

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

Tuesday  
October 11, 2022  
6:00 p.m.

*Via Hybrid*

**BOARDMEMBERS PRESENT:** Chair Hamilton; Vice-Chair Clark; Boardmembers Clima, Giampetro, Synn, Trescases

**BOARDMEMBER ABSENT:** Boardmember Singh

**COUNCILMEMBER PRESENT:** Councilmember Stokes

**PARKS STAFF PRESENT:** Brad Bennett, Brandi Christman (BAC), Pam Fehrman, Shelley McVein, Camron Parker, Mariam Sarwary, Michael Shiosaki, Ryan Walker

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Barbara Carey, Heidi Dean, Gauri Gupta, Artin Hadi, Galen Helmgren, Stuart Issac, Lorraine Masse, Susan Pappalardo, Lisa Tsang, Leslie Wang, Steve Williams

**MINUTES TAKER:** Michelle Cash

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

The meeting was called to order by Chair Hamilton at 6:00 p.m.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

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

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**Motion by Vice-Chair Clark and second by Boardmember Trescases to approve the September 13, 2022 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).**

4. **WRITTEN/ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

Steve Williams

Steve Williams expressed concern about the old Milt Swanson property, purchased by Isola Homes. The developer seeks to build 35 new single-family homes on six of the 12.3 acres. Save Coal Creek requests that the City purchase the property for an addition to Coal Creek Park. Steve Williams said that this is a critical wildlife corridor for animals to cross Lakemont Boulevard. Adding these parcels to the park can provide a safer place for pedestrians to cross the street, a place for school buses, level habitat for ADA, preserve the meadow habitat, and preserve the area for wildlife. A handout was distributed to Board Members regarding Steve Williams' remarks.

Susan Pappalardo

SPLASHForward

Susan Pappalardo expressed appreciation for the Board's support of an aquatic facility. The community needs gathering spaces. The exciting opportunities for the elements considered in Airfield Parks Master Plan would be a true hallmark.

Gauri Gupta

Gauri Gupta is a Junior at Interlake High School. Gauri Gupta also volunteers at SPLASHForward. Swimmers want to spend time in the water. Many swim practices are outdoors all year round. An aquatic center would provide a safe place for youth to swim and gather, which will have a lasting impact on youth.

Artin Hadi

Artin Hadi shared a story about becoming a lifeguard. The program was offered by SPLASHForward. An aquatic center will help community members learn how to swim and provide access to this essential life skill.

Leslie Wang

Leslie Wang asked Boardmembers to consider adding eight dedicated pickleball courts at Airfield Park. The current allocation in the plans for 3-4 courts will not be enough. In addition, Airfield Park has ample space to accommodate additional courts.

Barbara Carey

Barbara Carey expressed support for the addition of pickleball courts to the plans for the development of Airfield Park. Pickleball has become an important avenue for seniors to stay in shape while aging. The Bellevue International School has been a popular center for the growth of the sport. Some days 75-100 people use these six courts throughout the day. It is clear that the school is providing a resource that is very important to the community. As the school is scheduled to be destroyed and rebuilt, these courts will no longer be available. It is essential for the Parks Board to incorporate plans to build enough courts to meet the growing demands of the community. Bellevue should have the resources and the vision to establish a world-class 16 court complex. This would enable leagues to form and tournaments to be held, greatly benefiting the local business community.

Barbara Carey strongly urged Boardmembers to consider inclusion of a 16 court pickleball complex in the Airfield Park Master Plan.

Galen Helmgren

Galen Helmgren asked Boardmembers to consider leaving Airfield Park in an undeveloped, natural state, rather than adding pickleball courts or other organized activities. Galen Helmgren suggested that additional pickleball courts be added to existing parks that have courts.

Heidi Dean

Heidi Dean invited Boardmembers to join the Newport Hills Woodlawn Park celebration so that they can see how the park has been taken away from the neighborhood. Heidi Dean said that the park is now an oversized off leash dog area.

As the park was being developed, concerns were raised. Heidi Dean contacted the city and she was told that there were changes to the plans in regards to parking. Because of these changes, Heidi Dean said that the community will no longer be able to have their community picnics at the park. There is not enough room on the sloped terrace because it was redesigned after permitting.

During the planning phase, Heidi Dean said that the Board approved the concept for the community to be able to use the off leash area at Newport Hills Woodlawn Park when it is time to gather. When requested, Heidi Dean would like the Board to hold to this commitment.

5. **COMMUNICATION FROM CITY COUNCIL:**

No report.

6. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Michael Shiosaki, Parks & Community Services Director, discussed the following items:

- Thank you to Camron Parker for his efforts with the new park acquisition in the Eastgate neighborhood.
- Last night, Council approved an update to the Parks Naming Policy. It extends the opportunity to naming parks and recreational facilities to individuals and figures that have made non-monetary contributions to the city. It also provides another consideration regarding diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Boardmembers are encouraged to attend Saturday's Newport Hills Woodlawn Park celebration. Particular appreciation was extended to Scott Vander Hyden and Pam Fehrman for their efforts with the park project.

7. **BOARD COMMUNICATIONS:**

Vice-Chair Clark attended the recent Bellevue Network on Aging meeting. There is a working group within the BNOA that is creating a resource guide/document for seniors. Vice-Chair Clark also enjoyed playing pickleball and said that Bellevue Essentials participants visited Lewis Creek Park and Bellevue Botanical Gardens. Ranger Curtis was an excellent guide. Lastly, Vice-Chair Clark discussed the recent SPLASHForward event where students and swimmers gave compelling stories in support of an aquatic center.

Boardmember Giampetro accompanied out of town family members to Weowna Park. They were very impressed by all of the parks and the value that they bring to the community.

Boardmember Clima attended the Kelsey Creek Farm Fair and expressed gratitude to staff for planning such a great family affair. Boardmember Clima also participated in a Bellevue Essentials meeting where they toured Bellevue Youth Theatre, Lewis Creek Park, and the Bellevue Botanical Gardens.

8. **CHAIR COMMUNICATION & DISCUSSION:**

Chair Hamilton provided the following report:

- Visited Bellevue Botanical Gardens and walked the suspension bridge.
- Attended the Kelsey Creek Farm Fair.
- Impressed by Bellevue's Ranger program—this is a great addition to the parks system and helps people enjoy the parks.

9. **BOARDMEMBER/COMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS:**

No report.

10. **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:**

A. **Bellevue Aquatics Center**

Brandi Christman, Aquatics Manager at Bellevue Aquatic Center (BAC), discussed the mission of the BAC, which is to provide public safety and water safety education; diverse quality programming; and sound fiscal management.

The Bellevue Aquatic Center opened in 1970 with an addition of the Warm Springs Pool in 1997. Through partnerships and exceptional customer service, Bellevue Aquatic Center, City of Bellevue beaches and boathouses provide accessible opportunities for recreation, fitness, education, and celebrations to build a healthy community. Brandi Christman discussed the many ways that staff, contractors, vendors, and partners have embraced the mission statement and

continually produce programs, activities, and opportunities for the public to enjoy. There are many partners and renters that make the programs possible.

Brandi Christman said that the BAC tries to be as open and equitable as possible. The BAC programs focus on diversity, equity, inclusion and grants. Brandi Chrisman discussed the following items related to the BAC:

- Future Plans & Renovations
- Beach Lifeguard Program
- Boathouse & SE 40<sup>th</sup> Street Launch
- Challenges & Opportunities

Discussion:

- Is there any planning that goes into programs at Lake Sammamish?  
*Response: Not swim related because Bellevue does not have any public beach parks on Lake Sammamish.*
- Is the financial assistance process through the city? *Response: the financial assistance program is through the scholarship program, which is through the Parks Department as a whole. This is not a budgeted item. Each individual can receive up to \$500 per person.*
- How many people enter the aquatic center per day? *Response: for 2022, about 13k drop-in; 1,500 passes for 2022; approximately 70 renter reservations per day. Waitlist for lessons is approximately 150 people.*
- If there was more capacity would the Bellevue Fire Department conduct more training? *Response: the Fire Department has 3 different types of swim training. It is unclear if they would schedule additional sessions if more pool time was available.*
- How was life guard capacity this past summer? *Response: there have been life guard shortages for years.*
- What happens with the BAC once a new aquatic center is built? *Response: there was a feasibility study that was conducted to determine options for the BAC. One of the options being evaluated is to keep the BAC open and use it predominately as a warm therapy pool.*

B. Bellevue Airfield Park Master Plan Update

Pam Fehrman informed Boardmembers that Ken Kroeger is no longer the lead on the Bellevue Airfield Park Master Plan Update because he left the City of Bellevue.

Pam Fehrman said that the Bellevue Airfield Park (BAP) is located a quarter mile east along a pedestrian path near Robinswood Park, just north of I-90 in the Eastgate area. In 2002, recognizing that the BAP site may represent the last opportunity to acquire a large, undeveloped, relatively flat property in Bellevue, Council authorized the purchase of the properties with the intent of developing an active recreational community park. Today, the BAP is currently an undeveloped site comprised of three parcels totaling 27.5 acres. The site is well located to support active recreation development.

Pam Fehrman said that significant to development, considerations are the historical operations of the Bellevue Airfield (until 1983), and a municipal landfill from 1951 to 1964. From a development perspective, the site is rife with utility system easements (abandoned and operational) such as a landfill gas migration system, ground water monitoring wells, storm water systems, and a major King County Metro sewer line among others.

Pam Fehrman showed photos of the forested areas, open meadow over the landfill and well established trail system. The original Master Planning process started in May 2008. There was significant participation in this planning process from nearby residents and several interest groups. Most participants in the planning process supported one of the following major park elements: 1) an off-leash dog facility; 2) a little league field complex; 3) an aquatic or major indoor sport facility; or 4) a passive-use meadow.

Pam Fehrman reminded Boardmembers that the Board recommended a preferred Master Plan for the Eastgate Area properties and the name Bellevue Airfield Park. Council concurred with the recommendation and adopted the Master Plan and park name in June 2012. As currently adopted, the Bellevue Airfield Park Master Plan would provide the community with the following:

- Two lighted synthetic turf sports fields,
- Wooded picnic areas,
- Trail connections, playgrounds, restrooms, and parking.

The plan also maintains woodland buffers between the park and nearby residences.

Pam Fehrman said that the recognized predominate use of the undeveloped site at Airfield Park has been as an off-leash area. The Master Plan would include the expansion of the off-leash dog area at Robinswood Park from the approximate 1.75 acres to 5.75 acres. The current adopted Master Plan includes expansion of the off-leash park and the need for an aquatic facility. In fact, the need for an aquatic facility continues to be an identified need in the Parks & Open Space System Plan, which is partially informed by City of Bellevue Aquatic Feasibility Studies in 2009, 2020, and in 2021. King County also produced a 2019 Regional Aquatic Report. The population of the Eastside communities has more than doubled in the last 50 years. No new public pools have been built within Bellevue, Redmond, or Kirkland during this time. In addition, there are nearly half-million people living within an Eastside service area and there is continued population growth predicted. The pools in Bellevue, Kirkland, and Redmond that were funded by Forward Thrust in the 1960s are approaching the end of their useful lives and need to be replaced. The only existing public aquatic facility in Bellevue, the Bellevue Aquatic Center, is reaching the end of its useful life as well.

Recognizing the need, Pam Fehrman said that the City Council directed an update to the existing Bellevue Airfield Park Master Plan in 2021 to understand community preferences and inform impacts associated with locating an aquatic center at Bellevue Airfield Park. A Master Plan Update offers an opportunity to address the growing aquatic needs of Bellevue. The Bellevue Airfield Park site is the only undeveloped, city-owned site large enough to accommodate the preferred aquatic facility concept (requiring approximately 10-11 acres). Additional elements recommending an aquatic facility at this site are: easy access to I-90; existing shared parking

agreements with owners of the surrounding office park; and a site size that could allow for an aquatic facility and complementary outdoor recreation and open space park development.

Pam Fehrman said that since the June Parks Board meeting, there have been three public meetings along with other communications. Based on information obtained from community meetings, correspondence and survey responses, a few themes and Master Plan alternatives have evolved. The community would like Airfield park to be:

- Inclusive
- Safe
- Environmentally Responsive
- Active

The following alternatives were discussed as options for Airfield Park:

- Alternative 1: places the aquatic facility in the SW area of the site.
- Alternative 2: places the aquatic facility in the SE area of the site.

An additional alternative was presented that has no aquatic facility and slightly modifies the existing Master Plan to add sport courts in lieu of one sports field.

At the recent, in-person meeting at South Bellevue Community Center, the following is a list of feedback in the order of requests:

- Most frequently cited comments: There are not enough pickleball courts in any of the alternatives.
- Next most frequent comments: Support for an aquatic facility.
- Not as numerous however consistent comments: Concerns about the loss of trees, habitat, and open space and potential impacts of traffic on residents; as well as comments questioning the need for, the cost to construct, and ongoing operation and maintenance of an aquatic center.

Pam Fehrman discussed the timeline for updating the Master Plan.

#### Discussion:

- Is there a benefit in delaying a month until a decision is made about the levy? *Response: a recommendation from the Parks Board will not be asked for until 2023. The 2008 levy provides Phase 1 development for Bellevue Airfield Park.*
- Is there still a need for sport fields? *Response: yes. Sport fields have not been added into the system.*
- How many pickleball courts can fit in the various options? *Response: there are currently 17 pickleball courts in Bellevue. In the past 3 or so years, as tennis courts are renovated, pickleball lines are being added.*

- Would it be feasible to install the pickleball courts prior to the aquatic center? *Response: it is very likely that funding for an aquatic center will take longer than development of the site. It is possible that the courts could be added first. However, this would not be ideal.*
- Should the facility be named a rec center, rather than an aquatic center because of the usage? *Response: a Master Plan would be specific for the plan before environmental permitting is submitted. Focusing on the aquatic center is the direction for permitting. The facility could be called an aquatic center or a recreational facility.*
- Would not support a plan without inclusion of an aquatic center. The community has been asking for a first class aquatic center for quite some time.
- What are the cost differences to build pickleball courts? *Response: there's not a vast cost difference.*
- Would it be possible to build a roof over the pickleball courts? *Response: it would cost significantly more.*
- Prefer 16 pickleball courts.
- There have been a number of projects where we look to stretch—it makes sense to stretch the boundaries for size of the center.
- Are we evaluating traffic mitigation? *Response: part of the environmental review will be traffic and environmental studies. Also evaluating future transit options.*
- Is there a code for buffers? *Response: the plans will be to exceed any requirements and more passive use near neighbors.*
- How many trees will be removed with development and what is the impact to tree canopy? *Response: if trees are removed two times the removal will be planted at a minimum.*

C. Park Board approval of the third quarter 2022 report and communication to Council

Camron Parker asked Boardmember for feedback regarding the third quarter 2022 report and communication to Council. Boardmember Clima said that the first sentence in the third paragraph needs the word “were” added to the paragraph.

**Motion by Boardmember Synn and second by Vice-Chair Clark to approve the third quarter 2022 report and communication to Council as discussed. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).**

11. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. Remote Participation Approval

No requests.



12. **PROPOSED AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING:**

The following future agenda items were discussed:

- Comprehensive Plan Update
- Eastrail Project

Boardmember Trescases asked for updates on the budget, and Coal Creek property.

13. **OTHER COMMUNICATIONS:**

- A. Parks CIP Project Status Report
- B. 2022 Summer Ranger Program
- C. Invitation to Bellevue Arbor Day (10-22-2022)
- D. Email, RE: Badminton in the Park (10-4-2022)
- E. Email, RE: Response to Proposed Airfield Park Development Options (10-5-2022)
- F. Emails, RE: Supporting Pickleball Courts at Bellevue Airfield Park (10-1-2022 – 10-5-2022)

14. **WRITTEN/ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

None.

15. **ADJOURNMENT:**

At 8:30 p.m., Chair Hamilton declared the meeting adjourned.