

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Extended Study Session

March 25, 2019  
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room  
Bellevue, Washington

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

ABSENT: None.

1. Approval of Agenda

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m., with Mayor Chelminiak presiding. He noted a change to the agenda to recognize the law enforcement officers who were involved in a shooting the previous week.

→ Deputy Mayor Robinson moved to approve the agenda, as amended. Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

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

Mayor Chelminiak recalled that a Kittitas County deputy and a City of Kittitas police officer were involved in a shooting incident on March 19. Deputy Ryan Thompson was fatally injured, and Officer Benito Chavez's injuries included a severe leg wound from the gunfire. Mr. Chelminiak noted that 28 officers nationwide have fallen in the line of duty this year.

Mayor Chelminiak requested a moment of silence to recognize the sacrifice of Deputy Thompson and to remember his family.

Mr. Chelminiak said that members of the Bellevue Police Department will represent the City at the memorial service for Deputy Thompson.

2. Oral Communications

(a) Julie Copp expressed concern regarding property development in the right-of-way behind her home. She said the hillside is not stable and there are plans to develop six houses. She

said a neighbor behind the right-of-way cut down her plants and installed a gravel driveway to park his RV. Ms. Copp said City staff visited her home and suggested that the adjacent property owner install a fence. However, nothing has changed. She said another neighbor is subdividing their property.

Mayor Chelminiak said staff would follow up with Ms. Copp. He suggested she also email the Council to recap her comments.

- (b) Gabe Meyer, Policy Director for the Cascade Bicycle Club, thanked the City for hosting the Vision Zero Summit in February. He said he was impressed to learn how the City can improve safety through the design of its infrastructure. He thanked the City for its commitment and efforts to improve safety.
- (c) Michele Wylen commented regarding Puget Sound Energy's Lake Hills transmission line project. She expressed concern about the lack of community engagement. She said there are new innovative energy technologies. She thanked Councilmembers Nieuwenhuis and Zahn for their work to improve community engagement and to attend neighborhood meetings. She asked the City to encourage PSE representatives to meet with local community leaders.
- (d) Copper Delstein, representing Boy Scout Troop 186, noted the scouts in attendance to earn their merit badges in communications and citizenship.
- (e) Sagira Vora said she attended the Vision Zero Summit. She has a 12-year-old son that is autistic who tends to wander into the street. She encouraged a focus on improving safety for people of all abilities. She expressed concern regarding traffic speeds on her street.

Mayor Chelminiak noted that staff would follow up regarding her concerns.

- (f) Ann Marie Clark, representing the Tillicum PTSA, expressed the goals of the Vision Zero program. She noted concerns regarding traffic and bus safety around the school.

### 3. Executive Session

At 6:21 p.m., Mayor Chelminiak declared recess to Executive Session for approximately 15 minutes to discuss one item of property acquisition.

The meeting resumed at 6:37 pm.

### 4. Study Session Items

- (a) Council Business and New Initiatives

There was no discussion.

(b) King County Parks, Trails, and Open Space Replacement Levy 2020-2025

City Manager Brad Miyake introduced staff's presentation regarding the proposed 2020-2025 King County Parks replacement levy.

Joyce Nichols, Director of Intergovernmental Relations, said the current levy expires at the end of 2019. The King County Executive recently transmitted his proposal to the King County Council, which will determine whether to place the levy on the August ballot. Councilmember Stokes serves on the King County Regional Policy Committee (RPC), which will discuss the proposal on March 27 and make a recommendation to the King County Council. The County Council must take action by the end of April in order to place the levy package on the August ballot.

Christie True, Director of the Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP), King County, presented the King County Executive's recommendations. The proposal expands and improves access to the County's 200 parks, 175 miles of regional trails, and 28,000 acres of open space. The levy generates an estimated \$738 million over the next six years at a cost of 16.82 cents per \$1,000 of a property's assessed valuation (AV). Owners of a home valued at \$500,000 would pay approximately \$7 per month, which is \$2 more per month than the current levy.

Ms. True described the four goals of the levy package: 1) maintain existing facilities (i.e., operations and maintenance, active recreation repair and renovation), 2) grow and connect regional open space through land acquisition and conservation, 3) improve regional trails and mobility (e.g., Eastside Rail Corridor), and 4) make parks and recreation facilities more accessible. The fourth goal includes pass-through funding to cities, community partnerships and grants program, targeted equity grant program, and contributions to Woodland Park Zoo and the Seattle Aquarium.

Ms. True highlighted the benefits of the levy package for residents, businesses, and visitors. She noted that the King County Council will make a decision by the end of April about whether to place the replacement levy on the August ballot.

The King County Council is considering a number of amendments to the King County Executive's proposal. One is to add one cent to the levy for grants to cities for pools. One-half cent is proposed for habitat restoration and park activities in floodplains and river corridors. Additional funding for trails is recommended as well. The additions increase the property tax from 16.82 cents per \$1,000 AV to 18.32 cents per \$1,000 AV.

Councilmember Stokes said the Regional Policy Committee discussed the original proposal. He noted the County's interest in the equitable distribution of parks and recreation facilities. Responding to Mr. Stokes, Ms. True said the allocations will be similar to the existing levy, and many of the items are grant-funded programs. She said the County Council is considering a companion piece of legislation with attachments detailing the intended investments and grant process.

Responding to Councilmember Stokes, Ms. True said the package includes \$44 million for pools. Mr. Stokes noted Bellevue's interest in working with other cities to consider a regional pool on the Eastside.

Councilmember Robertson said she appreciated the mix of projects in the proposed levy package. She noted the maximum grant limit of \$5 million per city and said it would be beneficial if each city in a partnership could receive \$5 million toward a joint project, such as an Eastside aquatics center. Ms. Robertson noted the high demand for usage of the King County Aquatics Center. She asked the County to study the air quality at the center.

Responding to Ms. Robertson, Ms. True said the flood control projects could include park, habitat restoration, and/or wetlands components.

In further response to Councilmember Robertson, Ms. True said the median price for homes in King County is approximately \$509,000. Noting the higher prices of Bellevue homes, Ms. Robertson said the annual cost of the levy for a median Bellevue home would be \$168 under the original package and \$183 per year with the proposed additions.

Responding to Councilmember Nieuwenhuis, Ms. True said the levy with the proposed additions totals \$810 million versus \$738 million over six years. Ms. Nichols said the City is using the current year's median assessed value of \$941,000 to determine Bellevue's property tax payments toward the levy package. The levy rate of 16.82 cents per \$1,000 AV generates approximately \$10.9 million from Bellevue property owners. The rate of 18.32 cents per \$1,000 AV generates approximately \$11.9 million from Bellevue.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis said that some of the projects feel a bit Seattle-centric (e.g., Woodland Park Zoo and Seattle Aquarium). Ms. True said she will provide information regarding the number of patrons by district who attend the zoo and aquarium. She noted that the County does not own any facilities in Seattle so there are limited opportunities to invest in facilities in Seattle.

Responding to Councilmember Nieuwenhuis, Ms. True said the target equity grant program is focused on communities that do not have parks within a safe 10-minute walking distance. There are a number of additional criteria including areas with the highest rates of poor health outcomes (e.g., hospitalization rates) and lower income levels.

Councilmember Lee expressed support for regional facilities and coordination. He recalled that King County chose to divest in certain parks and facilities in the past. He said he wants to ensure that the funds are used where needed and not only for acquiring new facilities. He suggested that cities should be responsible for funding local facilities. Ms. True said King County does consider local versus regional facilities, the geographic distribution of its investments, and the urgency of specific needs.

Councilmember Zahn noted that Bellevue is the City in a Park. Responding to Ms. Zahn, Ms. True said the Bellevue segment of the Eastside Rail Corridor will largely be completed through the levy. The section over I-90 will not be completed within the levy package. However, King County wants it to be a priority for its grant funding proposals.

Councilmember Zahn said she appreciates the 30 percent in maintenance funds for park facilities. She supports funding for both active and passive recreation uses. Responding to Ms. Zahn, Ms. True said that examples of the community partnership grant program include private funding from soccer organizations for investments in sports fields on King County property and funding for playgrounds or other features from community groups. She said the grants were formerly available only for projects on county property. However, the new grants can include projects on both city and county properties.

Ms. Zahn noted that she serves on the King County Flood Control District Advisory Committee. She encouraged funding for both mitigation and restoration in floodplain projects.

Deputy Mayor Robinson said the King County Parks Levy is very relevant for Bellevue residents. As an example, she said Cougar Mountain Regional Wildlife Park and its trails are a strong asset for Bellevue.

Ms. Robinson noted that neighborhood pools are struggling. She suggested that they be eligible for county grant funding for certain maintenance and facilities costs.

Mayor Chelminiak expressed support for addressing flood control elements in park planning and development. He noted the open space and environmental elements of the BelRed Plan and said it would be helpful if some of those projects could be eligible for funding.

Mr. Chelminiak said that people from the Eastside and the region enjoy the Woodland Park Zoo. He suggested that data on annual passes, sorted by the zip codes of patrons, would be helpful. He requested attendance data for other regional facilities as well, including the Bellevue Botanical Garden and public pools. He questioned how pool funding can be used, noting Councilmember Robertson's suggestion to study air quality at the King County aquatic center.

Mr. Chelminiak requested information regarding the use of flood control funding in individual jurisdictions within the region.

Mayor Chelminiak suggested that Councilmember Stokes express general support for the levy package at the next Regional Policy Committee (RPC) meeting, and the Council concurred. He noted, however, that determining whether the Council should formally endorse placing the levy on the ballot is a separate issue for the Council's consideration.

(c) Update from King County Library System (KCLS)

Ms. Nichols introduced Lisa Rosenblum, Executive Director of the King County Library System (KCLS), to provide an update on activities at local and regional libraries. Ms. Nichols noted that the KCLS operates 50 libraries, including four in Bellevue (i.e., Downtown, Lake Hills, Newport, and Crossroads).

Ms. Rosenblum recalled that Mayor Chelminiak attended the opening of the KCLS ideaX Makerspace, which is funded in part by the KCLS Foundation, Bellevue Rotary, Google, and The Boeing Company.

Ms. Rosenblum described a number of current programs including the student eCard program in all school districts and literacy classes. She noted that the KCLS maximizes public funding through partnerships, including one with the Startup425 program. The KCLS Foundation provided more than \$1 million in funding in 2018 for the summer reading program, ideaX Makerspace, and diversity related programming. Ms. Rosenblum described the KCLS green initiative and capital investment planning. She said the current capital bond program is expiring. The levy resulted in 17 new libraries, 11 expanded libraries, 15 renovated libraries, and two parking lot expansions, including at the Bellevue Regional Library. She said operational money was used for renovations at the Bellevue library as well.

Councilmember Robertson, liaison to the Bellevue Library Board, thanked Ms. Rosenblum for the presentation. Noting that the Seattle Public Library is considering eliminating late fines, Ms. Robertson discouraged the KCLS from doing so, noting that they provide accountability and an important lesson for children. Ms. Rosenblum said the KCLS collects approximately \$1 million annually in fines and fees. However, she noted that a change in the policy on fines would be an issue for the KCLS Board of Trustees. Ms. Rosenblum said it is difficult to reinstate a fine or fee after it has been eliminated. She will be asking the Board to analyze what might be preventing patrons from returning items. She noted that the fines collected by many libraries go into the general fund. However, the money that the KCLS collects through fines goes directly toward the library system's collections, and Ms. Rosenblum is reluctant to give up that revenue.

Deputy Mayor Robinson concurred with Councilmember Robertson's comments regarding library fines. Ms. Robinson commented on the value of libraries in communities and the belief of Andrew Carnegie, who funded many libraries, in the importance of investing in social infrastructure. She thanked Ms. Rosenblum for the KCLS's excellent work.

Councilmember Zahn said she has visited the ideaX Makerspace a number of times. She is impressed with their activities and believes there is additional untapped potential for the program. Responding to Ms. Zahn, Ms. Rosenblum said that book circulation is decreasing nationwide. However, the KCLS is the top digital lender in the country. Ms. Rosenblum said that a number of modifications have been completed or are under consideration to adjust to the public's changing needs. For example, people are interested in more meeting spaces and therefore shelving will be decreased in certain libraries.

Ms. Zahn commended the partnership between the City's Conflict Resolution Center and the KCLS's classes on active listening and collaboration.

Councilmember Lee concurred with the need for community meeting space. Responding to Mr. Lee, Ms. Rosenblum said the KCLS is responsible for maintaining the Mahatma Gandhi statue at the Bellevue Regional Library. Mr. Lee suggested a consideration of how to enhance the use of the space around the statue.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis spoke to employers' interests in supporting STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) learning. He noted that he participated on a panel for an ideaX Makerspace event. Ms. Rosenblum said the KCLS is opening a Federal Way library ideaX Makerspace, which is primarily funded by the KCLS Foundation. She noted the receipt of

\$80,000 from The Boeing Company as well. In further response, Ms. Rosenblum said a ballot measure will be needed next year to replace the 2010 levy.

Councilmember Stokes spoke about the importance of public meeting space and the KCLS's collaboration with community partners, including the Bellevue School District. Mr. Stokes noted that there have been complaints about individuals experiencing homelessness who spend time in the libraries. He questioned whether there was anything the City could do to help with those issues.

Ms. Rosenblum said the year-round men's homeless shelter under discussion by the Council will help. While everyone is welcome at the King County libraries, there are policies regarding appropriate behavior for all patrons. Ms. Rosenblum said they coordinate with the Bellevue Police Department. She said Chief Mylett toured the downtown library with her, and they discussed modifications such as lowering shelving to improve sight lines. Other measures can include changes to seating and other elements of the library environment to discourage and enhance the visibility of bad behavior. She encouraged police officers to visit and to become familiar with the libraries and the patrons.

Mayor Chelminiak said he looks forward to revisiting the master plan for Ashwood Park adjacent to the downtown library. He recalled spending a great deal of time in libraries as he was growing up in West Seattle, and later with his own children. He said libraries are a place where imagination can come to life.

(d) Regional Issues

Joyce Nichols, Director of Intergovernmental Relations, said the Council would receive a report later in the week reflecting the status of individual legislation. She said the most recent State revenue forecast is approximately \$550 million higher than the projections released in February. She noted that the current legislative session is scheduled to end on April 28.

At 8:07 p.m., Mayor Chelminiak declared a 10-minute break. The meeting resumed at 8:19 p.m.

(e) Development Services Department (DSD) Update

City Manager Brad Miyake introduced staff's update regarding development activity.

Mike Brennan, Director of the Development Services Department (DSD), introduced the discussion and presented a short video regarding the Development Services 2018 year-end review. He highlighted the development cycle trends, permit volumes and valuations, and inspection activity. For new construction between 2015 and 2018, the City issued permits for 766 new single-family homes, 2.8 million square feet of office space, and nearly 5,000 multifamily units. Projects in the pipeline include 353 single-family homes, 5 million square feet of office space, and 4,072 multifamily units.

Liz Stead, Land Use Division Director, highlighted projects under construction in the BelRed-Overlake area including the REI Headquarters, Project FutureCare, Aegis at Overlake, and Block

16-Facebook. Upcoming projects in the same area include RJ Development senior housing, Block 24, SummerHill Bel-Red apartments, and Block 12 office and brew pub. Downtown projects under construction include 888 Bellevue Tower, Brio Apartments, and One 88 Bellevue; and projects in the pipeline include 555 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, 606 106<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, Bellevue Plaza, 1001 Office Towers, and the Avenue Bellevue mixed use development. Ms. Stead said the office vacancy rate is approximately five percent.

Ms. Stead noted DSD's ongoing efforts to: 1) build resiliency in staffing resources to meet workload demands, 2) accomplish system improvements for increased efficiency, 3) forecast future development activity, 4) update codes, training, and public information, and 5) manage growth impacts in the community.

Sean Wells, Utilities Development Review Manager, said the City continues to work toward the goal of 100 percent paperless permitting. He noted that online permit applications increased from 50 percent in 2013 to more than 85 percent of all permit applications in 2018. As of March 1, 2019, all construction permits require online applications. Later this year, all land use permits will require online applications as well. Mr. Wells presented a brief video regarding paperless permitting.

Mr. Wells highlighted service improvement efforts in 2018 including the online permit fee estimator, educational videos, public workshops, open data portal, customer survey, and public notifications and signage. The Building Bellevue interactive map platform will ultimately replace the major projects list.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis thanked staff for their hard work. Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Mr. Brennan said the 2018 DSD revenues totaled approximately \$26 million. In further response, Mr. Brennan said this has been a robust development cycle that is likely to continue through 2020. Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Ms. Stead said a number of developers are building condominiums in Bellevue including Canadian and local firms. Councilmember Nieuwenhuis noted for the public that permit information can be accessed through the MyBellevue app as well.

Councilmember Lee complimented staff for their resiliency and flexibility in managing the department's many challenges and heavy workload.

Responding to Councilmember Stokes, Ms. Stead said the City is seeing a mix of condominium prices. In further response, Mr. Brennan said that most of the new single-family homes built in Bellevue involve replacing an existing home, due largely to the lack of available land for new housing developments.

Deputy Mayor Robinson thanked staff for the presentation and commended the City's success in implementing paperless permitting. Mr. Wells confirmed that staff works continuously to improve and streamline processes. Responding to Deputy Mayor Robinson, Mr. Brennan acknowledged that affordable office space is a part of the City's economic development strategy.

Responding to Councilmember Robertson, Mr. Brennan said there are approximately 800 permits annually for home renovations. Ms. Robertson complimented the online permit fee



estimator as well as the transparency and clarity of the City's online information about the permitting process and fees.

Responding to Councilmember Robertson, Mr. Brennan said the City is doing a good job of meeting the timelines for processing permits, especially given the high volume of development activity. However, there is a strong competition for talent in the region and there are currently some vacancies in development services positions. Mr. Brennan said the City uses consultants when needed to assist with the workload.

Councilmember Robertson encouraged strong interdepartmental coordination to ensure that sufficient infrastructure is in place to support ongoing development. Mr. Brennan confirmed that the City Manager and staff in multiple departments monitor and collaborate in planning for growth.

Councilmember Zahn noted that the region's population continues to increase. She expressed support for staff's work on continuous improvements and systems enhancements. She noted the importance of managing car, pedestrian, and bike mobility. Ms. Zahn commended the move to paperless permitting, which provides greater predictability and cost certainty related to permit applications.

Responding to Ms. Zahn, Mr. Brennan confirmed that the City receives input and feedback from the development community. He said City staff is actively involved in the construction code update process at the state level every three years. He recalled that Mayor Chelminiak formerly served on the Washington State Building Code Council.

In further response to Ms. Zahn, Ms. Stead said a number of the larger office buildings are incorporating Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification and Salmon-Safe certification. Ms. Stead said the City is also seeing more greenscape features in many of the larger projects.

Responding to Mayor Chelminiak, Ms. Stead said that most of the townhome and condo development is in the BelRed and Crossroads areas. As an example of advance planning for growth, Mr. Chelminiak recalled that the City completed certain public works projects in anticipation of and in conjunction with Sound Transit's light rail project. Noting that the growth can be stressful for residents, Mayor Chelminiak encouraged communication with the public about projects in their neighborhoods.

(f) Bellevue Vision Zero Summit Debrief

City Manager Miyake noted that the Bellevue Vision Zero Summit was held in February. A number of Councilmembers attended the conference, and Deputy Mayor Robinson spoke to the group. Mr. Miyake said there were more than 100 participants despite the snow. He recalled that the Council adopted Resolution No. 2035 regarding the Vision Zero approach in 2015.

Paula Stevens, Acting Transportation Director, welcomed Judy Buckmaster, Executive Director of the Bellevue School District (BSD), and Brent Mason, Director of Philanthropy for Washington DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America).

Franz Loewenherz, Principal Planner, Transportation Department, provided an update on the Bellevue Vision Zero Summit. The meeting's speakers included individuals from the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Microsoft, Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC), and the Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center (HIPRC). Mr. Loewenherz said the City received confirmation that its Safe Systems approach is consistent with the industry's best practices. He said there is significant interest, locally and nationally, in collaborating with the City of Bellevue's Vision Zero efforts.

Mr. Loewenherz described the TINO (Tune In Not Out) partnership with the Bellevue School District and DECA to address teenage distracted driving. He noted that collisions are the leading cause of death for teenagers nationwide. In Bellevue, young drivers (age 16-25) are responsible for 25 percent of the collisions involving a fatal or serious injury.

Judy Buckmaster, Executive Director, Bellevue School District, said the District is happy to partner with the City's Vision Zero program. She commented on the District's long-term commitment to student safety. She noted that the TINO program empowers students to be the voices for their peers.

Brent Mason, Director of Philanthropy, Washington DECA, noted that 32 percent of all traffic fatalities in the state involve a young driver. A Washington safety and health youth survey conducted in 2014 indicated that 59 percent of high school seniors reported riding in a car in which the driver was texting or emailing. Adding one passenger under the age of 21 increases a young driver's risk of being killed by 44 percent.

Mr. Mason said that TINO is the only program in the country created by students and for students. He said the program will officially kick off on October 7 and will end on November 3 during DECA's fall leadership conference. He said schools are preparing for the program, and Washington DECA is seeking partners to help support the effort. Mr. Mason thanked Mr. Loewenherz and the City for the opportunity to participate in the Vision Zero Summit.

Mayor Chelminiak thanked everyone for the update.

Councilmember Zahn spoke about the importance of being role models, noting that teenagers and young drivers want to be safe. She said that 25 percent of the injuries in individuals under age 25 are due to traffic accidents. She learned at the summit that it takes 20 seconds to mentally switch between a distraction and becoming fully engaged again in driving. She expressed support for the City's Vision Zero work and partnerships.

Councilmember Lee said he attended the Vision Zero Summit. He said he is impressed with the data that has been collected, the interest within the community, and the availability of tools to pursue the Vision Zero goals.

Deputy Mayor Robinson noted that the Vision Zero program is a strong investment in the community.

Councilmember Stokes thanked everyone for the presentation.

Responding to Mayor Chelminiak, Mr. Loewenherz concurred that there are opportunities to work with families and neighborhoods with special needs children.

5. Council Discussion of Upcoming Items: None.

6. Continued Oral Communications: None.

At 9:33 p.m., Mayor Chelminiak declared the meeting adjourned.

Kyle Stannert, CMC  
City Clerk

/kaw