housing is not only a housing issue, but it is a strategy to build a more inclusive and connected Bellevue.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis said he would have liked to see an earlier start to the public engagement process. He suggested creating a standardized outreach guide for the City, especially for major issues like middle housing. He said it should not fall on neighborhood leaders to educate their communities about technical and complex issues. He said housing policies should respect the voices of local residents, place infrastructure needs before increased density, and protect the character, equity and dignity of communities.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis said he does not like it when the State supersedes local control and he does not like that the State is mandating uniformity without affordability. He said middle housing will be largely market-rate housing. While prices may be lower than many Bellevue homes, they will not be affordable to many individuals at \$800,000 to \$1,000,000. Mr. Nieuwenhuis said the Council has consistently supported more housing and more affordable housing. He said previous Councils have been very thoughtful in terms of understanding where to place increased density. However, now the State is dictating what cities must do.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis thanked the Planning Commission and staff for developing a Bellevue-specific LUCA to the extent possible. He noted that the State's model ordinance includes provisions that are not a good match with Bellevue's priorities and values. He expressed support for the proposed LUCA, which he feels represents a good compromise responding to a broad range of perspectives and goals. He would like to be able to take action immediately in the future if the regulations cause negative unintended consequences in any neighborhood.

Councilmember Hamilton thanked the Planning Commission, staff, the public and his colleagues on the Council for their collaboration throughout this process. He said the City has actively

engaged with the community for more than two years, including numerous public sessions, surveys, an interactive storymap and a regularly updated web site. Councilmember Hamilton said he is ready to move forward with final approval of the middle housing LUCA as presented tonight.

Councilmember Sumadiwirya spoke to the importance of increasing the supply of different housing types and affordability levels. She said it is difficult to achieve everything that everyone would like to see in the LUCA. However, she believes a balanced approach has produced good regulations for Bellevue. She said she supports the one quarter-mile walkshed to transit because many residents cannot afford a car and/or are not physically able to walk a long distance. She looks forward to enhancing and broadening the City's engagement with the community in future processes, as suggested by Councilmember Nieuwenhuis.

Councilmember Lee said this has been a multi-year process involving many individuals and organizations. He said it is important for it to be economically feasible for builders to develop housing in Bellevue. He expressed support for providing middle housing options at different affordability levels. He encouraged a willingness in the future to revise the regulations to the extent possible if there are negative unintended consequences. Mr. Lee suggested continuing to consider modifications to the permitting process to accelerate the processing timelines.

Mayor Robinson highlighted suggestions from her colleagues to create a standardized outreach playbook for planning processes, review the impacts of the middle housing regulations over time, and to consider changes if there are negative unintended consequences.

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to adopt Ordinance No. 6851, and Councilmember Nieuwenhuis seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

(b) Ordinance No. 6852 relating to middle housing and accessory dwelling units; Amending Chapters 9.13, 9.18, 14.10, 14.60, 22B.10, 22.18, 22.19, and 23.76 of the Bellevue City Code; Amending the Effective Date for Sections 77 through 82 and 84 through 108 of Ordinance No. 6839; Providing for severability; and setting an effective date.

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to adopt Ordinance No. 6852, and Councilmember Nieuwenhuis seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

13. Written Reports: None.

14. Unfinished Business: None.

15. New Business: None.

16. Executive Session: None.

17. Adjournment

At 8:50 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared the meeting adjourned.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC
City Clerk

/kaw