

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Extended Study Session

January 23, 2017
6:00 p.m.

Conference Room 1E-113
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Stokes, Deputy Mayor Chelminiak, and Councilmembers Lee, Robertson, Robinson, and Wallace

ABSENT: None.

1. Executive Session

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m., with Mayor Stokes presiding. There was no Executive Session.

2. Approval of Agenda

→ Deputy Mayor Chelminiak moved to approve the agenda, and Councilmember Robinson seconded the motion.

→ The motion to approve the agenda carried by a vote of 4-0¹.

3. Oral Communications

(a) Ray White spoke about the Eastgate men's homeless shelter, noting the differing opinions of students and others at Bellevue College. He said homeless individuals are currently living on and near the campus. He said there are community concerns regarding a low barrier shelter. He noted that Bellevue College is a no barrier institution. He observed that many public perceptions are fear based. He said Bellevue College represents improving lives, second chances, and open access. Mr. White said Bellevue College supports the shelter and is excited to be a partner.

(b) Farida Hakim said she has lived in the Eastgate area since 1986. She said she originally thought the proposed men's homeless shelter site was an ideal location. However, she has learned that there are a number of concerns among residents and other Eastgate

¹ Councilmembers Robertson and Wallace arrived shortly after the vote.

neighbors. Ms. Hakim asked the Council to address the safety concerns. She noted that Seattle University has a program that provides student escorts. She said the recent fire at the mosque in Bellevue illustrates the challenge of dealing with the homeless and with mental illness. She suggested that, if the man arrested for setting the fire had access to a shelter and services, the fire might not have occurred. She encouraged the Council to work with Congregations for the Homeless to address the community's concerns.

- (c) Cheryl Jurrus, a retired teacher and current volunteer with Congregations for the Homeless, spoke in support of the Eastgate men's shelter. She said there is already a low barrier shelter in Bellevue that has been successfully operated by CFH for eight years. She noted that essentially all public places are low barrier with regard to access. She said homelessness has many causes and many solutions. CFH works closely with veterans groups, mental health agencies, Imagine Housing, and the County voucher system for housing. Ms. Jurrus said the proposed Eastgate shelter will include transitional housing units. She said CFH has a medium barrier program for homeless men that rotates through 12 local churches. She said no location is perfect for the shelter, but the Eastgate location is good because it is close to public transportation and other services and it is surrounded by office buildings and a greenbelt.
- (d) Bill Hirt questioned why the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has not implemented HOT lanes on the I-5 corridor. He said the HOV travel time between Everett and Seattle is 70-75 minutes during peak commute periods. He questioned whether there are plans for HOT lanes on the I-90 bridge when the center roadway is closed this summer. He said WSDOT lawyers convinced a federal judge to reject Kemper Freeman's lawsuit opposing Sound Transit's confiscation of the bridge's center roadway. The lawyers argued that the center roadway was not needed for vehicles once new lanes are added to the outer roadway. Mr. Hirt said WSDOT is allowing Sound Transit to close the center roadway without ever demonstrating that the outer roadway has a needed capacity.
- (e) Alex Zimmerman, president of StandUP-America, spoke about going to a number of regional government meetings. He disparaged government officials and opined that they are all the same. He said he cares about America.
- (f) Linda Deardorff expressed concern about the loss of local bookstores. She said the stores are a part of the community and provide a public gathering space. She noted that the City of Kirkland supported Park Place Books for some time, and she asked the Council to consider what it might be able to do to support local bookstores.
- (g) Steve Sanchez spoke about the Eastgate men's shelter, noting that he has been involved with the homeless community since the late 1990s in his work with Homeless Youth Ministries and Tent City 4. He commented on the attempts of the City of Seattle and the Washington State Department of Transportation to clear homeless camps. He visited an area in Seattle recently cleared by the police, and homeless individuals had reestablished their tents. In speaking with the individuals, he said he was offered crack cocaine and introduced to a woman he suspected was a prostitute. Mr. Sanchez said that, while the current temporary Eastside shelter has been effective, it rotates through different

locations. He expressed concern that a more permanent shelter facility will attract drugs and sex trafficking.

- (h) Linda Nohavec, representing the Eastgate Residents Committee, spoke against locating the homeless men's shelter in the Eastgate area. She said she has been reviewing records obtained through public disclosure requests. She referred to meeting minutes of a previous City Council meeting in which Mayor Stokes commented that he was puzzled that members of the community felt the decision on the shelter location had already been made. She questioned whether other locations are being studied. She referred to similar comments by Councilmember Wallace, who she said also noted that there had been no public discussion about whether or how the shelter is congruent with the Eastgate master plan or how the impacts would be mitigated at the site. Ms. Nohavec said those issues have not been addressed. She recalled that Councilmember Robertson previously commented: "This is the first document we should have developed as part of the backgrounding for this project." Ms. Nohavec said she believed the reference was to the report of secondary impacts. She expressed concern about the negative impacts of the shelter on businesses and housing. She asked the Council to address unanswered questions.
- (i) Paul Bell spoke in support of Bellevue College's request for the street vacation and the waiver of the related compensation fee. He said the funds could be used by the College to enhance its ability to serve the neighboring community (e.g., bike path, community programming).
- (j) Saghar Rasoulamini, municipal liaison for Students of Bellevue College, spoke in support of the Bellevue College request for the street vacation and waiver of compensation. She said it will enable Bellevue College to better serve the community and students. As a separate topic, Ms. Rasoulamini said she would like to work with the City to advocate in areas of shared interests. She said there are students working with the County and with the state legislature to represent Bellevue College students' interests. Affordable housing is a key issue for the students.

4. Study Session

(a) Council Business and New Initiatives

Councilmember Lee spoke about the passing of Alan Sugiyama, a longtime leader, community advocate, and activist in support of social justice and the minority ethnic population. He served the public in many roles including two terms on the Seattle School Board and as Executive Director of the Executive Development Institute. Mr. Lee asked the Council to prepare a commendation recognizing Mr. Sugiyama's contributions. Mr. Lee extended the Council's condolences to the family.

City Manager Miyake said Mr. Sugiyama was a well-known community leader, as well as Mr. Miyake's counselor at Franklin High School. Mr. Miyake said Mr. Sugiyama worked on issues of social justice and was on the forefront of the Asian-American movement in the Seattle area.

Mr. Miyake said a celebration of Mr. Sugiyama's life will be held at the Seattle Center this weekend.

Deputy Mayor Chelminiak noted a request by Councilmember Robinson to participate remotely for the February 6, 2017 Council meeting.

- Deputy Mayor Chelminiak moved to approve the remote participation of Councilmember Robinson during the February 6, 2017, City Council Study Session and Regular Session. Councilmember Robertson seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

Mayor Stokes introduced discussion regarding the Council vacancy due to Councilmember Slatter's appointment to the State House of Representatives. Her resignation was effective January 14, and the Council must appoint a new member by April 14.

Mr. Stokes described the proposed process. With the Council's concurrence, staff will open recruitment for the position the following day. The vacancy will be advertised for 10 days and will be widely distributed across the community. Interested candidates should submit a resume and letter of interest responding to the following three questions: 1) What is your passion for the community?, 2) What is your vision for the City?, and 3) Why do you want to serve on the Bellevue City Council? The letter should be a maximum of 1,000 words and typed in a 12-point or larger font. The Council will decide during its February 6 meeting which candidates will be interviewed. Interviews will be held during an open session on February 13.

Mr. Stokes said the Council anticipates making an appointment on February 21 or 27. Application materials should be submitted to Kyle Stannert, City Clerk, and information will be provided on the City's web site and through a press release. Mr. Stokes said finalists might be asked for references. He said the term of the position will run through the certification of the November 2017 general election.

Councilmember Robertson expressed support for the process. However, she believes it would be useful to let applicants know at the beginning of the process that they might be asked to provide references. This would give them time to talk to individuals in advance regarding the potential need for references.

- Deputy Mayor Chelminiak moved to adopt the Council recruitment schedule for the selection of a Councilmember to fulfill the term of the position vacated by the resignation of Councilmember Slatter. Councilmember Lee seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

(b) Regional Issues

(1) WSDOT Update on I-405 Express Toll Lanes

City Manager Brad Miyake introduced discussion regarding the I-405 express toll lanes from Bellevue to Lynnwood.

Joyce Nichols, Director of Intergovernmental Relations, introduced Patty Rubstello, Assistant Secretary, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Toll Division and Kim Henry, WSDOT Project Director, I-405 Program.

Mr. Henry said the I-405 Master Plan adopted in 2002 provides a multi-modal, multi-agency plan. He said Sound Transit's Phase 3 (ST3) package will increase transit service and Park and Ride locations.

Ms. Rubstello recalled that 17 miles of I-405 express toll lanes began operation in September 2015. Toll rates range from 75 cents to \$10 and are in effect Monday through Friday, 5:00 AM to 7:00 PM. There have been 14.5 million trips in the express toll lanes. Ms. Rubstello said that 69 percent of the drivers use the toll lanes five times or less per month, and 56.5 percent of drivers pay 75 cents. She said I-405 is moving more vehicles through the corridor during peak periods in most areas. She highlighted the average speeds during the peak commute periods. She said speeds in the general purpose lane from SR 522 to I-5 have not improved, and WSDOT is addressing that section.

Ms. Rubstello said HOV lanes are performing slower than the express toll lanes. She said there is a state policy that HOV lanes are to operate at 45 miles per hour 95 percent of the time, and the state legislature has indicated that express toll lanes should meet the same performance criteria. After one year, the express toll lanes are performing at 88 percent, which is an improvement over the previous HOV lanes.

Ms. Rubstello said another criteria established by the state legislature is that the program meet its operating expenses. She said the program has covered its operating expenses over the first year, and there is sufficient revenue to implement the peak-use shoulder lane project.

Mr. Henry described the peak-use shoulder lane project that will convert the right shoulder to a general purpose peak-use shoulder lane on northbound I-405 between SR 527 and I-5. The project is anticipated to open this spring. The project includes a new noise wall for area residents and improvements to express lane signage and access. The lane continues from the SR 527 on-ramp to the shoulder. Farther north, there are two off-ramps to northbound I-5. The total length of the shoulder lane is 1.8 miles.

Mr. Henry said the state legislature's 2016 Supplemental Transportation Budget directed WSDOT to identify and prioritize projects that will help reduce congestion and provide added capacity on the I-405 tolling corridor between SR 522 and I-5. He said WSDOT reviewed the master plan and direct access ramps to identify potential projects, which include capacity improvements and bus rapid transit (BRT).

Mr. Henry said WSDOT held a two-day workshop in November with north end cities and agencies (i.e., Cities of Bothell and Woodinville, Community Transit, Federal Highway Administration, King County Metro, Snohomish County, and Sound Transit). The objective was to review north end I-405 phasing concepts and to discuss possible alternatives. The workshop resulted in a recommendation to move the dual express toll lanes through the SR 522 interchange and to provide direct access in the Canyon Park area.

Responding to Mayor Stokes, Mr. Henry said the workshop participants discussed the importance of maintaining bus rapid transit (BRT) in the I-405 master plan. Mr. Henry noted that the north end continues to experience housing and other growth. He said the governor placed \$5 million in his budget for continued north end studies including planning-level traffic and revenue studies, cost estimates, and environmental impacts.

Mr. Henry said WSDOT began construction of the I-405/SR 167 interchange project in September. WSDOT is also working on the major widening project between Bellevue and Renton that will add one lane in each direction. He said that lessons learned from express toll lanes on the north end have been incorporated into this project.

Mr. Henry said WSDOT has been working with Sound Transit to plan how transit will access certain transit stops. The NE 44th Street interchange will be redesigned to provide access for general purpose traffic and for direct access in and out of the express toll lanes. A Park and Ride will be located at the interchange as well.

Mr. Henry said the I-405/SR 167 interchange work will be completed by 2019. The Renton to Bellevue widening project will begin construction by that time and will be completed in 2024. WSDOT is coordinating with Sound Transit to begin BRT service by 2024 as well. The final phase of the Renton to Bellevue project is the NE 6th Street extension, which will begin design work in 2025. Mr. Henry noted additional projects in the Totem Lake area and at the SR 520 and 124th Avenue interchange. Two projects will be funded through toll lane revenues: the peak-use shoulder lane and a northbound auxiliary lane from SR 520 to NE 70th Street.

Deputy Mayor Chelminiak suggested it would be beneficial to work with Sound Transit to provide a direct access ramp at 112th Avenue, south of Bellevue, to enhance access to the Park and Ride. Noting the question from the public, he questioned the pros and cons of providing HOT (high occupancy toll) lanes on I-5 and I-90.

Ms. Rubstello said there is no legislation regarding tolling on I-5. However, WSDOT is interested in conducting a comprehensive planning study of I-5, with guidance from the Puget Sound Regional Council. Responding to Mr. Chelminiak, Ms. Rubstello said one of the challenges with I-5 is the limited ability to widen the freeway. She said HOT lanes are not under consideration for I-90.

Councilmember Robertson recalled the Council's interest in the impact of the toll lanes on local street traffic. Ms. Rubstello said WSDOT has been collecting data and working with staff in a number of cities. She said there have not been significant diversions. However, there have been changes thought to be consistent with growth.

Ms. Robertson said she is pleased to see the NE 6th Street extension project as well as plans to widen I-405 south of Bellevue. She thanked WSDOT staff for working with Sound Transit on BRT.

Councilmember Wallace referred to the slide on the Potential Phase 1 of the new express toll lane from SR 522 to SR 527 and questioned the source of the estimated cost of \$450 million. Mr. Henry said WSDOT is exploring potential funding sources including toll revenues. He said considerable work needs to be completed before construction funding can be determined.

Mr. Wallace questioned whether WSDOT has spoken to Sound Transit about contributing to the above project costs. Mr. Henry said there have been preliminary discussions. Sound Transit has language in its ST3 package that allows WSDOT to partner with them to find additional improvements. He said Sound Transit is investing in the NE 44th interchange and will provide an inline transit stop at NE 85th Street.

Mr. Wallace observed that significant Sound Transit revenues are generated by the East Subarea, which is essentially the I-405 corridor. He anticipates cost savings by Sound Transit due to the higher interest rate reflected in their budget versus the actual interest rate, and due to the 75-percent contingencies in the construction cost estimates. Mr. Wallace said that, as those funds become available, they need to be deployed on the Eastside, preferably for the I-405 BRT service. He said Sound Transit should not spend the money in Seattle.

Mr. Wallace said WSDOT's financial statements reflect a projected \$15 million in express toll lane profits. Mr. Henry said all of the toll funds will be used on projects in the I-405 corridor. Mr. Wallace questioned whether the excess revenues are included in the I-405 master plan budget. Mr. Henry said \$15 million was originally anticipated for the Renton to Bellevue project. Additional revenues would be used for new projects.

Mr. Wallace said he would like to monitor how the annual toll profits will be allocated to the I-405 corridor.

Mr. Wallace noted WSDOT's schedule to begin design for the NE 6th Street extension project in 2025. He said the City, Sound Transit, and King County are all working on projects in that corridor (i.e., Grand Connection, Eastside Rail Corridor). He suggested it would be beneficial to move the design work earlier in the overall I-405 schedule to optimize the coordination between projects. Mr. Henry said WSDOT staff can explore potential opportunities for that objective.

Deputy Mayor Chelminiak said he wants to make sure that Bellevue staff are working with WSDOT staff regarding the Grand Connection project that will cross I-405.

Referring to Mr. Wallace's earlier comment, Mr. Chelminiak said it is great that express toll lane revenues are used for projects in the I-405 corridor.

Councilmember Robinson expressed support for the need for BRT service. Given the higher than anticipated toll usage, she questioned the potential for reducing toll rates. Ms. Rubstello said the

purpose of the toll lanes is to manage the lanes for maximum utilization. If toll rates are lowered, more drivers will use the lanes, which will decrease travel speeds.

Mayor Stokes said he is pleased that cities, the State, and other agencies are all working together. He thanked WSDOT staff for the presentation.

(b) State Legislative Agenda

Deputy Mayor Chelminiak said the Bellevue College legislative agenda reflects a number of the City's priorities. He asked that the lobbyists work together on those issues.

Councilmember Robertson requested an update on a recent case involving development and stormwater. Ms. Nichols said the City Attorney is researching the potential impacts on projects already in process in Bellevue. Staff will provide the analysis to the Council when it is completed.

Councilmember Wallace requested an update on the state legislature's discussions regarding funding related to the McCleary Decision. Ms. Nichols said information will be provided as it develops.

5. Council Discussion of Upcoming Items: None.

6. Continued Oral Communications

Stephanie Walter said she attended a hearing related to the single room rental ordinance. There will be a Hearing Examiner ruling in the near future. She expressed her appreciation to the Council and staff for their work.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Kyle Stannert, CMC
City Clerk

/kaw