

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION
ANNUAL RETREAT MINUTES

November 8, 2017
6:30 p.m.

Robinswood House
2430 148th Avenue SE

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Walter, Commissioners Barksdale, Carlson, deVadoss

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners Laing, Morisseau

STAFF PRESENT: Terry Cullen, Mac Cummins, Emil King, Deborah Munkberg, Department of Planning and Community Development; Mike Brennan, Carol Helland, Department of Development Services; Matt McFarland, City Attorney's Office

COUNCIL LIAISON: Mayor Stokes

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER
(6:56 p.m.)

The meeting was called to order at 6:56 p.m. by Comprehensive Planning Manager Terry Cullen.

2. ROLL CALL
(6:56 p.m.)

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioners Laing and Morisseau.

Chair Walter welcomed everyone. She said she personally has enjoyed working with her fellow Commissioners and staff to serve the people of Bellevue by sharing information with the Council.

Mayor Stokes added his welcome and said he was looking forward to building on what has been done in the past. He expressed the Council's and his personal appreciation for the work done by the Commission over the last couple of years. He said for a long time the city has been trying to clarify what it wants to be when it grows up, but now the transition to being grown up has mostly occurred. The focus of the Commission now needs to be on how to build on what is in place in order to continue having Bellevue be a great city.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
(7:01 p.m.)

Mr. Cullen briefly reviewed with the Commissioners the agenda for the retreat.

4. STUDY SESSION – 2017 Planning Commission Annual Retreat
(7:03 p.m.)

A. Year in Review

Mr. Cullen said the work project that dominated the Commission's agenda over the past year was the Downtown Livability Initiative and the associated code amendments. The Commission was asked to deliver a recommendation by the end of May and was actually able to achieve that goal as the result of an enormous amount of work by the Commission and the staff. The Council was able to take something that was potentially, politically volatile, have a meaningful discussion, and carry through on delivering a result before the elections. The work will have a tremendous impact on the downtown area over the next 10 to 20 years.

Along with the work on the Downtown Livability Initiative, the Commission also worked on a number of issues, including Comprehensive Plan amendments. In the midst of it all the Commission began the transition to a digital format that will ultimately save the city a great deal of money.

Mayor Stokes added his appreciation for the work of the staff. Chair Walter concurred and pointed out that the amount of work done behind the scenes by the staff team is unbelievable.

B. Region and Local Factors Influencing Change in Our Community
(7:09 p.m.)

Mr. Cullen pointed out that there are regional and local factors that have potential implications for planning. During 2018 the Commission will be facing some large work program initiatives, and it is important to understand how the city might be changing in the future.

There are five metropolitan cities in the region, and Bellevue is one of them. Under the Growth Management Act, all local governments must adopt a long-range comprehensive plan to manage growth and development, and the comprehensive plans must be consistent with state, regional and county planning directives. As determined by the state and the region, Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan is consistent. Bellevue's current Comprehensive Plan was updated and adopted in 2015 and is slated to be updated again in 2023.

The intervening years are not devoid of work. Leading into the next update there is an extensive regional planning process underway. Something called the Centers Framework is being developed at the regional level that focuses on the existing designated growth centers in the Puget Sound area and questions are being asked about whether the centers should remain the same, be expanded or be changed in some other way. Senior Planner Mike Kattermann serves as the regional policy advisor for the Planning and Community Development; he has been working with liaisons to the Puget Sound Regional Council and the Growth Management Planning Board. The work is focused on where growth should occur within the region. Under the current structure, all of the growth centers are treated the same, but in reality they are not the same. From the work a typology is expected to emerge, namely metropolitan center and urban center, with the former center being more intense. Bellevue fits into the metropolitan center category. Once adopted at the regional level, it will translate to the countywide planning goals and directives, which will in turn inform what must be included in Bellevue's long-range plan. The effort that is currently under way can be influenced by Bellevue, but Bellevue does not control it.

Mr. Cullen said the state is going to develop population and employment projections, probably in low, medium and high ranges. The region will determine which range makes the most sense to match future trends. The projections will then be broken down by jurisdiction. Bellevue along with all jurisdictions will be told what population and employment targets must be met. It will then be necessary to focus on the city's buildable lands inventory, which looks at what is planned and zoned. Bellevue's share of the population and employment projections will then be matched up with the buildable lands inventory to determine if the city has enough capacity to accommodate the growth targets. By the time the next update to the Comprehensive Plan kicks off, these variables will have been determined and will have to be factored in.

Commissioner Barksdale asked how things like the city's density and building height will be impacted. Mr. Cullen said the new growth numbers have not been handed down yet so the impacts cannot yet be determined. He allowed that there may already be enough planned capacity to address the targets. Strategic Planning Manager Emil King added that the last growth targets were determined in 2006 and carried out to 2031. Once the targets in the categories of population and employment are known, staff will compare them against the previous version of the buildable lands inventory to determine if capacity changes will be needed. He said the importance of the Comprehensive Plan cannot be overstated. All of the city's guiding documents, from the Parks and Open Space System Plan to the Water System Plan, transportation plans, and the strategic plans of the fire and police departments must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and all long-range forecasts.

Mr. Cullen pointed out that the Planning Commission serves as steward of the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission serves a real value in reviewing proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments and making a determination as to whether or not they are consistent with the policy direction of Comprehensive Plan. The Commission works to make the Comprehensive Plan better and to translate it down to the ground level to make it work for the citizens of Bellevue. No other board or commission has that focus.

Commissioner deVadoss said he assumed that along with inheriting long-range planning targets from the region, Bellevue will still have the ability to be flexible in driving its own priorities. Mr. Cullen agreed.

With regard to aligning with the Comprehensive Plan, Commissioner deVadoss commented that the Commission recently dealt with two Comprehensive Plan amendments that appeared to be de facto complete in that they had already been put in action, leaving the Commission to retrofit them in terms of wordsmithing. He asked if the Commission can expect any and all proposed amendments to go through a review process before being enacted. Mr. Cullen answered that no ordinance that is clearly inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan can be enacted. Ordinances that speak to and which are generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan can, however, be enacted. In the case of the recent transportation amendments, the Commission was tasked with adding to the Comprehensive Plan to support the direction the Council wanted to go. There was consistency on a certain level, but there was more the Council wanted to see fully expanded through policy.

Mayor Stokes added that things are not always cut and dried. In the case of the recent amendment to address a boundary line in the downtown, things were fine for years before something changed and the line no longer made sense. A change was needed in order to have things make sense from a development point of view. The Commission could have elected not to recommend the proposed amendment and to keep things as they were.

Mr. King said at the time of Bellevue's incorporation in 1953, it had only about 6000 residents. Much of the growth that occurred through the 1990s was through annexations, but with no more annexations left, growth into the future will occur either through increases in persons per household or new development. The city is projected to increase by some 20,000 residents by 2035, much of which will be driven by robust job growth, a quality school system, the goods and services that are available, and the parks and open space system.

Mayor Stokes pointed out that in many ways, Bellevue's current population of 140,000 does not represent a very large city. What makes Bellevue a big city is not its population but rather the fact that it is the cultural and economic center of the Eastside region, which is a reflection of Bellevue's planning having been carried out. The planning being done and that will be done in the future will be not just for Bellevue given the city's relationship with the region.

Planning and Community Development Director Mac Cummins said the city's demographer is currently working to update the population density figures in and around the urban area, as well as data relative to job growth and jobs per acre in the urban growth areas. The numbers for the city are dramatically different from most cities of Bellevue's size. The downtown area is only 60 percent built out, and what is in the works for the Bel-Red corridor is far different from what is seen in cities with a similar population to Bellevue.

Chair Walter asked if growth in the downtown core will in some way insulate the outlying neighborhoods and residential areas from too much additional growth pressure. The neighborhoods all have a unique identity which the residents would like to protect and preserve. Mr. Cullen said finding the right balance is always a challenge, but efforts to do so will continue through the neighborhood planning process.

Mr. Cummins said in highly desirable areas like Bellevue there will always be development factions who will want to see the envelop pushed. It is up to the city to set a vision and stay the course. If the city does not set a vision, an outside source will attempt to do so. There will undoubtedly be pressures going forward on a number of fronts, and holding the line will need to be done on a very localized neighborhood level.

Chair Walter said she would like to see partnerships between the City Council and the neighborhoods so there will be no mysteries. Mayor Stokes said that is one of the arguments for Bellevue Essentials and for having quarterly meetings with community leaders. Part of the impetus for working on downtown livability and keeping a focus on the downtown is because of the level of capacity remaining in that area. There are other growth areas that have been planned for some time, including Bel-Red, Eastgate and Wilburton, and adhering to the plans will provide the city the opportunity to keep growth from creeping into the neighborhoods. Bellevue does a good job of keeping its urban areas and neighborhoods separate.

Commissioner Carlson commented that the city's biggest challenge going forward will lie in reconciling two very important values, namely maintaining the integrity of the neighborhoods and resolving the issue of affordable housing. Bellevue is the fifth largest city in the state and is the economic and cultural jewel of the Eastside. The city plans to absorb about 90 percent of its future growth in the downtown, Eastgate and Bel-Red, but there likely will continue to be pressure brought to throw more density into neighborhoods that do not want it. Mayor Stokes stated that any change in a neighborhood will only come if the neighborhood signs off on it.

Mr. Cullen said when he first came to Bellevue two things stood out about the downtown. First was how amazing it is given the city's population. The other was the bright line delineation

between the downtown proper and the surrounding neighborhoods. He said it was clear to him from the start that Bellevue is a city that values planning.

Department of Development Services director Mike Brennan said the single family neighborhoods have traditionally been called the neighborhoods. Going forward, however, it will be important to remember that the neighborhoods that will be created in the future will not be single family neighborhoods, rather they will be new urban neighborhoods that will need just as much planning attention as the city grows to make sure they are healthy and livable.

Mr. Cullen said the phrase “Bellevue Welcomes the World” plays out in the fact that the city is a very important immigrant receiving zone for the Puget Sound area. More immigrants are coming to Bellevue than to Seattle. As of 2015, 39.1 percent of Bellevue’s residents were foreign born, which compares to only 17.5 percent in Seattle, 21.7 percent in King County, 13.7 percent in the state and 13.5 percent nationwide. From that demographic flow all sorts of benefits ranging from arts and culture to the culinary scene. Bellevue’s diversity is a clear asset.

Commissioner Barksdale commented that in the book *Race, Class and Politics in the Cappuccino City* by Derek S. Hyra, talks about diversity segmentation. The book focuses on a neighborhood in Washington D.C. that sought to retain its low-income residents while welcoming high-income residents on the thinking that everyone would benefit. The result, however, was a segregation of the amenities that appeal to different groups. No true acceptance and integration resulted. In planning for a future that includes true integration, Bellevue should consider amenities that bring people together. Mr. Cullen agreed that there are clear implications for planning, particularly around planning and programming public space, communicating clearly where there are a hundred or so different languages being spoken, and getting people more actively involved in the community and local government. In order to have good planning, there must be community engagement from all sectors.

Mayor Stokes pointed out that Bellevue has become a minority majority city. While that stands as a testament to how great Bellevue is, it also brings with it additional complications relative to incorporating divergent ideas.

Chair Walter said her neighborhood association is very interested in getting new people to join. To that end the association recently held a trunk or treat event which went far beyond anyone’s expectations. The event served as a way to bring people together without any agenda. That sort of thing is what people are eager for and the city should seek to facilitate ways for the neighborhoods to come together. For one thing, it costs a thousand dollars in permit fees and that is something the city could address.

Mr. Cummins said one program Planning and Community Development manages is the Mini City Hall at Crossroads Mall, which sees 24,000 people come through annually. Many of those who visit are from underserved populations. Visitors to City Hall cannot actually get to Planning and Community Development without checking in and receiving a badge, something that is intimidating for many populations. The neighborhood outreach group has been talking a lot lately about how to take planning back out into the communities and what that might look like.

Commissioner deVadoss said he always cringes when presented with a slide of Bellevue’s diversity. He allowed that he was not born in the United States but said that is not a fact that should draw a line between him and other residents of Bellevue. There are things that unite and bring people together, and those are the things that really matter. He said he was born in India and grew up in East Africa but had no interest in bringing those areas to Bellevue. The Bellevue

way is what needs to be reinforced in ways that bring everyone together. Mayor Stokes suggested that the term “Bellevue Welcomes the World” is not intended as an exercise of drawing circles and squares on a map of the population, rather it is intended to mean everyone works together toward common goals. The fact that Bellevue has so much diversity seeking to come together is unique and something to be celebrated as a positive. The hope is that at some point city leadership from the Council to the boards and commissions and city staff will one day truly reflect the makeup of the city.

Mr. Cullen said one of the things he values most about Bellevue is that its citizens allow people to be who they are. They are not seeking total assimilation, which is not something seen everywhere around the nation.

Mr. King said in 1970 Bellevue hosted some 21,000 jobs. As of 2015, that number had grown to nearly 150,000, and the projections show a continued increase to 193,000 by 2035. Currently about a third of the jobs in the city are in the downtown and the balance of them are spread around the growth areas. Specific sectors within the job market have grown and decreased over the years.

Mr. Cullen pointed out that the point at which employment exceeded the population was in about 1990, the time when Microsoft was starting to ascend economically. Since that time, employment growth has continued to outpace population growth. Generically speaking, employment exceeding population is an indicator of being an regional center. Regional centers typically impact the transportation network and housing prices. As communities become wealthier, income diversity begins to flatten out and the disparity between the wealthiest and the poorest narrows. Increases in the tax base lead to the provision of additional services and programming. From a planning perspective, Bellevue is experiencing all of those factors.

Commissioner Barksdale asked if it can be expected that population will once again catch up with employment. Mr. King said the forecasts have employment continuing to outpace population through 2035. Bellevue is the urban center of the Eastside and there are many surrounding jurisdictions that have higher levels of population growth than employment growth, which in many ways is a definition of a suburban city. In some ways, the next step should be to look at Bellevue’s numbers in the context of the entire Eastside.

Mr. King shared a chart showing major industry job clusters by size, employment change and concentration. He noted that the data was drawn from between 2009 and 2015. He noted that Bellevue’s jobs are slanted heavily toward information technology and tourism, but less so in aerospace jobs.

Commissioner Barksdale asked if the city has targets for growing any of the specific clusters, and if so if that has any implications in terms of zoning. Mayor Stokes pointed out that Bellevue has a large gaming contingency making up much of the information technology sector. Bellevue has far fewer industrial jobs. The fact that jobs outpace population growth in Bellevue figures largely in the pressures brought to bear on traffic, amenities and services. Far more people commute into Bellevue to jobs than commute out of Bellevue for jobs. Accommodating that difference means Bellevue must provide infrastructure while at the same time working with the neighborhoods to make sure they are not adversely impacted. The biggest challenge lies in growing as planned within the region while maintaining quality of life.

Mr. Cullen said during his tenure in Tampa, Florida, the city struggled to put forward a referendum on light rail, even though the city was choking on its own traffic. The downtown area

was in fact paralyzed by not being able to get any more people in, even though there was existing capacity. It was not so much that light rail would solve the transportation problem, rather it was about offering a choice. Choice is directly related to the economic advantages of a community. Someone who has no choice but to travel by car will not choose to move to a place where they cannot easily get around by car. Bellevue is currently engaged in conversations that big cities have because it is having to deal with big city issues, even though technically Bellevue is not a big city. What the future will bring cannot be said with any degree of certainty. Self-driving cars are making forward strides, but possibly in the future there will be no need to move people at all if forecasts about the decentralization of the workforce come to fruition. Technology will change things, including artificial intelligence and robotics, which is no longer the stuff of science fiction.

Mr. Cullen said the city regularly conducts business community surveys and receives high marks for all key metrics. The two factors identified as negatively affecting businesses in Bellevue are lack of affordable commercial space and affordable housing. Mayor Stokes said development entities are quickly coming to realize that affordable housing is not just for the homeless, it is desperately needed for the workforce. That is why the city chose to put together an affordable housing strategy, something the Commission will be involved with in moving forward with implementation. Many businesses have stepped forward saying the issue is one that must be resolved. Mr. Cullen added that the lack of affordable housing is the top factor in regard to homelessness. An in-depth segment recently on KOMO News reported that a five percent increase in rental rates in Seattle results in 240 additional homeless families.

According to the business survey, 57 percent of the respondents are likely to recommend starting a business in Bellevue. Traffic, parking and lack of affordable housing are all issues highlighted by the survey. Seven of ten businesses feel that Bellevue is a somewhat or significantly better place to operate a business when compared to other cities. Mayor Stokes pointed out that Bellevue's marks have remained high over the course of several iterations of the survey.

With regard to how residents say the city is faring, Mr. Cullen noted that overall they rate the quality of life in Bellevue as being very good. There are, however, some potential concerns, including traveling within the city in a reasonable and predictable amount of time, how they rated a sense of community, and whether or not Bellevue can still be called a city in a park.

Commissioner deVadoss said he has seen a lot of momentum lately in terms of neighborhoods coming together to focus on their priorities. He said it seems at odds to have survey results that rate rather low a sense of community. Commissioner Carlson suggested there might be two reasons. With the increasing proportion of jobs in the tech sector, the city has seen an increasing number of young singles moving in, which is different from Bellevue's traditional view of itself as a family town. Those with kids in the house are more intrinsically driven to create community. Language could be the second issue. He noted that the small development in which he lives sees about one house per year sell, and of the last six sales, four have gone to Asian families and one has gone to an Indian family. They are all wonderful people with young families, but three of the families have language issues and as such they are a little less neighborly.

Mayor Stokes said he interacted recently with a neighborhood organizer who talked about how difficult it is to get people to go and talk with their neighbors. That in itself makes it difficult to create a sense of community. Mr. King noted that the resident survey goes out across the whole city and people living in multifamily neighborhoods, especially in apartments, have the same dilemma relative to generating a sense of community.

Mr. Cullen said he lives downtown in an apartment and has noticed a lack of community. Social events are scheduled, but given turnover and language barriers, they have not been successful. One thing that is working in the downtown is the new park which is bringing people of all different cultures together, with children being the commonality. Commissioner Barksdale said his experience has been when visiting parks that people do not speak to each other. He said when he speaks to people he gets a mix of responses, not all of which are positive.

Commissioner deVadoss pointed out that in the commercial sector, any time data crosses the 30 percent threshold it can be concluded that there has been a breakthrough. Any response of less than 70 percent portends a fundamental issue that could get worse unless addressed proactively.

Mayor Stokes said it is interesting that citizens responding to the questionnaire listed the same issues in saying why they like the direction Bellevue is going and why they do not like the direction Bellevue is going. The issues mentioned most often are growth and change. Mr. Cummins pointed out that overwhelmingly people are really happy with Bellevue, including the parks and open spaces, the availability of goods and services, and how the city is being governed.

Commissioner Carlson said he suspected that any city in the nation would love to have the same positive numbers describing the neighborhoods as a place to live, how safe the community is, and having attractive and well-maintained neighborhoods.

Mr. King reiterated that planning and code development occurs as the result of a joint effort between the Council, the Commission, the staff and the community. There have been a lot of good accomplishments, including Bel-Red, downtown and Eastgate. The city has over the past few years methodically worked through the various growth areas and is currently focused on Wilburton. Opportunities for rethinking land use came after significant regional investments were made in light rail, triggering the need to conduct station area planning.

With regard to the Wilburton area study, Mr. King said the concerted effort came about through direction from the Council. He said the work of the Citizen Advisory Committee is under way and their recommendations are anxiously being awaited. Ultimately the process will involve updating the policies in the Comprehensive Plan and the regulations in the Land Use Code.

Mr. Cullen said it is known, in looking to the future, that Bellevue will have a lot of multifamily neighborhoods. The downtown is a neighborhood area, but multifamily structures containing several hundred units are in fact neighborhoods unto themselves. Questions remain as to how the city's planners, including the Commission, the Council and the staff, should address the implications of vertical neighborhoods. During the downtown code amendment process, Bellevue Towers residents came and spoke as a homeowners association, and they evidenced a very strong neighborhood cohesiveness. The challenge ahead lies in looking at, thinking of, and accommodating the new vertical neighborhood. The same will be true in Bel-Red. Given how expensive owning a home is, the majority of Bellevue residents could soon be renters rather than owners, and consideration will need to be given to finding ways of getting renters invested in the city in the way owners traditionally have been.

Chair Walter asked if there are community spaces that do not require a fee to rent them in which people can hold community meetings. During the summer months there are a number of places outside where people can meeting, but there are months during the year when meeting outdoors is not feasible; during those months, neighborhood connections can be lost. Mr. Cullen said much is driven by what developers see as the demand for amenities and what they can capture

from the rental community. He said his building downtown has a rooftop garden, a nice large interior courtyard with a waterfall, and a community room as well as common areas where people can meet. Social mixers are also regularly planned to facilitate getting people together.

Mr. King stated that currently some 54 percent of Bellevue's households live in single family residences, and 46 percent live in multifamily dwellings. Given current growth trends, the projection is that in about ten years the majority of households will live in multifamily units. Additionally, the data that tracks the number of persons per household indicates that over the last ten years has increased from 1.97 to almost 2.1. Between 2005 and 2010 the number of persons per single family dwelling increased from 2.61 to 2.78, but by 2015 that number had dropped to 2.73.

Mayor Stokes added that very few new single family homes are being built, though there is a lot of rebuilding and remodeling of single family homes. Future growth will focus primarily on multifamily.

Mr. Cullen said the city is looking carefully at the predictions of an economic slowdown around 2020 to 2023, followed by an uptick in development. The city is planning for that from a financial perspective.

C. 2018 Work Program

Ms. Helland pointed out that the City Council is slated to hold its annual retreat in January. That meeting will highlight Council priorities for the year and having that information in hand when reviewing the Commission's work program would be helpful.

Chair Walter agreed it would be better to hold off discussing the work program until after the Council's retreat.

D. Post-Project Evaluation Survey (8:41 p.m.)

Mr. Cullen said one of the things talked about at the Commission's previous retreat was incorporating a post-project evaluation. He said a draft survey was developed and brought to the Commission as a point of departure on October 11. At that meeting the Commission asked Commissioner deVadoss to work with staff to develop a universal statement of intent. He noted that the survey is broad enough to encompass any type of post-project evaluation, and can be as qualitative or as quantitative as appropriate.

Mr. Cullen briefly reviewed with the Commissioners the instructions given him on October 11 with regard to removing Section 1, Section 2.F, and to reduce the remaining survey to a maximum of ten questions.

Chair Walter voiced her support for the statement of intent. She said she believed the survey was good and that it would trigger discussion. For example, depending on how the Commissioners answer the question regarding whether or not the process and tools to complete the project were effective, answers in the affirmative will highlight the things that went right, while answers in the negative will trigger a discussion of what could be better. She asked if the Commissioners would prefer to fill out the survey and get a cumulative answer, or to walk through the questions and discuss answers individually.

Commissioner Barksdale said he would prefer to have the surveys filled out prior to a meeting so it can be known up front which questions need to be addressed.

Chair Walter asked if it would fall to staff to send out the survey, collect the data and report it back out. Mr. Cullen nodded yes. Chair Walter asked at what point the information would go to the public. Mr. Cullen said it would come back to the Commission in an open meeting as an agenda item.

Chair Walter said she would like to see the post-project evaluation survey tried to see if it facilitates making projects cleaner and faster, or if it will add time to the process.

Commissioner deVadoss pushed back strongly on the notion of a survey. He said having lots of data can in some sense be an illusion. He said he would rather push for an informal discussion and deliberation of what went well, what did not go well, and what could be made better in an attempt to push toward a quicker closure.

Commissioner Barksdale said the survey would not represent a heavy process involving data analysis, particularly where the answers given are along the lines of strongly agree or strongly disagree. The same survey could be reused project to project.

Chair Walter allowed that generally where scientific studies are done, a single variable is changed to see if it works. She proposed narrowing it down to having the Commission focus on just two or three things.

Commissioner Carlson agreed with Commissioner deVadoss and said he would prefer to see the process kept simple, limited and informal to broker and encourage more participation.

Chair Walter suggested the survey could be sent out without having the answers coming back to the Commissioners. The data collected by the staff would give the heads up in regard to what will be informally discussed. There was consensus to try that approach.

Chair Walter asked Commissioner deVadoss to summarize the five whys. He the approach involves someone making a comment or a statement followed by someone asking why. The response to the why is followed with another why, and after four or five whys it can be expected that the discussion will converge on the primary challenge or problem. Typically, the five whys are about moving past the symptoms to the disease.

Chair Walter said she could see the approach working well with two people and asked if there is a threshold beyond which there are just too many people involved for it to be effective.

Commissioner deVadoss said the five whys should comment on specific comments or statements as opposed to there being a group of five whys.

By way of closing comments, Mr. Cullen allowed that the Commission's retreat in 2016 included an outside facilitator and a lot of developmental work. He said this retreat was different in that it was more reflective. The agenda was admittedly ambitious but the dialog can be continued in the next couple of meetings.

There was agreement that the discussion had been helpful, and that it would have been nice to have had a full complement of Commissioners present. There was also consensus that the event had been enjoyable.

Commissioner deVadoss acknowledged the participation of Mayor Stokes and commented that without the energy, focus and support of Mr. Cullen the Commission would not have gotten things through in time.

5. ADJOURN

Mr. Cullen said the only regularly scheduled Commission meeting left on the calendar for the year was December 13. He noted that there were no items scheduled for that meeting and that it could be canceled.

Mr. Cullen adjourned the meeting at 8:59 p.m.

Terry Cullen
Staff to the Planning Commission

Date



Jeremy Barksdale
Acting Chair of the Planning Commission

1/24/18

Date

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION
STUDY SESSION MINUTES

October 4, 2017
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Walter, Commissioners Barksdale Carlson,
deVadoss, Laing, Morisseau

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner deVadoss

STAFF PRESENT: Terry Cullen, Nicholas Matz, Department of Planning and
Community Development; Department of Transportation;
Matt McFarland, City Attorney's Office

COUNCIL LIAISON: Not Present

GUEST SPEAKERS: Vic Bishop, Chair, Transportation Commission

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER
(6:43 p.m.)

The meeting was called to order at 6:43 p.m. by Chair Walter who presided.

2. ROLL CALL
(6:43 p.m.)

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Laing, who arrived at 6:50 p.m., and Commissioner deVadoss, who was excused.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
(6:44 p.m.)

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Carlson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Barksdale and the motion carried unanimously.

4. REPORTS OF CITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None
(6:44 p.m.)

5. STAFF REPORTS
(6:45 p.m.)

A. Upcoming Planning Commission Meeting Schedule

Comprehensive Planning Manager Terry Cullen said the Commission's annual retreat was slated for November 8 at Robinswood House beginning at 5:00 p.m.

Mr. Cullen noted that in September the Commission's quarterly meeting was held with Chair

Walter, Commissioner Barksdale, the Mayor and staff. The agenda for the retreat was one of the items discussed.

Mr. Cullen briefly reviewed with the Commissioners the schedule of upcoming meetings and agenda topics.

The Commissioners were informed that they needed to update their iPads to the new operating system and he provided them with instructions for how to do it.

Chair Walter welcomed former Commissioner Michelle Hilhorst.

Commissioner Carlson took a few moments to salute and honor Ms. Hilhorst for her service on the Commission. He noted that Ms. Hilhorst was appointed to the Commission on the strength of her work as a citizen to get the city to pay attention to the residents and businesses in Newport Hills. Ultimately she served the Commission as Vice Chair and then Chair and did a stellar job in helping to shape a number of major issues. In appreciation for her years of service, he presented Ms. Hilhorst with a plaque.

Ms. Hilhorst said she was humbled and appreciative. She said serving on the Commission was an honor and a privilege. She said it was her Newport Hills neighborhood that brought her to the table, and the action taken by the Commission in regard to that neighborhood was the right decision. The Newport Hills Shopping Center is now flourishing and almost every space is full.

Chair Walter said she would not be serving on the Commission had it not been for Ms. Hilhorst reaching out to her as a neighborhood advocate. She said through the years since Ms. Hilhorst has helped her to bring her caring nature to the Commission.

Commissioner Laing thanked Ms. Hilhorst her service to the community. He said he has known her for eight years and had come to see her as a person with the good of the community at heart and with a very high level of understanding. He said it had been a privilege serving with her on the Commission.

6. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS
(7:09 p.m.)

Ms. Betsi Hummer, 14541 SE 26th Street, said she was present as a private citizen. She noted that at the November 3 meeting of the East Bellevue Community Council there were three public hearings conducted. There was a lot of input and good discussion ahead of approving the Neighborhood Mixed Use and the OLB-2 amendments for Eastgate, the restrictions on safe injection sites, and the homeless shelter. She said she was very sorry that the homeless shelter issue got to where it is; it could have been resolved in an open and transparent manner early on. There appears to be no end in sight and the issue just continues to get more convoluted. The Commission should act to make sure things are different going forward, and that the citizens are involved.

7. PUBLIC HEARING - None
(7:16 p.m.)

8. STUDY SESSION
(7:16 p.m.)

A. 2017 Comprehensive Plan Amendments – Final Review

Senior Planner Nicholas Matz noted for the record that written communications from McCullough Hill, the applicant's agent for the Eastgate Office Park Comprehensive Plan amendment, had been provided as part of the Commission desk packet and as such would become part of the record for the public hearing to be held on November 1.

Mr. Matz said there were four Comprehensive Plan amendments before the Commission for final review, two site-specific amendments and two policy and text amendments. Even though the applications are submitted as individual applications, under the Growth Management Act all changes to the Comprehensive Plan must be considered as to their cumulative effect on the Comprehensive Plan itself.

Beginning with the Complete Streets Comprehensive Plan amendment, Mr. Matz said the proposal is to amend the Transportation Element to fully support a Complete Streets program in Bellevue. Consistent with direction from the City Council, the Transportation Commission worked extensively to recommend amendments to seven existing policies in the Transportation Element, adding narrative language and creating a new graphic call-out text box. Complete Streets is a national movement intended to inspire communities to consider all modes of travel in the planning, design, implementation, maintenance and operation of transportation systems. The Complete Streets framework is used to ensure safe and reliable mobility options and access for all modes and users of the systems. The Washington state legislature enacted Complete Streets legislation in 2011.

Mr. Matz said the second amendment for consideration was the Downtown Transportation Plan. He explained that the proposed amendment seeks to amend the Downtown Subarea Plan with transportation- and facility-related amendments resulting from the 2013 update of the Downtown Transportation Plan, a functional plan that supports and implements the Comprehensive Plan. Consistent with Council direction, the Transportation Commission worked through an extensive public engagement process in developing amendments to the plan.

The Eastgate Office Park amendment was the third amendment on the docket. Mr. Matz said the amendment seeks a map change for a 21-acre parcel involving three sites from the existing Office designation to Office/Limited Business. The original privately initiated proposal for 14 acres was expanded by the Commission through geographic scoping. The sites are developed with low-rise office buildings and have both surface and under-building parking. The Commissioners were reminded that the proposal went through threshold review in 2016 and was deferred to allow for catching up with the since-adopted Eastgate Land Use Code amendments.

The final application involves the old Seattle Times building at 10777 Main Street. The proposal for the nearly one-acre site is to change the map from the current split of DT-MU and Professional Office designations to DT-MU only for the entire site. The site-specific amendment was initiated by the City Council on September 18, 2017, under its authority in the Land Use Code.

Mr. Matz introduced Vic Bishop, chair of the Transportation Commission, and Paula Stevens, Assistant Director of the Department of Transportation and noted that they were present to respond to questions and issues during the study session.

Mr. Matz said the Complete Streets amendment is part of a series of efforts the Transportation Commission and the city is engaged with in order to get a more holistic look at transportation

functions. Vision Zero, which was adopted in 2017, acts as a bookend to Complete Streets.

Chair Bishop said all of the Complete Streets policies exist in various locations in the current Comprehensive Plan. The narrative comments section is new, and the policies have been brought up to date to mesh with the Complete Streets concept and pulled together into a single package.

Commissioner Morisseau said she understood the overall concept but asked how it is to be achieved. Ms. Stevens said implementing the Complete Streets concept entails looking at things like designing crosswalks that meet the needs of pedestrians, ensuring the capacity needs of the city are being attended to, providing bicycle facilities, and all measures that will improve and maintain safety for all users. The holistic approach directs the city to look at a wide range of ways to consider streets for everyone and anyone wanting to use them. Many of the things outlined in the Complete Streets amendment are things the city already does though without calling them part of the Complete Streets toolkit. At the direction of the Council, a name has been put to the practices. By having Complete Streets policies called out in the Comprehensive Plan, funding options for the city are created to address anything done having to do with Complete Streets.

Commissioner Carlson asked if in the name of Complete Streets the city might remove any driving lanes and repurposing them for other users, such as bike riders. Chair Bishop said the Transportation Commission is currently involved in developing an approach called multimodal level of service, the concept of which is to move away from a focus solely on vehicle level of service in talking about transportation. The vehicular level of service standards will not be changed in adding a level of service concept for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit ridership. The idea is to develop an approach that will help to identify priorities for where to spend capital dollars. The concept fits neatly into the Complete Streets concept. The work on the Downtown subarea plan identifies particular streets to serve priority vehicle, priority pedestrian and priority transit functions. The 2009 Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan includes a primary bicycle network that includes four of the streets in the downtown and those streets will receive an emphasis on bicycles. Main Street is designated as a primary bicycle route and recent changes that have been made are in line with that thinking. At the same time, those changes were made in conjunction with an evaluation of the level of service for vehicles to avoid diminishing the overall capacity.

Commissioner Carlson commented that in the name of Complete Streets, Seattle and other communities have chosen to provide multimodal facilities at the expense of vehicle capacity. The return on investment has been more congestion, which Seattle now says is no longer a priority. Ms. Stevens said Bellevue is not Seattle nor does it want to be Seattle. The approach being taken in Bellevue is in the best interests of Bellevue and what Bellevue wants to be. The Complete Streets concept does not create any additional capacity, nor does it reduce existing capacity. It simply brings to light facilities for all modes of transportation and highlights the increasingly difficult prioritization conversation that goes along with having scarce resources.

Commissioner Laing said he was glad to hear that Bellevue is not Seattle and that Bellevue does not want to be Seattle. He pointed out, however, that no language in the proposed amendment will prevent Bellevue from following the path Seattle has taken. It is not a zero sum game as presented in terms of the right-of-way that is available. It is even less so a zero sum game when it comes to automobile mobility versus other modes of mobility given that the design standards that require sidewalks that are 12 to 16 feet wide. He said he would feel more comfortable if the Transportation Element and the Comprehensive Plan noted that when converting right-of-way to dedicated bicycle lanes, consideration should be given to using part of the width of the pedestrian facility rather than eliminating an automobile lane.

Chair Walter asked about balancing modes of transportation, not just measuring them. She said some modes of transportation can go more places than others, such as pedestrians who can use sidewalks as well as the streets in a crosswalk. A bicycle can go on the street and on a sidewalk. In terms of predictability, that should be considered. There should be a balance across the continuum of modes. Many of the changes will squeeze automobiles while allowing other modes to take over, and doing that too quickly will have an effect opposite of what is intended. The experience of the driver should be factored in along with the experience of the cyclist and the pedestrian.

Commissioner Barksdale asked how success under Complete Streets is to be measured. Ms. Stevens said measurement of the policies will occur through the implementation initiatives, like multimodal level of service, which is an in-depth process. Mr. Matz added that the policies create a framework for making specific decisions. Commissioner Barksdale said it should not be assumed that evaluation will only happen at the implementation level; it should happen at the policy level as well. The language of the amendment should include an indication of how the policies are to be evaluated.

Commissioner Carlson commented that policies are driven by intent. He asked what the intent is behind the policies. Mr. Matz said the intent is to give the city more tools for managing things that happen in the space owned by the city and for which the city is responsible. The policies are intended to facilitate decisions predicated on an agreed-upon framework set at the top level, which is the Comprehensive Plan. Policies do not always create solutions in and of themselves, but they establish the framework by which decisions are made. Success will be measured by such things as being able to resolve issues involving different modes of transportation within the same physical framework.

Commissioner Barksdale asked why Policy TR-32, utilize multimodal level of service standards for transportation corridors that reflect a range of intended mobility actions, was needed. Ms. Stevens said it is needed in part to help prioritize spending. It is also needed to get to measuring what is trying to be achieved, which occurs at implementation. Commissioner Barksdale said such measures will be made against evaluation criteria or a desired outcome as part of the policy, making Policy TR-32 unnecessary. Mr. Matz said the conversation that began in 2015 as part of updating the Comprehensive Plan included the notion of measuring capacity using the conventional standard. It was determined that going forward, both for the purpose of continuing to sustain automobile travel and other forms of travel, a different measure is needed to be able to determine whether or not the city is succeeding at moving people through the community. The conventional measure of volume/capacity is not sufficient for addressing all of the things going on, whether they are priority streets, or whether there are regional issues. A framework is needed in order to do that so that when it comes to implementation, everyone is on the same page. Ultimately, success will be measured by how well people are moved in and out of the city by whatever form of transportation they use.

Commissioner Carlson asked who wrote the policies. Mr. Matz said they began with a draft by staff but they were subjected to an extensive exercise by the Transportation Commission that ultimately gives the Transportation Commission ownership of them. Chair Bishop added that a special committee was set up in the summer of 2016 and charged with scouring the existing policies in the Comprehensive Plan to identify which of them relate to the Complete Streets concept. Edits were made to the language of some of the policies to make them compatible with Complete Streets.

Commissioner Carlson asked who the target audience is for the Complete Streets document. Mr. Matz said anyone in the city. Commissioner Carlson asked what the supposed reaction of a reasonably well educated Bellevue resident would be to hearing that under Policy TR-23 one of the city's priorities is to coordinate improvements and operations among travel modes and provide facilities to support people who are making connections between modes. He said he had no idea what the policy is saying. Mr. Cullen said the Commission was free to provide direction to staff to take into consideration when drafting the final reports for the November 1 public hearing.

Mr. Matz said if so directed, staff would rework the policy language to make it clearer. Ms. Stevens pointed out that if that were to be done, the language would need to go back to the Transportation Commission for review and comment. Chair Walter suggested that could be done in a joint meeting with the Transportation Commission. Mr. Matz said given the upcoming schedule, taking that path would kick Complete Streets out of the 2017 package of Comprehensive Plan amendments.

Chair Bishop pointed out that the city has already received a \$500,000 grant from the Transportation Improvement Board based on the proposed policies. The NE 6th Street and 106th Avenue NE intersection is being rebuilt with those funds.

Commissioner Laing allowed that the policy phraseology actually tracks the language of the Comprehensive Plan update relative to multimodal mobility and as such it is consistent with language in other parts of the Comprehensive Plan, including parts of the Transportation Element. The conversation is not new and there are other parts of the existing Comprehensive Plan that already have the more accessible language. Mr. Cullen said one option would be to include a glossary of terms to improve understanding for those reading the document.

Commissioner Carlson proposed revising Policy TR-22 to read "Expand transportation options." He said the language of government should be as simple and clear as possible. Mr. Cullen pointed out that transportation is very complex and some of the concepts are not easily simplified. Taking a single concept out, such as Complete Streets, makes it even more difficult to really understand when it stands on its own. He agreed to have staff take a shot at readability and including a glossary of the terms of art.

Chair Bishop pointed out that the only new words added to Policy TR-22 were "multimodal" and "Complete Streets." The balance of the language is in the existing policy. The intent of the Transportation Commission was to keep things simple and to avoid reinventing the wheel while making the existing policies consistent with Complete Streets. The Transportation Commission did not undertake the work with an eye on creating a whole new set of policies.

Ms. Stevens reiterated that the policies as proposed largely consist of existing language. The idea was to keep it simple while getting the Complete Streets concept out there for posterity and to secure funding using the concept.

Mr. Cullen suggested intent could be explained more fully in the narrative rather than in the policies themselves. Mr. Matz allowed that that was in fact the intent of including the call-out box.

Commissioner Carlson proposed appointing a single Commissioner to work with staff on a three-word assignment: simplify and clarify. The resulting revisions would be brought back to the Commission for a vote. Mr. Cullen said the call-out box does not need to include the language

that is in the plan; it is just the narrative that explains the language in the plan. The agenda memo and the attachment are separated. The description of Complete Streets could be appended to the actual language itself and drafted to be more readable for the average person. That could be done without changing the language itself in the text of the plan.

Mr. Matz said he understood his charge to be to bring the document back, to make it more obvious what has been done, to spend some narrative time on outcomes and a glossary of terms, but not to stray from the charge of the Transportation Commission which was to include Complete Streets without rewriting transportation policy. Additionally, in the narrative to the agenda memo, to pursue the idea of explaining in simplified language to help connect the dots.

****BREAK****

Turning to the Downtown Subarea Plan Comprehensive Plan amendment, Mr. Matz reminded the Commissioners that the subarea plan is a functional plan that supports the Comprehensive Plan, which is something the Transportation Commission had in mind when working on it prior to the general update of the Comprehensive Plan. In 2016, the Commission, in study session, asked the Transportation Commission to go back and conduct a fresh check of the subarea plan recommendation to make sure it was still what they wanted to advance to the Planning Commission. The Transportation Commission undertook extensive public engagement in working to update the plan language to address overall mobility, both in 2013 and again in 2016.

Commissioner Morisseau asked staff to highlight the changes made by the Transportation Commission. Mr. Matz said he would make that part of the package.

Chair Walter pointed out that the map on page 35 shows a post office that no longer exists. She said she would like to see a map of the priority streets and Mr. Matz said he would provide that. Chair Walter also said it would be helpful to have the strike-out draft that includes comment boxes indicating the reason for each change. Mr. Matz said he would provide that as well.

Mr. Matz said the Eastgate Office Park Comprehensive Plan amendment involves a map change for three sites covering 21 acres. The proposal is to change from Office to Office/Limited Business. The original proposal addressed only 14 acres but was expanded by the Commission through geographic scoping. The sites are already developed with low-rise office buildings that have surface and under-building parking. The amendment was deferred in 2016 after threshold review and is before the Commission for final review. The applicant believes the site was essentially overlooked in the Eastgate/I-90 land use and transportation study. The applicant's intent is to use language that was embedded into the Eastgate subarea plan as a result of the 2015 update as one of the policy outcomes of the Eastgate land use and transportation study to allow for testing redevelopment against the visions and strategies captured in the language.

Commissioner Morisseau asked staff to elaborate on the statement in the memo regarding the Commission's perspectives on balancing competing priorities. Mr. Matz explained that in looking at a redevelopment proposal in terms of transportation, staff looks to see what impact there will be to the transportation system, and whether it is consistent or competing with the priorities established in the Eastgate subarea plan.

Commissioner Morisseau referred to the statement by staff that the proposal supports the Eastgate plan, including increased opportunities for residential development. She asked how moving from Office to Office/Limited Business would make that happen. Mr. Matz said the Office/Limited Business designation would allow the property owner to pursue a rezone. The

Eastgate Land Use Code amendment accomplished the creation of a new Office/Limited Business and a new Office/Limited Business 2, the latter of which is particularly focused on a more rewarding mixed use component.

Mr. Matz said the Old Seattle Times Comprehensive Plan amendment was initiated by the Council on September 18. The nearly one-acre site is split by a designation line so that part of the site is designed DT-MU and part is designated Professional Office. The result is an artificial development constraint and raises the question of which way the line should be moved. The east, north and west boundaries of the downtown, the boundary line essentially follows street rights-of-way. The southern boundary, however, has a jagged edge that splits some buildings and parcels as it makes its way between 100th Avenue NE and 108th Avenue NE. The major Comprehensive Plan update amended four of the five identified split parcels along the line by acknowledging community interest in making the boundary more regular while maintaining the established policy direction of not extending downtown development into residential neighborhoods to the south. At the time, the owners of the old Seattle Times building property did not respond to the city's outreach efforts and thus a boundary adjustment was not effected for the site. The property owners have since made contact with the city and would like to resolve the split designation in a manner similar to what happened on the other four sites.

Commissioner Carlson asked if the action is really about symmetry. Mr. Matz said it is less about symmetry and more about making sure everyone has equal economic access to development and redevelopment. Commissioner Carlson asked if there has been much reaction from the community. Mr. Matz said the proposal has been posted through the appropriate channels.

Mr. Matz shared with the Commission the zoning map showing how the properties adjacent to the subject property are zoned.

Ian Morrison with McCullough Hill Leary noted that a zoning map had also been provided in the packet that indicates a buffer of R-30 zoning and R-10 zoning to the south of the site that is developed with both apartment buildings and townhomes.

Chair Walter said it appeared to her that topographically there is a rise separating the subject property from the residential developments to the south. Mr. Morrison said that is correct. He said the applicant is hoping to take advantage of the grade change to assure a graceful transition.

Mr. Matz said the issue would be back before the Commission on November 1, prior to which the staff recommendations would be published.

B. Planning Commission By-Laws

Assistant City Attorney Matt McFarland said one of the outstanding issues was Article V.J, the time for adjourning Commission meeting. He noted that inclusion of an adjournment time will help the Commission exercise control over the meeting, and said both 9:00 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. had been suggested. The Commission always has the option to extend a meeting as needed by majority vote.

Mr. McFarland said the other outstanding issue was Article VII.C.4, the time of presentation allowed applicants of privately initiated Comprehensive Plan amendments. He said currently applicants are allowed up to 15 minutes. The discussion to date has uncovered a consensus that that is too much time and after some back and forth it was determined the time should be reduced to seven minutes. He reminded the Commission that the role of the body is to serve in an

advisory capacity for the Council for privately initiated Comprehensive Plan amendments, which come to the Commission's agenda only once per year except in rare circumstances. He agreed that while 15 minutes was too long, it would be better to allow applicants ten minutes rather than seven in which to make their presentations.

Commissioner Carlson commented that by having an advertised set limit on the amount of time applicants are allowed will encourage them to compress their presentations and focus on getting their main points across. The Commission can always allow more time if needed beyond the allotted time. Mr. McFarland noted that as drafted, the section includes language that allows for extending the time period if needed.

With regard to the question asked previously by Commissioner Barksdale about repetitive comments across meetings, Mr. McFarland agreed with a comment made previously by Commissioner Morisseau that in follow-up meetings there is the benefit of the record from earlier meetings. An applicant may make a comment that is similar or even the same, but in so doing can bring to bear consideration of the comment in light of the record and new materials. Limiting repetitive comments across meetings could constrain that and potentially put the chair in the difficult position of gauging what the other Commissioners want to hear.

Commissioner Morisseau commented that a majority of Commissioners had previously agreed to set 9:00 p.m. as the adjournment time. She said she will go along with what the Commission decides, but suggested that based on past experience the Commission almost never completes its business by 9:00 p.m. Having to extend the meeting every week could be largely eliminated by setting the adjournment time at 9:30 p.m. She also said the Commission is charged with listening to the public and restricting the time in which the public can share with the Commission should be done very cautiously. There is very little difference between seven minutes and ten minutes, especially for something that only happens once or twice a year.

Chair Walter suggested that having 9:00 p.m. as the target adjournment time, the Commission is likely to go to 9:30 p.m., and having 9:30 p.m. as the target could mean the Commission will go until 10:00 p.m. She said she would like to see 9:00 p.m. set as the adjournment time and evaluate how well the Commission does in meeting that target over the next year.

Commissioner Carlson said the pacing of the meeting depends largely on the leadership.

Commissioner Barksdale commented that having a set adjournment time establishes an expectation for the public. He agreed that the difference between seven minutes and ten minutes for Comprehensive Plan amendment applicants is not that great, but he said he would prefer to see seven minutes allowed.

Commissioner Carlson said if the limit is 15 minutes, 15 minutes will be taken. If seven minutes is the limit, the same things will be said but only in seven minutes.

There was consensus to allow Comprehensive Plan amendment applicants seven minutes in which to make their presentations.

Chair Walter referred to Article VI.B and noted that the Commissioners have traditionally received materials five days ahead of the next meeting. She said she would prefer to see the paragraph say copies of the agenda will be available at least five days prior to a regular meeting. Mr. Cullen allowed that getting materials to Commissioners five days ahead of a meeting is consistent with current practice. Mr. McFarland said the requirement to have agendas published

at least two days prior to a regular meeting is based on Council practice, which in turn is based on state law. He said state law actually requires posting 24 hours in advance of a meeting. The language as drafted referencing two days prior to a meeting would not prevent having the materials prepared five days ahead of a meeting.

Referring to Article VII.C.2, Chair Walter said she has observed at Council meetings persons wishing to speak allowed to address the Council in other than the order in which they signed up. At times that is done to stagger pro and con statements, and at other times it is done to accommodate certain speakers. She said she did not want the Commission's flexibility in that regard to be limited in any way. Mr. McFarland cautioned the Commission from appearing to give preference to any one person over another. Almost all municipalities use the first-come first-speak methodology at public hearings to avoid any subjectivity in prioritizing the order of speakers.

Commissioner Carlson said the order in which persons speak should be the prerogative of the chair. Commissioner Morisseau said if that is the case, the language of the by-laws should allow it. Mr. McFarland reiterated his caution against subjectively choosing speakers, and said again that the first-come first-speak approach is used by jurisdictions across the country for that very reason. He said one option would be to add to the end of the paragraph "subject to the discretion of the Chair." There was agreement to include that language.

Chair Walter commented that current practice limits the amount of time for petitions and communications at the end of each meeting. Mr. McFarland said a paragraph could be added to limit the amount of time for continued oral communications as another way of exercising control over the length of each meeting.

Chair Walter proposed limiting continued oral communications to two minutes per person and 15 minutes total. Mr. McFarland said the three-minute limit per speaker tracks the Council's approach and is something that has been put in for all boards and commissions. The Commission could, however, elect to allow a different amount of time for each individual at the end of the meeting than at the beginning of the meeting.

Commissioner Morisseau said it is possible a person could miss the first oral communications opportunity. In that event, the person would not be given equal time in which to make his or her comments. Mr. McFarland said that certainly could be the case. Mr. Cullen said the Commission does not typically get a lot of oral communications at the end of a meeting.

Chair Walter said she was willing to allow all speakers three minutes, including at the end of the meeting. Mr. McFarland said from a legal perspective, allowing equal time makes the most sense. He said he could see nothing wrong with limiting the overall time for continued oral communications to only 15 minutes.

Chair Walter referred to Article IX.E, the six-month time limitation, and said while it is part of the Council's approach, it could make the work of the Commission somewhat inflexible. The work of the Commission is iterative and includes studying issues for long periods of time. The Commission should have the flexibility to change its mind as more information comes to light. Mr. McFarland said the voting section has never been subject to variability. He said he would not recommend seeking to change the paragraph without allowing staff time to research the issue, which would mean not being able to adopt the by-laws until a later date.

Chair Walter said the Council faced a situation in which they had taken a vote and where their

intention was to come back and discuss the issue later. The rule came into play and unintentionally locked in the Council's initial vote. Mr. McFarland said there is value in wanting votes to be final. The paragraph allows an out where there is a substantial change in circumstances.

A motion to approve the by-laws, with the changes outlined by the Commission, was made by Commissioner Morisseau. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Carlson and the motion carried unanimously.

C. Planning Commission Guiding Principles
(9:00 p.m.)

Chair Walter noted that a full complement of Commissioners was not present and accordingly proposed moving the agenda item to a future meeting. Mr. Cullen said he could add it to the October 11 agenda. If necessary, the issue could possibly be discussed at the retreat.

Commissioner Barksdale suggested getting comments from the Commissioners via email prior to the next meeting.

9. OTHER BUSINESS – None
(9:01 p.m.)

10. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
(9:01 p.m.)

A. September 13, 2017

Commissioner Carlson called attention to the ninth paragraph on page 8 and pointed out that "...seconded Commissioner Carlson..." should be revised to read "...seconded by Commissioner Carlson...."

A motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Commissioner Morisseau. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Barksdale and the motion carried unanimously.

11. CONTINUED ORAL COMMUNICATIONS
(9:04 p.m.)

Ms. Betsi Hummer, 14541 SE 26th Street, said she agreed with the direction of the Commission to send the multimodal issue back to the Transportation Commission to have the language clarified. Every effort should be put into drafting language for regular people to understand. She said she was glad the Commission backed off limiting public comment to one minute. It is very important to get as many people as possible to feel comfortable enough to make their comments before the Commission. She gave a shout out to Michelle Wannamaker who argued before the Commission not doing the Eastgate Land Use Code amendment without addressing transportation. Her efforts triggered the Eastgate congestion relief project, which still needs to be designed and built. With regard to East Link, she said it appears that those who work in downtown Seattle but live in Issaquah will have to stop in Bellevue before transiting the lake, which seems ridiculous. The Commission should take that into consideration at some point.

Ms. Pamela Johnson, 3741 122nd Avenue NE, said the Commission should do all it can to make its meetings more transparent. Many cities in the area, including Sammamish, video their

Planning Commission meetings. Bellevue should investigate doing the same. Additionally, anything that can be done to summarize Commission meetings and get the issues into the new cycle quickly should be done.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None
(9:08 p.m.)

13. ADJOURN
(9:08 p.m.)

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Barksdale. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Morisseau and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Walter adjourned the meeting at 9:08 p.m.


Terry Cullen
Staff to the Planning Commission

1/25/18
Date


Jeremy Barksdale
Acting Chair of the Planning Commission

1/24/18
Date