

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Regular Meeting

January 11, 2021  
6:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting  
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Robinson, Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis, and Councilmembers Barksdale, Lee, Robertson, Stokes, and Zahn

ABSENT: None.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m., with Mayor Robinson presiding.

Councilmember Lee announced with regret that Paul Bader, a former executive assistant to the City Council and a U.S. Navy Captain, passed away on January 3, 2021. Mr. Lee expressed the Council's heartfelt appreciation of Captain Bader and wished his wife of 52 years, JoAnn, and their family well.

2. Roll Call; Flag Salute

City Clerk Charmaine Arredondo called the roll. All Councilmembers were present and participating remotely. Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis led the flag salute.

3. Approval of Agenda

Mayor Robinson suggested adding an agenda item regarding the Diversity Advantage Initiative summit held on January 8.

→ Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to approve the agenda, amended to add Item 7(a), Update on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Summit. Councilmember Lee seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

4. Oral Communications

- (a) Christian Dorsett expressed support for the City's handling of an issue.
- (b) Ray Cullom said he is the CEO of a new nonprofit organization called EastHUB, which is focused on reinventing the way that cultural and community gathering spaces are developed. He suggested incorporating cultural gathering spaces into the community to create a comprehensive network of music and dance rehearsal spaces, studios, theaters, galleries, live music venues, and flexible use spaces. He noted the goal of creating at least 16 new cultural gathering spaces within the first five years. The first major project will be a playhouse and music theater near City Hall. Mr. Cullom thanked Microsoft for their support and said that EastHUB looks forward to working with the City.
- (c) Ruth Lipscomb, a resident of the Newport Shores neighborhood, thanked Mayor Robinson for her statement regarding the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on January 6. However, she commented on language that referred to beginning the process of healing. She said there is no unity or healing without accountability. She requested a full investigation into whether any City employees, including police officers, were present at the riots at the U.S. Capitol or at Washington's state capitol. Ms. Lipscomb said that anyone involved in unlawful activity should be terminated from employment.

5. Reports of Community Councils, Boards, and Commissions: None.

6. Report of the City Manager

- (a) Update on COVID-19 Pandemic

City Manager Brad Miyake introduced Patty Hayes, Director of Seattle-King County Public Health Department, to provide an update on activities related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Hayes thanked the City for its leadership during the past year in response to the pandemic. She discussed how the seven-day moving average number of cases is used to track the rate of infection. She noted an increase in the number of cases following Thanksgiving and Christmas. She said it appears that the virus has spread more through family and other small gatherings in recent months. However, there continue to be outbreaks in the workplace. She encouraged everyone to continue to wear face masks and to physically distance from others.

Ms. Hayes said this region is fortunate that hospitals have not been overrun with COVID patients as has occurred in other parts of the country. She said testing continues through the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the University of Washington. She said there have been few cases of the variant of the virus regionally or on the West Coast. The current vaccines are expected to offer some level of protection, and public health officials are watching that closely. She said hospitals in the area have been receiving vaccines since mid-December. The priority groups for vaccinations are frontline health care workers, emergency medical personnel, and nursing home residents and employees.

Ms. Hayes said approximately 70,000 people have been vaccinated in King County to date. She acknowledged the challenge of administering the vaccine and said the County is working closely with the State to expedite the process. Ms. Hayes said the governor recently released guidance indicating that the next groups to be vaccinated are individuals over age 70 and individuals over age 50 who live in a congregate setting. The next priority is to vaccinate essential workers, including Police and Fire personnel, teachers, and others.

King County is working to expand its testing and vaccination sites. Ms. Hayes said pharmacies will be important partners as well in expediting vaccinations. She acknowledged that many people are hesitant to receive the vaccine. However, she noted that the vaccine went through multiple clinical trials, and health officials are confident that it is safe and effective.

Councilmember Zahn thanked Director Hayes for her leadership and work throughout Washington state. Responding to Ms. Zahn, Ms. Hayes said the governor's office is aware of the need to refine the definition of essential workers and to provide clear guidance. Ms. Hayes said King County has launched an online phase finder which allows individuals to determine when they will be eligible for vaccination.

Ms. Zahn noted the potential isolation site established in the Eastgate area and asked whether it could be used as an interim vaccination site. Ms. Hayes said that a number of organizations are offering to set up pop-up sites or drive-through sites. She said the County is encouraging businesses to help in administering the vaccine.

Councilmember Barksdale thanked Ms. Hayes and staff for their work related to the pandemic. Responding to Mr. Barksdale, Ms. Hayes said that the number of COVID cases in long-term care facilities and among emergency medical personnel is expected to decrease as more vaccinations are given. In further response to Mr. Barksdale, Ms. Hayes said the County's environmental health team is working with restaurants to ensure appropriate ventilation and air flow in their outdoor tents. She said it is possible to have good airflow even if the sides of a tent are closed. She noted that distancing between customers is important as well.

In further response to Mr. Barksdale, Ms. Hayes said that home testing will become more available in the future. However, she noted that immediate results at home are not added to the regional data system. Ms. Hayes said labs that process mailed home tests should be reporting the data to the state system. She said that people who are undergoing tests through the drive-through and other mass testing sites are typically receiving their results within 30-36 hours.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis expressed concern about news stories reporting that some vaccine has been wasted because it was not administered within the allowed timeframe. Ms. Hayes said the two vaccines have different storage requirements. She said public health staff is working to strengthen relationships between nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and pharmacies. The hope is that pharmacies will transfer unused doses to hospitals before the storage limit expires.

Ms. Hayes said her staff is working to develop an online dashboard to enable the public to track the availability of vaccines. She said more vaccines are still being developed, and it is possible that they will be easier to store.

In further response to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Ms. Hayes said that nearly all of the nursing homes and many assisted living facilities in King County are coordinating with pharmacies. However, the vaccine is not reaching adult family homes. Ms. Hayes said there is a massive effort to contact all 1,400 adult family homes to determine their needs and actions to date.

Councilmember Robertson said she accessed the State's website to review the phases for vaccinating the public. She said individuals are able to sign up to receive an alert when they become eligible for the vaccine. Responding to Ms. Robertson, Ms. Hayes said the vaccine is free to the public as part of the federal declaration that providers cannot charge individuals, including any administrative fee.

Ms. Robertson said that many school districts in Washington have had full or partial in-person learning, and 90 percent of all private schools have in-person school or a hybrid approach. However, most of the school districts in King County are closed. She said the pediatrics association recently published an article indicating that there have not been any cases of teacher-children transmission of the virus in schools. Child-to-child transmission is low as well, and most cases in schools originated from community spread.

Ms. Robertson expressed concern regarding the mental health impacts of the pandemic on children, especially at-risk youth. She noted that there has been little spread of the virus related to restaurants and retail shops, yet so many businesses remain closed. Ms. Robertson expressed concern regarding the impact of unemployment and the loss of income for many individuals.

Responding to Councilmember Robertson, Ms. Hayes concurred with her concern regarding the trauma of the pandemic on children and families. Ms. Hayes said the County and the State are working with school districts, especially to focus on the youngest children and those with special needs. She noted the challenge of providing better ventilation and larger spaces for students. Ms. Hayes said the science indicates that children do get COVID and they pass it on to other people. She said there continue to be outbreaks in work places. The Washington Department of Health recently revised a guideline to allow a higher level of cases in schools before returning to remote learning. She said the State is working hard to get children back into schools.

With regard to businesses, Ms. Hayes said that contract tracing has been a challenge and it has been hard to trace cases to specific events (e.g., small gatherings, restaurant, weddings, etc.). She noted that there have been outbreaks traced to restaurants, including among restaurant staff. She reiterated the importance of face masks, distancing, and ventilation.

Mayor Robinson asked Ms. Hayes to provide information to the City Clerk regarding the County website, contact information, and how to sign up for a vaccination alert.

Responding to Councilmember Lee, Ms. Hayes said that both of the current vaccines are 95-percent effective. The Pfizer vaccine requires 21 days between the two doses, and the Moderna vaccine requires 28 days between doses. Ms. Hayes suggested that people discuss the vaccine options with their physician. In further response, Ms. Hayes said the State is following the

clinical trials that recommend full doses for both doses. However, they are following the science and experiences in other parts of the country and world.

Mayor Robinson thanked Director Hayes for the report and encouraged everyone to support local businesses through the pandemic.

(b) Bellevue Conflict Resolution Center Annual Update

City Manager Miyake introduced staff's update regarding the City's Conflict Resolution Center. He noted the center experienced an increase in cases in 2020 due to issues related to the pandemic.

Mike McCormick Huentelman, Assistant Director, Community Development Department, said the presentation would focus on the impacts of the pandemic on the Conflict Resolution Center. He noted that there has been an increase in landlord-tenant disputes.

Marci McReynolds, Conflict Resolution Center Manager, said the center handles approximately 300 cases per year dealing with trees, fences, boundaries, noise, landlord-tenant issues, foreclosures, and other areas. She said that most of the cases are referred by residents or City departments (e.g., Police, Utilities, Transportation). She said the center also teaches classes in the community, including the popular listening classes in partnership with the libraries. The program relies on volunteers who complete a mediation certification process, and the center belongs to a statewide consortium of dispute resolution centers.

Ms. McReynolds said staff has continued to offer classes via Zoom and mediations have been conducted online during the pandemic. She said there has been an increase in neighbor-to-neighbor disputes, primarily related to noise complaints, right-of-way complaints, and landlord-tenant issues. The governor issued a proclamation in August suggesting that individuals utilize dispute resolution centers to resolve landlord-tenant issues and to establish payment alternatives.

Ms. McReynolds described the creation of the rent negotiation program to help landlords and tenants address payment and repayment solutions. The City partnered with a property management company for the pilot program. She noted that the eviction moratorium expires at the end of March, and the number of conflict resolution cases related to foreclosures and rentals will continue to increase this spring.

Ms. McReynolds said the Washington State Department of Commerce refers potential foreclosures to the City's conflict resolution program. She noted that the City's Development Services Department (DSD) is working to facilitate a good neighbor agreement between the men's homeless shelter and surrounding residents and businesses. The next training for Conflict Resolution Center volunteers will be held February 8-10, and there are still openings in the class.

Mayor Robinson suggested that Councilmembers submit any questions for staff via email.

(c) 2020 Development Update and MyBuildingPermit.com

Mike Brennan, Director of the Development Services Department, introduced staff's presentation regarding 2020 development activity and MyBuildingPermit.com. He noted that projects in recent years positioned the department well to continue to function and provide services during the pandemic.

Sabra Schneider, Chief Information Officer, summarized key technology investments in recent years. She noted that 100 percent paperless permitting was achieved in 2019 through a collaboration of DSD and the Information Technology Department (ITD). She recalled that Bellevue was a founding partner of MyBuildingPermit.com, a collaboration of 17 jurisdictions that provides an online portal for development services applications, inspection scheduling, permit status information, and tip sheets. She said an eCheck and direct payment option was added and approximately \$900,000 in permit fees were submitted in 2020. Additional technology advancements were improvements to the MyBuildingPermit dashboard function and the eGov Alliance web site.

Mr. Brennan highlighted Bellevue's development activity, noting a slight decrease in permit applications and issuances since the beginning of the pandemic. There were 14,212 permit applications in 2020, including 759 multifamily units, 171 single-family homes, and more than 2 million square feet of office space. The City reached its highest valuation in permits of \$1.2 billion in 2020 despite the pandemic. Mr. Brennan noted that 79,461 inspections were completed in 2020. Overall customer satisfaction with development services increased in 2020, particularly in the areas of timely responses and courteous staff.

Mr. Brennan said there are a number of ways to access public information about development activity including the Building Bellevue map, City Capital Projects in Your Neighborhood map, major projects lists for the Downtown and the BelRed district, MyBuildingPermit.com, and permit data on the Open Data portal. He praised staff's resilience and commitment during an especially challenging year.

(d) Bellevue Convention Center Authority (BCCA) Board Appointment

City Manager Miyake requested the Council's concurrence with his reappointments to the Bellevue Convention Center Authority (BCCA) Board of Directors. The Board is composed of seven members who are appointed by the City Manager with the concurrence of the City Council. Mr. Miyake said that 2020 was a challenging year for Meydenbauer Convention Center, and the Board has done a great job of partnering with the City and ensuring the viability of the center throughout the pandemic.

- Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to concur with the City Manager's reappointments to the Bellevue Convention Center Authority (BCCA) Board. Councilmember Zahn seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

7. Council Business and New Initiatives

(a) Update on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Summit

Mayor Robinson said she wanted to give Councilmembers the opportunity to comment on the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Summit held on January 8. The summit provided a progress update of the City's Diversity Advantage Initiative and staff presented a video depicting the City's long commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. The second half of the summit featured five concurrent sessions with topics around racial equity, inclusive outreach and engagement, community building, and trauma informed care. There were 270 participants in the summit, including some from outside of Bellevue and Washington state.

Councilmember Barksdale thanked staff for planning and coordinating the summit. He said he appreciated how the speakers spoke directly about systemic and institutional racism and how to approach it as a community. He said he looks forward to more of those conversations, perhaps as part of the Bellevue Centers Communities of Color Initiative. He expressed an interest in the dashboard and metrics that were mentioned during the session.

Councilmember Stokes said he was unable to participate in the summit. However, he said he has heard positive feedback and he looks forward to continued communications about racial equity and inclusion.

Councilmember Zahn noted that she was reminded earlier by her brother that today is the anniversary of the day they immigrated to the United States. She thanked staff for all of their hard work in organizing the event. She highlighted key messages from the summit including the need to focus on the most important issues and the commitment to follow through to achieve the desired outcomes despite challenges. She said there was a discussion about four questions to consider as part of an equity lens in policymaking. She suggested further discussion of those concepts during a Council retreat. Ms. Zahn said the summit offered practical tips on how to implement priorities in order to move forward.

Councilmember Robertson thanked staff for their great work in organizing the summit. She noted the large number of participants in the summit, including those from the region and out of state. She said it was uplifting to see the commitment to investing in creating a more equitable and inclusive environment. She said there was discussion about how the budget is the moral document of a city. She noted how that was consistent with the Council's budget discussions last year and the interest in ensuring that the budget reflects the City's values.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis thanked staff for all of their work to plan and coordinate the summit. He said it was great to see so many members of the community engaged in the conversation and interested in continuing with future discussions.

City Manager Miyake noted that the summit was recorded and the recording will be made available to the public.

Councilmember Lee concurred with Councilmember Robertson about the budget as a reflection of the Council's values and said he is pleased with the investments in human infrastructure in the 2021-2022 budget. Mr. Lee said this reflects his personal journey of coming to the United States in 1958 to live with freedom, liberty, and justice for all. He noted the importance of taking action to advance the City's priorities related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. He said that roughly half of Bellevue residents moved here from another country. He encouraged bold actions, public education, and relationship building.

Mayor Robinson thanked everyone for their participation and comments. She said it is important to go outside of our comfort zone and to try new things, meet new people, and to consider other perspectives.

Councilmember Barksdale reminded everyone about the activities on January 18 to celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

8.     Consent Calendar

- Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to approve the Consent Calendar, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.
- The motion to approve the Consent Calendar carried by a vote of 7-0, and the following items were approved:
  - (a) Resolution No. 9866 authorizing execution of an amendment to increase the Professional Services Agreement with McKee Appraisal Real Estate Services and Consulting, Inc., by \$70,000, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$160,000, plus all applicable taxes for appraisal services related to property rights acquisition for Transportation Capital Investment Program (CIP) project 124th Avenue NE - Ichigo Way to Northup Way (PW-R-191).
  - (b) Resolution No. 9867 authorizing execution of a Reimbursement Agreement with Puget Sound Energy to pay for the relocation of Puget Sound Energy facilities located in a private easement that are in conflict with the 124th Avenue NE - NE 12th Street to NE Spring Boulevard (CIP Plan No. PW-R-169).
  - (c) Resolution No. 9868 determining that six utility easements and portions of two additional utility easements are surplus to the City's needs and are no longer required for providing continued public utility service; and setting a time and place for a public hearing to consider the release or partial release of these easements. The easements lie within nine parcels owned by Sound Transit for their Operation Maintenance Facility East and related Transit Oriented Development, generally located west of 120th Ave NE between NE Spring Boulevard and Northup Way.



- (d) Resolution No. 9869 authorizing the execution of documents necessary to release an existing slope easement on private property located at 12855 Coal Creek Parkway SE.
- (e) Resolution No. 9870 authorizing execution of a five-year general services contract with MacDonald-Miller Facility Solutions, LLC for HVAC maintenance and repairs at all Parks and Community Services Department facilities in an amount not to exceed \$645,031, plus all applicable taxes.
- (f) Adoption of Revised Draft 2021 State Legislative Agenda

9. Public Hearing

- (a) Public Hearing and action on Resolution No. 9871 authorizing the execution of documents necessary to release an existing sewer easement and a portion of a second sewer easement located at 10235 SE 6th Street, which have been declared surplus to the City's needs and are no longer required for providing continued public utility service; the granting and recording of such releases being deemed in the best interest of the public.

City Manager Miyake introduced the public hearing and Council action on the release of easements at 10235 SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street.

Ira McDaniel, Real Property Division Manager, described the proposed release of an existing sewer easement and a portion of a second sewer easement. The property is being redeveloped and the property owner will grant a new easement to cover the actual location of the sewer main.

→ Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to open the public hearing, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Sally Knodell said she was speaking on behalf of her mother, Ellen Knodell, as her durable power of attorney. Ms. Knodell said her mother owns property at 617 Bellevue Way SE, directly south of the subject property. She said her father, John Knodell, has passed away. However, she noted that Councilmember Lee worked with her father a number of times. Ms. Knodell noted that she is an architect. She said it has been great working with Kim Bui, who has been very responsive and helpful. She said Ms. Bui assured her that the existing easement will not be released until the new easement is in place. Ms. Knodell said she wants to be sure that there will be a secured sewer easement across the property to serve her mother's house.

→ Councilmember Stokes moved to close the public hearing, and Councilmember Lee seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Councilmember Lee said he missed her father and he was glad to hear that her mother is doing well. Responding to Mr. Lee, Mr. McDaniel said the City typically does not release an easement until the new easement is established.

Councilmember Robertson suggested that, in the future, a statement be added to the documents to confirm that easements are not released until new easements are in place.

- Councilmember Robertson moved to approve Resolution No. 9871, and Councilmember Lee seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Mayor Robinson commented that all of us are outside of our comfort zone and experiencing new things. However, she noted that the Council, City, and community are going through challenging times and succeeding together. She said she was pleased with the development activity in 2020, despite the pandemic. Ms. Robinson thanked the community, Council, and staff for their hard work and collaborative efforts.

Councilmember Lee complimented Mr. Brennan and DSD staff for their hard work and effectiveness. He thanked Ms. Schneider and IT staff for the technology investments over the years, which have paid off especially during the pandemic. He thanked the community for their engagement with the City.

Councilmember Stokes concurred with his colleagues regarding the City's ability to respond so effectively to the pandemic. He said that, while Bellevue is a great place to live, it needs to be greater, especially given the challenges related to ongoing growth and development. He thanked staff for their good work to address equity issues and encouraged continuing to move forward.

Councilmember Zahn said that the City's ability to work with people and to resolve conflicts are more critical than ever as Bellevue grows. She expressed support for the efforts of the Conflict Resolution Center, especially as the community works through the impacts of the pandemic. She said she is grateful for the efforts to prevent foreclosures and to facilitate agreements between landlords and tenants.

Councilmember Barksdale said the City is making progress and doing many good things. He said it will be helpful to be able to tie programs and activities to outcomes.

10. Study Session: None.
11. Land Use: None.
12. Other Ordinances, Resolutions, and Motions: None.
13. Unfinished Business: None.
14. New Business: None.

15. Executive Session: None.

16. Adjournment

At 8:05 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared the meeting adjourned.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC  
City Clerk

/kaw