

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Study Session

February 21, 2017
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Stokes and Councilmembers Lee, Robertson, and Robinson

ABSENT: Deputy Mayor Chelminiak and Councilmember Wallace

1. Executive Session

- (a) Evaluation of the Qualifications of Candidates for Appointment to Elective Office
[RCW 42.30.110(1)(h)]

Mayor Stokes called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. and said the Council received a request from Deputy Mayor Chelminiak to participate remotely via telephone during the later Regular Session. He noted that the Council previously voted to approve Councilmember Wallace to participate remotely during the Regular Session as well.

→ Councilmember Robertson moved to allow Deputy Mayor Chelminiak to participate remotely via telephone during the Regular Session. Councilmember Robinson seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 4-0.

Mayor Stokes declared recess to Executive Session for approximately 45 minutes to discuss the qualifications of candidates for appointment to elective office.

The meeting resumed at 6:53 p.m., with Mayor Stokes presiding.

2. Study Session

- (a) October-December 2016 Quarterly Update on Economic Development Activities

Mayor Stokes introduced discussion regarding the City's economic development activities.

Nathan McCommon, Deputy City Manager, introduced James Henderson, Economic Development Director, and Jesse Canedo, Economic Development Manager, to present the October-December 2016 quarterly update on economic development activities.

Mr. Henderson recalled that the 2014 Economic Development Plan contains direct strategies and foundational strategies. The three program areas are: business attraction, business retention and expansion, and Next Generation Bellevue.

Mr. Henderson said the Office of Economic Development met or exceeded most of the 2016 Action Plan metrics. In the area of business attraction, the City helped to facilitate six company locations/expansions, which created 2,547 jobs. There are 47 active prospects, or companies that are looking to relocate or expand into Bellevue from all over the world. In the area of business retention and expansion, staff made 25 company visits, including five with major employers and provided 51 forms of technical assistance to businesses. Three projects were created that retained 440 jobs. The Next Generation Bellevue program created 38 new jobs at Impact Hub Bellevue and supported 164 total members. In addition, nine technology events were supported and 10 businesses received Small Business Development Center (SBDC) counseling.

Mr. Canedo highlighted the major accomplishments for 2016 including the Destination Marketing Plan Phase 1, economic development branding and marketing, the production of economic development videos, and the expanded use of social media. He said the Innovation Triangle partnership with Kirkland and Redmond won the award for public sector innovation from the Economic Development Council of Seattle-King County. Mr. Canedo said Bellevue received the federal TechHire designation, which will focus on education programs for individuals with non-technical backgrounds to meet the increasing need for technology workers.

Mr. Canedo said the City's efforts with a number of companies in 2016 will bring 2,500 new jobs to Bellevue. He said the Innovation Triangle group worked with BitTitan, which was formerly located in Kirkland, to retain the company on the Eastside. The effort was competing with potential company sites in Florida and Singapore. The company is relocating to the One Twelfth @ Twelfth campus in Downtown Bellevue, which will retain 90 jobs and create 310 new jobs. In the area of business retention and expansion, the technical assistance provided to businesses included helping with transportation and mobility support, development services support, and connecting them to service providers.

The Next Generation Bellevue program had 164 Impact Hub Bellevue members at the end of 2016 compared to the goal of 150 members. Mr. Canedo said STARTUP425 is a new Eastside collaborative to support entrepreneurs in Bellevue, Kirkland, Issaquah and Renton. The first project is the Global Passport Training program to take six startup companies to the Mobile World Congress trade show. One limited-term employee will be hired this year to help expand the STARTUP425 program. Mr. Canedo said Impact Hub has decided to close its Bellevue location and to concentrate on its Seattle location. However, the group has expressed an interest in reopening a Bellevue location over the next three to four years.

Mr. Henderson said the Innovation Triangle partnership sponsored the SelectUSA Summit and the Immersion event. The two events demonstrated the ability for the cities to work together to achieve more than any one city would achieve by working alone. He said Bellevue is collaborating with a number of programmatic partners including the Bellevue Downtown

Association, Bellevue Chamber of Commerce, State Department of Commerce, Trade Development Alliance of Greater Seattle, Visit Bellevue Washington, and others. Mr. Henderson said there has been good collaboration as well between City departments with regard to economic development activities.

Mr. Henderson highlighted the 2017 economic development initiatives including numerous events through the Innovation Triangle partnership (e.g., DICE, Space Foundation Symposium, SelectUSA, Immersion, and others), STARTUP425 small business training programs, TechHire Bellevue activities, and development of the Destination Development Plan Phase 2. He said the City of Kirkland is taking the lead in organizing a Broker's Forum to coordinate efforts with City governments to bring companies to Bellevue and the Eastside.

Mr. Henderson said Economic Development staff will work with Councilmember Robinson on the TechHire Bellevue initiative, and with the City's Arts Manager, Joshua Heim, to develop a Creative Economy Strategy.

Mr. Henderson described an initiative by King, Snohomish, and Pierce Counties to explore ways to better market the region both nationally and internationally to attract jobs and investments to the region. He noted that Mayor Stokes is a member of that group's Principal Advisory Committee. Mr. Henderson said the working group is developing a framework for the organization, which is targeted for completion by June or July of this year.

Councilmember Robinson thanked staff for making significant progress over the past two years. She noted her ongoing interest in facilitating funding opportunities for startups. Noting that the Impact Hub will be closing its Bellevue location, Ms. Robinson said there are other incubator groups in Bellevue that could work with the City. She would like to see the creation of affordable office space for startup companies.

Councilmember Robertson commented, with regard to low-cost incubator space, that many of the startups open their businesses in less expensive office space. As redevelopment continues to occur, the rents increase significantly. Ms. Robertson said it would be useful to have information about the types of space that will be displaced, as part of the analysis related to rezones in commercial areas.

Responding to Councilmember Lee, Mr. Henderson said the Global Innovation Exchange (GIX) will hold its grand opening on September 14 to welcome its first class. The program is currently accepting applications for a class of 70-150 students, depending on the number of applications. They hope to have their certificate of occupancy in August. Mr. Henderson said the City is working with Dave Maddox, CEO of GIX, to explore potential partnerships with local companies. He said the facility will be both a school and a research and development program.

Councilmember Lee said he would appreciate information regarding the City's work with GIX, including anything the City can do to help GIX achieve its objectives. Mr. Henderson noted that GIX was a presenter at the fall Immersion event, which helped introduce GIX to the business community.

Responding to Mayor Stokes, Mr. Canedo concurred with Councilmember Robinson's earlier comment about the need for low-cost office space for startup companies. Mr. Canedo said he will be working with Civic Services Department staff to identify potential work space. Mr. Stokes suggested taking an inventory of existing affordable work space in the community. However, he acknowledged that redevelopment will continue to drive up rents.

Responding to Councilmember Robertson, Mr. Henderson said the action plan will be updated to reflect accomplishments to date and to identify new initiatives and performance metrics.

Mayor Stokes said he has heard of companies interested in hiring Expedia employees when the company moves to Seattle. He commended the economic development plan, strategies, and metrics, and thanked staff for their hard work.

(b) City of Bellevue Website Redesign Update

Mr. McCommon said the City has been working to redesign its website to better serve the community and to reflect Bellevue's brand as a city that welcomes the world. He said the presentation is for information purposes only and no Council action is requested.

Lenka Wright, Chief Communications Officer, said the current website was developed in 2006. The City now offers more online services and, as Bellevue becomes a multicultural, international city, the website needs to evolve as well.

Sabra Schneider, Interim Chief Information Officer, said a One City project team with representatives from all departments was assembled in 2015. The consultant Civiclive was selected to assist in the process and to function as the host and content management system for the effort. Staff conducted a community survey to gain public feedback and input. Approximately 1,000 individuals completed the survey, and the feedback was used to establish the goals of the website redesign.

Ms. Schneider said goals include a responsive government website that supports that Council vision of a high-performance government. The team wanted to establish site branding to promote the City's goals and identity, and to represent Bellevue as the dynamic, vibrant technology economy and city in a park that exists. Public feedback focused significantly on wanting better navigation and a better search function. The team recognized the importance of keeping the diverse community in mind as the website was redesigned.

Ms. Schneider said the project team focused on the mobile usability of the website because approximately 80 percent of the external traffic to the website comes from mobile devices. The team wanted the website to work well on both a desk computer and mobile device.

Ms. Wright said the redesigned website has a new navigation structure and search functionality. Easier access to information will help to increase awareness of City news and public engagement opportunities. She said the project team streamlined the website content by reducing the number

of pages and PDFs by 30 percent and focusing on the information most critical to the public. Improved web analytics will help the City to determine how the website is functioning for users on all devices.

Ms. Wright said community engagement improvements include an emergency notification banner site-wide, increased emphasis on national accessibility standards, most important content translated into five languages (Chinese, Korean, Russian, Vietnamese, and Spanish), and improved social media integration. She said the City is not using Google Translate due to concerns that the information is not always accurately translated.

Ms. Schneider said initial usability testing by City staff began a couple of weeks ago. The project team has received good feedback on the navigation of the site. She displayed how the website looks on a computer and phone and highlighted features of the site, including a menu in the upper right corner of every page and a prominent search field at the top of every page. Beta testing over the coming weeks will involve additional testers including Bellevue Essentials graduates, neighborhood leaders, a Bellevue College class, residents, and other stakeholders.

Ms. Wright said staff anticipates the new website going live in early spring.

Responding to Councilmember Lee, Ms. Schneider said the survey was conducted during early 2016. The City hired CivicLive in late 2015. In further response to Mr. Lee, Ms. Schneider said language translations will not be available for every page of the website. There will be footers on the pages with language options. She said there was extensive discussion about whether to use Google Translate, but the consensus was that it was not reliable. Ms. Wright said part of the website testing will be the language feature. Mr. Lee concurred with the importance of accuracy in the language translation feature. Ms. Schneider said the project team has heard from a number of users that they use their web browser to translate websites.

Responding to Mr. Lee, Ms. Wright said the website will have more photos, including those depicting the diversity in Bellevue, than the current site. Mr. Lee encouraged staff to use social media sites used by other cultures.

Mayor Stokes complimented staff on their work. He suggested that Councilmembers submit additional comments and suggestions to staff as well.

Councilmember Robertson said she was a strong supporter of funding the website redesign. She uses the City's website relatively frequently and looks forward to an improved search feature. Responding to Ms. Robertson, Ms. Schneider said there will be a message on the emergency banner during the testing phase indicating that it is a beta site.

Ms. Robertson said she would like the ability for Councilmembers and Board and Commission members to be involved in the beta testing. She suggested the ability for users to "Like" a page on the website as helpful feedback. Responding to Ms. Robertson, Ms. Schneider said the site will have road, park, and trail maps. Ms. Robertson noted that King County parks provide an app that can text maps to users. She would like to see consideration of that feature in the future.

Councilmember Robertson said she is pleased to see the governance policy, and she wants to be sure the project team involves the Public Records Officer and City Attorney's Office in the process. She likes that the City pushes information out to www.Nextdoor.com and other outlets. However, she said it is important to be sure the City is not engaging with individuals via those media sources because the exchanges would then become public records that need to be retained. She said it is important to comply with the Open Public Meetings Act as well. Ms. Robertson suggested drafting policies regarding comments to ensure that First Amendment rights are protected.

Ms. Wright said the City currently has a working social media comment policy that was vetted through the City Attorney's Office.

Councilmember Robinson praised the website. She said it reminds her of the Cultural Navigator that is translated into approximately 12 languages, which provides practical information such as how to obtain a driver's license, find a doctor, enroll children in school, and other items. She suggested that much of that information would be helpful in English as well. She suggested incorporating some of that information into the website or providing links to the Cultural Navigator site.

Ms. Robinson suggested listing City volunteer opportunities with the job listings. She questioned whether the Open Data section will help with public disclosure requests. Ms. Schneider said the availability of that information online can help. She said the Information Technology Department is working with the City Clerk's Office to create an online public records center that hopefully will decrease some of the requests.

Kyle Stannert, City Clerk, said very few public disclosure requests are alike. Staff is focusing on making data saved in internal databases available to and usable for the public through a site that is currently undergoing testing. To avoid search results with an excessively long list, the project team's goal is to keep the most current information on the website and older information in a searchable database with more of a library, Boolean style search feature.

Mayor Stokes noted there are a number of other cities' websites with good design and search features. Responding to Mr. Stokes, staff confirmed that they welcome feedback and suggestions from the Council. He said he was impressed with the photo of Bellevue on the Home page.

At 7:55 p.m., Mayor Stokes declared recess to the Regular Session.

Kyle Stannert, CMC
City Clerk

/kaw