

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Extended Study Session

March 12, 2018
6:00 p.m.

Conference Room 1E-113
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Chelminiak, Deputy Mayor Robinson¹, and Councilmembers Lee, Nieuwenhuis, Robertson, Stokes, and Zahn

ABSENT: None.

1. Oral Communications

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m., with Mayor Chelminiak presiding.

- (a) Sue Dills spoke in favor of developing an aquatic center. She grew up swimming in leagues with her siblings, and she noted that the Midlakes Swim League has a waiting list and can take years to join. She noted the benefits of an aquatic center for exercise, physical therapy, and family/community activity.
- (b) Meghana Paranjape said she was the first paid professional female water polo player in India. She noted that the youths with her tonight are from different schools and water polo teams, and some are training in diving. She said the students must travel one and a half hours each way to practice, and she noted that not all parents and children have the ability to travel for sports. She encouraged support of an aquatic center.
- (c) Marlaina Capes shared that her daughter with cerebral palsy gains freedom in the water and is a member of the Eastside Barracudas Special Olympics swim team. She said many people with special needs and autism would benefit from water activities but there are few facilities in the region. Swimming is the only sport her daughter can participate in, she swims three times per week, and she has won several Special Olympics gold medals. Ms. Capes said an aquatic center is needed for individuals of all abilities.

¹ Deputy Mayor Robinson participated via telephone until approximately 7:25 p.m.

- (d) Court Olson spoke in support of green building incentives, noting that he has been a builder and contractor and is now a commercial consultant. He was the assistant project manager when the current City Hall building was built for Pacific Bell. Referring to the meeting materials, Mr. Olson suggested adding the LEED Platinum level to the City's proposed incentive program. He said the City's proposal is a step in the right direction, but more will be needed.
- (e) Jennifer Keller, a Lake Hills resident and a member of Climate Action Advisors Group for Bellevue, commented on strategies for green building incentives. She urged the City to make its program as strong as possible. She is concerned about the climate for a number of reasons, including the forest fires in recent years. She thanked the City for its efforts to date. She noted that green building practices are important for building retrofits as well as new construction. She encouraged the City to explore ideas and practices from other places.
- (f) Pamela Johnston encouraged the City to make green building standards streamlined and understandable for the public, including residents with single-family homes. When she deconstructed and rebuilt her home, she said the City's checklists were confusing and not necessarily applicable. She noted that the placement of a structure on a lot can be more important than other items on the checklist.

2. Approval of Agenda

- Councilmember Stokes moved to approve the agenda, and Councilmember Robertson seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

3. Study Session

- (a) Council Business and New Initiatives.

There was no discussion.

- (b) Aquatic Center Update

City Manager Brad Miyake recalled that the City conducted an Aquatic Center Feasibility Study in 2009 to assist the Council in determining whether it supports an aquatic. The study explored a range of options and operating models. In May 2017, the Council directed staff to continue evaluating a number of alternatives for the development and operation of a parks facility and/or a regional Eastside facility. During the 2017 Mid-biennium Budget process, the Council discussed the possibility of funding further study with the use of Council Contingency funds. Mr. Miyake said staff is seeking direction about whether to continue working with potential partners on aquatic center alternatives, including the authorization to spend up to \$250,000 to update the cost, program, and site options to better inform the Council about whether to proceed.

Patrick Foran, Director of Parks and Community Services, described the renewed community interest in aquatics facilities, partnerships, and regional solutions. The 2009 Aquatic Center Feasibility Study explored the different types of facilities that could meet the demand, conducted a preliminary site analysis, completed a market analysis, conducted public outreach, and explored a range of financing options. The study was presented to the Council in 2009, and the Council expressed interest in Option D, a regional aquatic center, and directed staff to work with adjacent cities, school districts, and other potential partners. The effort was temporarily put aside, in part due to the recession.

The City of Kirkland placed a community and aquatic center proposal on the ballot in 2015, which the voters did not approve. The City of Redmond initiated public outreach in 2016 to study a range of facilities for community centers and aquatic centers. In 2017, the King County Parks Department convened a process to reexamine the viability of a regional approach for an Eastside facility. King County Councilmember Claudia Balducci secured approximately \$2 million to work toward a regional solution, and that process is ongoing. Mr. Foran noted direction from the City Council in May 2017 to continue to pursue local partnerships and opportunities. He said Bellevue is participating in the King County process and exploring potential partnerships and sites.

Mr. Foran described the popularity of swimming and aquatic activities in Bellevue and on the Eastside. He said 4,200 families are members of private outdoor pools in Bellevue, and 3,600 swimmers participate in more than 26 Eastside swim clubs. The Bellevue Aquatic Center provides a warm water therapy pool and a full range of aquatic activities, but there is a 900-person waiting list for swim lessons. Mr. Foran said there are a number of private neighborhood pools and membership facilities in Bellevue. However, the Bellevue School District does not have water sports facilities. He noted that Kirkland and Redmond are served by older pools as well.

Regional aquatic facilities that have been developed since 2011 include: 1) Snohomish Aquatic Center, 2) Lynnwood Recreation Center and Pool, 3) Sammamish Community and Aquatic Center, and 4) Rainier Beach Community Center and Pool. Those facilities serve a wide range of ages and types of activities. Mr. Foran described a conceptual layout previously discussed with the Council that includes a leisure and recreation pool, competition pool, instruction and fitness pool, and a wellness/fitness/rehabilitation pool. He described how a movable bulkhead feature allows the facility to modify the configuration as needed.

Mr. Foran described the current King County regional process involving Bellevue, Kirkland, and Redmond to explore the range of funding and governing options (e.g., voted levies, voted/Councilmanic bonds, grants, private funding, and partnerships) and the potential for multiple facilities. There has been some discussion about developing a Metropolitan Parks District in which voters in each city would be asked to approve a taxing district. Mr. Foran said the work group proposes the execution of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to outline the tasks needed to continue in this effort. He said the MOU would not preclude any options or partnerships that could be developed by local governments or private parties separate from that agreement.

The sites previously reviewed in the City's feasibility study were Hidden Valley, Airfield Park, Marymoor Park, Bellevue Utility Site at Marymoor, SE Eastgate Way, Highland Park, Bellevue College and the Bel-Red corridor. Mr. Foran said an aquatic facility could be coordinated with the Grand Connection project, which would provide a tourism and family activity center. He said the Bellevue School District submitted a letter to the City indicating an interest in providing financial support to develop a facility that would accommodate the District's competitive swim programs. Bellevue College revised its campus master plan since 2009, and one component of the plan is a community partnership of some kind.

Next steps, if approved by Council, are to continue to participate in King County's regional process, follow up with the Bellevue School District and Bellevue College, explore additional partnership opportunities, and update the major decision factors from the 2009 study (i.e., site feasibility, program elements and schematic design, capital and operating costs, funding plan, and public outreach). Mr. Foran said staff requests authorization to utilize up to \$250,000 from the Council Contingency (Capital Investment Program G-107) to develop more precise information to determine whether to proceed with an aquatic center.

Responding to Mayor Chelminiak, Mr. Foran said Bellevue's aquatic center experiences more than 200,000 visits annually, and Federal Way's aquatic center experiences more than 500,000 visits annually. Mr. Foran said an Eastside facility is envisioned to accommodate 500,000-700,000 annual visits.

Councilmember Robertson thanked staff for the presentation, including the photos and schematic drawings. Responding to Ms. Robertson, Mr. Foran provided additional details regarding the conceptual layout, which could be used for many things including water polo and diving. A separate diving area could be developed as well. Ms. Robertson said she would like more information on the market conditions and demand to determine whether a separate deep water tank is needed and how it could fit into the conceptual layout. She expressed support for moving forward with continued analysis. She thanked the public for their input and involvement, noting that she is interested in both Bellevue and regional facilities.

Ms. Robertson said drowning is the second leading cause of death in children. She said the movable bulkhead design allows greater flexibility for the use of the aquatic center, including the ability to provide more swimming lessons. She said there is only one year-round 50-meter pool in King County, which is in Federal Way.

Councilmember Robertson said she wants to ensure that the MOU is non-binding and does not preclude cities from continuing to pursue local facilities separately from the regional effort. She questioned whether transient occupancy tax (TOT, or hotel/motel tax) revenues could be used toward the financing of the facility as a tourism asset. She noted she toured an aquatic facility that also has yoga and other activities to help cover operations costs.

Councilmember Stokes concurred with Councilmember Robertson's comments. Mr. Stokes said he swam competitively in college, and his daughter swam and played water polo in high school. Mr. Stokes opined that a great city should have an aquatic center. Given the growth in the area, he envisions a regional facility as well as smaller local facilities. He expressed support for the requested funding from the Council Contingency fund.

Councilmember Stokes thanked Mr. Foran and staff for their efforts and noted that the aquatic center will be an important legacy of his time with the City.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis thanked staff for the work to date. He expressed support for moving forward with continued due diligence efforts to examine facility needs. He said that 25 percent of water polo scholarships are unclaimed, and he would like Bellevue athletes to be able to pursue those scholarships. Mr. Nieuwenhuis expressed an interest in more information on operations costs and the public outreach process.

Councilmember Zahn said she is shocked that there is a 900-person waiting list for swim lessons at the Bellevue Aquatic Center. She said a community of this size should have a center that accommodates the public's needs. She commended Bellevue water sports athletes who compete successfully despite the lack of practice facilities.

Ms. Zahn noted that aquatic centers are expensive to build and maintain. She said it will be important to establish a cost structure with the project partners to ensure that the facility is well maintained. She supports the parallel process of studying both local and regional efforts.

Councilmember Lee recalled that Bellevue originally acquired the aquatic center from King County. He said operations costs are a challenge, and it is important to have a long-term commitment from partners to sustain a regional center. He thanked everyone for coming out to show their support. He suggested that staff explore the Federal Way aquatic center and its operations costs and business model.

Mr. Lee said this is an opportunity to bring Bellevue's diverse community together to develop a facility that everyone of all abilities can enjoy. He expressed support for authorizing up to \$250,000 for continued refinement of the previous analysis and to respond to the Council's questions and feedback.

Mayor Chelminiak asked staff about the anticipated outcomes of further analysis. Mr. Foran said the work will produce a schematic design, cost estimates for construction and operations, a more extensive site study, financing models, and public outreach. In further response, Mr. Foran confirmed that staff will continue the work of the 2009 study to develop cost estimates for the different components of an aquatic center and to identify potential partners for the different functions.

Mr. Chelminiak expressed support for a general park system recreation pool to accommodate swimming laps, swim lessons, and other programs. However, he said a 50-meter competitive pool is not necessarily something a municipal park system would provide. He suggested that the regional effort could develop a number of facilities, with different cities and partners taking the lead for each facility. Mr. Foran said the intent of the money from King County is to create a facility or facilities for water activities.

Councilmember Robertson noted that King County Councilmember Balducci suggested that County transient occupancy tax (TOT, or hotel/motel tax) revenues could be used for a regional facility.

Mayor Chelminiak suggested that staff explore the range of revenue sources. He spoke in favor of moving forward with further analysis. He believes Bellevue should take the lead for a regional facility or, if multiple facilities are developed, provide the larger facility of the system. He noted that a large facility will have traffic and other impacts. He said the BelRed Plan includes a civic presence component. However, the City does not currently own property in the area for that purpose. He said the Bel-Red corridor is a good location for a facility serving neighboring cities.

Mr. Chelminiak said he is not in favor of creating a Metropolitan Park District. He opined that the area should have fewer special purpose districts.

City Clerk Kyle Stannert noted that, due to technical difficulties, Deputy Mayor Robinson was no longer connected to the meeting. He said she expressed her support for moving forward to authorize the additional funds and analysis.

- Councilmember Stokes moved to approve Option 1 to direct staff to utilize up to \$250,000 in available Council CIP Contingency funds to develop more precise information necessary to determine whether the Council wishes to proceed with an aquatic center, with the work to refine the potential project scale and scope, estimated costs, site feasibility, financing and operational plan, and public outreach and communications. Councilmember Robertson seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

At 7:30 p.m., Mayor Chelminiak declared a short break. The meeting resumed at approximately 7:40 p.m.

(c) Strategies for Incentivizing Green Building

City Manager Miyake recalled that the last update on the Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) was in August 2017, at which time staff introduced the concept of an advanced green building pilot program and incentives. He introduced Jennifer Ewing, ESI Program Manager, and Liz Stead, Land Use Director for the staff presentation.

Ms. Ewing said the green building program ideas to be presented are consistent with the Council Vision, Comprehensive Plan's Environmental Element, ESI Strategic Plan, Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement, and the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C) commitments. She highlighted the benefits of green building including decreased operational costs, reduced energy and water use, stormwater management, Smart Building technologies, and economic development by meeting the demand for green buildings. The barriers to green building are higher initial development costs; split incentives between developers, owners and tenants; risks of new technologies; and resistance to change.

Ms. Ewing highlighted green buildings in Vancouver, B.C.; Santa Monica, California; and Seattle. She described the continuum of green building rating systems, including BuiltGreen, LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), PHIUS (Passive House Institute US), and the Living Building Challenge.

Green building strategies currently in place in Bellevue include land use incentives in the BelRed and Downtown area codes, fee reductions for stormwater and transportation impact fees, reductions in required parking minimums in transit-oriented development, voluntary solar-readiness code, and low-impact development principles. Ms. Ewing noted that Seattle and King County have green building codes. Incentives can include a density bonus, reductions in stormwater and/or transportation impact fees, project marketing and technical assistance, as well as expedited permitting and/or permit fee reductions.

Ms. Ewing presented a chart comparing green building incentives in Bellevue and neighboring cities. She said homes built under Seattle's Priority Green program are outperforming the anticipated energy efficiency of the building designs.

Ms. Stead said the Seattle-King County Master Builders Association reports that there is a positive correlation between expedited permitting and the prevalence of green buildings. The feedback also indicated that permitting assistance is important for complex projects, building height and density bonuses are effective incentives, and that incentives must balance the additional costs and risks.

The green building program proposed for Bellevue begins with an advanced green building pilot program focused on commercial and multifamily development. The second phase is Greenpath commercial and multifamily incentives, and the third phase is Greenpath single-family development incentives. Ms. Stead said the recommended pilot program begins with the most stringent programs (i.e., Living Building Challenge and BuiltGreen Emerald Star certification). She presented photos of buildings in neighboring jurisdictions and of the Vandusen Garden Visitor Centre in Vancouver, B.C. Ms. Stead highlighted and compared the elements of Seattle's Living Building Challenge pilot program and Shoreline's Deep Green Incentive program.

Ms. Stead said staff's proposal for Bellevue limits the pilot program to three projects over three years, focuses on the highest impact building types, provides green building charrettes with trained staff, and involves technical assistance and facilitated permitting. Phase 2 would require additional staff resources to expand the program to include BuiltGreen, PHIUS, and LEED certifications. Additional incentives to consider include expedited permitting, land use bonuses, project marketing, joint promotions with Puget Sound Energy, incentives for on-site stormwater management, and technical assistance for green design. The proposed implementation strategy for Phase 1 includes establishing the program, training staff, developing templates for project intake, and advertising the program. Phase 2 includes continued research and development of the program as well as the drafting of a budget proposal for program expansion.

Councilmember Zahn said she had trouble finding the performance metrics on the City's website and suggested making that information more visible. Responding to Ms. Zahn, Ms. Stead said

Seattle has had three projects so far in its pilot program. They recently added new incentives to stimulate more activity. Shoreline's program is new and there have not been any projects to date.

Councilmember Zahn concurred with the suggestion during oral communications that the City include the LEED Platinum certification in its incentive program. Ms. Stead confirmed that the pilot program is focused on commercial, multifamily, and institutional projects. Ms. Zahn recalled that she toured the Bullitt Center in Seattle when it initially opened. At that time, the City of Seattle had not allowed the building owner to reuse the gray water it collects. Ms. Zahn said that, if the City is going to be more aggressive about encouraging green building, it is important to understand the code implications for rainwater collection and reuse, geothermal technology, and other features. Ms. Stead said City staff from multiple departments are working together to address those types of issues. She said staff is studying new practices used by the Bellevue School District and others to learn from them.

Ms. Zahn expressed support for the green building pilot program and said she is eager to see the benefits of expedited permitting. With regard to the reduction in required parking incentive, she wants to be sure the City is looking at the right sites. When she visited the Bullitt Center in Seattle, she said there was no parking and she did not have time to use transit.

Ms. Zahn questioned whether heating and cooling system modifications or building retrofits for energy efficiency will be part of the pilot program or included in a later phase. Ms. Stead said a major renovation/retrofit would likely be included in the pilot program. However, there are nuances that need further analysis. Ms. Stead noted the opportunity for the City to work with Puget Sound Energy and other partners as well to help applicants identify and consider options. However, she sees that as more likely to be a component of Phase 2.

Councilmember Robertson said she supports moving forward with the pilot program, and she noted her understanding that no code amendments are needed. Ms. Stead confirmed that code amendments have not yet been identified. However, staff is continuing its review and the City might need to consider a development agreement if the Land Use Code raises issues for larger projects.

Ms. Robertson observed that green building is increasing due to environmental concerns as well as due to the market demand for energy efficiency, similar to how people are increasingly wanting electric and hybrid cars. She noted the importance of consistent definitions for the different certification levels (e.g., LEED, BuiltGreen, etc.). She said the development of educational materials following the pilot program will be helpful for the community. Responding to Ms. Robertson, Ms. Ewing said the City has streamlined permitting related to solar energy.

Councilmember Robertson encouraged public outreach to attract three pilot projects. She said it will be helpful for staff to study both successful and less successful programs in other cities. She recalled problems years ago with early energy efficient buildings that did not have sufficient air flow, resulting in widespread mold production. She noted that energy efficient schools have not been universally successful. Ms. Robertson concurred with Councilmember Zahn's concerns about the potential impacts of reductions in parking requirements.

Responding to Councilmember Robertson, Ms. Stead said building height and density bonuses are available in the Downtown and BelRed corridor. The pilot program is not considering any additional incentives for those items. Ms. Robertson encouraged transparency in the regulations for developers and property owners. She suggested sharing information about local green projects with potential applicants to help them envision potential outcomes.

Councilmember Stokes encouraged a strong proactive effort to educate the public. He expressed support for moving forward with the pilot program.

Responding to Councilmember Lee, Ms. Stead confirmed that the later phases of the green building program that will expand to residential incentives will require additional staff resources.

Mayor Chelminiak encouraged staff to move forward with the pilot program. He concurred with suggestions to add the LEED Platinum level as an incentive. However, the incentives need to make sense financially for developers. Mr. Chelminiak questioned whether there is a way to integrate this with the affordable/attainable housing goals. He noted that energy efficient housing reduces living costs.

Councilmember Robertson noted that construction debris is 30-40 percent of the waste stream. Her understanding is that deconstruction costs approximately the same as demolition but it takes longer. Ms. Stead said information on that topic can be included in the other educational materials. She noted that many green building programs require deconstruction. Ms. Zahn said the City of Seattle, King County, and the Port of Seattle all have deconstruction and waste management requirements in place.

Mayor Chelminiak said he supports the benefits of deconstruction. However, he said it can be a financial disincentive as well as raise liability issues because it is difficult to remove everything from a structure (e.g., removing all wiring from a building).

Mr. Chelminiak said he hopes builders will participate in the pilot program.

(d) Cultural Conversations Program Briefing

City Manager Miyake introduced discussion regarding the Cultural Conversations program.

Carol Ross, Community Relations Coordinator, and Barb Tuininga, Program Coordinator, provided the staff briefing.

Ms. Tuininga thanked the Council for its support of and participation in the program, which provides a safe place for community connection. She said the Cultural Conversations program began hosting events approximately eight years ago and holds seven events during the academic year. Approximately one-third of those who attend are new to the program. She said the program is all about partnerships and connections, and she noted a joint event at the Bellevue Arts Museum on March 13. Ms. Tuininga thanked Councilmembers Lee and Stokes for their interest in speaking at the event.

Ms. Ross said the program highlights that, where similarities are recognized there is connection, and where there are differences there can be growth. She noted that people are looking for connection, and Bellevue's increasing diversity was a catalyst for establishing the program. She said the first Cultural Conversations session began with the question: What is the one question that you wish you could ask someone in this room? And what is the one question that you wish someone would ask you? Ms. Ross said the participants appreciate the opportunity to learn about the diversity of cultures and life experiences, and they share the common goal of wanting to belong in their community.

Ms. Ross said staff recently released the Cultural Conversations Best Practices Handbook for Organizers, which encourages individuals, neighborhoods, partnering organizations, and nonprofit agencies to create programs suited to their communities. The handbook and a booklet entitled "A Year of Storytelling and Conversations, 2015-2016" are both available in print and on the City's website.

Ms. Ross introduced Debbie Lacy, a longtime Cultural Conversations participant, the co-founder and Executive Director of the Eastside Refugee and Immigrant Coalition, and a storytelling coach.

Ms. Lacy said she is an advocate for the immigrant and refugee communities. She said the Eastside Refugee and Immigrant Coalition tracks how local governments, organizations, and institutions are operationalizing their values related to diversity. She said Cultural Conversations is one of the most visible and successful examples of an organization's commitment to celebrating diversity. She noted that many participants have formed friendships, learned about community resources, and found jobs through their interactions. Ms. Lacy commended Ms. Ross and Ms. Ewing for their work and encouraged the City to continue to build on the program.

Councilmember Lee said he is a lifelong advocate of multicultural programs and services. He expressed strong support for the Cultural Conversations program and thanked staff for their work. However, he observed that cultural groups in Bellevue live somewhat in silos, and it is great to focus on programs that bring everyone together. He encouraged individuals to go beyond discussions to participating in community projects together.

Councilmember Zahn said she attended the most recent Cultural Conversations session and was deeply touched by the stories that were shared. She said an attendee from the City of Redmond Fire Department took a copy of the best practices handbook to consider how they might start a similar program. Ms. Zahn said she hears frequent positive feedback from the overall community regarding the program.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis thanked staff for their work and noted that this is the type of program that makes Bellevue special and reflects its commitment to welcoming a diverse community. He said he hears positive feedback from the public about the program.

Councilmember Stokes observed that some of the participants have extended the concept into other organizations to implement ways to build relationships and networks. He noted that diversity programs often serve a targeted cultural or ethnic group. However, the Cultural Conversations program brings everyone together.

Mayor Chelminiak thanked staff for the best practices handbook and encouraged others to use it as a resource. He noted that he recently received an email from an individual who was unhappy with the Council's vision statement about welcoming the world, our diversity is our strength, and respecting our past while embracing our future. He said the Cultural Conversations program highlights diversity as a strength while also honoring Bellevue's history as a Native American settlement, white flight suburb, and now an international urban community. Mayor Chelminiak thanked everyone for their hard work.

(e) Neighborhood Enhancement Program (NEP) Update

City Manager Miyake recalled that the Neighborhood Enhancement Program (NEP) was restored in July 2015 after a hiatus during the recession.

Mike McCormick Huentelman, Neighborhood Outreach Manager, highlighted past NEP projects completed since the program began in 1988, including the Crossroads skate park, picnic shelters, trail connections, and public art. The NEP program funds small capital investment projects, proposed and selected by the community, in Bellevue's 14 neighborhood areas. The program reflects the City's fundamental principle that residents know best about the needs of their neighborhoods.

Mr. McCormick Huentelman said the maximum project cost has been increased from \$150,000 to the neighborhood allocation established based on the number of households. The neighborhood areas are defined in the Comprehensive Plan. He noted that Eastgate and Factoria are combined, as are Downtown and BelRed, because the areas did not have the population densities to stand alone as neighborhoods. He said the City will resume the rotation schedule from where it left off in 2008, with Bridle Trails and Northwest Bellevue next in the rotation. Past projects include trails, picnic shelters, bridges, boardwalks, enhanced crosswalks, public art, traffic calming features, and street lighting.

Theresa Cuthill, NEP Coordinator, said the NEP process extends over six months from project kickoff to selection and includes a number of opportunities for public involvement including neighborhood meetings, open houses, direct mailings, and online input. The program is promoted through flyers, social media, *It's Your City*, Nextdoor.com, *Bellevue Reporter* articles, and local schools. The common themes for NEP project requests are safety, recreation, community identity, and pedestrian access. The project criteria are affordability, consistency with City plans and policies, feasibility, ability to implement within 3-5 years, maintenance requirements, and public benefit. The NEP core team includes staff from the departments of Planning and Community Development, Transportation, and Parks and Community Services.

Every household is allowed to vote on projects. Ms. Cuthill highlighted past projects including the Lewis Creek Park wetland buffer, Lakemont Boulevard SE path, streetlights and lighting in the Eastgate/Factoria area, gateway landscaping at SE 38th Street, West Lake Sammamish Parkway flashing crosswalk, and the Ardmore Park trail and playground improvements. She said a list of the projects suggested but not selected is maintained by the City and shared with the appropriate departments for consideration as regular capital projects.

Ms. Cuthill said the next steps for the Bridle Trails NEP process are to accept project ideas until March 26, vet the proposed projects, and hold a neighborhood open house on June 14. Residents will vote on the projects in June or July. The Northwest Bellevue process launches on April 18 with a meeting at the Northwest Arts Center on NE 24th Street.

Responding to Councilmember Stokes regarding how the NEP fits with the recent neighborhood transportation levy projects, Ms. Cuthill said there are Transportation staff on the NEP team. Staff will ensure that NEP dollars are not used for projects already planned by the Transportation Department.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis expressed support for the program and noted that small things matter, and the projects instill pride and highlight the different characteristics of Bellevue neighborhoods. Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Ms. Cuthill said staff has heard concerns that organized neighborhood associations could have a disproportionate influence on the selected projects. However, she noted that every household is entitled to one vote. Mr. Nieuwenhuis requested information on the projects that have been proposed but not built, and whether they were later completed through the City's regular capital budget process. Ms. Cuthill said she would research that issue.

Councilmember Zahn said her neighborhood does not have an organized association so it can be difficult to rally neighbors around a process or project. She is pleased with the higher budgets available for neighborhoods, which could result in multiple smaller projects throughout an area. She expressed concern that some of the neighborhoods are rather large, and more isolated areas might find it difficult to receive a project. For neighborhoods without an established association, Ms. Zahn suggested that residents might want to organize a less formal community club as a conduit for communications.

Mr. McCormick Huentelman said all project ideas are evaluated and tracked as part of the City's commitment to neighborhood needs.

Councilmember Robertson expressed strong support for the NEP, noting that she is pleased with the higher budgets for neighborhood priorities. She opined that the modifications to the neighborhood boundaries in recent years provide greater equity, especially for smaller areas. She said the neighborhood transportation levy will help to complete smaller projects as well. She noted that Nextdoor.com is an effective social media tool.

Responding to Ms. Robertson, Mr. McCormick Huentelman said some of the new projects since 2015 have exceeded the former \$150,000 cap. However, there have been smaller projects as well.

Councilmember Robertson asked staff to publicize the Neighborhood Match Program, which provides up to \$10,000 in matching funds for specific projects.

Mayor Chelminiak thanked staff for the presentation. He said the Neighborhood Enhancement Program allows residents to choose projects and builds neighborhood connections. He said the

process of proposing projects often highlights needs that have not been identified by the City but can be incorporated into other capital projects.

4. Continued Oral Communications: None.

5. Executive Session

At 9:16 p.m., Mayor Chelminiak declared recess to Executive Session for approximately 30 minutes to discuss one item of pending litigation.

The Executive Session concluded at 9:36 p.m., and the meeting was adjourned.

Kyle Stannert, CMC
City Clerk

/kaw