

**CITY OF BELLEVUE
PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday
March 9, 2021
6:00 p.m.

Via Zoom

BOARDMEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Trescases, Vice-Chair Hamilton, Boardmembers Clark, Heath¹, Kumar, Synn

BOARDMEMBER ABSENT: Boardmember Unger

COUNCILMEMBER PRESENT: Councilmember Zahn

PARKS STAFF PRESENT: Shelley Brittingham, Pam Fehrman, Nancy Harvey, Kim Indurkar, Shelley McVein. Camron Parker, Michael Shiosaki

OTHERS PRESENT: Katherine Hollis, Curt Warber

MINUTES TAKER: Michelle Cash

1. **CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Trescases at 6:00 p.m.

Chair Trescases announced that there are a few procedural items that need to be addressed. She explained that because in-person meetings are prohibited by the Governor's emergency order concerning the Open Public Meetings Act, the Board will be holding its meetings remotely for an unknown period of time. Chair Trescases reminded Boardmembers that the Board's Bylaws regarding remote participation and the order of business have been suspended until such time as the Board is no longer holding its meetings remotely.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Motion by Boardmember Clark and second by Boardmember Kumar to approve the meeting agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously (5-0).

¹ Joined at approximately 6:10 p.m.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Motion by Boardmember Synn and second by Boardmember Kumar to approve the February 9, 2021 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously (5-0).

4. **WRITTEN/ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

Mr. Parker called attention to the Written Communications included in the Board packet, along with one that was emailed to Boardmembers from Dwight Schrag.

5. **COMMUNICATION FROM CITY COUNCIL:**

Councilmember Zahn provided the following report:

- The Council Retreat was recently held. Council reviewed the vision and strategies at the retreat. Councilmembers affirmed the vision. There were three items added to the guiding principles: equity, sustainability, and innovation.
- Council approved Proclamations for Black History Month, Lunar New Year, and Women's Day.
- Council received an update on the COVID vaccine
- The Lake Hills Community Association started a parks challenge walk. The community and Councilmembers were invited to join the association at Bellevue Botanical Gardens to take a socially distant walk. There was also an art project to encourage tree painting.
- Bellevue Clean and Green recently hosted a litter clean-up day along Coal Creek trail area.

6. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Mr. Shiosaki called attention to Shelley Brittingham's memo included in the Board packet regarding programming. In response to Boardmember Unger's question at the February Board meeting, Mr. Shiosaki provided an update on youth programming for in-person summer day camps. Staff is moving forward in planning summer camps. Registration is anticipated to start in early May, 2021 with camps beginning around June 22, 2021.

7. **BOARD COMMUNICATIONS:**

Vice-Chair Hamilton enjoyed Spirit Ridge Park and checked out the progress at Downtown Park. He also drove by Ashwood Park.

Boardmember Kumar visited Weowna Park and Larsen Lake. She also visited the Downtown Park construction project.

Boardmember Clark visited Downtown Park and looks forward to the corner entrance completion. He also enjoyed watching the conversion of the NE 12th stretch of open space. Boardmember Clark looks forward to the completion of the Spring District's transition to a livable, identifiable neighborhood.

Chair Trescases visited Bellevue Botanical Gardens. She also has been keeping an eye on the Mountain-to-Sound Greenway trail project in Factoria.

8. **CHAIR COMMUNICATION & DISCUSSION:**

No report.

9. **BOARDMEMBER/COMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS:**

No reports.

10. **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:**

A. **Eastrail Project Update**

Katherine Hollis, Eastrail Partners, provided information about the Eastrail project. She explained that Eastrail Partners helps build exemplary public-private partnerships.

Ms. Hollis explained that the Eastrail, formerly called the Eastside Rail Corridor, is a 42-mile rail line that was previously owned by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway Company. The Eastrail extends from Renton north to Snohomish County, passing through Bellevue, Kirkland, Woodinville and portions of unincorporated King County. It also includes a spur—called the Redmond Spur—that extends about seven miles from Woodinville south to Redmond. A map of the Eastrail was included in the Board packet. Ms. Hollis noted that King County owns segments of the corridor and holds a continuous trail easement along segments that are owned by others. Redmond, Kirkland, Woodinville and Snohomish County also own segments of the corridor. Sound Transit owns a 1.1-mile segment of the corridor in Bellevue and holds an easement for transit along other portions. Puget Sound Energy holds an easement for utility use along the corridor.

Curt Warber, King County Parks, discussed the partnership success with WSDOT for part of the design build for the I-405 Renton to Bellevue Widening and Express Toll Lanes (ETLs) Project. This Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) project will pave the Eastrail from Coal Creek Parkway to Renton. This segment is expected to be completed and open to the public in May. WSDOT's project will also construct a crossing between SE 8th Street and I-90 to carry the trail over the southbound lanes of I-405.

Mr. Warber provided updates on the following Eastrail projects:

- NE 8th Street Overcrossing. The County is in the permitting phase for the Eastrail overcrossing at NE 8th Street. The overcrossing will provide a safe and comfortable connection over a major arterial and allow pedestrians and bicyclists access to Sound Transit's Wilburton Station. The crossing will be a key junction for frequent transit service, vibrant neighborhoods, thriving businesses, and recreational opportunities. The bridge design team is collaborating with the Japanese American Commemoration Project to memorialize the contributions of the Japanese American community in Bellevue. This project is fully funded. Construction is expected to begin this fall and must be completed in 2022, before the East Link light rail is electrified.
- Wilburton Trestle. This project will rehabilitate the historic structure and connect the trail to SE 5th Street. The 2020-2025 King County parks, trails, and open space levy provides about \$25 million for the trestle, which is owned by King County. The Bellevue Capital Improvement Program includes \$2.5 million to support Eastrail projects, such as the Wilburton Trestle. Kaiser Permanente is contributing \$500,000 and the State Legislature provided \$3 million for the trestle project in the 2019-2021 biennium. King County plans to advertise for construction this fall and open the structure to the public in 2023. While this project is fully funded, stakeholders are seeking to raise \$5.5 million for the project, which would allow King County Parks levy funds to be used for other projects on the Eastrail. This project also includes a trail head with some historic interpretation and design features.

Ms. Hollis asked Boardmembers to help raise awareness about this project

Boardmember Clark applauded the designers for the aesthetic choices of Japanese heritage and the historic elements of trail. He asked if there are specific usage hours for the trail. Mr. Warber clarified that the King County trails are open dawn to dusk; however, the policy is anticipated to change to include extended hours for commuters. He added that there is lighting at all of the crossings along with the NE 8th bridge and trestle. Boardmember Clark inquired about the expected completion date of the I-90 bridge crossing. Mr. Warber clarified that this is a high priority for funding. They are currently seeking state, private and federal funding to assist with this project.

Vice-Chair Hamilton asked for clarification on the unfunded portions of the trail. Mr. Warber noted that the Coal Creek Parkway and I-405 crossing is a gap; the second gap is the connection from the north end of the trestle up to the NE 8th bridge crossing at 6th, where the Grand Connection will occur. Mr. Warber discussed some of the complexities of both of these sections.

Boardmember Kumar enjoys walking some portions of the trail and is excited to see the additional sections open. She asked if there is a plan for entertainment, food trucks, restaurants, shops or other social elements for people to stop and gather. She noted that the Wilburton Advisory Committee offered some options for activating the trail. Ms. Hollis explained that programming will be determined once the project is complete but planners are anxious to

brainstorm ways to bring community members to the trail. Mr. Warber added that short-term the trail completion is necessary. Then, the space will be ready for events, activities, etc. with potentially some COVID-friendly options for summer.

There was a brief discussion about Sturdavent Creek and daylighting this creek, which is the ultimate goal.

Boardmember Synn asked if there is a painted line down the middle of trail system to designate pathways. Mr. Warber clarified that lines are not added to the King County trails for ease of spreading out and movement. However, designers are evaluating the bike/pedestrian trail. He said that heavy use between the trestle and Spring District is anticipated so the bicyclists and pedestrians may need to be separated.

Boardmember Synn asked if there will be bike storage and/or restrooms included at various points along the trail. Mr. Warber said that bike racks will be included at various trailhead locations. Restrooms are more challenging so Eastrail tends to rely on partners for restrooms. Ms. Hollis added that as storefronts are created along the trail this will increase restroom availability.

Boardmember Synn asked for clarification on where to access the trestle. Mr. Warber said that he hopes to have more clarification about this access point in a month or so. Eastrail is working hard to resolve this issue.

Chair Trescases expressed her concern with an active, at-grade crossing at NE 1st. Mr. Warber explained that Bellevue's traffic system is quite complex to coordinate timing with signals to help reduce traffic impacts. Chair Trescases suggested a decorative rail arm should be incorporated for historical sake. Mr. Warber explained some of the safety hazards of this but loved the idea.

Boardmember Kumar asked if there is a plan to have a signal before approaching NE 1st. Mr. Parker clarified that the area from 116th up the hill is a puzzle that the Bellevue Transportation Department is evaluating.

B. Choices Plan for People Living with Disabilities

Mrs. Indurkar provided an overview of the Choices Plan access to Bellevue programs and facilities. She discussed some of the history on how Bellevue's accessibility has evolved for adaptive recreation opportunities as well as inclusion support for community members living with developmental and/or physical disabilities.

The Choices Plan has three main focuses including:

- Break down barriers for participation (inclusion).
- Access to parks, facilities, playgrounds.
- Increase staff awareness and knowledge.

Mrs. Indurkar explained that the Choices Plan was developed after information was gathered about adaptive versus inclusion. The Choices Plan is for individuals with disabilities, parents/guardians, community recreation providers, recreation professionals, and elected officials, boards and commissions.

Mrs. Indurkar provided an overview of the goals for the department, including:

- Ensure people with disabilities have access to facilities, city parks and programs.
- Expand recreation opportunities.
- Improve Parks & Community Services' staff knowledge and awareness toward serving residents with disabilities.
- Develop and implement strategies that expand awareness and knowledge of program and service opportunities for residents with disabilities.
- Expand programming to better serve individuals with a variety of disabilities.

Mrs. Indurkar explained that adaptive recreation builds skills needed to transition to an inclusive program. It also allows an individual to participate in an activity with others of similar ability and provides an introductory choice for learning new recreation activities.

Although the majority of the adaptive recreation programs are held at the Highland Community Center, other adaptive recreation sites include:

- Northwest Arts Center
- Tennis Center
- Aquatic Center
- Bellevue Youth Theatre

Mrs. Indurkar discussed the term "inclusion" and provided some examples of how Bellevue has helped facilitate inclusion. Currently, there are no barriers to requesting a program modification.

Vice-Chair Hamilton discussed a personal story of a family member who benefits from the Highland Community Center programs. He also asked when Highland Community Center will reopen. Mrs. Indurkar hopes the center can open soon. She discussed the phasing that might happen with the reopening, noting people with physical disabilities would be in the first tier.

Boardmember Clark requested clarification on page 4 of the Choices Plan which indicates the number of Bellevue Residents with disabilities. Mrs. Indurkar clarified the statistics in these charts, which are prepared from the Census report. There was a general discussion about ways to spread the word about the programs that are offered for people with disabilities.

Chair Trescases called attention to Downtown Park and the Inspiration Playground, which is a model for all playgrounds. She added that this is an example of a community playground open and accessible to all abilities. Mrs. Indurkar added that programs are evaluated through an “access for all” lens.

Councilmember Zahn discussed the universal design concepts incorporated in various parks. As playground equipment is replaced, this will be the model. Councilmember Zahn asked if the play area at Newport Hills Park will include accessible play equipment. As designs are finalized, Councilmember Zahn suggested that a presentation be made to the Parks Board to explain some of the universal design elements.

11. **NEW BUSINESS:**

Boardmember Synn said that the Planning Commission is going to discuss a proposed land use amendment within the Grand Connection. He asked if a more active role can be taken by the Parks Board regarding this amendment, since many of the topics up for discussion are parks-related. Mr. Parker clarified that the Parks Board has written two letters in regards to the project and everything should be in alignment with the Board’s comments for next steps and the process.

Boardmember Synn added that there are environmental impacts, open space requirements, color schemes, etc. that are included in the plan. He was uncertain as to why there was an amendment versus active participation from the Parks Board. He encouraged Boardmembers and staff to review the Planning Commission agenda prior to their meeting.

Boardmember Clark reported that staff will be drafting the 1Q21 letter to Council for Boardmembers to review. He encouraged Boardmembers to provide feedback to staff if they want something included in the letter. Boardmember Synn asked if an alternate funding source can be included in the letter for consideration (i.e., Parks Foundation, Friends of Parks, etc.). Mr. Parker explained that there is an overall funding strategy for Parks in the City Council Priorities that will be evaluated as part of the Parks & Open Space System Plan update later this year. Councilmember Zahn added that this issue was raised at the recent City Council retreat. This is in addition to the Grand Connection and Meydenbauer Bay Park Phase Two. Councilmember Zahn added that the funding requirement needs to be identified and then an action plan created. Boardmember Synn would like this topic included in the 1Q21 Council letter to show alignment with the Council priorities. Chair Trescases suggested including “*the Parks Board is encouraged to hear parks funding is being evaluated*” in the Council letter.

12. **PROPOSED AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING:**

The following items were suggested for future meeting agendas:

- 1Q21 Draft letter to City Council
- Update presentation for the Eastlink project

13. **OTHER COMMUNICATIONS:**

- A. Parks CIP Project Status Report
- B. Facility and Program Re-opening Communications Update
- C. Email 2-15-21 re Bellevue, WA Trust for Public Land
- D. Email 2-23-21 re Meydenbauer Bay Park

14. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion by Boardmember Synn and second by Boardmember Clark to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 p.m. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).