

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION  
STUDY SESSION MINUTES

December 1, 2021  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Virtual Meeting

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Malakoutian, Vice Chair Ferris, Commissioners Bhargava, Brown, Goepppele, Moolgavkar, Morisseau

**Deleted:** Ferris

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Thara Johnson, Emil King, Mac Cummins, Department of Community Development; Matt McFarland, City Attorney's Office; Mike Brennan, Trisna Tanus, Department of Development Services

COUNCIL LIAISON: Councilmember Barksdale

GUEST SPEAKERS: Ann MacFarlane, Jurassic Parliament

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER  
(6:31 p.m.)

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Chair Malakoutian who presided.

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Chair Malakoutian stated that the meeting was being held remotely via zoom.

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2. ROLL CALL  
(6:31 p.m.)

**Deleted:** in order to comply with the Governor's emergency order concerning the Open Public Meetings Act, which prohibits in-person meetings.

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Brown who arrived at 6:33 p.m.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA  
(6:33p.m.)

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Ferris. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Moolgavkar and the motion carried unanimously.

4. REPORTS OF CITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS  
(6:34 p.m.)

Councilmember Barksdale reported that at the November 29 City Council meeting a conversation was had regarding the Northwest Bellevue and Northeast Bellevue neighborhood area plans. He said the Council elected to largely keep intact the recommendation of the Planning Commission. He thanked the Commission and the staff for their work on those plans.

5. STAFF REPORTS – None

(6:35 p.m.)

6. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – None  
(6:35p.m.)

7. PUBLIC HEARING – None  
(6:35 p.m.)

8. STUDY SESSION  
(6:35 p.m.)

A. Annual Planning Commission Retreat

*Introductions / Welcoming Remarks / Accomplishments*

Chair Malakoutian invited the Commissioners and staff to share a little about themselves and their hobbies. He said he teaches at the University of Washington in the civil engineering department, and also works for Amazon. He said he recently took up the game of tennis.

Vice Chair Ferris said she had a long career as a senior vice president of a large international company which included a lot of travel. She said after her retirement she fell into doing interim executive director work for non-profits, most recently president and chair of Imagine Housing. She said her favorite hobby is water skiing.

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Councilmember Barksdale said he leads user experience research at Unity Technologies and plays music and sings for a hobby, particularly during the winter months.

Commissioner Bhargava said he works in product management for Amazon, though he started his working life as an architect and worked for a time as an urban planner. He said he holds a doctoral degree focused on social justice, equity and urban infrastructure for developing countries. He said he likes to play tennis and golf and also plays guitar.

Commissioner Morisseau said she currently works as a real estate agent and previously worked as a structural engineer. She said she serves as a member of the board of the French school on Mercer Island and enjoys dancing, traveling and entertaining friends and family. She said her passion is social justice, with a particular focus on police reform.

Commissioner Moolgavkar said she works at Nori, a startup that is focused on carbon credits and block chain cryptocurrency. She said she also plays tennis, is an avid runner, and likes to bake and travel with her family.

Commissioner Goepppele said he works as general counsel for TerraPower, an advanced nuclear energy company. The company is focused on advanced nuclear energy and medical isotopes. He said outside of work he plays tennis and is interested in languages and travel, and is keen on environmental and early childhood development issues.

Commissioner Brown said she works as an immigration attorney. Outside of work she said she enjoys hiking, dancing and karaoke.

Matt McFarland said he serves as an assistance city attorney for Bellevue and has been the advising counsel for the Commission for the past five years, and also for the Department of Development

Services and the Department of Community Development. He shared that he recently went water skiing for the first time in 25 years and ended up unable to walk or extend his arms due to muscle soreness.

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Mac Cummins said he is director of the Department of Community Development, which includes the planning group and economic development services as well as the neighborhood divisions. He said he loves to cook.

Ann MacFarlane said at the moment her chief hobby is reviving her Russian language skills.

Trisna Tanus said she is the consulting attorney for the Department of Development Services. She said she also loves to play tennis.

Mike Brennan said he is the director of the Department of Development Services. He said his department deals with policy and code development, as well as building inspection and permitting services. He said he loves spending time outdoors in the mountains skiing, hiking and climbing, and also loves riding his bike.

Emil King said he is one of three assistance directors in the Department of Community Development and leads the planning division. He said he recently became an empty nester and now has more time to play soccer, ride his bike, run, and engage in home improvement projects.

Thara Johnson said she serves as the comprehensive planning manager and as the staff liaison to the Planning Commission. She said she reports to Mr. King and Mr. Cummins and her team works on long-range planning initiatives, neighborhood area planning and updates to the Comprehensive Plan. She said pre-Covid her hobby was travel, but said she also enjoys spending time with her dogs and hiking.

Turning to the Commission's accomplishments during 2021, Chair Malakoutian highlighted the annual Comprehensive Plan amendments that included the neighborhood plans for Northwest Bellevue and Northeast Bellevue; the incorporation of multimodal concurrency into the Transportation Element; and the DASH and Evergreen Court amendments. The Commission also worked on Land Use Code amendments related to affordable housing, and focused on the Grand Connection guidelines. All of the Commission's work during the year was conducted online. He noted that during the year the Commission said goodbye to Commissioner deVadoss and welcomed Commissioner Goepppele.

Councilmember Barksdale voiced his appreciation for the commitment each Commissioner is making to the Commission and the community. He shared that the in-depth conversations held by the Commission and engagement by members of the community is very beneficial to the City Council.

#### *Jurassic Parliament Training*

(7:00 p.m.)

Anne McFarlane with Jurassic Parliament said it is clear from the Commission's minutes that the Commission is an effective body. She added, however, that there is always room for improvement.

The first thing that happens at a meeting is the call to order, and the chair is the person with the authority to do so. The role is taken and it is the job of the chair to announce the presence of a quorum. A quorum consists of the minimum number of voting members who must be present for business to be done, usually a majority of the members serving on the Commission. If there is no quorum, a meeting cannot be called to order, and if during a meeting quorum is lost, business cannot be conducted. For a public body, both listening and talking is doing business, and steps must be taken to avoid creating a

serial or walking quorum in which a majority of Commissioners are talking to each other outside a meeting, constituting in effect a quorum.

Leadership is tasked with preparing a draft agenda, taking into account the overall workflow and priorities approved by the Commission. Commissioners wanting to see a topic added to an agenda should submit a request well in advance. The draft agenda is within the control of the body, subject to notice requirements. Roberts Rules says if the standard order of business is followed, there is no need to vote to adopt the agenda. Many bodies do elect to vote to approve the agenda, and it takes a majority vote to adopt the agenda, and a two-thirds majority to change the agenda later in the meeting. Suggested approximate times for each agenda item should be included, and the Commission should stick to those times, not allowing the discussion to run off into side topics not immediately relevant to the discussion. If the chair recognizes the need to extend the time to discuss a topic, he or she is allowed to simply add time for discussion absent any objection. It is a good practice to identify on the agenda which items are being for information, for discussion and for decision.

The role of the chair is critical in keeping everything moving. Timed meetings are productive. Commissioners must read their packets prior to meetings, and questions should be asked of staff in advance. It is always better to have information ahead of time.

According to Roberts Rules, the purpose of meeting minutes is to record the actions taken by the body. The minutes are to record what is done, not what is said. Ms. McFarlane allowed that the Commission has a different practice but pointed out that detailed minutes are a bad idea in that they violate the fundamental purpose of minutes, can create liability for individuals or the organization, tends to personalize and politicize the discussion, can intimidate participants and prevent them from speaking freely, and absorbs too much time for staff and the group. It also makes it more difficult to find the actions taken. Correcting what someone is quoted in the minutes as saying can be very time consuming. Given that the meetings are recorded, a good solution is simply to put time stamps in the minutes. Another good practice is not to include detailed public comments for many of the same reasons. She stressed, however, that the Commission is free to do as it wishes in terms of meeting minutes.

Ms. McFarlane said under Roberts Rules all members have equal rights, privileges and obligations. While easy to say, that is not always easy to apply and practice. Discussions at Commission meetings are not conversations; they are debates and they are to follow their own rules. The first of four fundamental guidelines is that no one can speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once. The guideline has the power to transform meetings, but few follow it, tending instead to discuss issues in conversational mode in which dominant people tend to dominate and agreeable people tend to let them. The structure is intended to make sure that all have equal opportunity to speak. If a discussion devolves into a hockey match, the chair should stop it, and if he or she does not, a member may make a point of order. The point of order takes precedence over the discussion, requiring the chair to rule on the point. The point of order is a motion claiming that a procedural mistake has been made and according to Roberts Rules it can only be made by a member of the body, though it is good practice to authorize staff to also raise points of order. The public is not allowed to raise points of order.

A point of order can be raised as an interruption to someone who is speaking, but it must be made at the time of the offense. The third person voice should always be used to avoid making things personal. Where the chair does not want to make a ruling, he or she can always ask the group to decide. The chair can always take appropriate action to maintain decorum even absent a member raising a point of order. Once the chair rules on a point of order, the only allowable form of discussion is to appeal the ruling. An appeal is the most important of all of Roberts Rules yet it is the least known. Anyone disagreeing with the ruling of the chair can appeal, and the members then decide.

Turning to motions and amendments, Ms. McFarlane said there must be motions before any discussion begins. It is acceptable for small groups to discuss things in a more casual manner, but even then it is best to begin with a motion. The suggested sequence is that staff presents a proposal in writing and answers any questions. Each member should be allowed to ask one or two questions, with each member having a turn. A motion is then moved, seconded and discussed. The motion may be amended, but ultimately the members vote on the motion. Often questions asked by members of staff after an issue has been presented result in a back and forth that can go on for a long time, and a discussion of the merits of the proposal. It is important to avoid that. The first presentation should be kept strictly focused on information; discussion should be saved for after a motion has been moved and seconded.

A main motion is a proposal to do something. Motions should be in writing if at all possible. They should be clear and unambiguous. A main motion must be phrased in the grammatical positive. A motion not to approve an ordinance would be incorrect; the proper approach would be to move to approve the ordinance and then vote it down. A main motion must comply with the bylaws and procedural laws of the land. There can only be one main motion at a time.

At the right time, any member can make a motion by stating a proposal as clearly and precisely as possible. A separate member must second the motion, and the chair then is to state the motion before debate begins. Members can debate and/or amend the motion, and the chair restates the motion before calling for a vote. Once the vote is taken, the chair is to state the result of the vote and indicate whether the motion passes or fails before going on to state the next item of business. Under the approach, members will hear the motion stated three times.

All motions must be seconded before they can be discussed. It is acceptable for members to second motions with which they disagree. Absent a second, motions are not to be considered or discussed. Discussion of a motion follows the offering of a second, and each member is to be afforded the opportunity to present their opinions, either for or against. Once discussion is concluded, the vote is taken. All online meetings should be conducted just as in-person meetings are held, and roll call votes are best for transparency and to avoid any confusion.

Roberts Rules says that to abstain from voting is to do nothing, and that the chair should not call for abstentions. Ms. McFarlane noted that local government bodies do generally call for abstentions, and that is acceptable. She observed that the Commission's bylaws state that an abstention is to be counted as a vote in favor. Members should be given the leeway to abstain for whatever reason they have without having their abstention counted as a vote in favor, particularly where an abstention is because of a conflict of interest.

Ms. McFarlane said the amendment process is used to make a change to a main motion. An amendment is intended to improve the main motion. Amendments must be germane, and anyone may move to amend, including the person who made the main motion. Once an amendment is made, there can be no discussion of the main motion, only the amendment. Motions to amend can add or insert words into the main motion; strike out words; strike out words and insert words in their place; or they can substitute words. If an amendment is adopted, the main motion is changed accordingly. If the amendment fails, the original main motion remains on the table and debate on it continues. Additional amendments can be made and voted up or down before the main motion is ultimately voted on.

There are occasions in which members offer what they term a friendly amendment. Often the chair turns to the maker and seconder of the motion and asks if they will accept the friendly amendment. That approach is not in keeping with Roberts Rules. Amendments are amendments, friendly or otherwise, and must be handled according to the rules.

Councilmember Barksdale asked about motions to amend an amendment. Ms. McFarlane said that can be done by any member. A second is needed and discussion follows. If the amendment to the amendment passes, it becomes part of the amendment to the main motion which, if it also passes, becomes part of the main motion. At each level, the chair is to state the language of the amendment.

Chair Malakoutian asked if a member can vote to approve meeting minutes for a meeting they did not attend. Ms. McFarlane said it is not necessary to abstain from voting in that instance. Roberts Rules states a member must not have been present at a meeting in order to vote to approve the minutes. The vote is a general expression of confidence in the process of the body.

Commissioner Ferris asked if Roberts Rules allows for a consent agenda. She also asked if the minutes need to reflect who seconds a motion. Ms. McFarlane said consent agendas are allowed under Roberts Rules, though they should contain items that are not expected to be controversial. Consent agendas are adopted with a single vote and cannot be discussed or debated. Anyone wanting to discuss a specific item on a consent agenda can ask to have that item removed from the consent agenda. She said the purpose of the seconder is to make sure that at least two people want to talk about the subject. The name of the seconder is not required to be reflected in the minutes, though most local governments do in fact record the name of the seconder.

Commissioner Goepple agreed that Roberts Rules dictates that all members are allowed to ask questions in an orderly manner and without taking over the discussion. He asked if there were circumstances where the process of seeking clarification from staff would allow for more of a conversation with back and forth questions and answers. Ms. McFarlane said in such instances it is necessary to apply common sense to keep the conversation from running wild and hijacking the meeting. The chair could also simply open the floor to conversational mode or informal discussion for a set period of time.

Commissioner Morisseau asked if Roberts Rules prevents a member from abstaining from voting on minutes if they choose not to. Ms. McFarlane said Roberts Rules allows for abstaining for any reason. The Commission's bylaws are more restrictive in that they state an abstention will be counted as a positive vote, except in cases of conflicts of interest.

Ms. McFarlane said Roberts Rules for small boards of up to about 12 people are different than those for large boards. In small boards, the chair can make motions, discuss and vote unless law, regulations or bylaws state otherwise. It is recommended, however, that the chair exercise constraint by speaking and voting last and by refraining from making motions. The Commission's bylaws state that the chair must step down in order to make a motion.

Ms. McFarlane distinguished between two types of organizations. She said one is shaped like a pyramid and is called an accountability hierarchy in which the boss at the top recruits people to do the work of the organization, tells them how to do it, and removes them if they do it badly. Such an organization has rank or status and those who are near the boss are higher in status than those down below. Status and rank is needed in order to have accountability. The other type of organization is called a voluntary association. The Planning Commission and the City Council and all non-profit boards fit into that model. It is where a group of people come together to achieve a common purpose. They set up guidelines and select a chair, but the chair is an equal invested with some special responsibilities. Each member during the meeting has an equal right to speak. The chair serves as the servant of the group, and the group is the final authority. Within the city, both types of organizations exist: the Commission is a voluntary association, and the city manager and staff work through an accountability hierarchy.

In voluntary associations, all members share in a joint and collective authority which exists and can be exercised only when the group is in session. Staff serve as advisors but not members. The body may invite them to speak and may empower them to make points of order. The Commission must give clarity to the staff. If an individual Commissioner wants to direct the staff to do something, the chair must make sure the full Commission agrees. It is okay for members to disagree; it is a good thing for members to have different opinions. Those whose positions are not accepted by the group sometimes take it personally, but that is a mistake. At the end of the day, the body must unite behind its decisions. The decision of the majority voting in a properly called meeting is the decision of the body as a whole.

Ms. McFarlane stressed seeking recognition before speaking; not allowing anyone to speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once; avoiding interrupting; not having sidebar conversations; and exercising courtesy and respect. The chair controls who speaks and when. Those who have not been recognized have a duty to remain silent except when raising a point of order. Members who have the floor have the right to speak until completing their comments. The chair may interrupt others when necessary to bring them to order, but not otherwise. Members may interrupt to make a point of order, should have no sidebar conversations, should avoid whispering, and should avoid texting or posting to social media during meetings.

Courtesy and respect are required and there are five types of remarks that are not allowed to be made during Commission meetings. Personal remarks are not to be made; the measure not the member is the subject of debate. Should a question arise as to whether a remark is appropriate or not, the chair rules subject to appeal, or may turn immediately to the group. The chair serves as a benevolent dictator enforcing the rules the group has chosen. Individual members must seek recognition before speaking, and if they speak without being recognized, or out of turn, the chair is to stop them. Members have a duty to obey the directions of the chair and they are not allowed to argue. They are, however, allowed to raise a point of order or an appeal.

Ms. McFarlane said the Commission is a body established by the Council to carry out the instructions of the Council. The Commission must address the issues assigned to the Commission by the Council and not propose unrelated alternatives. Staff are employees of the city and the Commission is not charged with directing them to address tasks. The Commission is charged with developing specific recommendations, and the staff are there to help achieve that goal.

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\*BREAK\*  
(8:00 p.m.)

Commissioner Bhargava indicated that he would not be returning after the break.

#### *Resource Book*

(8:07 p.m.)

Ms. Johnson noted that staff had the draft resource book materials were sent out to the Commissioners the week prior to the retreat. She said once finalized the document will be published to the Commission's website. The first section of the book outlines what the resource book is about and frames the work of planning in the city, the Council's vision and priorities, the Commission's guiding principles, and details on the two departments the Commission works with most closely: Community Development and Development Services. There is also an overview of the Growth Management Act, Shoreline Management, and comprehensive planning. There is a detailed section on ethics; a section titled Tips and Tricks which outlines how the Commission can best work with the public, the staff and the City Council; a section on Commission procedures; and a section with additional resources.

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Vice Chair Ferris said the resource book is outstanding and exceeded her expectations in terms of the amount of information, the detail it includes, and the professionalism it evokes. She suggested it would be helpful to dig a little deeper into the differences between the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Use Code and how the processes work together. She also suggested that something should be included about how the Commission can go about seeking modifications to issues being worked on by the staff without adding more work to the staff or the Council.

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Commissioner Goeppele agreed that the book is an excellent resource. He said he had some detailed comments that he would forward to staff, including places where there could be a little more content. He noted the discussion in the materials about the legislative and administrative functions of the Commission versus quasi judicial functions and commented that during his tenure on the Commission there has been nothing that could be termed quasi judicial. Ms. Johnson said she would add some clarifications in the document, adding that boards and commissions in Washington state primarily make recommendations on legislative matters. Mr. McFarland confirmed that statement and clarified that the Commission has no quasi judicial functions at all. The City Council does sometimes have quasi judicial items before it.

Chair Malakoutian added his kudos for the work done by staff in producing the resource book. He said the document will be of great importance to new Commissioners as they are appointed to serve on the Commission. He expressed a desire, however, to see the document be about 20 or 25 pages in all with links to everything outlined in the document for additional information. Ms. Johnson suggested staff could draft an executive summary of the resource book that could serve that purpose.

Councilmember Barksdale suggested it would be helpful to include a case study previously undertaken by the Commission. That would provide a good reference as to where all the pieces fit into the whole.

#### *Discussion of Survey Results*

(8:24 p.m.)

Mr. King explained that in consultation with the chair and vice-chair, the pre-retreat survey was sent out to the Commissioners and the four core staff who work routinely with the Commission. The detailed results of the survey were subsequently sent out to the Commissioners.

With regard to areas where the Commission is functioning well, Mr. King said the answers highlighted a number of areas. The more detailed research indicates many positive things the Commission should be proud of. He noted few recommendations for improvement from the survey results.

The second survey question dealt with areas where Commission interactions could be improved. Mr. King said the desire to have more big picture discussions of land use and policy was raised by the survey results. There was expressed by some a desire to discuss issues and better ways to receive public comment. The notion of calling on Commissioners who have used the raised hand feature rather than simply going around the table was raised, as was the notion of voting through the use of the raised hand feature to save some time. Also mentioned was the idea of having a consent calendar that could include meeting minutes as a time saver. Some highlighted the need for more background materials and training, which the new resource book will go a long way toward achieving.

Commissioner Moolgavkar commented that the public often comes in with great ideas, but too often that is just before the Commission is set to vote on something. The opportunity to give in-depth attention to the comments made by the public is missing from the process.



Chair Malakoutian pointed out that the public is welcome to attend Commission study sessions that lead up to a public hearing and a final recommendation, and at each of those meetings they are free to raise their issues and concerns. Commissioner Moolgavkar said her concern was more with the public comments made during a public hearing; that is where the Commission lacks the opportunity to give their comments due consideration.

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On the question of how staff could better support the Commission, Mr. King said one Commissioner mentioned knowledge sharing from staff to Commission. Another highlighted as important the timing of the Commission receiving the meeting packet and all public input a minimum of five days ahead of a meeting. Another comment asked for a balanced perspective on policy choices, including views opposite to any staff recommendation. Ensuring Commissioner training and allowing for feedback to improve effectiveness was highlighted, as was closing the loop in terms of follow-up on all Commission requests.

Commissioner Moolgavkar said she strongly supported the notion of having a balanced perspective on policy choices. She said not everyone thinks the same way and to the extent the staff can help explore all perspectives the process would benefit.

Vice Chair Ferris agreed the Commission should be given opposing views to any staff recommendation, along with the reasons why the staff believe their position to be the right one.

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Chair Malakoutian asked about the timing for receiving the packets. Mr. King said staff tries to get them out by the end of the Wednesday preceding the next meeting. He allowed that while that is the goal, staff have not always been successful in achieving it.

Vice Chair Ferris said she was not opposed to having information dribble in. Getting the main packet out as early as possible would be good, but sending out additional information after that would also be okay.

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The fourth survey question asked if there are areas in which interaction with the community can be improved. Mr. King said the responses revolved around sharing information with the community, how to get new and more voices involved, continuing to use Zoom in the future post-Covid, and allowing the public to use video in Zoom. Comments were made about the burden expressed by different parts of the city in regard to planning issues, and how to deal with that. The East Bellevue Community Council area was the example given in the comments. There were responses indicating the need for more time after a public hearing to consider the comments of the public before making a recommendation.

The final survey question focused on areas for improvement from the perspective of staff relating to overall Commission functions and interactions. One Commissioner indicated it would be beneficial to have more strategic discussion around the structure of state mandates, Comprehensive Plan revisions, the Commission's role and objectives, and climate change and its relationship to Comprehensive Plan policies. The staff responses boiled down to three areas: making sure the Commissioners are encouraged to reach out to the Commission's staff liaison and other core staff in advance of meetings; building on the good work done to date and being deliberate about referencing the decision criteria when forming and modifying recommendations; and not deferring more work to the Council compared with the Commission wrapping up all loose ends before sending forward a recommendation.

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Mr. Cummins allowed that he does not attend all commission meetings but said he was happy the staff are able to provide the necessary services. He agreed that it is difficult for new Commissioners as they come on board to deal with highly controversial, very visible and community-changing kinds of initiatives and said if there is anything the staff can help with or point to, the Commissioners should feel free to reach out to the staff.

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Commissioner Goepple said it would be good to have the decision criteria included in the resource manual. Chair Malakoutian agreed and highlighted especially the need to include a definition of significantly changed conditions.

Commissioner Moolgavkar concurred as well. She allowed that to some extent the definition is intended to be somewhat loose, but it has on occasion felt like the staff have used it in different ways in different situations, which has been confusing and hard to follow and which leads to not providing the best recommendations to the Council. While the Commission wants to give the Council fully formed recommendations, it sometimes feels like what the Council is asking the Commission to do cannot be done within the given framework.

Councilmember Barksdale said the Council discussed increasing the number of monthly Commission meetings to allow for more time to work through issues.

Vice Chair Ferris said it was her understanding that a member of the Council had in fact mentioned the Commission is supposed to be meeting weekly. Councilmember Barksdale urged the Commission to discuss the issue and said he would advocate for whatever position the Commission takes.

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Chair Malakoutian said it was his understanding that in the past the Commission did meet more often than twice per month, particularly when there were a number of issues being addressed. The Council is anticipating that going forward a lot of decision making will be required and wants to know if the Commission can have more frequent meetings, like three per month.

Commissioner Moolgavkar asked if the decision is being left to the Commission, or if the Council will direct the Commission to meet more often.

Commissioner Moolgavkar said meeting more than twice a month would be a non-starter for her. She said she would not have committed to being a Commissioner if that had been the case, and added that meeting three or more times per month would necessitate her withdrawal from the Commission.

Commissioner Brown echoed those comments and said she would not be able to meet on any additional Wednesdays.

A motion to extend the meeting to 9:30 p.m. was made by Commissioner Brown. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Goepple and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Goepple asked if the anticipated volume of work is what triggered the Council's discussion about the Commission going to three or more meetings per month, or some question by the Council about the Commission's work product. He suggested that by working together, the meetings can be made more efficient and effective. The Commission has the ability to call special meetings as needed. He said his preference would be to retain the schedule of two meetings per month and add special meetings as needed.

Chair Malakoutian allowed that the length of Commission meetings could be increased to 9:30 p.m. or 10:00 p.m. to allow for addressing more issues.

Councilmember Barksdale said he did not get the impression that the Council was questioning the effectiveness of the Commission. He said there is a lot of work coming up that will be on the Commission's plate.

Commissioner Morisseau said the issue likely is more related to process than anything else. Often the Commission is given information during a meeting and is expected to reach a decision during that same meeting. She agreed that the Commission has the authority to schedule additional meetings as necessary to give a topic full attention. Each Commissioner when appointed was given the expectation that the Commission would be meeting twice per month. To change that to four meetings would be drastic and a burden for many. She said her schedule is already full on the other Wednesdays of each month.

Vice Chair Ferris echoed the concerns voiced by the other Commissioners, noting that everyone has other responsibilities and that the Commissioners are operating on the assumption that the Commission will only be meeting twice a month. Changing the process in ways that will allow for a greater flow through should be explored. That could mean getting more information via email ahead of meetings to process and digest.

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Councilmember Barksdale noted his appreciation for the feedback. He said he would share with the Council the concerns of the Commissioners.

Commissioner Moolgavkar asked what follow-up will be associated with the survey. Mr. King said staff wanted to hear the discussion first to identify which items were of most interest to the Commission. Staff will be following up on the specific items that have specific processes associated with public meetings. The easier to implement issues can be implemented more quickly. He said staff would need time to develop recommendations and would report back in January or February.

#### *Looking Forward*

(9:07 p.m.)

Mr. Cummins shared with the Commission that the city is at a point where it is facing some very important decisions relating to city planning. He said one question he and Mr. Brennan hear often is whether or not the city is really planning for all the growth. The Commission is in a place to significantly influence the future of the city, and there are some strategic and significant policy changes that will come up in 2022. A recent article in *Geekwire* titled "Density Dilemma: Bellevue Faces Housing Hurdles With Massive Tech Growth on the Horizon." The article states that the Bellevue's surge in popularity is projected to result in a wave of growth unlike anything the city has ever encountered. There is no dispute about the fact that Bellevue is at a crossroads; even the city's own projections show a 25 percent growth over the next 20 years. What is up for debate, however, is how well prepared the city is for that growth.

Continuing, Mr. Cummins said coordinating the city's land use systems, its various infrastructure systems, the need for open spaces, the ability of the business community to continue to be successful, and the impacts resulting from growth are the kinds of things the Commission is going to be dealing with. Work is under way to begin the process of looking at some things that only come around every so often, but yet set the framework on which a lot of decisions are made. For example, the pre-work for the upcoming major update of the Comprehensive Plan is currently being done, something that is only done every eight to ten years. The recently adopted Economic Development Strategic Plan places a higher emphasis on small businesses and recruitment of small businesses, and puts significantly more emphasis on equity and inclusion in all business recruitment and retention efforts. Retail and placemaking are being reviewed with an eye on making Bellevue more of a 24-hour city.

The upcoming major strategy initiatives include the Wilburton initiative. While there is a large body of work by the CAC, things have changed. The jobs/housing imbalance has become substantially more

profound to where the city is now tens of thousands of housing units deficient. While it will be controversial, it will also be exciting as the focus turns to total transformation of the area.

Mr. Cummins said some commitments have been made that will be implemented as quickly as possible, including the C1 map amendments and rezones. As soon as the issue is ready, it will be brought back to the Commission. A full slew of CPAs can be expected to be submitted given the level of development currently ongoing in the city. There will be a lot of work done around housing, the jobs/housing imbalance, and placemaking, primarily in urban areas but also for the neighborhood shopping centers. No city in the country is currently seeing the kind of explosive job growth Bellevue is seeing over a 24-month time horizon.

Mr. Brennan said one of the fun things about the work being done is being part of implementing the work of the Commission. The development happening in the city is reflective of the current Commission and previous Commissions relative to downtown livability, Eastgate, affordable housing, East Main TOD and other things. The work of the Commission is hugely important to the future of the city. The pace of development is unprecedented both in size and duration. In 2020 the city issued permits for about \$1.2 billion of construction investment. That number will be exceeded during 2021, even during the pandemic. There is currently 8.7 million square feet of construction under way in the city. Amazon is a driving factor but there is other interest on the part of other businesses. Bellevue is where businesses want to be located, and it is where employees want to be. The level of growth and development presents challenges and opportunities, and how they are dealt with is part of what is driving the work of the Commission. The jobs/housing gap is a very significant issue and there is a clear need to increase housing opportunities, particularly for the middle- and low-income segments. There are also pressures being seen in the neighborhoods: there is interest in preserving the single family neighborhoods in their current forms, and there is pressure to allow additional development in the form of duplexes or ADUs.

The transportation challenge is a constant. The move to a focus on a multimodal approach is about the full range of transportation options rather than just on getting cars into and out of the city. The city has met with great success over the years, but going forward part of the challenge will be focused on protecting those successes and the city's reputation for being a place where people want to be. In the coming year the Commission will be faced with finding the right balance.

Commissioner Morisseau thanked the staff for their presentations and reminded the Commissioners that the work of the Commission is humbling given the scope of the responsibility.

Commissioner Goepple also thanked staff for outlining the upcoming strategic challenges. He stressed the importance for the Commission to receive pertinent information regarding upcoming issues as soon as possible.

Councilmember Barksdale thanked the Commissioners for their engagement throughout the meeting.

Chair Malakoutian expressed his appreciation for the work of staff and the Commissioners over the last year.

9. OTHER BUSINESS – None  
(9:23 p.m.)

10. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None  
(9:23 p.m.)

11. CONTINUED ORAL COMMUNICATIONS  
(9:23 p.m.)

A motion to extend the meeting for ten minutes was made by Commissioner Brown. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Goeppeler and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Leslie Geller, address not given, said she was impressed by the Commissioners and their service. She said she looked forward to continuing to listen and providing input. As secretary of the Eastgate Community Association, it is her duty to keep Eastgate residents informed in regard to what is going on.

Ms. Betsy Hummer, 14541 SE 26<sup>th</sup> Street, voiced her appreciation for being able to virtually attend the meeting and get to know the Commissioners. The pandemic has made it difficult to make real connections with others on a more personal basis. She agreed that two meetings per month should be sufficient. She said the EBCC will be looking at many of the same issues the Commission will be focused on going forward.

Ms. Pamela Johnson, address not given, commended the Commission for the answers given to the survey questions. She said she agreed with the need to hear both sides of each argument. She stressed the fact that the citizens who attend Commission meetings are good sources of information.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None  
(9:33 p.m.)

13. ADJOURNMENT  
(9:33 p.m.)

A motion to adjourn was made by Vice Chair Ferris. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brown and the motion carried unanimously.

Deleted: Commissioner

Chair Malakoutian adjourned the meeting at 9:33 p.m.