

**CITY OF BELLEVUE
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday
June 6, 2019
6:30 p.m.

Conference Room 1E-113
Bellevue City Hall
Bellevue, Washington

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Diann Strom (Chair), Negin Khanloo, Lisa Schreiner, Ling Zhuang

COUNCIL LIAISON: Jared Nieuwenhuis

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Vanja Knezevic (Vice Chair), Anne Howe, Aaron Morin

OTHERS PRESENT: Lucy Liu, Assistant Director – Resource Management & Customer Service; Brian Pugliese, Smart Water Infrastructure & Technology Project Manager, Linda De Boldt, Jerry Shuster, Kit Paulsen, Laurie Hugdahl, Minutes Taker

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Strom at 6:30 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved unanimously (4-0).

3. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Oral and written communications were solicited. There were none.

4. COMMUNICATION FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMMISIONS

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis reported on the following:

- A Livable Cities discussion held with the University of Washington.
- The EMS levy will be put on the ballot in November.
- The Council approved the purchase of an affordable housing unit.
- The Council made some progress on the East Main Plan.
- The Lake-to-Lake bike ride is this Saturday.
- Downtown bike lane project – 108th Street was approved to maintain as a bike street. Council is also looking at Main Street as well.
- Staff has have concluded interviews for the open seat on the ESC.

5. STAFF REPORTS

Assistant Director Liu acknowledged Aaron Morin's two-term (8 years) contribution to the Commission. May was his last meeting, and he will be missed. She also gave an update on the Cherry Crest Reservoir.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4/4/19 Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Ling Zhuang, seconded by Commissioner Schreiner, approve the minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously (4-0).

5/2/19 Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Ling Zhuang, seconded by Commissioner Schreiner, approve the minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously (4-0).

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

8. NEW BUSINESS

Smart Water Meters project – New Meter Standard

Brian Pugliese, Smart Water Infrastructure & Technology Project Manager

Mr. Pugliese gave an update on options to address customers who might not want the planned updates to the meters. For background he reviewed that the Smart Water Meter Standard will be a digital meter transmitted to a wired unit which transmits information to the City. This meets the customers' demand for timely leak detection and provides greater customer access to information; however, a small number of individuals (13 out of 14,000 customers) don't like technologies that employ wireless communications citing potential adverse health effects, risks to privacy, and safety concerns.

Regarding health concerns, the City has researched the matter and is comfortable that the radio frequencies risk to health is not proven although some individuals report sensitivity. Regarding privacy concerns, the meter consumption data is a low value target. Nonetheless, Utilities' requirements are for secured network communication and encrypted data. The City complies with stringent state laws and is updating its privacy protection standards. Regarding safety concerns, this is not a high-level concern for water meter service. He reviewed options available,

as well as pros and cons, for addressing concerns by customers who are opposed to the Smart Meters.

Staff's recommendation is to accommodate customers who prefer to have a non-standard meter. This would be offered to current residential account holders only, and when there is a change of ownership, the account would be transferred to the new Smart Meter. Staff believes Utilities should recover the associated direct costs and recurring manual meter reading fees. Proposed fees were reviewed. These accounts would not be eligible for leak adjustments. By choosing non-smart meters, customers forgo the ability to detect leak losses early.

Chair Strom asked about the situation where a customer who had a Smart Meter for some time wanted to switch back to a non-standard meter. Mr. Pugliese replied they had not looked into that option.

Commissioners indicated general support for the proposal.

Watershed Management Plan and Open Streams Condition Assessment

Linda De Boldt, Jerry Shuster, Kit Paulsen,

Ms. De Boldt introduced the presentation. Jerry Shuster reviewed the Watershed Management Plan background, policies, strategies, and opportunities. The goal of the Plan is to improve the health of the streams in the City. The Open Streams Condition Assessment would provide an assessment of the current condition of streams before making a Plan.

Kit Paulsen explained that the goals of the Open Streams Condition Assessment are to gain a comprehensive understanding of current stream conditions and identify opportunities for improvements. 80 miles of streams will be surveyed throughout the City. About 60% of the streams are privately owned. The habitat surveys will collect data about the health of the stream basins and identify opportunities for improvement. Ms. Paulsen reviewed the current status of the assessment. Early results from the first phase of the assessment show promising results for the condition of Large Woody Debris. This provides important information for the City. Next Steps are to continue the field data collection for the remainder of the streams and synthesize data for reporting and use in the Watershed Management Plan. The City is currently scoping the project, developing a schedule and strategy for developing the Plan and developing outreach and engagement strategy plan.

Commissioner Zhuang stated she is extremely happy to see this happening. She asked about using an intern to help with the surveying to speed up the process. Ms. Paulsen explained that they had tried using interns, but for this particular project it wasn't the best fit. Commissioner Zhuang asked how long staff expects the surveying to take. Ms. Paulsen replied they are hoping to finish within three

years. Commissioner Zhuang expressed concern about the length of time due to the existing poor condition of the streams. Mr. Shuster explained that staff will begin working on the plan before all the surveying is done. They have decided to take a parallel course of working on the condition assessment while they are also working on the Plan.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis asked if the Open Stream Condition Assessment group is working with the Stream Team. Ms. Paulsen replied that they are because there is some overlap. She explained that she and Laurie Devereaux work very closely together. Councilmember Nieuwenhuis wondered if some of the volunteers from Stream Team could be used for the surveying. Ms. Paulsen replied it had been considered, but it isn't the best and safest use of volunteers.

Chair Strom thanked staff for the presentation. She suggested keeping the public informed about what they are discovering.

9. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

David Plummer commented regarding the Smart Water Meter Standards. He questioned whether or not people are requesting quicker access to water leak detection. He questioned whether or not the current water meters are really reaching the end of their life. He wondered where the information about the "small number of citizens" who don't like technologies that employ wireless communications came from. He asked for citations about the research done. He thought that the reason only a small number of people had expressed concerns is because Utilities hasn't contacted all the customers yet. He suggested letting people that don't want to have Smart Meters read the meters themselves, report it to the City, and square things up at the end of the year. He questioned why the City would be replacing meters that are still working. He questioned why they are only allowing residential questions to opt out and why the City needs to have special billing practices for customers who opt out instead of just continuing with the current billing practices for them. He provided information about a Utilities and Transportation Commission meeting where they discussed AMI issues.

Commissioner Schreiner asked staff what would happen for current customers who were not aware that AMI is coming in. Can they still opt out? Lucy Liu indicated they could opt out within a certain timeframe for a fee. She indicated she would follow up with the length of the timeframe.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis clarified that staff has provided answers to all of Mr. Plummer's questions time and time again. It is inaccurate that staff hasn't provided information or hasn't cooperated with him.

10. REVIEW OF ESC CALENDAR/COUNCIL CALENDAR;

- ESC Calendar/Council Calendar

Asst. Director Liu reviewed these items. In July, the ESC will be holding the CIP tour. August will be in recess. She also reviewed the Council calendar and the Outreach Activities Calendar.

Commissioner Zhuang asked when the RFP for the Smart Meter portal would be issued. Asst. Director Liu replied that is still being looked at. Staff is focusing on implementation currently, but she will bring back more information as it is available.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.