

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Extended Study Session

February 10, 2020  
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room  
Bellevue, Washington

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

ABSENT: None.

1. Approval of Agenda

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m., with Mayor Robinson presiding.

→ Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to approve the agenda, and Councilmember Robertson seconded the motion.

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

2. Executive Session: None.

3. Oral Communications

- (a) Michael Itti, Executive Director of the Chinese Information and Service Center, described the organization's efforts to ensure full participation in this year's census. He noted that they have offices in Bellevue, Kent, Redmond, and Seattle. Mr. Itti said the organization received funding from the State of Washington and the Seattle Foundation to hire staff who speak Russian and Chinese. He highlighted a number of upcoming activities including census questionnaire assistance from March 16 to April 30 at the Bellevue office in the Lake Hills neighborhood and coordinating public outreach with other nonprofit organizations and community groups.
- (b) Lalita Uppala, Executive Director of the India Association of Western Washington, thanked the City, King County, and the Seattle Foundation for the census grant, which enabled the organization to launch a massive awareness campaign and to hire a part-time census civic engagement coordinator. Ms. Uppala said the organization's staff attends every cultural event in Bellevue on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays to educate the public about the importance of achieving a complete census count. She said everyone, including

non-citizens, should file their census forms. Ms. Uppala said the organization has 45 female volunteer ambassadors who are assisting in this effort.

- (c) Wendy Tyner, representing the Wintergrass Festival, thanked the City for its ongoing support of the event. She noted a Visit Bellevue Washington report indicating the significant economic impact to the community in terms of sales, jobs, hotel rooms, and overall spending. The festival's performances and educational workshops attract approximately 14,000 attendees over four days. Ms. Tyner noted that this year's theme is Bluegrass Beyond Borders.
- (d) Alex Zimmerman expressed concerns about fascism and Seattle's Mayor and City Council.
- (e) Julie Copp expressed concern that the City is allowing development and redevelopment that is damaging to neighborhoods. She said property owners are subdividing, increasing density, and redeveloping older homes into huge houses. She expressed concern regarding the impacts on the environment and the overall quality of life. She said she has tried to work with the City and does not know what to do at this point.

#### 4. Study Session Items

- (a) Council Business and New Initiatives

Mayor Robinson announced that the City received a placemaking award from the Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA) recognizing the completion of Phase 1 of Meydenbauer Bay Park.

- (b) Retrospective on 2018-2019 Livable City Year Partnership with University of Washington

City Manager Brad Miyake opened staff's presentation regarding the 2018-2019 Livable City Year Partnership with the University of Washington.

Nancy LaCombe, Assistant Director of the City Manager's Office, said staff would provide an update on the Livable City Year projects. She noted that participating faculty and staff were in the audience. She recalled that the City originally proposed more than 50 projects, and 30 projects were matched with participating faculty and students. All of the projects reflect objectives found in the Council Vision and other existing plans.

Danielle Verwaren, Management Analyst and Livable City Year Project Manager, said the program engaged nearly 300 students from all University of Washington campuses to work on projects that advance livability and sustainability in the community.

Ms. Verwaren described a community risk reduction project partnership with the Fire Department and the Bothell School of Nursing and Health Studies in which nursing students participated in community outreach to populations that are traditionally hard to reach (e.g., elderly adults, individuals experiencing homelessness). The project provided CPR training for

residents and partnered with the King County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division to provide CPR training in assisted living facilities.

Ms. Verwaren provided details regarding a winter weather route optimization project, trail-oriented development planning, and a neighborhood engagement study. Additional projects addressed Startup 425 planning, marketing Bellevue parks, improving walkability, food trucks, implicit bias in prosecution, civic center vision, health impact assessment, climate change vulnerability, small business incubator, planning for a south mini city hall, public-private partnerships, multifamily housing public engagement, and other topics. The City received the Outstanding Community Partner award for its participation in the program.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis commended everyone for their partnership and hard work. Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Ms. LaCombe said the potential for implementing UAS (Unmanned Aerial System, or drone) technology is one example of a higher impact project that could enhance the efficient use of Police personnel because it can significantly reduce the time needed to process a vehicle accident scene.

Ms. Verwaren said that a number of City departments have expressed an interest in the findings and recommendations from the neighborhood engagement project. She said a survey of the project leads will include questions about what the staff would have paid a consultant for the same work.

Councilmember Barksdale expressed enthusiasm for the results of the Livable City Year efforts and noted the importance of bringing practice into the classroom. Responding to Mr. Barksdale, Ms. Verwaren said the program involved significant resources and there is no current plan to repeat the program in the near future. Mr. Barksdale congratulated the students and staff on their work.

Councilmember Lee said he was very impressed with the open house event showcasing all of the projects. He said it is good to see how the projects provide practical applications for the City and the community. He expressed an interest in presentations from City staff regarding the implementation of project recommendations in the future.

Councilmember Robertson said the Livable City Year program is consistent with Bellevue's priorities related to being an innovative local government and community. She said she appreciated the open house held last year to present the projects.

Responding to Ms. Robertson, Ms. LaCombe said that specific project recommendations will be presented to the Council in the coming months. Ms. LaCombe said that a number of the recommendations and solutions resulting from the neighborhood engagement work have already been implemented in multiple City departments. Councilmember Robertson complimented everyone involved in the program and expressed support for a similar effort in the future.

Councilmember Stokes concurred with his colleagues regarding the significant benefits of the Livable City Year program. Responding to Mr. Stokes, Ms. LaCombe said that current City staff do not have the workload capacity to explore the topics addressed through the program, and

some of the work would have required hiring consultants. She said the students invested approximately 30,000 hours in the program and provided creative ideas and solutions. Ms. Verwahren noted that the relationships between City staff and University of Washington faculty will continue to inform the implementation of project recommendations.

Councilmember Zahn commended the innovative projects identified through the Livable City Year program. She observed that it might interest students in exploring employment opportunities with the City. Ms. Zahn said that all of the projects are described on the University of Washington website. She highlighted the projects related to increasing language access and enhancing the public's understanding of the City budget.

Responding to Councilmember Zahn, Ms. Verwahren confirmed that the City proposed projects related to transportation. However, the program was unable to match those projects with the appropriate faculty. Ms. Zahn suggested that, as the City moves forward with the potential implementation of the 30 projects, perhaps there are opportunities to leverage partnerships with the community and/or the City's Boards and Commissions.

Mayor Robinson said the Livable City Year program was a great opportunity for the City to work with students and faculty of a major university. Responding to Ms. Robinson, Ms. Verwahren said that some project recommendations are already moving forward while others will require more planning and/or consideration during the budget process. Ms. Verwahren said staff is establishing a tracking system to monitor project implementation.

Mayor Robinson thanked everyone for their hard work and for choosing the City of Bellevue as a partner.

(c) Update on Key Demographic Characteristics of Bellevue and the 2020 U.S. Census

City Manager Miyake introduced staff's update regarding the 2020 U.S. Census and Bellevue's key demographic characteristics.

Emil King, Assistant Director, Community Development Department, commented on the importance of using data to guide planning initiatives and programs.

Kate Nesse, Associate Planner/Demographer, said a complete census count is important because it determines the division of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and provide a basis for apportioning federal taxes and funding among states. She noted that the Puget Sound region received the ninth highest number of new residents of any metropolitan region in the country between 2010 and 2018. Job growth in Bellevue is slightly above the target set in the 2015 Comprehensive Plan update, and housing growth is slightly below the target set in 2015. Ms. Nesse noted the increase in H-1B visa applications by companies in Bellevue. Many of those employees have families, including spouses who are generally not allowed to work in the United States. Ms. Nesse said that most of the spouses are women who tend to be highly educated.

Ms. Nesse said there is increasing income inequality in Bellevue. She noted that 45 percent of the households with a full-time, minimum wage income support more than one person, and a

household at that income level will be cost burdened with a rent that exceeds \$700 per month. She commented on the changing residential character of the community. New multifamily housing is currently mostly studios and one-bedroom units. However, there were higher percentages of two-bedroom units from 1940 through the early 2000s. Single-family homes are getting larger with the majority having four or more bedrooms.

Gwen Rousseau, Senior Planner, said that invitations to respond to the census online or by phone will be mailed to households in mid-March. She said approximately 17 percent of Bellevue's population moved to the United States since 2010 and have never experienced a census. In 2010, 76 percent of Bellevue's population self-responded to the census. Ms. Rousseau said the goal is to increase participation with this census, and everyone should be counted regardless of whether they are a citizen. Ms. Rousseau presented a video narrated by Councilmember Lee regarding the importance of the U.S. Census.

Mayor Robinson thanked staff for the presentation and noted that Councilmember Lee and Councilmember Zahn have been involved in promoting participation in the census.

Councilmember Lee said the census is a community effort and it is important to be counted. He said he is proud of the involvement of young people who are working with their parents and friends to raise awareness and increase participation in the census. Mr. Lee recognized two students in the audience who commented on their efforts related to the census.

Councilmember Zahn thanked Councilmember Lee for his work and noted that he also participated in the National League of Cities (NLC) video regarding the census. Ms. Zahn said it is important for the public to understand that their census information is confidential. She thanked staff for their ongoing efforts and expressed her support. She said it is important for the public to understand that the results of the census guide federal funding allocations.

Councilmember Barksdale thanked staff for the presentation. He expressed an interest in learning more about the factors that contribute to income inequality and workforce issues, and how the Economic Development Plan might address those factors.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis said that when his family moved to the United States, his mother was a nurse who became involved in volunteer activities because she was not allowed to work. He suggested that perhaps the census outreach activities could include information about ways to connect to the community, especially for new residents.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis expressed an interest in neighborhood-specific information regarding household incomes, H-1B visa holders, and other characteristics if available.

Mayor Robinson thanked staff and Councilmember Lee for the video and presentation. Ms. Robinson concurred with Councilmember Barksdale's interest in addressing workforce needs through the Economic Development Plan. Ms. Robinson expressed an interest in learning about the training and qualifications needed for individuals who are entering or reentering the workforce.

Responding to Mayor Robinson, Ms. Nesse said that 40 percent of all households in Bellevue have individuals who are above age 65. Ms. Nesse said she would follow up with information on the percentage of those that are single households.

Councilmember Lee noted that the inability of H-1B spouses to work can contribute to income inequality, family stress, and other issues.

At 7:28 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared a short break. The meeting resumed at 7:43 p.m.

(d) Well-KEPT (Kids Environmental Project Training) Program Update

City Manager Miyake introduced discussion regarding the Well-KEPT (Kids Environmental Project Training) program offered through the Natural Resource Division of the Parks and Community Services Department.

Geoff Bradley, Natural Resource Manager, highlighted the programs managed by the Natural Resource Division including the Forest Management Program, Trails and Greenway Program, Street Tree and Arterial Landscape Program, Water Conservation and Irrigation Program, and the Nature Parks and Visitor Center Program.

Curtis Kukal, Park Ranger, said the Well-KEPT program was established in 1987 to provide paid summer internships for local students, with priority given to Bellevue residents. No previous experience is required and the program combines environmental education with park resource management activities. Each work crew typically includes 10 students and two supervisors. The program's mission is to provide youth employment opportunities in the field of park resource management and to help build strong self-esteem, good work habits, and sound environmental ethics for the students. The program offers educational workshops on a range of topics including plant identification, urban forestry, wildlife science, wetland and aquatic ecology, resumes and cover letters, interviewing skills, personal finance, and cultural competency.

Mr. Kukal said the projects fall into three categories: 1) hiking trails (e.g., new construction, renovation, grading, surfacing, and drainage), 2) forest management (e.g., integrated weed management and native plant installations), and 3) special projects (e.g., blueberry farm maintenance and park infrastructure improvements). He highlighted the key projects in 2019 including the removal of weeds and ivy at Kelsey Creek Park, removal of weeds and blackberry plants along the Lake Hills Greenbelt, removal of weeds and ivy and the planting of native plants in Wilburton Hill Park, removal of blackberry and bindweed in Lewis Creek Park, renovation of 5,649 linear feet of trail in the Coal Creek Natural Area, and routine maintenance on citywide trails.

Councilmember Robertson, former liaison to the Parks and Community Services Board, expressed strong support for the program. Responding to Ms. Robertson, Mr. Kukal said the students are paid the minimum wage.

Responding to Councilmember Stokes, Mr. Kukal said there will be two work crews this summer. Mr. Bradley noted that they do not like to turn any kids away. In further response to Mr.

Stokes, Mr. Bradley said staff is currently working on an agreement to pursue funding from King County.

Responding to Councilmember Zahn, Mr. Kukul said the crews work six-hour days. In further response to Ms. Zahn, Mr. Bradley said the City has volunteer programs throughout the school year related to environmental education and projects.

Councilmember Lee expressed support for the program, which provides both education and hands-on experience.

Councilmember Barksdale noted that he grew up on a farm and participated in similar types of projects. Responding to Mr. Barksdale, Mr. Kukul said staff conducts outreach to the Boys and Girls Clubs, schools, and others. Mr. Barksdale suggested exploring partnerships with REI, nonprofit organizations, and local businesses. Mr. Bradley said the City's volunteer program has involved Expedia and other entities. Staff is currently working with REI to determine whether there are opportunities to collaborate. Mr. Bradley noted the Stewardship Saturdays and Eco Fridays programs.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis thanked everyone for their work. Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Mr. Kukul said the job advertisement will be posted soon. The application deadline is May 31 or until the crews are filled. Mr. Bradley said the program tries to reach as many youth as possible. However, some students have been able to participate a second year.

Mayor Robinson said she spends a lot of time on trails and she appreciates how well they are maintained. She thanked staff for their work in providing these strong community assets.

(e) Economic Development Fourth Quarter 2019 Update

City Manager Miyake introduced staff's fourth quarter economic development update.

Jesse Canedo, Chief Economic Development Officer, said staff continues to work on updating the 2014 Economic Development Plan and will return to the Council in late February with an initial briefing on the conceptual policies. He noted that total employment in Bellevue increased 14 percent (18,643 employees) since 2012 and office market rates continue to increase annually. The Class A office rental rate in the central business district is \$58.32 per square foot. Mr. Canedo said that the availability of transportation options continues to be a key amenity desired by businesses. He said there is a higher interest in development in the BelRed corridor due in part to the light rail line.

Mr. Canedo noted that Bellevue has replaced the number of Expedia jobs that moved to Seattle. He highlighted the City's partnerships related to economic development, including with the Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA) for Grand Connection planning and with Visit Bellevue Washington to promote tourism. He said the City's business assistance work has helped to brand Bellevue as a business-friendly community and to reinforce its reputation as a solution-oriented place focused on high-quality customer service.

Philippa Marsh, Economic Development Manager, said the City continues to work with the Greater Seattle Partners in the area of business recruitment. The Innovation Triangle partnership hosted a delegation of 22 CEOs from India, who also visited other U.S. cities. Ms. Marsh thanked Mayor Robinson for welcoming the group during their work with the Global Innovation Exchange (GIX).

Ms. Marsh said City staff attended the 2019 Select USA conference, which is a global trade attraction event led by the U.S. Department of Commerce. The event resulted in 21 meetings with global firms and investors, and staff will continue to follow up with those entities.

Mr. Canedo said the City and its partners are reevaluating the benefits of participating in the Select USA conference. While staff sees a high level of interest from leads and prospects, the contacts have not resulted in businesses moving to Bellevue. Mr. Canedo said that Bellevue was ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in fDi's American Cities of the Future ratings in both the overall category and the economic potential category. He noted that fDi Intelligence covers business and economic news worldwide and is a trusted source of information for senior decision makers and economic development consultants around the world. Mr. Canedo said that several of Bellevue's benchmark cities were recognized with high rankings as well.

Staff continues to support existing businesses and met with 28 companies in 2019, including 21 small businesses. Ten of the companies are women or minority owned and five of the companies are classified as local creative businesses. Participating businesses included Basta Boatlifts, Anchorhead Coffee, Unique Art Glass, TerraClear, Auth0, and ispotTV. Mr. Canedo noted that Auth0 works with the arts community.

Ms. Marsh highlighted staff's efforts to provide excellent customer service information across internal departments to assist companies and to support proactive growth. The City assisted T-Mobile with its new Eastgate campus and continues to have routine meetings to address the company's growth and transportation solutions. The City is assisting REI in preparing for the move of their headquarters to the Spring District this summer and continues to work with Amazon through its expansion plans in Bellevue. Ms. Marsh noted that Facebook, located in the Spring District, continues to grow in Bellevue.

Ms. Marsh presented an update on the Startup 425 Foundation program, which provides fall and spring workshops for early-stage entrepreneurs and new businesses. The program includes courses covering business ideation, business plans, marketing, financing, licensing, and networking. The full spring 2019 workshop series had 1,284 registrants and the abbreviated fall series had 328 registrants. Of those, 67 percent were female, 33 percent were male, and 21 percent were not currently employed. Ms. Marsh said a Small Business Essentials pilot program designed to provide more in-depth information than the Foundation series was offered last fall.

The Startup 425 Advisory Committee provided recommendations to enhance the program through the primary initiatives of curriculum enhancement, Startup 425 integration with collaborative business spaces, and a membership program. Secondary initiatives include business ecosystem building, expanding the mentor pool, participating in job fairs, and hosting a hackathon event.

In the area of small business assistance, Ms. Marsh said the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) partnership with the City of Redmond provided assistance to 39 businesses in 2019 at no cost to the client. Mr. Canedo noted that it has been challenging to retain a SBDC advisor because it does not pay well compared to other jobs requiring a similar set.

Mr. Canedo noted ongoing partnerships related to Grand Connection planning with the Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA), Bellwether art festival, Innovation Triangle, and the 5G Innovation Partnership Zone.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis complimented staff on their work and commented on the importance of continuing to work with existing small businesses. Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Mr. Canedo said the next step in the 5G partnership will be the announcement of the accelerator program and the companies that have been accepted to participate.

In further response to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Mr. Canedo said the Greater Seattle Partners is the primary organization for business recruitment in the region, and the group's target industry clusters align with Bellevue's priorities. Mr. Canedo said the City and its Innovation Triangle partners share an interest in technology companies. Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis expressed support for partnerships that align with Bellevue's priorities and strategies.

Councilmember Barksdale asked about the City's approach to income inequality as part of the Economic Development Plan. Mr. Canedo noted that the Startup 425 program partially responds to the challenges of income inequality. In further response to Mr. Barksdale, Ms. Marsh said that two measures of the effectiveness of the Startup 425 program are the number of business starts and the success of those businesses over a period of 3-5 years. Ms. Marsh said that a goal of the strategic plan is to build more robust programming beyond the Foundation workshop series.

Councilmember Lee said he looks forward to the next presentation regarding the update of the Economic Development Plan. He suggested addressing the topic of untapped human capital discussed during the earlier agenda item on demographic data. He noted the need to anticipate a long-term, sustainable economy. He expressed support for assistance to startup companies and suggested exploring innovative ways to be more accessible to small businesses. Mr. Lee encouraged a new branding effort for Bellevue to highlight its strengths.

With regard to accessibility for small businesses, Mr. Canedo said staff will work with the City's partners to identify opportunities for providing assistance (e.g., online courses). Regarding branding, Mr. Canedo said Bellevue is known as a favorable location for technology businesses. He said that companies in Europe are requesting more information about Bellevue, especially in the areas of talent and real estate.

Councilmember Robertson noted that eight percent of King County residents work from home, which has a positive impact on the transportation system. She expressed concern regarding the affordability of office space and the replacement of more affordable offices with more expensive Class A office space. Ms. Robertson said that she and Mayor Robinson want to ensure there are spaces in Bellevue for incubator businesses.

Councilmember Robertson said that Bellevue has been a convener in the area of transportation technology (e.g., autonomous, connected, electric, and shared vehicles), and she anticipates continued innovation in that sector.

Ms. Robertson encouraged a focus in the Economic Development Plan update on companies that bring family wage jobs. She thanked staff for the thorough, in-depth content in the presentation.

Councilmember Stokes suggested expanding the Innovation Triangle to other Eastside cities. He noted articles about the need for more restaurants, entertainment, and cultural opportunities in Bellevue. He suggested that the Economic Development Plan address community development, neighborhoods, housing, and human services due to their impact on economic activity.

Councilmember Zahn suggested exploring ways to support business development throughout the community, including through transportation options. She encouraged providing more online information for the public. She suggested perhaps partnering with the Bellevue Regional Library's welcoming program to provide information regarding starting and operating a business. Ms. Zahn expressed an interest in more information regarding the outcomes of the Startup 425 workshops. Mr. Canedo said an outcome survey was conducted last year and the data is available.

Mayor Robinson expressed support for small businesses and startups, noting that 97 percent of businesses in Bellevue are small businesses. Ms. Robinson highlighted the importance of preserving existing affordable office space.

5. Council Discussion of Upcoming Items: None.
6. Continued Oral Communications

Don Marsh said that tonight's presentations illustrate what is so exciting about Bellevue. He expressed concern regarding the removal of trees along 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue for Puget Sound Energy's transmission line project. He proposed undergrounding the line for a 1.5 mile stretch to preserve the natural environment. He suggested exploring funding partnerships with REI, T-Mobile, and others.

At 9:03 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared the meeting adjourned.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC  
City Clerk

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