

**CITY OF BELLEVUE
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday
October 22, 2020
6:30 p.m.

Zoom

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Strom at 6:33 p.m.

ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Vanja Knezevic (Chair), Diann Strom (Vice Chair), Neal Hines, Anne Howe, Negin Khanloo, Ken Wan, Ling Zhuang

COUNCIL LIAISON: Conrad Lee

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Brian Bartle, Deputy Director, Utilities; Nav Ota, Director, Utilities; Lucy Liu, Resource Management and Customer Service Assistant Director, Utilities; Linda De Boldt, Engineering Assistant Director, Utilities; Brian Landau, Engineering Planning Manager, Utilities; Jo Liu, Fiscal Manager, Utilities; Cherish Jackson, Interim Executive Assistant, Utilities; Jerry Shuster, Senior Stormwater Engineer, Utilities; Christa Heller, Environmental Scientist, Utilities; and Laurie Hugdahl, Minutes Taker

2. TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF BYLAWS

Vice Chair Strom stated that the Bylaws provisions on remote meetings needed to be suspended temporarily to allow the meeting to be held remotely.

Deputy Director Brian Bartle reviewed procedures regarding online meetings.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion made by Commissioner Khanloo, seconded by Commissioner Hines, to approve the agenda. The agenda was approved unanimously (7-0).

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

No written communications were submitted.

No one registered for oral communications.

5. COMMUNICATION FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Councilmember Lee reported that the budget has been presented to the City Council by the City Manager for deliberation. Council expects to take action on the budget during the first part of December. He thanked the ESC for their hard work on the budget.

6. STAFF REPORTS

None

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A) 10/7/20 MINUTES

Motion made by Commissioner Khanloo, seconded by Commissioner Hines, to approve the 10/7/20 minutes as presented. The minutes were approved unanimously (7-0).

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

9. NEW BUSINESS

a) Watershed Management Plan Update

*Brian Landau, Engineering Planning Manager
Jerry Shuster, Senior Stormwater Engineer
Christa Heller, Utilities Environmental Scientist*

Planning Manager Landau began the PowerPoint presentation on the Watershed Management Plan (WMP) with the goal to improve the health of Bellevue's streams. This involves optimizing stormwater fund investments, prioritizing actions to improve stream health quickly, and developing or changing policies that will allow for successful plan implementation. He reviewed Bellevue's four major watersheds: the Lake Washington Tributaries Watershed, the Greater Kelsey Creek Watershed, the Lake Sammamish Tributaries Watershed, and the Coal Creek

Watershed. He spoke to the importance of better managing the land in order to improve stream health.

Senior Stormwater Engineer Jerry Shuster reviewed progress to date noting that the Open Stream Condition Assessment has concluded. The WMP Framework includes using data from the Open Stream Condition Assessment to assess and prioritize watersheds with public input; identifying a toolbox of opportunities (projects, programs, policies, maintenance practices) to address or fix the health of the streams, and developing the Watershed Management Plan via policy development, regulatory strategies, and public involvement. The Watershed Process Conceptual Model points to urbanization as the cause of change in flows, streamside alteration, pollutants, and fish passage barriers. All of these consequences of urbanization can lead to decreases in aquatic health and decreases in aquatic community diversity and/or eradication. The model shows where the City needs to target management tools to better manage the consequences of urbanization.

Commissioner Zhuang asked how Bellevue's WMP will fit in the bigger picture of watershed management by the Department of Ecology, especially with regard to fish passage barriers. Mr. Shuster explained that the prioritization method the City is using is in line with the recommendation of the Department of Ecology.

Utilities Environmental Scientist Christa Heller explained that she attends the regional meetings and briefly discussed how they inform each other and work together. She continued to review the Open Stream Condition Assessment. The city is currently post-processing the data and is on schedule for data analysis and reporting. She explained that one metric for assessing habitat quality and opportunities for improving stream quality is the amount of large wood in streams.

Commissioner Zhuang asked if the City measures the flow for Kelsey Creek and Coal Creek to see if there is a change compared to the past. Ms. Heller explained that this study looks at the baseline indicators for streams such as width, depth, and bank stability/instability. She noted that it is possible to see the effects of urbanization by the physical condition of streams. Mr. Shuster noted that there are continuous reading flow gauges at the mouths of Kelsey Creek and Coal Creek, and there is a long record of this data for the City.

Commissioner Hines asked if there are any flow gauges upstream of the mouths. Mr. Shuster reviewed the location of several upstream gauges. Commissioner Hines asked for more information about the relationship between flow and fish migration. Christa Heller commented on the flow

and depth requirements of different species. Mr. Shuster discussed general trends. On average the flow is higher than it used to be, but in the summer it is lower because there is less infiltration of water into the ground.

Mr. Shuster discussed the watershed prioritization methodology as recommended by the Department of Ecology. Accordingly, watersheds and parts of watersheds will be classified in three categories – areas to improve, areas to protect, and areas to sustain. The four metrics which will be considered in the classification process will be changes in flows, streamside alteration, pollutants, and fish passage barriers. Management actions will be assigned to the different areas once the prioritization is completed. The toolbox including projects, programs, policies/regulations/standards, and maintenance practices will be used to address the various areas.

Commissioner Zhuang urged staff to consider the dramatic difference in stream quality of Kelsey Creek, the City's largest watershed, in the planning efforts. Mr. Shuster explained that public involvement would be part of the prioritization process.

Commissioner Hines asked why temperature and dissolved oxygen data is not included in the metrics. Mr. Shuster noted that there is not a lot of data related to that for the streams. The limited water quality data which is available will be considered in the prioritization process. Commissioner Hines suggested utilizing some of the many technologically savvy people/organizations in Bellevue to help with the data collection.

Mr. Landau discussed proposed projects in the 2021-2027 CIP Sturtevant Creek retrofit, Coal Creek/ I-4-5 weirs, and Coal Creek off channel sediment pond retrofit. Opportunities associated with this project include improving public awareness of streams and stormwater through public engagement; incorporating social justice/equity into project prioritization efforts; improving coordination with other city department planning efforts and improving community engagement methods through technology. Challenges include the loss of institutional knowledge with the loss of some employees and adapting to COVID-19 with work/project schedules, field work, and public engagement. Mr. Shuster reviewed next steps and the anticipated schedule.

Commissioner Hines asked if there will be any outreach efforts to schools. Mr. Landau explained they are just starting to develop the public engagement plan, but will definitely consider using the schools.

Commissioner Wan asked what has been done with regard to coordinating with the Draft Environmental Stewardship Initiative team. Mr. Landau

explained that the ESI group has recommended work on the Watershed Management Plan, and there is synergy between the plans.

Commissioner Zhuang asked how the legal aspect of water rights will be handled. Mr. Shuster replied that this plan would not involve taking any water out of any streams or interfering with anyone's water rights; it is mainly about improving the quality and quantity of water entering the streams.

Commissioner Wan asked for clarification of the timeline for beginning the actual work on the streams. Staff explained that some opportunities for early actions have been identified prior to completion of the overall plan. Director Otal further reviewed how placeholders can be placed in the budget as they are identified. She commented that the completion of the WMP is expected to coincide with the completion of the CIP, but it is not necessarily a linear process. Some early actions have already been identified, and more are expected to be identified. Commissioner Wan encouraged work on the WMP to be done as quickly as possible in order to begin to make improvements to the environment.

b) 2021-2022 Operating Budget and Rates and 2021-2027 CIP Recommendations to City Council

Nav Otal, Utilities Director

Lucy Liu, Asst. Director – Resource Management & Customer Service

Jolie Liu, Fiscal Manager

Director Otal presented the PowerPoint regarding the 2021-2022 Operating Budget and Rates and 2021-2027 CIP Recommendations to City Council. The City Manager has included the budget and rates recommended by the ESC in his proposed budget to the Council. The Council is scheduled to review the Utilities budget on November 9. Director Otal discussed the upcoming timeline for budget activity.

Motion made by Commissioner Khanloo, seconded by Commissioner Hines, to recommend that City Council support the proposed Utilities 2021-2022 Operating Budget of \$321.8 million, the 2021-2027 CIP Budget of \$235.6 million and the proposed combined rate increases for water, sewer, and stormwater management services of 3.8% in 2021 and 3.9% in 2022.

Commissioner Wan spoke in support of using the recommendation to the City Manager as a starting point and including more details about cost containment measures. Director Otal explained that staff could work with

the Chair and Vice Chair to enhance that information. Commissioner Wan also recommended including that the Commission was taking feedback received from the community seriously. Vice Chair Strom concurred.

Upon a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

10. REVIEW OF COMMISSION & COUNCIL CALENDARS

Deputy Director Brian Bartle reviewed the tentative ESC Calendar. There will be a meeting on November 5 and a potential remote retreat on December 3. He also reviewed the potential Council calendar.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Commissioner Wan, seconded by Commissioner Zhuang, to adjourn the meeting. Upon a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.