

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION
STUDY SESSION MINUTES

February 28, 2018
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Commissioners Barksdale, Carlson, Malakoutian,
Morisseau, Moolgavkar

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners deVadoss, Laing

STAFF PRESENT: Terry Cullen, Mike Kattermann, Deborah Munkberg,
Department of Planning and Community Development

COUNCIL LIAISON: Mayor Chelminiak

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER
(6:35 p.m.)

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Commissioner Barksdale who presided.

2. ROLL CALL
(6:35 p.m.)

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Morisseau, who arrived at 6:53 p.m., and Commissioners deVadoss and Laing, both of whom were excused.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
(6:36 p.m.)

A motion to amend the agenda to move item 11 to precede item 5 and to approve the agenda as amended was made by Commissioner Carlson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Malakoutian and the motion carried unanimously.

4. REPORTS OF CITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS
(6:37 p.m.)

Comprehensive Planning Manager Terry Cullen welcomed Commissioner Moolgavkar. He said the pool of candidates was amazing.

Commissioner Moolgavkar said she grew up in Bellevue in the Bridle Trails neighborhood and currently lives in West Bellevue. She said she has three children attending Enatai elementary school and works as an attorney for King County doing their transit-oriented development policy work.

11. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
(6:38 p.m.)

A. January 10, 2018

A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Carlson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Malakoutian and the motion carried unanimously.

B. January 24, 2018

A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Carlson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Malakoutian and the motion carried unanimously.

5. STAFF REPORTS
(6:41 p.m.)

Commissioner Barksdale reported that he had spoken with Mr. Cullen about including on the agenda for each item a printed learning objective, the detailed part of each agenda broken down with timeframes, and a wrap-up on how to turn the discussion into part of a broader policy framework.

Mr. Cullen said the walking tour of the East Main project site occurred on February 9 and proved to be very informative. He said he was willing to conduct a second walking tour for any Commissioner who had not visited the site, and Commissioners Malakoutian and Moolgavkar agreed to work with him on finding a date.

Mr. Cullen briefed the Commissioners about the upcoming schedule of meetings and agenda items. He also urged the Commissioners to make sure OneDrive was connected on their iPads, to check for software updates, and to regularly check their Planning Commission email accounts.

6. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS
(6:50 p.m.)

Mr. Cullen called attention the written communication received from ARCH highlighting the Housing 101 session planned for March 29 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

10. OTHER BUSINESS
(6:53 p.m.)

A. Elections

Mr. Cullen said the interim election was needed to fill the unexpired term of the former chair, which runs through July 31. Sometime prior to July 31 another election will be held to elect a chair and vice-chair for the 2018-2019 term.

Commissioner Barksdale opened the floor to nominations for chair.

Commissioner Morisseau nominated Commissioner Barksdale.

There being no other nominations, Commissioner Barksdale was declared to be the chair.

Chair Barksdale opened the floor to nominations for vice chair.

Commissioner Carlson nominated Commissioner Morisseau.

There being no other nominations, Commissioner Morisseau was declared to be the vice chair.

7. STUDY SESSION
(7:02 p.m.)

A. East Main Station Area Implementation: Transit-Oriented Development
Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Senior Planner Deborah Munkberg briefly reviewed the schedule with the Commissioners, noting that after the Comprehensive Plan policy review portion was completed the focus would turn to the Land Use Code amendments before bringing it all back together in July.

Senior Planner Mike Kattermann explained that elements of place are things people observe that comprise a sense of place. Put together in the right combination and magnitude and the result is the characteristics known as transit-oriented development. Paths are how people observe a place as they move through it. Edges are boundaries that define or distinguish districts; they can be physical barriers like freeways, or natural barriers like a stream or landscaping. Districts are areas with common identifiers or characteristics; they can be small or large but have a clear sense of place. Nodes can be points or strategic spots along a path or within a district; they can be plazas or open spaces, or something large such as an area around a transit station. Landmarks are points of reference; they are usually a physical object such as a building or a statue, fountain or park.

Mr. Kattermann shared with the Commissioners some conceptual drawings that were done early on in the Bel-Red process and he pointed out the various paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks. Also shared with the Commissioners was a more detailed rendering done for the 130th station area plan and the various elements were highlighted.

Ms. Munkberg noted that the elements of place could apply to any kind of neighborhood. Transit-oriented development optimizes the benefits of the significant investments in transit that aim to result in frequent and reliable transit service. In the case of the East Main station, transit trains will be coming and going at 10- to 15-minute intervals throughout the day. Mixed use development is a key element to maximizing the investment in transit, as is having a compact and walkable area that is focused on pedestrians.

Commissioner Carlson asked what the residential population target is for the Spring District. Mr. Kattermann said there is no population target specific to the Spring District, though there is one for the Bel-Red subarea.

The Commissioners were asked to share their experiences in visiting transit-oriented developments. Commissioner Malakoutian highlighted the U District in Seattle. Commissioner Moolgavkar called out downtown Burien.

Ms. Munkberg shared with the Commissioners photos of buildings with various distinctive features relative to form and shape, height and bulk, and relationship to the street. Both highrise and midrise buildings were in the mix. The Commissioners were also shown various pedestrian spaces and attention was called to the relationship with nearby buildings, different approaches to

landscaping, amenities, and activities that could happen in the spaces. With regard to parking, she noted that the East Main CAC recommended hiding parking; photos showing ways that could be done were shown to the Commissioners.

Ms. Munkberg said staff are beginning to think through and shape the policy direction for East Main. She said the majority of the policies developed will likely become part of the Southwest subarea in the Comprehensive Plan, though some more general overarching transit-oriented development policies may be developed for the Land Use Element. Overall, goals and policies should be aspirational and describe what is to be achieved. Regulations, by comparison, establish what must happen by establishing minimums and maximums. The policies and the regulations should tell a consistent story and point in the same direction.

Ms. Munkberg called attention to the two-page vision statement and preliminary policy concepts included in the agenda memo. She noted that the vision included the notion of development oriented toward transit with a mix of uses, an area that serves as a transition from single family to the downtown, and an area which is walkable and green in character. The agenda memo also highlighted five topic areas, starting with land use, which establishes the kinds of land uses for the area, where they will be located, and identifies the idea of using development incentives to promote public benefits. Urban design is a topic area that will be a significant section of the policies in the way they address the notion of scale, the walking environment, the need for good gathering places, and the need to reflect the relationship of the station area with the surrounding area. The topic area of transportation outlines the notion of needing a system that is complete and connected, both internally and to areas outside the transit area; the notion of small walkable blocks within the area; and the idea of prioritizing pedestrian and bicycle mobility within the area. With regard to open space, the idea is to create an attractive and functional system that includes connections to the larger park system and pathways. The topic of the natural environment includes preserving and enhancing Sturtevant Creek and the surrounding wetland areas, along with the concept of sustainable development in general within the area.

Mr. Cullen asked the Commissioners to highlight American cities they really enjoy visiting and said he would seek examples of transit-oriented development that match those places. They listed Santa Monica, San Francisco, New York City, Boston, Chicago, Phoenix, Scottsdale, and Long Beach, California.

The Commission engaged in an interactive site design exercise utilizing a theoretical location that closely resembled the East Main area. For comparison purposes, Mr. Kattermann noted that downtown Bellevue's superblocks are 600 feet on each side, which is twice as large as the typical 200- to 250-foot blocks in most downtowns. The Commissioners colored in edges to define the district. The Commissioners identified SE 6th Street as a soft edge between two types of transit-oriented development. In discussing the need for connecting paths, the destinations identified were the downtown, the East Main station, the bikeway on 114th Avenue SE, the adjacent parks, and the possible pedestrian overpass near SE 6th Street. The Commissioners indicated a desire to see housing units in the area developed away from the freeway. Parking was considered as a use along the freeway, and landmarks were drawn in recognition that nodes could develop near them. Locations for retail and residential uses were indicated as well, as were green and open spaces.

Mr. Cullen stressed the need to talk about things in terms of systems. He allowed that the challenge lies in organizing the space in a way that will create a whole new neighborhood place.

With regard to the policy framework, Ms. Munkberg said the overall vision is for a lively,

transit-oriented neighborhood that serves as a transition between the downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods; an area with a mix of uses, including a variety of housing choices; and an area with small walkable blocks with connecting pathways.

Commissioner Moolgavkar said she would rather the vision call out the area as multimodal rather than walkable, and suggested the vision should specifically call out sustainability. Commissioner Barksdale agreed except he stressed that the multimodal element should emphasize non-motorized mobility.

Commissioner Morisseau said the concept of the area serving as a transition should be predicated on maintaining the character of the Surrey Downs area.

Commissioner Moolgavkar asked about the role buses will play in taking people to and from the station and if that notion should be captured. Mr. Kattermann said there will be drop-off areas on either side of 112th Avenue SE near the station, and while there will be buses serving the area, it is not expected to be a major transit hub. The East Main station is not anticipated to have a high ridership and has been designed accordingly by Sound Transit.

Commissioner Morisseau said the reality is there likely will be people driving in from other areas to hop on the train. That needs to be taken account, particularly in the discussion about parking. Parking could easily end up occurring in the Surrey Down neighborhood. Mr. Kattermann said that was voiced as a concern by the CAC, which is why recommendations were put in place to address it. Surrey Downs is a parking permit zone, which limits parking there to people who have a permit.

Commissioner Carlson commented that the stretch from the station to SE 6th Street is about six blocks long and noted that the transit station takes up only about one block. He asked what would be happening in the remaining five blocks. Mr. Kattermann said there will be a landscape strip between the street and a wide path. Beyond that is the light rail right-of-way and a separation space before the wall, all of which will be fenced off from the public. Commissioner Carlson said he had heard Sound Transit intends to make East Main a transit hub for STR-3. If that happens, ridership will increase exponentially. Mr. Kattermann said one concept for the STR-3 line, which would run from Kirkland through Bellevue to Issaquah, includes East Main as a transfer point. Under that scenario, the East Main station would be far different in terms of the amount of activity. That approach, however, was not anticipated when the original East Main station plans were drawn up. Commissioner Carlson asked where anyone wanting to take light rail from Bellevue to either Kirkland or Issaquah or Seattle would park. Mr. Kattermann said they will either park at Eastgate, the South Bellevue park and ride, or at the park facilities in Bel-Red and Redmond. When light rail systems are designed, park and rides are usually located at the ends of the systems to intercept trips before they come into a central area. Human nature dictates that some people will want to park their cars near the East Main station and ride the rail, but no effort should be put into developing additional parking for that specific purpose.

Commissioner Morisseau suggested the Commission may want to have a conversation about parking for the East Main station, even though the CAC came out against it. She noted that every time the East Main issue has been before the Commission, the subject of parking has come up. Mr. Kattermann clarified that it was city policy rather than a CAC recommendation that there be no parking for the light rail station.

Commissioner Moolgavkar voiced support for the position of the city against having parking for the station.

Commissioner Malakoutian pointed out that many of the stations in Seattle that serve a huge number of people do not include parking. He agreed that having parking would defeat the purpose of having the light rail station.

Ms. Munkberg commented that the urban design elements include development scaled to the station area and the surrounding area; minimizing the visual intrusion of parking structures; creating a safe and inviting walking environment; the creation of public plazas and gathering spaces; the role of the station area as a significant downtown gateway; and building form. She also noted that the goal relative to transportation is to have a complete and connected system that enhances mobility and protects nearby neighborhoods from spillover traffic impacts; an active safe and inviting pedestrian and bicycle environment; pathways to the station area; small walkable blocks; a future connection from Main Street to the Wilburton area; and potentially one or more east-west connections between 112th Avenue SE and 114th Avenue SE.

Commissioner Moolgavkar asked if the regulatory incentives that will apply to the East Main area are those that already exist in Bellevue city code. Mr. Kattermann said there is a good menu of incentives in the code, though they may not all apply to the area. That is something that will be worked through with the Commission. Ms. Munkberg said affordable housing is likely to be a major incentive.

With regard to the policies regarding the natural environment, Ms. Munkberg said they address environmental sustainability and capitalizing on opportunities to improve the health of natural features.

Mr. Kattermann said the issue would again be before the Commission at its next meeting by which time the concepts will be somewhat more flushed out. Once there is preliminary approval for the policies, they will be used as the basis for developing the code.

B. Guiding Principles Part II and Refresher of Standards and Practices
(8:48 p.m.)

Mr. Cullen noted that the Commission approved a set of guiding principles in January. At the annual retreat in November 2017, Commissioner Morisseau asked for additional discussion regarding the principles to possibly allow for adding to them. The standards and practices were jointly agreed upon by Commission staff and the City Council liaison at the Commission's annual retreat in 2016, and Mr. Cullen said it was his intent to bring them up at least annually as a way of keeping them in mind.

Commissioner Carlson said the guiding principles were developed as a reminder of common areas of emphasis and priority. He said in part they were intended to keep the Commission from falling prey to the temptation of mission creep and going beyond its charter. The most important of the principles is to remember that the Commission is carrying out the orders and the desires of the City Council. Second, the attention of the Commission is to be on land use rather than on micromanaging areas for development. Third, the Commission should operate in as collegial a fashion as possible.

Commissioner Morisseau commented that having been on the Commission for the past two years and witnessing several discussions, she felt that as the community is changing, not all Commissioners were prepared to have the courageous conversations needed with respect to zoning and land use. She said the guiding principles that are in place are very good but could be

improved on by the inclusion of her proposed additional principles regarding the role of the Commission in serving the community.

Commissioner Barksdale proposed having Commissioner Carlson review and edit Commissioner Morisseau's proposed additions and to review them at the next Commission meeting, possibly at that time entertaining a motion to revise the guidelines.

Commissioner Moolgavkar asked what was meant by number three, creative conversations, from a land use and zoning perspective. Commissioner Morisseau gave an example about a presentation that was made to the Commission on the latest city demographics. At the time, some Commissioners struggled with why the information was important to the work the Commission does. It was an intense conversation. She said that is why she felt the addition was needed.

Commissioner Malakoutian said he had read over the guidelines, including Commissioner Morisseau's proposed additions, and commented that stylistically they do not mesh. Commissioner Barksdale proposed allowing staff the opportunity ahead of the next meeting to attempt to create a single integrated document. Mr. Cullen said he would do that in concert with Commissioner Morisseau.

With regard to the standards and practices, Mr. Cullen said the main question is how to operationalize them. Coming into the 2016 retreat there was a lot of disjointedness between the Commission, staff and the Council. There were various perceptions as to roles and where the boundary lines were. The standards and practices were an attempt to begin a conversation aimed at coming to some sort of agreement relative to expectations, standards and practices. A facilitator was brought in to interview the Commissioners, the staff who work with the Commission, and some of the City Council members. The standards and practices document represents the points of agreement by all three groups.

Continuing, Mr. Cullen said the Commission had asked for some way to operationalize the standards and practices in order to hold itself accountable. One of the things that was suggested was to put the standards and practices on a display board posted at every Commission meeting.

Commissioner Barksdale suggested it would require more time on the agenda to talk about operationalizing the standards and practices.

12. CONTINUED ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None
(8:53 p.m.)

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None
(8:53 p.m.)

14. ADJOURN
(8:53 p.m.)

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Morisseau. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Malakoutian and it carried unanimously.

Commissioner Barksdale adjourned the meeting at 8:53 p.m.


Terry Cullen
Staff to the Planning Commission

4/5/18
Date


Jeremy Barksdale
Chair of the Planning Commission

4/4/18
Date