

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Study Session

May 20, 2019
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room
Bellevue, Washington

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

ABSENT: Deputy Mayor Robinson

1. Executive Session

At 6:00 p.m., Mayor Chelminiak called the meeting to order and announced recess to Executive Session for approximately 15 minutes to discuss one item of pending litigation.

The meeting resumed at 6:25 p.m., with Mayor Chelminiak presiding.

2. Study Session Items

(a) Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) Strategic Plan Update Process

City Manager Brad Miyake recalled that the most recent discussion with the Council regarding the Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) was held on February 29, 2019. At that time, the Council requested that staff return with information regarding strategies to advance the City's efforts.

Arun Jain, Assistant Director of the Community Development Department, introduced discussion regarding suggested goals and targets for the update of the ESI Strategic Plan.

Jennifer Ewing, ESI Program Manager, said the current effort to update the ESI plan is consistent with the Council's Vision Priority 11: Review progress of ESI and analyze additional steps the City may wish to take to achieve its environmental goals. She recalled that staff reviewed the City's progress on ESI objectives with the Council on February 19, 2019.

Ms. Ewing noted that Attachment B in the agenda packet summarizes the City's existing environmental goals and targets. The ESI Strategic Plan was last updated in 2013, and the Comprehensive Plan was updated in 2015. Ms. Ewing said a number of City plans overlap with

the ESI Plan including the Smart Cities Plan, Smart Mobility Plan, Utilities Strategic Plan, and Parks and Open Space Plan. One objective of the process to update the ESI Strategic Plan is to consolidate a number of environmental goals and targets into one environmental strategic plan.

Ms. Ewing recalled that the five focus areas of the ESI Plan are materials management and waste, mobility and land use, natural systems, energy, and climate change. Each area has an overarching goal and one or more targets or performance measures, and each will have resulting actions (e.g., programs and projects).

In the area of materials management and waste, the goal is to reduce the negative impacts of consumption and waste practices and to divert 50 percent of all waste to recycling and composting. Ms. Ewing said that King County recently updated its Solid Waste Management Plan and the region will continue to explore alternatives.

Ms. Ewing highlighted the targets and potential targets for the mobility and land use component of the plan, including reducing the drive-alone rate for residents to 55 percent by 2035, expanding the use of electric vehicles, increasing the pedestrian and bicycle mode share, and increasing transit ridership. Under the natural systems category, Ms. Ewing noted targets to increase the tree canopy to 40 percent citywide, maintain public urban forests in Class 1 or Class 2 condition, and to ensure that 72 percent of the population lives within one-third mile of open space. She suggested the consideration of a target related to improving stream health.

In the area of energy, the City is on track to reduce municipal operations energy use by 10 percent by 2020. Ms. Ewing suggested that the Council might want to consider adding targets related to the use of renewable energy for City operations and across the community. Climate change targets from the Mayors Climate Protection Agreement were to reduce greenhouse gas emissions for both municipal operations and the overall community to seven percent below 1990 levels by 2012. The City's municipal operations have reached approximately 50 percent of the goal, and citywide emissions have reached 22 percent of the goal.

Ms. Ewing said a consultant will assist in the outreach and analysis related to the update of the ESI Strategic Plan. The consultant will supplement the City's research and work to date, and will help to develop updated targets. Public outreach will gather input on strategies to achieve the goals, and staff will return this fall with recommendations and to seek Council direction on the goals and targets.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis, liaison to the Environmental Services Commission, thanked staff for the presentation and noted that he and Councilmember Lee attended the recent climate change forum. Mr. Nieuwenhuis said the City of Portland, Oregon, was discussed as a model for other cities. Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Ms. Ewing said the targets throughout the ESI Strategic Plan were established at different times, and some are outdated or no longer relevant. In further response, Ms. Ewing said staff will return in October to update the Council on the research and analysis and to begin the public engagement process. The update of the ESI Strategic Plan is anticipated to be completed early next year.

Councilmember Stokes thanked staff for the update and noted the importance of raising public awareness. While he has heard positive comments about the City's environmental focus, he opined that most of the community is not aware of the depth of the City's efforts. He said the update process provides opportunities for public education and partnerships. Mr. Stokes said that environmental and climate change issues are complex. He encouraged setting ambitious goals and continuing to work with the community.

Councilmember Zahn thanked staff for their hard work. She said she was happy to see that the City studied practices in 17 peer cities. She noted that she also attended the climate change forum. She said Portland reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent over a 20-year period. Referring to the five focus areas in the ESI Strategic Plan, Ms. Zahn suggested adding sections for community engagement and for local government operations. She encouraged bold short-term and long-term goals as well as regional partnerships. She noted that the Bellevue School District is incorporating net zero building practices into the Puesta del Sol school project.

Councilmember Robertson reiterated her ongoing concern regarding construction waste and debris. She suggested that the City encourage deconstruction versus demolition and measure the diversion rate. She encouraged composting for the City's parks and landscape maintenance.

Ms. Robertson expressed support for increasing the use of electric vehicles and suggested exploring increasing the use of liquid natural gas as well. She recalled reading a few years ago that if every fleet in America converted its vehicles to natural gas, the country would be at 1990 greenhouse gas emission levels. Noting the goal related to transit ridership, she suggested including carpool, vanpool, and employer-connect vehicles as well.

Referring to the goal of expanding open space, Councilmember Robertson suggested using the City's acquisitions of open space as one of the performance measures. She expressed support for restoring the urban forest and daylighting streams, especially in the BelRed area. Ms. Robertson said she recently read an article stating that most trees in U.S. cities are male, which release more pollen and contribute to increasing problems with seasonal allergies. Noting the impact on air quality, she said she would be interested in hearing from the City's forestry staff regarding that concept.

Councilmember Robertson said she is proud of the environmental improvements in the City's operations through waste reduction, paper reduction, and the use of electric vehicles. She thanked staff for their work.

Councilmember Lee complimented staff and said that Bellevue is doing a good job. He looks forward to continued study and discussion to update the ESI Strategic Plan. He concurred with the importance of strong targets and metrics.

Mayor Chelminiak observed that the City and the community are doing well in some areas and have room for improvement in others. He noted that the Council set aside \$300,000 in the budget to update the ESI Strategic Plan.

Mr. Chelminiak suggested exploring different types of goals related to recycling, including to focus on the items that are the most cost-effective to recycle with the greatest reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. He noted the increase in non-recyclable items in recycling bins. Regarding construction debris, Mayor Chelminiak said the State is moving away from its current recycling calculation method and will use a broader approach to divert items from the waste stream.

Mr. Chelminiak said electric vehicles are not the only type of vehicle that dramatically decreases greenhouse gas emissions. Noting Councilmember Robertson's reference to liquid natural gas, Mr. Chelminiak said that fossil fuel-based natural gas is also better than gasoline and diesel fuel. Renewable natural gas (RNG) is a biomethane fuel option that might be appropriate for the City's larger vehicles. Mr. Chelminiak suggested improvements to older single-family and multifamily residences to enhance energy efficiency and to reduce utilities costs. He noted that transit use will increase when light rail begins operating through Bellevue.

Councilmember Zahn said she would like to see net zero community events to provide information regarding recycling, composting, and other practices.

(b) Stream Team Update - Kelsey Creek Peamouth Presentation

City Manager Miyake introduced staff's update on the Stream Team's activities.

Laurie Devereaux, Stream Team Program Administrator, Utilities Department, said the Stream Team program has been in existence for more than 30 years. Volunteers participate in fish monitoring and bug collection during the summer, watch for salmon in the fall, and watch for peamouth minnows in the spring in Kelsey Creek and the Mercer Slough. Ms. Devereaux noted that volunteers receive training regarding fish, streams, water quality, and pollution prevention. She described the significant benefit of fish ladders and the restoration of habitat under the Wilburton trestle.

Ms. Devereaux said there was a peamouth spawning event in late April. She described a mystery that began in early May with the discovery of numerous fish carcasses. With the assistance of video cameras, she was able to rule out herons, otters, and beavers as the responsible parties and to identify raccoons as the culprits. Ms. Devereaux noted that another large spawning event occurred on May 19.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis thanked Ms. Devereaux for the update. Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, she encouraged individuals to email streamteam@bellevuewa.gov if they are interested in joining the Stream Team. She noted that salmon are counted in the fall and peamouth are monitored in the spring. In further response, Ms. Devereaux concurred with the suggestion to explore additional ways to publicize the fish events when they occur on weekends.

Councilmember Stokes expressed strong support for the Stream Team and noted that it is fantastic to have the habitat and fish activity in the middle of an urban area.

Councilmember Zahn thanked Ms. Devereaux and the volunteers for their work. Responding to Ms. Zahn, Ms. Devereaux said volunteers observe the streams at the Mercer Slough fish ladder and the Wilburton trestle. She noted that Kelsey Creek and many other streams in the basin flow into the Mercer Slough.

Councilmember Robertson thanked Ms. Devereaux for the informative and entertaining presentation and commented on how good it is to see wildlife thriving in Bellevue.

Responding to Councilmember Lee, Ms. Devereaux noted that a few volunteers monitor Lewis Creek where it flows into Lake Washington. However, the majority of the spawning occurs at the Wilburton trestle. She noted the importance of water breaking over the rocks in the creek to release oxygen for the fish eggs and to carry away waste. She said peamouth minnows made their way to Kelsey Creek Farm in 2005 and were found in the West Tributary on Mother's Day that year. In further response, Ms. Devereaux said the best time to see fish is typically the evening.

Responding to Mayor Chelminiak, Ms. Devereaux said Kelsey Creek Farm is farther upstream than the peamouth will usually travel. However, salmon and trout have benefitted from the stream restoration work in that area. Cutthroat trout live in Bellevue year-round. Mr. Chelminiak suggested using social media to publicize the Stream Team program and key fish events. He said this is a great way to educate the public to appreciate nature.

3. Report of the City Manager *[Regular Session Agenda Item 6]*

(a) 2019 Cesar Chavez Living Legacy Community Advocate Award

City Manager Miyake announced that Patrick Alina, Bellevue Youth Link Program Coordinator, received the 2019 Cesar Chavez Living Legacy Community Advocate Award.

Toni Esparza, Assistant Director for Parks and Community Services, said the award recognizes individuals who demonstrate the core values of leadership, service to others, dedication to strengthening and celebrating community, and steadfast commitment in the pursuit of a just society through equity. Ms. Esparza noted that Mr. Alina has been the Youth Link coordinator for 18 years. The award specifically commends his integrity, innovative ideas, tireless passion for community, and determined advocacy to support youth and families of all backgrounds.

Mr. Alina said the award was unexpected and appreciated. He said that Youth Eastside Services (YES) appreciates the work of the City to support students and families. He looks forward to continuing to create opportunities for youth to learn about and become involved in government.

Councilmember Zahn, a member of the Bellevue Youth Link Board, congratulated Mr. Alina for the award and his 18 years with the Bellevue Youth Link program.

Councilmember Stokes congratulated Mr. Alina and thanked YES for their work in the community.

Councilmember Lee commended Mr. Alina's work with the Youth Link program.

Councilmember Robertson thanked Mr. Alina for his work and for making a difference in the lives of children and youth.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis congratulated Mr. Alina, noting that he would spread the word on social media.

Mayor Chelminiak congratulated Mr. Alina and suggested pausing for photos.

At 7:51 p.m., Mayor Chelminiak declared recess to the Regular Session.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC
City Clerk

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