

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Regular Meeting

September 11, 2023
6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Robinson, Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis and Councilmembers Barksdale, Lee, Robertson¹, Stokes and Zahn

ABSENT: None.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m., with Mayor Robinson presiding.

Mayor Robinson said today is a day of reflection, sorrow and remembrance of the attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis said the attacks in 2001 changed the way we live and changed the lives and families of thousands of people who were directly impacted.

Councilmember Lee said September 11 is a reminder of the great patriotism in our nation as we witnessed many heroes emerge on that day and in the months beyond. He praised the coalescing of people with common values and shared heartache, with the collective mission of showing up as a community to rebuild lives and heal together.

Councilmember Robertson said that City officials and employees deeply understand and connect to the value of community, which guides what we do every day.

Councilmember Stokes expressed appreciation for first responders, who are often the closest to our community, for the sacrifice demonstrated by individuals who choose public safety as a profession.

Councilmember Zahn said she is proud of the way the City lives its values and demonstrates our caring, resilient community.

¹ Councilmember Robertson left the meeting at approximately 8:25 p.m.

Councilmember Barksdale said that honoring September 11 is an important element of our national identity that continues to hold on to the lessons and reflections from that day in 2001.

Mayor Robinson asked everyone to observe a moment of silence for those lost and those impacted on September 11, 2001.

Mayor Robinson announced that Police Officer Kevin Bereta, who was seriously injured on August 15 when he fell nearly 60 feet from an I-5 overpass in Seattle while providing motorcycle escort for Vice President Kamala Harris, has been released from the hospital. He underwent multiple surgeries for injuries to his back, legs and shoulder and will require months of therapy. Ms. Robinson said many of Officer Bereta's colleagues, friends and peers escorted his ambulance to his home. Officer Bereta is 39 years old and has a wife and three young sons under five years old. The Bellevue Police Foundation is accepting donations to help support him and his family.

Mayor Robinson expressed appreciation for all first responders who risk their lives every day to protect and serve our community. She wished Officer Bereta continued positive progress in his recovery.

2. Roll Call; Flag Salute

City Clerk Charmaine Arredondo called the roll and all Councilmembers were present. Councilmember Robertson led the flag salute.

(a) Hunger Action and Awareness Month Proclamation

Councilmember Stokes read the proclamation recognizing September as Hunger Action and Awareness Month in Bellevue and strongly urged all residents to support local food banks and our neighbors who are hungry.

Phillip Peters, Renewal Food Bank, said the organization has experienced a 40 percent increase in the number of clients over the past year and is now serving 400 families weekly. He said the food bank provides high-quality meat, produce, milk, dairy and deli items. The food bank serves individuals of all backgrounds and cultural preferences.

Amanda Lopez-Castanon and Jodi Pena, representing Hopelink, thanked the Council for the City's generous support of Hopelink's food program. Ms. Pena said that Bellevue residents in need receive an average of \$135 in food per month from the food bank. Hopelink has served 1,122 Bellevue families (2,792 individuals) so far in 2023. Ms. Lopez-Castanon said the Bellevue center located at the corner of 148th Avenue and Main Street distributed 1.9 million pounds of food in fiscal year 2023, which is an increase over fiscal year 2022. She said that, with the City's help, Hopelink has been able to serve the area's diverse community by providing culturally relevant foods.

(b) Eastside Welcoming Week Proclamation

Councilmember Zahn read the proclamation recognizing September 8-17, 2023, as Eastside Welcoming Week in Bellevue in partnership with the cities of Issaquah, Kirkland, Redmond and Sammamish. Ms. Zahn encouraged the public to engage in events and activities to learn, connect across differences and to take joint action to achieve a welcoming and inclusive community.

Haruka Kojima, Vice Chair of the Bellevue Diversity Advisory Network (BDAN), accepted the proclamation and invited everyone to the Welcoming Week resource fair at Crossroads shopping center on Saturday, September 16, 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM. The event is a partnership with the Chinese Information and Service Center (CISC). Ms. Kojima said more than 20 organizations will provide information and have representatives available to talk to residents.

(c) Mahsa Day Proclamation

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis read the proclamation recognizing September 16, 2023, as Mahsa Day in Bellevue to honor the women of Iran and their sacrifices in the pursuit of freedom. He recalled the murder of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini by the Islamic Republic Guidance Patrol, or morality police, on September 16, 2022, which sparked an Iranian and global movement known as Woman Life Freedom. Since September 2022, Iranian Americans have organized rallies in Bellevue to stand in solidarity with their sisters and brothers in Iran as they fight for freedom.

Dr. Naseem Ghazanfari said she is an Iranian-American physician, mother and human rights activist. She shared a poem in Persian that is written on the wall in the United Nations. She said the poem translates in part that human beings are members of the whole. She said Mahsa Amini was arrested and murdered because a few strands of her hair were showing. She said Iranians continue to demand the replacement of the autocratic regime with a secular democracy. She thanked residents in Bellevue and around the world for their support and for not staying silent.

A human rights activist with Dr. Ghazanfari said more than 700 people, including 70 children, have been killed by the Iranian regime since September 16, 2022. She thanked the Council and the community for their support.

3. Approval of Agenda

→ Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to approve the agenda, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

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

4. Oral Communications

City Clerk Arredondo reminded the public that no election-related topics may be discussed during oral communications, including promoting or opposing a ballot measure or candidate. Oral communications are heard for a period of 30 minutes and individuals speaking to items on the evening's agenda will be given preference, followed by those who have not spoken to the

Council within the past 60 days or are speaking to items that will come before the Council over the next 60 days.

- (a) Willard Westre, speaking on behalf of People for Climate Action (PCA), said he and others in the audience are looking forward to tonight's update on the environmental stewardship plan. He said they will meet with the new program staff on October 5. He expressed concern that the City will not meet its goal of a 50-percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. He said the entire community needs to reduce its emissions as well. He encouraged strong actions by the City to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- (b) Pamela Johnston expressed support for the new Keep Bellevue Beautiful initiative and encouraged broad community outreach about the program.
- (c) Michael Mathor, a resident of Ashwood Court in downtown Bellevue, said tenants have been notified of another eight percent rent increase. She said Bellevue's area median income (AMI) is \$146,000. She said the apartments were built 25 years ago and were not meant to compete with the newer high-rise buildings. She said most of the residents are dependent on social security payments and personal savings. She said she worked as a teacher until she was 75 years old and then volunteered as a reading teacher for four years at Lake Hills Elementary School. Ms. Mathor said that as of October 1, she will be using 85 percent of her social security check for rent. She requested rent control measures to help senior adults.

Mayor Robinson asked the City Manager to have affordable housing staff reach out to the Ashwood Park community.

- (d) Susan Dale, a resident of Ashwood Court, said the apartment building's ownership changed in the past few years. Until recently, Ashwood Court offered affordable housing for senior adults. She has lived there for 11 years and rent increases were one percent to three percent annually. In recent years rental rates have increased eight or nine percent annually, and another nine percent increase goes into effect on October 1. She said seniors living at Ashwood Court are on fixed incomes and she asked the City to help.
- (e) Linda Gowing thanked the Council for listening to residents and thanked Mayor Robinson for sending someone to talk to residents at Ashwood Court. She recalled that 25 years ago, the City Council supported public housing for seniors in Bellevue. She said the tax advantages for developers/property owners are ending for some of those properties and rental rates are increasing significantly. In 2022, the ownership of Ashwood Court was transferred to CIRC Living, which is located in Bellevue. Ms. Gowing said rents increased by nine percent last year and another eight percent twelve months later. She thanked Councilmembers for their attention and asked for help in preserving affordable senior housing.
- (f) Alex Tsimmerman indicated he does not like Muslims and Democrats. He objected to the Council's rules limiting oral communications to a total of 30 minutes.

- (g) Heidi Dean expressed support for the earlier comments by Ashwood Court residents. She thanked the City for taking action to clean up SE 41st Place. She said that with the new shelter and permanent supportive housing, there should no longer be a problem with individuals living in their vehicles on City streets. She expressed concern about camping and unsanitary conditions along Factoria Boulevard and said the street is being advertised online as a place to camp. Ms. Dean said she has been involved in homeless outreach in South Bellevue and is helping three gentlemen access services.
 - (h) David Haines said he moved from Seattle to Bellevue after a number of items, including his 19th bike, were stolen from him. He spoke to the need for a law to trespass drug users, for example, a person smoking meth next to the propane tanks outside the grocery store. During the All-Star baseball game in Seattle, his 20th bike was stolen. He said police officers give political excuses as to why they cannot enforce certain crimes. He encouraged enhanced enforcement and cooperation between different police departments. He expressed concern about the condition of certain more affordable apartments in Bellevue.
5. Reports of Community Councils, Boards, and Commissions: None.
 6. Report of the City Manager
 - (a) Keep Bellevue Beautiful

City Manager Brad Miyake introduced staff's update regarding the Keep Bellevue Beautiful program.

Mark Heilman, Neighborhood Outreach Manager, Community Development Department, said the Keep Bellevue Beautiful program was created as part of the Safe, Clean and Vibrant City outcome area adopted in the 2023-2024 budget. Staff is currently managing contracts for the retrieval of abandoned shopping carts and coordinating groups of volunteers for cleaning up litter.

Mr. Heilman said they are collaborating with other departments to reduce graffiti and to promote waste reduction as well. He said residents have been helpful in reporting abandoned shopping carts and graffiti through the MyBellevue app. He said the vendor has collected 1,400 carts to date. The next step is to work with businesses to ensure that they are responsible for keeping and retrieving shopping carts.

Mr. Heilman said two cleanup events were held this summer (Downtown, Factoria) and staff has worked to develop a volunteer base. The first monthly signature streets event will be held this month in the Bridle Trails neighborhood.

Sarina Miller, Program Coordinator, said the City successfully hosted the first cleanup event on August 12 at the City Hall Plaza with approximately 80 volunteers. The second cleanup event was held on August 19 in the Factoria neighborhood with 55 volunteers, including students from

Newport High School. She said these events provide a great opportunity for youth to earn community service hours and to help keep Bellevue beautiful.

Ms. Miller said more than 95 bags of trash were collected over the two events. A number of departments participated in the events including Utilities, Police, Fire and Transportation. The next event is a signature street cleanup on September 30 in the Bridle Trails area, to be followed by events in Lake Hills, BelRed and Crossroads over the coming months. Ms. Miller said the public may register online for an event at BellevueWA.gov/keepbellevuebeautiful.

Mr. Heilman said he and Ms. Miller are grateful for the assistance of other departments that ensured the events are safe, well planned, effective and well attended. He thanked all of the volunteers and supporters for their work and for donating supplies. He thanked Amazon, Starbucks, Wallace Properties, the Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA) and the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce for their support and involvement.

City Manager Miyake introduced the new Deputy City Manager, Joseph Todd, and noted his experience in both the public and private sectors.

7. Council Business and New Initiatives

Councilmember Lee recommended the appointment of Ann Miyahira Hajnosz to the Environmental Services Commission.

→ Councilmember Lee moved to appoint Ann Miyahira Hajnosz to serve a full term on the Environmental Services Commission ending May 31, 2027. Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis seconded the motion.

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

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) Council Minutes
Minutes of August 7, 2023 Regular Meeting
- (b) Motion to approve payment of claims and payroll for the period July 1, 2023 - July 31, 2023.
- (c) Motion to award Bid No. 23028, 2022 Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) Crosswalk Improvements Project (CIP Plan No. PW-R-46), to Kamins

Construction as the lowest responsible and responsive bidder in the amount of \$628,864.90, plus all applicable taxes

- (d) Motion to increase the construction contract with Laser Underground & Earthworks (Bid No. 22002) by \$686,539.97 for a total contract amount of \$2,745,305.97, plus all applicable taxes, for the 98th Avenue SE and SE 11th Street Slope Stabilization Project (CIP Plan No. PW-M-19 & W-16).
- (e) Resolution No. 10292 authorizing the execution of a Professional Services Agreement with KPG Psomas in the amount of \$516,031.16, plus all applicable taxes, to design new sidewalk, paving and traffic calming for South Bellevue Station Neighborhood Improvements.
- (f) Resolution No. 10293 authorizing the execution of a Professional Services Agreement with WSP USA, Inc. in the amount of \$4,917,936.80, plus all applicable taxes, to develop preliminary design, up to 30 percent level, for the Bellevue Grand Connection: I-405 Crossing - Downtown to Eastrail project (CIP Plan No. PW-R-216).
- (g) Resolution No. 10294 authorizing execution of an agreement with Riskconnect Inc. to extend the term for licenses to and support for Riskconnect Risk Management Information System software in an amount not to exceed \$500,000 plus all applicable taxes, for an additional five-year term.
- (h) Resolution No. 10295 authorizing the execution of a five-year Axon Enterprise, Inc., (Axon), License Agreement for the purchase of Public Safety Technology for the City's Police Department in an amount not to exceed \$4,601,411.06 plus all applicable taxes.
- (i) Resolution No. 10296 authorizing execution of Amendment 3 to the Technical Services Agreement with Random Access, Inc. for work related to permit tracking system updates, configuration, and enhancements in an amount not to exceed \$485,000, plus all applicable taxes, for a total contract amount of \$1,365,000.
- (j) Resolution No. 10297 amending the Hearing Examiner Rules of Procedure and repealing Resolution No. 9474.
- (k) Resolution No. 10298 authorizing execution of an amendment to a professional services contract (No. 2050038) with Tetra Tech, Inc., for Utilities On-Call Professional Services for Water, Sewer, and Stormwater, to increase contract capacity by \$1,700,000 for a total contract amount not to exceed \$11,600,000, plus all applicable taxes.

9. Public Hearing

- (a) Public Hearing concerning the City's intended assumption of the Bellevue Transportation Benefit District pursuant to the authority of Chapter 36.74 RCW.

City Manager Miyake introduced the public hearing regarding the assumption of the Bellevue Transportation Benefit District (TBD).

Andrew Singelakis, Director, Transportation Department, said the purpose of the public hearing is to hear comments regarding the assumption of the TBD. The Council approved the formation of the district during its July 17 meeting. He said the assumption of the district allows the Council to assume the rights, powers, functions and obligations of the TBD.

Mr. Singelakis said the decision of whether and how to fund the TBD will be addressed in the future. He said some jurisdictions form TBDs but decide to not fund the district. He said the City's public outreach efforts will be ongoing.

John Resha, Director, Finance and Asset Management (FAM) Department, presented the timeline for establishing the TBD. He noted that the decision about funding has been deferred to either the mid-biennium budget process this fall or the 2025-2026 full budget process in late 2024, depending on how the Council wants to proceed. He said the TBD was formed in July and is a legal taxing authority recognized by the State of Washington. He said it will be necessary to establish, separately from the Council, the rules, procedures and administrative support specifically for the TBD.

Mr. Resha said the City's assumption of the TBD streamlines the management and administration of the district and directly connects to regular City and Council processes. The assumption does not remove any of the accountability requirements under RCW 36.73 or assume any funding action. Mr. Resha said that tonight's public hearing is a necessary administrative step to complete the assumption.

Chris Long, Assistant Director, Transportation Department, reviewed the public input from the public hearing held to consider the formation of the TBD. He said there was concern about additional taxes or fees for residents and businesses but general support for funding transportation maintenance needs. Members of the public encouraged the City to expand its outreach to residents and to provide more information regarding the transportation needs, resource gaps and the process for allocating funds. Mr. Long said there was an interest in further conversation about the funding amount and activation process.

Mr. Long said staff held three events to provide information to the public, including at City Hall and the Crossroads farmers market. A fourth event will be held during Eastside Welcoming Week at the Crossroads shopping center. Mr. Long highlighted outreach efforts involving social media in multiple languages. He said there is an ongoing survey and there have been approximately 100 responses to date. He said the survey focuses on exploring the maintenance projects that are most important to residents. Sidewalk and asphalt repair are ranked in the survey as the top concerns.

Mr. Long said three webinars were held, with two of them focused more on neighborhood associations and one focused on community based organizations. An additional webinar is scheduled for September 20.

Mr. Long said the next steps for the Council are to determine whether to assume the TBD and the process for reviewing and prioritizing transportation needs and funding mechanisms.

Mayor Robinson said the Council has read the many emails and communications from the public. She said the assumption of the TBD is an administrative process but does not address whether or how to fund the district in the future.

- Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to open the public hearing, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

City Clerk Arredondo said the Council received approximately 80 public comments before today, and 18 new comments are also now available to the Council.

1. Paul Clark spoke in opposition to the TBD. He said he supported last year's Parks levy. However, he expressed concern about how TBD funds would be used. He said taxes contribute to the already high cost of living in Bellevue. He said many senior adults who are longtime Bellevue residents have had to leave to live in a more affordable community. He expressed concern regarding the potential for a tax in the future.
2. Anne Coughlin complimented the City's Bellwether event and music performances in the Spring District. She expressed opposition to the TBD and to any new taxes. She concurred with Mr. Clark's comments and concerns and highlighted other taxes paid by residents.
3. Mariya Frost, Transportation Director, Kemper Development Company, said it is critical to look at what the City wishes to fund and accomplish in order to decide whether the TBD is necessary. She said staff proposes a sales tax increase without specifying the projects to be funded. She said sales tax revenue in Bellevue has grown 123 percent over the past 10 years. She expressed concern about the types of projects that might be funded. Ms. Frost said Kemper Development Company does not support the TBD or any potential new tax.
4. Barbara Hughes, a Bridle Trails resident, said she objects to the TBD and any potential increase in the sales tax. She said she doubted whether many Bellevue residents were aware of the TBD. She encouraged robust community outreach through multiple formats. She encouraged the City to put the TBD on hold until there is more public involvement.
5. Betsi Hummer, a Lake Hills resident, spoke in opposition to the assumption of the TBD. She said residents' biggest concerns are cut-through traffic and taxes.

6. Craig Spiezle, speaking on behalf of Neighbors for a Livable Bellevue, expressed opposition to the assumption of the TBD and to any tax increases. He expressed concern about providing funding before identifying specific projects. He encouraged Councilmembers to vote against the TBD and to find other funding in the budget for transportation needs. He said the sales tax is a regressive tax.
7. Carl Vander Hoek, Vander Hoek Corporation, voiced opposition to the assumption of the TBD. He said the proposed sales tax would generate \$10 million annually while deferred maintenance projects total \$3 million. He said the TBD should be voter-approved. He encouraged enhanced community outreach to solicit public input. He suggested that the Council find other ways to fund the deferred projects.
8. Kevin Wallace recalled that he previously served on the City Council and he and Councilmember Robertson initially opposed property tax increases proposed for 2009 and beyond. Mr. Wallace said he supported the recent Parks levy, sales tax levy for affordable housing, B&O tax increase and the property tax increase for the general budget. He noted his work as a Councilmember on the Fire Facilities levy and the 2016 neighborhood transportation levy that provides \$10 million for the transportation budget. He said the TBD should not be assumed or funded unless and until there is a specific need and plan for the use of the funds.
9. Patti Mann said she has generally felt that the City Council has the community's best interests in mind. She expressed concern, however, about the use of funding through a TBD. She urged the Council to not adopt the sales tax increase.
10. Al Rosenthal said he opposed the staff-proposed sales tax increase to fund the TBD. He said very few bicyclists use the new bridge and trail in the Factoria area. He suggested that the City sublease some of its office space to generate revenues. He said climate change is not affected by CO₂ emissions. However, the water is warming, which increases CO₂ emissions.
11. Pamela Johnston suggested that the Council stop the TBD process. She said staff did not provide sufficient information to the Council to fully consider the proposal. She expressed concern about competing priorities including affordable housing and public safety. She expressed concern that the TBD could continue indefinitely. She urged the Council to oppose staff's recommendation.
12. Mike Negrin said he built his first house in Bellevue in 1976. He constructed a number of public and private projects, including one of the first privately funded stormwater detention systems. He said he built the first privately funded LEEDS certified office building and the first pervious street in the City of Kirkland. He said high-cost regulations will not lead to low-cost housing. He noted the need for plumbers, electricians and other workers. He said the City should not over-regulate infrastructure development because it increases the cost of living in Bellevue.

13. Heidi Dean, a Newport Hills resident, said that during the neighborhood walk in Newport Hills, she was encouraged to support the TBD. She expressed concern regarding the TBD and potential new taxes.
- Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to close the public hearing, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.
 - The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

At 7:42 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared a break. The meeting resumed at approximately 7:55 p.m.

Councilmember Zahn said she appreciated the presentation and all of the input from residents. She asked about the urgency to take action now to assume the TBD.

Mr. Resha said the TBD has been formed. He said Councilmembers can choose to do nothing until they are able to have further discussion. However, assuming the district provides protections and safeguards around the process. Mr. Resha said the Council could alternately choose to defer further action at this time. He described how the Council would govern the TBD upon assumption.

Responding to Ms. Zahn, Deputy City Attorney Trisna Tanus said that while the TBD has been formed, the Board/Council has not done anything yet and has not established any rules.

Responding to Councilmember Zahn, Mr. Resha confirmed that the Council can discuss transportation needs, priorities, revenues and related topics without any vote on the assumption of the TBD. Ms. Zahn indicated she was not convinced there is an urgency to assume the district now.

Councilmember Robertson said the assumption of the TBD is an administrative step to complete the formation of the TBD. She suggested that the City might want to present a voter measure for a TBD tax in the future. Ms. Robertson said the assumption of the district will require staffing. However, the district would have no funding.

Ms. Robertson said she is an attorney for cities and has clients that formed and assumed TBDs and never funded them. She said there is nothing in the assumption that requires levying a tax. She said a ballot measure could be put to a public vote. She said the assumption of the district is needed to finalize the formation of the TBD. She suggested that the Council can have discussion in the future about transportation priorities. She said the assumption of the district does not initiate any tax. She believes it would be more efficient and cost-effective to assume the district now and to talk about funding later.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis thanked the community for their input and comments. He said he hears a lot about economic challenges, the impacts of taxes and the increasing expense of living in Bellevue. He said it is important to properly maintain infrastructure and residents support

transportation projects. However, he suggested waiting until the mid-biennium budget process to continue discussion regarding the TBD.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis noted the suggestion during the public hearing to consider a sunset clause for the TBD. He said he would like to pause action on this topic and noted there is no reason for urgency. He would like a thorough review of the benefits and risks of the TBD as well as a comparison to competing priorities during the budget process.

Mayor Robinson thanked everyone for the discussion and input. She acknowledged that the Council needs to discuss the TBD and whether it is a tool the City wants to use. She suggested completing the assumption to allow the Council to have further discussion as the TBD governing body.

Councilmember Stokes said this has been a good conversation and the decision tonight is whether to assume the TBD. He suggested moving forward to do so and noted that there will be time in the future to discuss whether to proceed with funding the district. He said a funding mechanism could be presented for voter approval. He said he appreciated the public's input.

Councilmember Lee said transportation needs are a top priority and the Council needs to spend time discussing the budget and how the TBD could potentially be used. He said needs and priorities will change. He noted the need for discussions with the community and for transparency. He concurred with the public's interest in establishing a plan for the use of the TBD if funded in the future.

→ Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to direct staff to finalize the Transportation Benefit District (TBD) assumption ordinance for final adoption at a future meeting.
Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

Councilmember Zahn suggested having the mid-biennium budget discussions before talking about whether to fund a TBD.

Responding to Mayor Robinson, Mr. Resha said the benefit of assuming the district in the near future is that it eases the administration of the TBD.

Ms. Zahn reiterated her interest in overall budget discussions before considering the TBD.

Councilmember Barksdale said that, consistent with the comments that have been made in support of moving forward, he observed that pausing further action would be inconsistent with the majority of the public comment. The assumption of the district has no negative impact on the community and there is the benefit of easing the administration of the district. He suggested continuing to move forward with the intent of having discussions about funding the TBD in the future.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 4-3, with Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis, Councilmember Lee and Councilmember Zahn opposed.

[Councilmember Robertson left the meeting at approximately 8:23 p.m.]

10. Study Session Items

(a) Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) Quarterly Update

City Manager Miyake introduced the Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) quarterly update.

Jennifer Ewing, Environmental Stewardship Program/Sustainability Manager, Community Development Department, introduced the seven new staff hired to accelerate the implementation of the environmental stewardship plan, including one position in the Finance and Asset Management Department.

Ms. Ewing said staff has been busy hiring new staff since early in the year. She said nearly 80 percent of the actions in the environmental stewardship plan have been initiated or incorporated into existing operations.

Ms. Ewing highlighted six community action programs: 1) Energy Smart Eastside, 2) Clean Buildings Incentive, 3) Bellevue 2030 District, 4) climate vulnerability assessment, 5) tree code update, and 6) tree giveaway events. The Energy Smart Eastside program is working with residents to help them install energy efficient heat pumps. She said the City recently launched its incentive for moderate income households. The Clean Buildings Incentive program continues to recruit more businesses to participate. The Bellevue 2030 District was launched in June and is a public-private partnership to promote sustainability and energy efficiency.

The tree code update is underway and was last before the Council on June 26. A public information session was held on June 8. Since that time, the City has hired a technical consultant to study best practices and tree codes in other jurisdictions. Ms. Ewing said the third annual tree giveaway has received 700 applications for approximately 800 trees, primarily for residents but also for community organizations, schools and nonprofit organizations.

Ana Hagerup, Resource Conservation Program Manager, provided an update regarding municipal operations, which continue to focus on building energy efficiency and fleet electrification as the two largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions. She noted the energy retrofit project at the Bellevue Service Center (BSC) and the rooftop solar project at City Hall. She said staff continues to explore grant opportunities. She said City Hall is in compliance with the City's energy efficiency targets and with the Washington State clean building standard. Additional actions include green building certification programs at Fire Station 5 and Fire Station 10 and providing the infrastructure required for the electric fire engine that was partially funded through a grant.

Ms. Ewing said the recent addition of staff will help to begin implementing a number of new initiatives including the Wilburton Sustainable District opportunity assessment, electric vehicle roadmap/plan and tracking new federal and state grant opportunities. Next steps include the climate vulnerability assessment, tree canopy assessment, greenhouse gas emissions inventory

and continued community engagement (e.g., Clean Buildings symposium, tree giveaway and Arbor Day, and the Sustainable Bellevue town hall meeting). Ms. Ewing said the 2022 greenhouse gas emissions inventory results will be presented to the Council during the fourth quarter update.

Councilmember Zahn thanked staff for the presentation and welcomed the new employees. She noted the importance of energy efficiency and reducing energy costs. She wondered whether there are opportunities to partner with King County Metro in providing electric vehicle infrastructure. She encouraged community solar projects. Regarding the wedge analysis, she stated her understanding that the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) is trying to consolidate the calculations from multiple cities. She said PSRC has convened an expert review panel for its climate work program. Ms. Zahn encouraged the City to participate in joint advocacy with PSRC and other jurisdictions. She thanked staff for all of their hard work.

Ms. Ewing said the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) tax credits apply to energy efficiency projects and the City is working to promote those through the Energy Smart Eastside program. She said there have been new interpretations about how the credits might actually apply to local governments and nonprofit organizations.

Ms. Hagerup said the City and its consultant have been working with PSRC on the wedge analysis. Ms. Ewing noted that the tool the City is using is based on work the City's consultant did with PSRC in recent years.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis thanked staff for the update. He noted that the tree canopy varies throughout Bellevue and asked whether the City can bolster its outreach to neighborhoods with a reduced tree canopy (e.g., targeted tree giveaway). Ms. Ewing confirmed that staff has plans to reach out to those areas. Information materials have been translated into multiple languages and staff is exploring how to provide culturally appropriate engagement opportunities for the public.

Councilmember Stokes asked about staff's work on the tree code. Ms. Ewing said the Development Services Department (DSD) team is reviewing the City's existing code, general best practices and codes in other jurisdictions to prepare recommendations for Council consideration.

Mr. Stokes said it is exciting to have the City's first electric fire engine. He expressed support for the Wilburton Sustainable District opportunity assessment. Ms. Ewing said staff has been preparing for the assessment. She noted a number of workshops following the trip to Denmark to continue to develop ideas and said a consultant will assist with the assessment.

Mayor Robinson asked how likely the City is to reach its 2030 climate goals. Ms. Ewing said the 2022 greenhouse gas emissions inventory will provide more information and help to establish a baseline following the pandemic. Ms. Ewing said that achieving some of the goals will be somewhat dependent on state legislation (e.g., requiring utilities agencies to transition to 100 percent renewable energy).

Responding to Councilmember Lee, Ms. Hagerup said the fleet electrification program is focused on providing renewable energy to City buildings through solar energy. She noted plans to expand solar infrastructure at the BSC and at City Hall. She said new grant opportunities, including one announced today, will help move projects forward. Ms. Hagerup noted the need for increased electrical capacity at BSC and City Hall, including to support fleet electrification. A consultant has been hired to evaluate the facilities and an engineering analysis will be conducted as well. Ms. Hagerup said the Green Fleet strategy completed last year has been helpful in guiding the staff work.

Ms. Hagerup said staff is tracking grant opportunities through the federal IRA grant program, Washington State Department of Commerce and other sources. She said the City is interested in enrolling all City-owned charging stations in the Clean Fuel Standard program, which offers an incentive or credit for the amount of energy used in any vehicle. She said the City receives a reimbursement for deploying renewable electricity into the community and for the City's fleet operations and employee charging stations. She said staff continues to look for opportunities to generate revenue, leverage existing grants and to partner with the community.

Councilmember Barksdale welcomed the new employees. He suggested exploring ways, perhaps through the MyBellevue app, to remind the community about energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions in their daily lives. Ms. Ewing said the additional staffing will provide the ability for a broader and more sustained public outreach effort, including a community survey. Mr. Barksdale encouraged staff to think about ways to both provide information to the public and to collect data to help inform continued actions. He said Google now has a function that will identify more environmentally sensitive travel routes.

Responding to Councilmember Stokes regarding the Wilburton area, Ms. Ewing confirmed that staff is coordinating with planning efforts related to the Eastrail and the Grand Connection.

11. Land Use: None.
12. Other Ordinances, Resolutions, and Motions: None.
13. Written Reports
 - (a) Downtown Mobility Study
14. Unfinished Business: None.
15. New Business: None.
16. Executive Session: None.
17. Adjournment

At 9:06 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared the meeting adjourned.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC
City Clerk

/kaw