

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION
STUDY SESSION MINUTES

February 26, 2020
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Morisseau, Commissioners Ferris, Malakoutian,
Vice-chair Moolgavkar

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners deVadoss, Laing

STAFF PRESENT: Emil King, Nicholas Matz, Jennifer Ewing, Department of
Community Development

COUNCIL LIAISON: Councilmember Barksdale

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER
(6:36 p.m.)

The meeting was called to order at 6:36 p.m. by Chair Morisseau who presided.

2. ROLL CALL
(6:36 p.m.)

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioners deVadoss and Laing, both of whom were excused.

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

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

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

Councilmember Barksdale said he had no formal report. He said he was glad to have been appointed to serve as the Council's liaison to the Planning Commission.

5. STAFF REPORTS
(6:38 p.m.)

A. Planning Commission Meeting Schedule

Community Development Assistant Director Emil King briefly reviewed with the Commission the upcoming meeting dates and agenda items.

Mr. King said a comment was received on February 21 from a resident who is following the use of the new Downtown livability code. The resident pointed out that the provision in place for some of the taller buildings is being used, and encouraged the city to monitor and think through how the code is being used. He said the staff are monitoring the heights of the buildings that are coming in through the design review process, along with the ten percent open space requirement triggered when the old height limit is exceeded. In the future, any modifications needed to the code will be based on data.

6. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS (6:43 p.m.)

Chair Morisseau referred to a letter received from Dwight Schragg, the 2019 CPA Vision Zero for Gun Safety proponent, and asked staff about the timeline that it makes reference to. Mr. King said staff have been receiving email communications from Dwight Schragg related to the annual Comprehensive Plan amendment process for 2019. Mr. King noted a City Council session was held on the topic in January where the police chief and representatives of the City Manager's Office and the Parks and Community Services Board provided a briefing on all the things the city is doing relative to addressing gun safety. The Commission did its work on the topic in 2019 and referred all materials to the City Manager's Office. Mr. Schragg has been assured that the city is undergoing a thoughtful process that involves other city venues rather than the Planning Commission.

Ms. Pamela Johnston, 3741 122nd Avenue NE, voiced concern that the Comprehensive Plan is not very visible to the public on the city's website. The Comprehensive Plan amendments are not very visible either. It seems big changes are made under cover. The Commission is charged with making the best decisions on the part of the public and in doing so should explain why things are the way they are. With regard to the 2020 Kapela CPA, there is a reference to the Bridle Trails subarea plan policy S-BT-54. Ms. Johnston stated that she believes the policy, in referring to the approximately four-acre parcel on the west side of 140th Avenue NE and NE60th Street, states the site should retain its existing Single Family-Low designation, but she believes that nothing in the following discussion says why the existing designation should be retained. Ms. Johnston also made reference to policy S-BT-4 which encourages and supports interjurisdictional agreements among Bellevue, Redmond, Kirkland and King County to ensure land use is compatible with Bridle Trails' residential neighborhoods, and there is reference made to encouraging communication and cooperation with Kirkland on land use and circulation issues along common boundaries between Bellevue and Kirkland. It should be made clear what has been done in that regard to date and what has been accomplished.

Ms. Julie Kopp, 3550 164th Place NE, said she has attended nearly every City Council meeting for a year and has heard them say nothing. She said her concern is with owners of single family sites subdividing their lots into two lots, allowing for the construction of homes that do not fit in with the local environment. Local residents are not given any say. The city is not taking into account the views of local residents who do not want high-density occurring in their neighborhoods. Some new houses along a private road near her house are being rearranged without a proper survey to make them face NE 30th Street. The existing residents will be left looking at the side of a two-story building. Areas like Tam o'Shanter have covenants in place that protect the residents, but those who live outside that area get shafted. One house built without a permit had to be torn down. New homes going in do not fit in with existing homes. Two homes have been converted to assisted living facilities, with one home in the husband's name and the other in the wife's name. That issue needs to be more controlled because people

are manipulating the system.

Mr. Jim Rivard, 111 North Post, Spokane, spoke representing SRM Development which has an application in for a rezone for a property at the corner of Bellevue Way and Main Street (the 100 Bellevue Way SE proposed 2020 plan amendment.) He said SRM has long been involved with development in Seattle and on the Eastside. The Comprehensive Plan calls for the site to serve as a gateway corner, but it would be very difficult to create a gateway corner on a site that is only 18,000 square feet. The site is currently occupied by a Jack In The Box restaurant, and an agreement is in place to purchase the adjacent 7-Eleven property. The issue is that there is a split zoning that passes through the building that has the 7-Eleven, and that limits the FAR. The aim of the proposed plan amendment is to honor the intent of the lower FAR by transferring it to the main project to allow for the building of a true gateway project. The existing zoning is in place to provide a transition to the residential to the south, though in fact there are two- and three-story buildings to the south and very little residential. The proposal is to remove the split Downtown Mixed Use (DNTN-MU) and Office (O) and in favor of just DNTN-MU.

7. PUBLIC HEARING – None
(6:56 p.m.)

8. STUDY SESSION
(6:56 p.m.)

Environmental Stewardship Program Manager Jennifer Ewing said the Environmental Stewardship Initiative was started in Bellevue in 2007. The city signed on to the Mayor's climate protection agreement in 2006 and since that time focus has been given to a variety of different climate and sustainability programming and initiatives. The intent of the Environmental Stewardship Initiative is to look at how to integrate environmental stewardship and sustainability into city operations as well as city policies and programming. In 2014 the city joined King County's Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C), a group organized by the county for cities and entities such as the Port Authority and Sound Transit that is focused on issues related to climate change.

Ms. Ewing noted that in November 2019 staff outlined some draft goals and targets for updating the environmental stewardship plan, and discussed strategies for engaging with the city's boards and commissions to gain input on possible strategies and actions for the plan. She said during January and February she was providing introductory presentations to those boards and commissions.

The process for updating the ESI plan began with reviewing progress made to date. Also driving the process is the Council priority to review progress made and to analyze additional steps to be taken by the city to achieve the goals, which of course brings to mind the question of what the city's environmental goals are. One of the first tasks for updating the plan has been to update the goals that are out of date, to replace short-term goals with long-term goals, and to establish new goals where needed. A recommended suite of goals has been presented to the Council along with a request for direction in terms of how ambitious the city wants to be going forward.

An initial round of public outreach and engagement was launched in the fall of 2019. Residents were asked how ambitious they want Bellevue to be in terms of taking environmental actions and how much of a priority they place on environmental issues, and what their priorities are. A second round of outreach and engagement to residents and the business community is planned to launch soon in 2020.

The first round of outreach and engagement included an online survey completed by 385 people, an open house, and about six pop-up events. What flowed from the efforts is that climate change is an important issue to Bellevue citizens. The majority indicated they would like to see Bellevue be ambitious and be a leader when it comes to sustainability. Key issues related to the environment the city should take into consideration include trees, climate change, parks and open space, water quality and mobility options. Residents also placed a high value on looking at both costs and benefits of various strategies.

Ms. Ewing said after reviewing best practices in terms of establishing environmental goals and targets, staff looked at what has been done in other cities in the region and indeed around the nation and the world. The work resulted in a suite of goals and targets for the focus areas of climate change, materials management and waste, mobility and land use, and natural systems. The City Council was presented with different options tied to how ambitious the city wants to be. The council landed on the notion of taking bold steps in line with many peer cities and communities, but the council also voiced a strong desire to look at increasing some of the goals to make them more ambitious and in line with large companies like Microsoft and Amazon in terms of a hundred percent renewable energy, reducing greenhouse gases emissions in line with international community recommendations, and zero waste.

Cities have other goals, most notably increasing tree canopies and improving access by residents to park. In conjunction with the Parks and Community Services Department, one goal being developed aimed to have all residents within a third of a mile of a park. The Comprehensive Plan already includes targets relative to drive-alone rates, but another goal that will be recommended will be centered on electric vehicle ownership, particularly in the areas of the city that likely will always be auto dependent. Washington state goals about reducing total vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per person will be mirrored in Bellevue's goals.

Of particular interest to the Planning Commission is the goal of siting jobs and housing within a quarter mile of frequent transit. The city's Transit Master Plan analyzed the best level the city might achieve would be to have 85 percent of jobs and 65 percent of housing within a quarter mile of a frequent transit station, where frequent is defined as 15-minute headways.

Vice-chair Moolgavkar asked if the goal of moving toward 100 percent renewable energy refers to what city buildings use or what is offered to the public generally. Ms. Ewing said the targets are focused community wide but with more of a 2040 time horizon for city operations. The city has already signed up for Puget Sound's Green Direct program to buy green power. The city should reach the 70 percent target for renewable energy fairly soon.

Council Liaison Barksdale asked how things like drive-alone rates and electric vehicle ownership are currently measured. Ms. Ewing said the drive-alone rate data comes from a five-year rolling average of the American Community Survey. Electric vehicle ownership data is drawn from the state's Department of Licensing.

With regard to mobility and land use, Ms. Ewing said some analysis has been done in terms of increasing housing in proximity to frequent transit, though more analysis is needed. She noted that there has in fact been a significant increase in the number of jobs located within a quarter mile of frequent transit. It is believed the goal can be achieved through the city's existing plans and policies which call for focusing growth in designated growth centers.

Ms. Ewing allowed that significant growth has been forecast for the city over the next 20 to 30

years. In order to achieve the goal of reducing energy use by 30 percent, it will be necessary to reduce the energy consumed by existing buildings as well as new construction. The city's policies and incentives around green buildings and energy efficiency resulted in a decline in energy use between 2011 and 2017. Per capita energy use has decreased primarily because the majority of new housing being built in Bellevue is multifamily, which is inherently more energy efficient. Total energy use fluctuates year to year, primarily driven by the weather.

Ms. Ewing said tree canopy has consistently been highlighted by the public as a priority and a concern. In the last Comprehensive Plan update a policy and target was included to achieve a 40 percent tree canopy. A 2017 study of the city's tree canopy found a 37 percent tree canopy overall. To achieve the 40 percent goal, 670 acres of trees would need to be added through preserving what is existing and letting it grow, and by planting new trees. Of interest to note is the distribution of the tree canopy. The city's parks are heavily forested, but they only account for about 20 percent of the tree canopy. Most of the trees are in suburban residential areas on private property. There are policies in the Comprehensive Plan around tree canopy that are being implemented and addressed through the Land Use Code, but interest has been expressed in updating some of those codes.

All of the different focus areas collectively add up to greenhouse gases emissions. Accordingly, greenhouse gases emissions are looked at both in terms of the entire city and city operations. Transportation is the biggest contributor to emissions, followed by energy use in homes and commercial buildings. There has been a decrease in emissions measured over the past seven years, much of which has been driven by the electricity grid moving toward being cleaner. To achieve the target will take effort in every goal area. The Comprehensive Plan includes a policy aimed at updating the city's emissions target. The proposed 80 percent reduction by 2050 is in line with King County and the K4C joint commitments. It is also in line with the state's target, though the state is currently considering legislation to increase the statewide target.

Ms. Ewing said some draft targets have been established. Identification of strategies and actions to achieve the goals will constitute the next steps. The analysis work will include looking at the impacts, costs and benefits of the different strategies. A more complete list of actions will be brought back to the Planning Commission for feedback. These actions will include focusing growth near transit, continuing to plan for mobility alternatives, preserving and growing the tree canopy, and implementing low-impact development policies. After additional outreach and public engagement, the issue will be brought again to the Planning Commission in the spring. The schedule calls for ESI Plan adoption by the City Council by the end of the summer.

Commissioner Ferris asked how the city measures emissions. Ms. Ewing said data is received from Puget Sound Energy regarding all of the energy used in Bellevue by homes and commercial buildings. For transportation, modeling around vehicle miles traveled is calculated and compared against the fuel economy of vehicles. There are specific protocols followed in taking collected data from various sources and aggregating it into a single number.

Commissioner Malakoutian asked where the 2050 targets came from, and if the city also has short-range targets. Ms. Ewing said 2050 is the target year around climate change. The global consensus is that by that year emissions need to be reduced by 80 percent if not more. She noted that staff are also working to develop some interim targets, likely ten years out. The question will be how ambitious the city will want to be over the next decade.

Ms. Ewing said an open house is slated for March 3 at Interlake High School. That will be followed by an open house and sustainability fair on March 28 at the Mercer Slough

Environmental Education Center. An event at Bellevue College is planned for April 21 with a professor from University of Washington Bothell who has done research around climate anxiety.

Council Liaison Barksdale asked how the city is using technology to help communicate the targets and progress made to the community. Ms. Ewing said the materials and information are posted to the city's environmental stewardship dashboard. The page is being updated to allow for sharing targets and progress made. People are also being engaged through online surveys and open house events.

B. Introductory Study Session: 2020 Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Senior Planner Nicholas Matz said five privately initiated site-specific Comprehensive Plan amendments were received for consideration in 2020. He sought from the Commission direction on any data requests commissioners will need for the threshold review study. The review schedule calls for the geographic scoping session to occur toward the end of March, and the public hearing process to occur in late May or June.

Mr. Matz briefly reviewed the two-step review process for annual Comprehensive Plan amendments, including who can propose them and how they are proposed. Both site-specific and text/map amendments are allowed, though for 2020 no text changes were proposed. The Land Use Code outlines a process that involves early and continuous public engagement, public notice, Planning Commission review and City Council action. The staff will do some analysis relative to geographic scoping and the Commission will be asked to indicate whether or not the geographic scoping of any amendment should be increased. The amendments made to the Land Use Code in 2019 create a new consequence to the three-year limit, namely that once a plan application is submitted and made complete, the three-year rule kicks in. The same applies to properties included as part of the geographic scoping process. Expanding the geographic scope for purposes of a public hearing will not mean those properties will automatically be included, it just means the analysis will consider those properties. Because of the consequence for someone who might not have realized it, there will be an emphasis of it at the March 25 geographic scoping study session and at the public hearing level.

The 2019 Land Use Code changes also moved the submittal deadline to September 15 for the following year. For 2020, that change has not kicked in, so the original January 31 deadline was utilized. However, the requirement to conduct a pre-application engagement with Department of Community Development staff has kicked in; applications cannot be submitted without having gone through that early exercise which results in the issuance of a letter outlining the proposal, and the letter is needed before an application can be submitted. That process has ushered in a more rational approach, and gives staff a head start in their analytical work. In final review, the Commission is asked to evaluate the merits of each application according to the adopted decision criteria.

Mr. Matz said the city is continually looking for ways to improve the engagement process. Community engagement and access to information is a key element of the city's Growth Management Act role in reviewing Comprehensive Plan amendment. The intent is to engage residents, stakeholders and communities in the process. The role of the Commission is key to that and allows for documenting the process and public testimony, which ultimately allows stakeholders to weigh in at specific points in a fairly transparent manner. The tools used include Commission meetings and the plan amendments websites. Particular attention is paid to parties of interest, which includes anyone who have chosen to become part of the record of those who receive notice of all proposed actions. Notice is provided to property owners and to the public

via signs posted on properties.

Mr. Matz located each of the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments on a map of the city. He noted that the application for the 100 Bellevue Way SE application referenced the Jack In A Box property on the corner of Bellevue Way SE and Main Street. The actual plan amendment site, however, lies to the south of that property along Bellevue Way SE. The property lies both within the Downtown subarea and the Southwest Bellevue subarea. Mr. Matz explained that the Downtown boundary line here does not follow a property line or any survey line. The focus of the application will be addressing the split zoning on the site. The proposal is to go from a combination of DNTN-MU and Office to DNTN-MU only for the entire site.

Mr. Matz said the Safegard Self Storage site is located on 164th Avenue NE in the Crossroads subarea. The application proposes amending the map designation from Office to Community Business (CB). The property has been under the same ownership for many years. The site has also been zoned Office for many years but the specific self storage use is nonconforming in that zone. The intent of the property owner is to pursue a mixed use redevelopment of the site consistent with and encouraged by the Crossroads subarea plan. Development of the Crossroads area on the Toll Brothers site on NE 15th Street and other projects were realized through the CB designation. The city has been very specific about the type of mixed use development wanted in Crossroads and the fundamental plan about supporting the viability of the mall and the center. The application will put before the Commission a question about whether the mixed use approach as outlined in the plan belongs in an area that has not necessarily contemplated it.

The NE 8th Street Partners application involves a one-acre property on NE 8th Street and proposes changing the existing Office use to a Multifamily-High designation to allow for the construction of attached housing. Mr. Matz said there is a significant trend in most of the applications toward multifamily housing and the study sessions and hearings will explore the need. The proposals also tend to be along transportation and transit corridors which is contemplated by the Comprehensive Plan. The proposed Multifamily-High for the NE 8th Street Partners site would translate into a density of R-30.

Mr. Matz said the Kapela Property Redesignation concerns a property in the Bridle Trails subarea. The proposal seeks to change the existing Single Family-Low designation to Multifamily-Low on two properties that total 30.1 acres. There is in the Bridle Trails subarea plan a policy that applies to the Kapela site and the adjacent site, totaling 40 acres, that says rezoning to multifamily can be considered if it results in some form of senior housing. The applicant will seek to test how that policy is to be applied. The policy was drafted a long time ago and the Commission will be asked if it is still appropriate.

The Glendale Country Club NE application seeks a map amendment from Single Family-Low to Multifamily-Medium on 3.3 acres of the Glendale Country Club property, a triangular site that fronts on NE 8th Street and approximately 136th Avenue NE. The intent of the applicant is to realize attached housing. The site is part of the golf course and there is a policy in the Wilburton subarea plan that talks about keeping the golf course. The question the Commission will need to address is how that policy affects a redevelopment proposal for only a portion of the golf course site.

Chair Morisseau asked how the proposed amendment for the Glendale Country Club site line up with the Wilburton subarea study. Mr. Matz said the Wilburton study area does not include the Glendale Country Club site.

Commissioner Malakoutian asked about the specific policy language affected the Kapela site. Mr. Matz said the language is specific 40 acres as outlined by specific boundaries. The 40 acres includes three parcels under two separate ownerships. He allowed that the question of geographic scoping will certainly be raised and considered by the Commission.

Chair Morisseau asked if the owner of the Jack In The Box site on Bellevue Way SE will be contacted during the geographic scoping exercise. Mr. Matz said the owner of that property would not necessarily be affected given that the site is already located within the Downtown boundary. He clarified that the applicant wants to redevelop three different parcels, including the Jack In The Box site, the right-of-way property, and the southernmost parcel that is split by the designation. The outcome sought by the applicant is to effectively move the Downtown border.

9. OTHER BUSINESS – None

10. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. January 22, 2020

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

11. CONTINUED ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

13. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Malakoutian. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Moolgavkar and the motion carried unanimously.


Chair Morisseau adjourned the meeting at 7:57 p.m.



Emil King
Staff to the Planning Commission

June 24, 2020

Date


Anne Morisseau
6/24/2020 2:09:10 PM PDT
Anne Morisseau
Chair of the Planning Commission

06/24/2020

Date