

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Extended Study Session

March 9, 2015
6:00 p.m.

Conference Room 1E-113
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Balducci, Deputy Mayor Wallace, and Councilmembers Chelminiak, Robertson and Stokes

ABSENT: Councilmembers Lee and Robinson

1. Executive Session

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Deputy Mayor Wallace. He declared recess to Executive Session for approximately 20 minutes to discuss one item of property acquisition/disposition.

The meeting resumed at 6:54 p.m., with Mayor Balducci presiding.

2. Oral Communications

- (a) Joe Rosmann, representing Building a Better Bellevue, said residents continue to study the 90-percent design documents for Sound Transit's East Link light rail project. He expressed a number of concerns, noting that the project impacts are even greater than he previously understood. He said the rail line will transition from a deep trench to an at-grade profile in front of the Winters House. Sound Transit staff recently said the sound walls will actually be 14 feet, not 10 feet as he previously commented, which blocks the view of the park. The western portion of Mercer Slough is very soft peat bog. In order to accomplish a stable structure, Sound Transit must dig out all of that peat and replace it with stone and gravel, creating a channel up to 40 feet deep and 60 feet wide. That work will be a multi-year process. Mr. Rosmann said the alignment along the Mercer Slough is not in compliance with shoreline regulations and City Codes.
- (b) Norm Hansen, a Bridle Trails resident, thanked the Council for its review of the Energize Eastside project as well as a broader view of electrical reliability. He reiterated his ongoing support for underground electrical wires across the city. He believes the City in a Park identity is not consistent with the visible wires.

- (c) Bill Popp, an Enatai resident, distributed a handout and expressed his concerns regarding fluoridation in the City's water supply. He read from an article that Israel stopped adding fluoride in 2014. He described studies indicating the negative impacts on child neurodevelopment and brain function in general, even at the low levels typically used in water in the U.S. There also appears to be a negative relationship with osteoporosis and Alzheimer's disease. He asked the City to question how safe the water from Lake Tapps will be.

3. Study Session

(a) Council Business and New Initiatives

Mayor Balducci noted information in the desk packet regarding the naming of East Link light rail stations. She said the optional names provided by Sound Transit for the six Bellevue stations were discussed during the Council retreat. Staff has since confirmed that both the 120th and 130th stations are on Spring Boulevard.

Ms. Balducci asked whether the Council wanted to reconsider its preference for naming the 120th station as Spring Boulevard. Options previously considered by the public are Kelsey Creek Station, 120th Station, and the Spring District Station. The Council's recommended name for the 130th Station is Midlakes. Mayor Balducci questioned whether the Council wanted to provide input to King County on station naming.

Councilmember Stokes said he could support the Spring District name for the 120th station.

Councilmember Robertson said she would be okay with 120th/Spring District Station. She expressed support for the alternate language provided in the email sent earlier in the day, which indicates a desire for additional public input on name selections as project design progresses.

Mayor Balducci suggested the Council could also simply report factually what was discussed and encourage delaying the naming of the 120th Station. However, she noted that Sound Transit staff will likely recommend Spring District as the name.

Councilmember Chelminiak said he originally preferred Spring Boulevard but he is okay with 120th/Spring District or 120th/Spring Boulevard. He continues to support Midlakes for the 130th Station.

Mayor Balducci said she will pass the Council's comments along to Sound Transit, which is that Spring Boulevard was the preference but the Council understands the possible confusion. Ms. Balducci noted she believes Sound Transit staff prefer the name Bel-Red for the 130th Station. However, the Council reaffirmed its preference for the Midlakes Station name. Councilmember Chelminiak suggested stating opposition to the name Bel-Red. He noted there is more than one station in that area and he believes Midlakes is an accurate description.

Moving to Council reports, Mayor Balducci said this past weekend Congressman Smith held an open house at Bellevue College. There were a number of attendees from India representing technology companies in Bellevue who are advocating for the passage of a federal bill related to how green cards are processed for those living here on H-1B Visas. She said there is bipartisan support for the bill. Mayor Balducci asked staff to provide information to the Council and a recommendation about whether this issue should be placed on Bellevue's federal legislative agenda.

Mayor Balducci noted concerns about the name of Bovee Park which have been raised since the City's first mayor, Charles Bovee, was arrested and subsequently left Bellevue. There was a Council consensus to direct the Parks and Community Services Board to begin work on renaming the park.

Mayor Balducci said the King County Area Agency on Aging, which subcontracts with DSHS, has made a request that all King County cities support a funding request before the state legislature. The agency provides services to allow elderly adults to remain in their homes at a lower cost than a nursing home for a better quality of life. The agency assists approximately 800 Bellevue citizens. If the funding is denied, the agency will no longer be able to operate and more residents will be forced into nursing homes.

Mayor Balducci said she would like to send a letter of support if there are no concerns from Councilmembers. She said staff has indicated that it is consistent with the Council's adopted policies and legislative agenda. Mayor Balducci noted a Council consensus to send the letter.

- Councilmember Robertson moved to allow Councilmember Robinson to remotely participate via conference call in the Energize Eastside agenda item and the Executive Session. Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 5-0.

Councilmember Robertson noted comments during oral communications regarding the East Link light rail project. She requested that information be provided to the Council and the public regarding the environmental impacts identified in the 90-percent design documents, as compared to those reported in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

Deputy Mayor Wallace expressed concern that the Council entered into an agreement with Sound Transit based on a certain alignment and an understanding that appropriate mitigation would be provided. He said the Council is now hearing that there are potentially significant changes to the alignment affecting environmental, noise, visual, and traffic impacts.

Mr. Wallace said the petition filed by Mr. Rosmann and others indicates that City staff have concluded that the Council approved the alignment and therefore the permit will be issued. However, there are concerns that mitigation has not been addressed. Deputy Mayor Wallace requested a detailed discussion about the alignment and the mitigation reflected in the 90-percent design documents. He questioned whether the mitigation is consistent with City Codes.

City Manager Miyake said these topics will be addressed as part of the amended Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) discussions currently underway.

Mr. Wallace noted public comment that the original FEIS identified an eight-foot wall in South Bellevue and now the documents reflect a 14-foot wall. He said the Council needs to verify the changes and understand the implications.

Councilmember Stokes concurred that the Council needs to take a look at the allegations by the public. If there are problems, the Council needs to know that as well as how the impacts will be mitigated.

Mayor Balducci suggested framing the Council's concerns as questions to Sound Transit. She observed that she would be surprised if a project did not change from inception to 90-percent design. However, she agrees that any changes in impacts and mitigation need to be understood.

Councilmember Chelminiak recalled that, during the preparation of the EIS, the rail was going to become an aerial configuration north of the Y at Bellevue Way and 112th Avenue SE, with a rail over road design along 112th. During the cost sharing work with Sound Transit, the design became road over rail, in part to lower the rail track.

Mr. Chelminiak said it is no surprise that there is a lot of peat in the Mercer Slough. That is one of the reasons that the B7 alignment alternative was a problem, and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) advised against going through the slough due to the possibility of soil movement. However, WSDOT did not have concerns about rebuilding the South Bellevue Park and Ride and light rail station at its present location. Mr. Chelminiak recalled that there was movement of the peat under I-90 at one point that was causing the bridge to move. The City received reports on that as far back as 2010.

Councilmember Chelminiak concurred that it is important to get answers to the Council's questions.

Deputy Mayor Wallace observed that Mr. Chelminiak's comments will be especially appropriate for future discussions about extending light rail to Issaquah. Mr. Wallace reiterated his concern that the Council made a decision in 2011 without knowing what the project mitigation would be. He does not believe this should be a basis for granting permits. He wants to be sure the East Link project complies with City Codes, the transit-specific Land Use Code Amendment, and other laws.

Mr. Miyake confirmed that staff has recorded the Council's questions and concerns.

(b) Bellevue Water System Plan Update - Schedule for Development and Review

City Manager Brad Miyake introduced staff's review of the City's Water System Plan.

Paul Bucich, Assistant Director of Utilities, introduced Doug Lane, Senior Engineer for Water and Wastewater and project manager for the update of the Water System Plan. Mr. Bucich commented on the purity of the water supply in this region from the Tolt and Cedar Rivers via Seattle Public Utilities. Despite the low snowfall this year, Seattle is managing water and keeping reservoirs high, and the agency does not anticipate problems this summer.

Mr. Bucich said this is the first of multiple Water System Plan updates to the Council. He highlighted elements of the Interest Statement and requested Council feedback. Council action on the Interest Statement is scheduled for March 23, 2015.

Mr. Bucich said additional information is provided in the meeting's written materials.

Mayor Balducci thanked staff for the draft Interest Statement.

Councilmember Robertson recalled concerns within the past couple of years about fluoridation in the City's water and questioned the levels in Bellevue's water. She recalled that the levels were low, and she noted she supports the use of fluoride. Mr. Bucich confirmed that the fluoride levels are low. Ms. Robertson asked staff to email the Council information on the current standards for the use of fluoridation.

Ms. Robertson questioned whether it would be helpful to add language to the Interest Statement addressing fluoridation, since it is an issue that routinely comes up. Referring to the second bulleted item in the Interest Statement, she suggested revising to add the underlined wording: "Provide a safe supply of water that meets or exceeds state and federal drinking water quality standards."

Mayor Balducci expressed general support for the principles in the Interest Statement. She suggested adding words to capture the qualities of Bellevue's water that go beyond safety (i.e., taste, smell).

Deputy Mayor Wallace expressed support for the Interest Statement, especially the statements regarding the self-supporting financial structure that insures rate stability, regionally competitive fees, intergenerational equity, and minimizing debt. Of the City's utilities, water is the one the City can control the best. Referring to the first principle that mentions working cooperatively with the Cascade Water Alliance, Mr. Wallace questioned whether there is anything in their principles that the City might want to adopt in its statement. Mr. Bucich said staff will review that and get back to the Council.

Mayor Balducci thanked staff and noted that Council action is anticipated on March 23.

Councilmember Stokes observed that the Interest Statement could be more aspirational. He said he would send staff his ideas. He suggested stronger language than "working cooperatively" with Cascade Water Alliance.

Mayor Balducci suggested starting the statement regarding Cascade with: “Secure water sources for Bellevue’s foreseeable needs by working cooperatively...” Mr. Stokes concurred with that suggestion.

Mayor Balducci asked staff to circulate a second draft before the March 23 meeting.

(c) Ratification of Proposed Amendments to the King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs)

Mike Kattermann, Senior Planner, said staff recommends ratification of two proposed Countywide Planning Policies. They have been approved by the Growth Management Planning Council, and Councilmember Robertson serves on that committee. The proposed policies must be ratified by 30 percent of the jurisdictions in the county representing 70 percent of the population.

The two policies relate to the Buildable Lands Report, which is required of six counties in Washington under the Growth Management Act. Bellevue has targets for housing and employment over the next 20-25 years. Bellevue has a total capacity of 23,165 housing units, with a capacity for 10,387 new housing units by 2031. The majority of the housing units are in mixed use developments, primarily in the Downtown and Bel-Red corridor. Similarly, Bellevue’s employment capacity is in good shape with a capacity for an additional 35,026 jobs by the 2031 target.

The second policy relates to greenhouse gas reduction targets. When the policies were updated in 2012, a policy was added specifying that the County should set a target that meets or exceeds the statewide reduction goal to 1990 levels. The Growth Management Planning Council approved countywide reduction targets last summer but there are not specific targets for each city. The long-term goal is a 80-percent reduction from 2008 to 2050.

Mr. Kattermann said Bellevue is already monitoring and working on reducing its greenhouse gas emissions, both in City operations and the overall community. He requested Council direction regarding ratification of the two proposed CPPs.

Mayor Balducci questioned the difference between Bellevue’s emissions reduction target and the levels targeted in the proposed CPP. Mr. Kattermann said he will provide the specific numbers. However, he knows that the King County target is more aggressive.

Councilmember Stokes said the Buildable Lands Report indicates the City has a good amount of capacity for both housing units and jobs. He observed that the Eastgate area has potential future capacity as well. He thanked Councilmember Robertson for her work on the GMPC, and expressed support for the proposed policies.

Mayor Balducci said Bellevue does a good job of making use of the capacity it has, especially in commercial areas, to create mixed use development opportunities. She noted a Council a consensus to direct staff to bring back a Resolution on March 16 for Council action.

(d) Energize Eastside Project Briefing Update

City Manager Miyake introduced staff's Energize Eastside project briefing.

Mike Brennan, Director of the Development Services Department, recalled that the Energize Eastside project was proposed by Puget Sound Energy (PSE) in December 2013. The project is an 18-mile, 230kV transmission line extending from Renton to Redmond to provide electrical capacity to serve growth and improve grid reliability.

Nicholas Matz, Senior Planner, said the independent analysis is underway by Utilities System Efficiencies, Inc. (USE). The study was initiated by the City to evaluate the purpose, timing, and need for the Energize Eastside project. The project schedule has been extended because USE will be able to access 2014 data from PSE. Staff plans to return to the Council on March 30 to present the report.

David Pyle, Senior Land Use/Environmental Planner, said the Environmental Impact Statement is an impartial disclosure document identifying significant environmental impacts, reasonable alternatives, and mitigation measures. The EIS is not a permit but it provides a consolidated collection of information to facilitate decision making and inform the permit.

Mr. Pyle described the Energize Eastside environmental review process. He said the independent technical analysis is slated to be completed in time for the needs analysis to be incorporated into the EIS scoping documents. The EIS process extends over approximately two years, and PSE will apply for permits at the end of the process.

Bellevue is the lead agency for the EIS review, and an interagency agreement has been established with partner cities (i.e., Kirkland, Newcastle, Redmond, and Renton). The EIS consultant has been selected and the Phase 1 review will start soon. A project web site was launched the previous week: www.EnergizeEastsideEIS.org Mr. Pyle said a mailer on the project was sent to approximately 50,000 customers.

Mr. Pyle described the two phases of the EIS: Phase 1, a non-project level environmental review including a broader analysis of needs and methods to address the need for the project; and Phase 2, a project-level environmental review focusing on construction and operation impacts. A Draft EIS (DEIS) will be issued for Phase 1, followed by a 45-day comment period. The plan is to issue responses to comments from Phase 1 first, and again later following the Phase 2 report and 45-day comment period.

Mr. Brennan said five community meetings are planned to provide information about the project during the EIS scoping process. Mr. Pyle said meetings will be held with organized stakeholders as well.

Responding to Councilmember Chelminiak, Mr. Pyle said a draft EIS will be published for each phase. The final EIS will not necessarily include all of the information from both of those draft

reports. Phase 2 will be a project-level narrowing of scope from the broader environmental review during Phase 1.

Councilmember Robertson said she is pleased there is an Energize Eastside web site. She suggested that staff add the email list from the Utilities web page to the Energize Eastside project web site so that subscribers can receive updates.

Responding to Councilmember Robertson, Mr. Brennan said the need for the project, including the timing of demand and the potential alternatives, are all part of the initial EIS scoping. In further response, Mr. Brennan said staff will work with the consultant during the technical review to make determinations about whether optional solutions are viable. This analysis will be documented in the EIS.

Councilmember Robertson questioned whether the Council, as a whole, can provide input and comment on the EIS. Mr. Brennan said staff would discuss the best way for the Council to provide feedback and questions. Ms. Robertson said she would like the Council as a whole to be able to comment on scoping. However, if not, she will want to comment as an individual.

Mayor Balducci observed that this EIS is a little unusual in that Bellevue is serving as the lead with other jurisdictions. Responding to Ms. Balducci, Mr. Pyle said Bellevue is working with other cities to arrange open houses/public meetings and to distribute information on the project. He said the inter-jurisdictional agreement established a collaboration group to oversee the EIS.

Responding to Mayor Balducci, Mr. Pyle said his understanding is that the Phase 2 (Supplemental) EIS is essentially a draft of the final EIS, and that it represents the cumulative work to date on the project.

Mr. Brennan thanked Council for the comments

Councilmember Chelminiak recalled past discussions about the ability to address Bellevue-specific issues during the EIS scoping. He wants to be sure that the City's comments will be considered during the scoping. Staff confirmed that this is the correct understanding.

Mr. Chelminiak said the Electrical Reliability Study completed several years ago identifies a proposed 230kV line between the Sammamish Substation and the Talbot Hill Substation. He said there are already three 230kV lines into Sammamish, and one connects to the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) Maple Valley Substation. The latter is currently leased to PSE by BPA, and the lease expires in 2018. Mr. Chelminiak wondered whether and how, if the line reverts back to BPA usage, this would affect the need for the Energize Eastside project. Mr. Matz said staff will follow up on that with PSE.

Mr. Matz provided update on the Electrical Reliability Study. He referenced Attachment 4 in the meeting packet showing the status of recommendations from the study. He highlighted operationalized items that have already been implemented including conducting City-PSE

reliability workshops and planning workshops, energy efficiency improvements, multi-utility planning, and emergency response pre-event/storm procedures.

Items underway include creation of an Integrated Resource Plan, development of smart grid strategies, and utility project coordination in which the City has initiated the undergrounding of lines. Mr. Matz said items not yet initiated are vegetation management around substations and building on the City's relationship and role with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC).

Mr. Matz presented information on past power outages and how PSE's reliability compares to other utilities. In a 2012 survey of 106 member utilities, PSE ranked in the top 18th percentile. In the 2013 survey of 93 member utilities, PSE ranked in the 28th percentile.

Mayor Balducci thanked staff for the update. She is pleased to see items from the Electrical Reliability Study moving forward.

Responding to Councilmember Robertson, Mr. Matz confirmed that PSE's reliability decreased somewhat from 2012 to 2013. In further response, Mr. Matz said the MOU between the City and PSE is considered the implementation plan.

Councilmember Chelminiak thanked staff for the work that was generated by the Electrical Reliability Study. He said he hears many comments from the community about wanting to underground utilities. He noted that the study did not suggest the City should underground all utilities. However, it commented on how the City might look if certain overhead lines were placed underground.

Mr. Chelminiak said some of the policy issues to be considered are: Does the City want to take on undergrounding all electrical wires? What is the cost of that? Does the City want to consider going to the WUTC and/or state legislature to lobby for a change to the tariff structure? Does the Council want to conclude that what is in the Comprehensive Plan is sufficient and meets the City's needs? Mr. Chelminiak observed that additional work in this area will be handled by the new Intergovernmental Relations staff person.

Mayor Balducci observed that these ongoing meetings and work with PSE are what the Council envisioned following the Electrical Reliability Study. She questioned how the City can measure the effectiveness of participating in these activities. How much influence is the City having? How does the City know if efforts are improving electrical reliability? Responding to Ms. Balducci, Mr. Matz said he will provide additional information to clarify and expand upon the reliability data presented tonight.

4. Executive Session

At 8:47 p.m., Mayor Balducci declared recess to Executive Session for two hours to discuss one item of potential litigation. She indicated that the meeting would adjourn upon conclusion of the Executive Session.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 p.m.

Myrna L. Basich, MMC
City Clerk

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