

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Regular Meeting

November 1, 2021
6:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting
Bellevue, Washington

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

ABSENT: None.

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call; Flag Salute

City Clerk Charmaine Arredondo called the roll. All Councilmembers were present and participating remotely. Councilmember Lee led the flag salute.

3. Approval of Agenda

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

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

4. Oral Communications

(a) Michelle Wannamaker, Vice President of Eastgate Community Association (ECA), said that Eastgate area residents have been asking for a neighborhood park for a number of years. She expressed concern that certain Councilmembers seem ready to support the development of a cricket field. She said this is discouraging and demoralizing for Eastgate residents who have been advocating for a neighborhood park over the past seven years.

(b) Damodhar Bhat asked the Council to consider supporting the development of cricket infrastructure in Bellevue. He noted the growing popularity of the sport and the improved cricket infrastructure in other cities. He said Bellevue could be a future training hub for USA cricket. He noted the favorable economic impact of sports facilities.

- (c) Vandana Thomas expressed support for the development of cricket facilities in Bellevue. She said that both of her children want to play professional cricket and to represent the United States in international competitions. She said they have to travel far to practice and play cricket in this region. She asked the Council to give her children the chance to realize their dreams by providing cricket infrastructure.
- (d) Jivana Aras said she is 17 years old and has lived in Bellevue her whole life. She noted her experience competing in cricket at the national level and her goal to be on the USA women's team to play in the Cricket World Cup. She said cricket is the second most popular sport in the world. She thanked the City for the cricket pitch at Robinswood Park, which allows her to practice in Bellevue. She said that cricket fields in the Seattle area are artificial turf while games at the national and international level are played on natural turf pitches. She would like to see a cricket stadium in the region, which could be used as a training center.
- (e) Matt Jack, representing the Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA), expressed support for Bellevue's state legislative agenda to be discussed later in the evening. He said the transportation projects identified in the legislative agenda are consistent with the BDA's past positions. He said the SR 520/124th Avenue Interchange project and the South Downtown I-405 Access Improvement project will decrease surface street traffic in Bellevue and help to relieve congestion in growth areas. He said the Mountains to Sound Greenway trail and the Eastrail project will further unlock the potential of the multimodal transportation system. He encouraged funding for the preliminary engineering and right-of-way (ROW) work for the SR 520 and I-90 interchanges on I-405. Mr. Jack said the BDA supports encouraging a diversity of housing types and maintaining a fiscally responsible budget. He said the BDA appreciates the focus on climate change and the environment and on social and criminal justice.
- (f) Heidi Dean said she attended the Newport Hills candidate forum to ask questions and to advocate for help with the neighborhood's shopping center.

Mayor Robinson asked the City Clerk to explain the rules for commenting on campaigns and candidates during oral communications. City Clerk Arredondo said the Council's platform cannot be used to express support for or opposition to a ballot measure or candidate.

Continuing, Ms. Dean expressed concern about the loss of businesses in the shopping center. She noted that one business recently moved to the Renton Highlands due to concerns about safety around the shopping center at night. She has been told that a third business is planning to move away soon, and the remaining few businesses are struggling. She noted the City's efforts to assist small businesses in downtown Bellevue and urged the Council to help the Newport Hills Shopping Center businesses. She expressed concern about what she referred to as slum lords adjacent to the center and asked the City for help.

5. Reports of Community Councils, Boards, and Commissions
 - (a) Parks and Community Services Board Third Quarter 2021 Report
[Written report only; no presentation.]
6. Report of the City Manager: None.
7. Council Business and New Initiatives
 - (a) Major League Cricket Proposal

Councilmember Zahn said the Council has heard from community members advocating for the development of a cricket facility in Bellevue. She presented a proposal for an initiative that will take more than eight hours of staff time. She said the issue of bringing major league cricket to the region is time sensitive to be able to leverage the City's property at Marymoor Park. Ms. Zahn said this is an opportunity for fostering multicultural connections throughout the community. She noted the economic and public benefits and said this could be an opportunity to attract talent to the region, especially among technology industry workers who play cricket.

Ms. Zahn requested Council support to consider and explore, along with the cricket community and other governments and organizations, the possibility of developing cricket infrastructure in the region. She said a number of local employers have adult cricket teams within their organizations. She said the proposal is broader than a parks-related request. She encouraged the Council to consider cricket facilities from the perspective of bringing the Eastside into prominence in major league cricket.

Councilmember Zahn recommended directing staff to further explore the potential for major league cricket and to review associated community building, regional economic development and tourism, and other public benefits that could result from the proposal. She suggested allowing staff to review current encumbrances on the site from the grant agreements with the State Recreation and Conservation Office. Staff would come back and provide information about the level of staff time and other resources that would be required to support the budget.

Councilmember Robertson said the City-owned property at Marymoor Park is utility property, and she does not recall the City ever determining whether the property is surplus to the needs of the Utilities Department. She recalled the community's past efforts to develop ballfields on the property. However, the City indicated that would not be possible if the property was not considered surplus.

Ms. Robertson listed the information she would want to see to consider the proposal: 1) whether the property is surplus to utility needs, 2) value of the property, 3) funding, 4) potential partnerships, 5) priority relative to other projects, and 6) operational costs. She acknowledged the growing interest in cricket as the community becomes more diverse. She said the City would need to buy the property from the Utilities Department for parks and recreation usage. She wondered whether the project could be added to the next parks levy. She said cricket pitches are quite large and they can be used for other activities (e.g., outdoor concerts, other sports).

Councilmember Robertson expressed support for directing staff to research the potential for developing a cricket facility.

Councilmember Stokes said he supports directing staff to study the proposal as well. He said the regional aspect of the proposal is important and he encouraged private-public partnerships.

Councilmember Lee noted the increasing diversity in Bellevue and said the cricket facility could bring the community together. He expressed support for private-public partnerships as well as concern regarding the potential project costs. He expressed support for directing staff to study the proposal.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis said that, as a former professional athlete, he would like to see the proposal move forward to determine the viability of a cricket facility. He noted the potential positive impacts for economic development and tourism. He said he lives near Robinswood Park and regularly observes people playing cricket there every day.

Councilmember Barksdale said the Council talks about diversity being our strength. He suggested that the City has a responsibility to ensure there are amenities to serve the diverse community. He encouraged looking at the proposal from the perspective of wanting to make it happen rather than looking for ways to prevent the development of a cricket facility.

Mayor Robinson expressed support for exploring the potential for developing a cricket facility. She noted the importance of considering the costs, funding sources and private-public partnerships. She said King County is interested in supporting cricket infrastructure, and the City has received many letters of support. She thanked Councilmember Zahn for the proposal.

Councilmember Zahn said that major league cricket advocates have discussed a model in which the City develops the field and it is leased back to the cricket community, which then develops the cricket facility. She said this is not intended to compete with other park projects. As a resident of South Bellevue, she understands the concerns about the lack of parks in that area. Ms. Zahn said there are multiple pathways for developing a cricket facility. She said the solution could be that the City leases the property and does not necessarily develop the facility with City funds.

Responding to Mayor Robinson, Parks and Community Services Director Michael Shiosaki said the questions provided by Councilmember Robertson are appropriate and reflect some of the issues that staff has discussed.

- Councilmember Zahn moved to waive the Council's eight-hour rule and to direct staff to explore this opportunity for major league cricket on the City-owned property at Marymoor Park, and to return for a future meeting to describe the level of staff time and resources needed to support the project. Councilmember Robertson seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

8. Consent Calendar

- Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to approve the Consent Calendar, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.
- The motion to approve the Consent Calendar carried by a vote of 7-0, and the following items were approved:
 - (a) Council Minutes
Minutes of October 18, 2021 Regular Meeting
 - (b) Motion to approve the Eastside Transportation Partnership (ETP) Agreement and associated costs through 2023.
 - (c) Resolution No. 10013 authorizing execution of a two-year Professional Services Agreement, with an option for one three-year renewal, with Yates, Wood & MacDonald, Inc., in the estimated amount of \$500,000, plus all applicable taxes, for residential property management services at the Bayvue Village Apartments.

9. Public Hearings: None.

10. Other Ordinances, Resolutions and Motions

- (a) Ordinance No. 6613 of the City of Bellevue, Washington, providing for the issuance and sale of one or more series of limited tax general obligation refunding bonds in the aggregate principal amount of not to exceed \$135,000,000 to refund certain limited tax general obligation bonds of the City, and to pay costs of issuance of the bonds; providing for the disposition of the proceeds of sale of the bonds; and delegating the authority to approve the method of sale for and final terms of the bonds.

Deputy City Manager Nathan McCommon introduced discussion regarding Ordinance No. 6613 providing for the issuance and sale of refunding bonds.

Toni Call, Director, Finance and Asset Management (FAM), said the ordinance will refund (refinance) two limited tax general obligation (LTGO) bonds issued in 2012 and in 2013. Under current market conditions, the refunding will yield significant savings for the City and its taxpayers. With the current interest rates, refunding the 2012 bonds saves approximately 23 percent of the present value and refunding the 2013 bonds saves approximately nine percent of the present value. Ms. Call said the City's debt policy states that refunding may occur if the savings is a minimum of three percent.

The ordinance will delegate the authority to the City Manager and/or the Director of Finance and Asset Management to approve the method of the sale and the final terms of refunding the bonds. Those decisions are guided by a set of parameters outlined in the agenda memo. Ms. Call said the market can change at a moment's notice. If the City is no longer able to achieve the savings

necessary for responsible refinancing, the City reserves the right to refund a portion or none of the bonds.

Ms. Call asked the Council to authorize the issuance and sale of the proposed LTGO refunding bonds.

Councilmember Lee expressed support for refunding the bonds. He thanked staff for their diligence and efforts to achieve significant savings of \$24 million for the City.

Councilmember Robertson concurred and thanked staff and the City's bond counsel for their work.

Councilmember Stokes expressed support for refinancing the bonds.

Councilmember Zahn concurred and thanked Ms. Call and staff for always looking for ways to reduce the City's costs of borrowing.

→ Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to adopt Ordinance No. 6613, and Councilmember Lee seconded the motion.

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

11. Study Session Items

(a) Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA) Report

Deputy City Manager McCommon introduced an update regarding the Heart of Bellevue program.

Jesse Canedo, Assistant Director of Community Development, noted the BDA's efforts to support downtown businesses and to enhance placemaking in Bellevue. He thanked Patrick Bannon and his staff for their support of small businesses, including the outdoor dining program, and the BDA's overall marketing of the downtown.

Patrick Bannon, BDA President, said the Heart of Bellevue campaign provides the opportunity to welcome people back to the downtown and to support local businesses. He said the Heart of Bellevue campaign builds on efforts initiated in 2019 to activate the Grand Connection. With the pandemic, the BDA has focused on economic recovery and engaging people to come back to the downtown. He noted the BDA's support of short-term and long-term community wide benefits.

Mr. Bannon described the BDA's work to foster storytelling through social media, weekly newsletters, blog content, online information, print materials, banners and other ways to engage the community in supporting the downtown. He said that live events in 2021 include the 4th of July fireworks event, Bellevue Beats music series, Downtown Arts Market, jazz and blues music series, ice rink and Downtown Talks. He thanked the City for its partnership with the BDA and for the involvement of City staff from multiple departments.

Mr. Bannon said that placemaking efforts include the yellow lanterns along the Grand Connection, the Al Fresco outdoor dining program in Old Bellevue, and the return of holiday lights to the Downtown Park in 2021. He said the BDA and the City held a placemaking workshop series in February that brought together 16 stakeholders representing the business community. He said a review of the public realm in Bellevue indicated that more public engagement is needed, including with the downtown residential community. He said the BDA will initiate a strategic planning effort in 2022 that will involve key stakeholders and organizations. He thanked the City, Amazon, Microsoft, Puget Sound Energy (PSE) and others who support the Heart of Bellevue program.

Councilmember Barksdale thanked the BDA for their efforts to bring people together in the downtown. He asked how to improve the reach throughout Bellevue to ensure that people are aware of the projects and experiences available in the downtown. He said that play allows people to come together and to build relationships, and he asked about elements of play in the BDA's future work.

Mr. Bannon acknowledged that street level activity is crucial for the downtown experience and safety. Referring to the future of play, he said the resources are available to continue to explore opportunities and to take risks with those opportunities, including experimenting with new activities in public spaces. He said the BDA works with City staff as well as other stakeholder organizations to educate the public about activities in the downtown.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis thanked Mr. Bannon for the presentation and for the BDA's work with the City. Mr. Nieuwenhuis said he wants to continue to look at different approaches to outreach and placemaking. He said many people are not aware of the Grand Connection. He suggested placing QR codes on the lanterns to inform the public about the lanterns and the Grand Connection. Mr. Nieuwenhuis asked how the BDA approaches small businesses versus larger businesses.

Mr. Bannon said they installed 600 lanterns this year but did not bring back the signage with QR codes from the prior year. He believes there is ample opportunity in the future to enhance the experience along the Grand Connection, especially as redevelopment occurs. He said the BDA is trying to be intentional in not seeing small businesses as one type of business but to build its knowledge base regarding individual businesses and their needs and priorities.

Councilmember Zahn thanked the BDA for its work to add more color and light to the downtown with the yellow lanterns and to make the downtown more fun. She commended their strategic planning effort targeted for 2022. She expressed an interest in identifying ways to integrate more night life into the downtown and to work with Visit Bellevue to generate festivals and pop-up activities. Ms. Zahn asked whether the City and BDA could do more banners in the downtown, including perhaps to highlight the different cultures represented in Bellevue.

Ms. Zahn said she is concerned about neighborhood businesses and interested in learning how the City can reach out to them with an approach similar to the engagement with downtown businesses.

Councilmember Robertson said she appreciates and values the City's long partnership with the BDA. She concurred with Councilmember Zahn's suggestion to work with businesses throughout Bellevue. Ms. Robertson said she works in downtown Bellevue and many restaurants have not reopened for lunch due to the pandemic.

Ms. Robertson said she loves the holiday lights and activities in the downtown and she questioned the plans for this year. Mr. Bannon said the BDA's core mission over the next couple of months is to promote holiday activities in the downtown. He said a number of events will return following the pandemic including Garden d'Lights at the Bellevue Botanical Garden. He said Snowflake Lane will return in a slightly modified form and the ice rink will open on November 19.

Councilmember Stokes thanked Mr. Bannon and staff for doing a fantastic job, including in response to the challenges of the pandemic. Mr. Stokes thanked the BDA for its leadership and partnership with local businesses. He commended the placemaking efforts, which enhances the concept of the creative economy. He asked about the extent of the participation of Bellevue's diverse populations in downtown events.

Mr. Bannon said the BDA, employers, and others strive to pay special care to representing the richness and diversity of the region in musical performances and artists. He said the BDA continues to look for opportunities to foster the creative economy, including through its work with the City's economic development staff.

Mr. Stokes asked what more the City could do to help the BDA advance its priorities. Mr. Bannon said there are a number of longer term opportunities for activating the Grand Connection and for supporting greater connectivity to and through the downtown. For the near term, Mr. Bannon said the BDA is requesting participation by the City Council and staff as the BDA formulates its strategic planning process.

Councilmember Lee thanked Mr. Bannon for his work and acknowledged the importance of the BDA in advocating for policies and supporting its members. Mr. Lee said that people are interested in going to restaurants and other places but many businesses have not reopened or are struggling. He encouraged capacity building with minority business owners and other stakeholders who might be the most vulnerable to the negative economic impact of the pandemic. He suggested storytelling efforts representing both customers and business owners.

Mr. Bannon concurred with the need to ask those questions and to work on solutions, which will be part of the strategic planning process. He said the placemaking workshop series represented a diverse array of businesses. However, they did not fully reflect the global diversity of the community and business owners. Mr. Bannon said that enhanced public engagement will be helpful in developing the right strategies. He said the BDA tries to make its events welcoming and inclusive while it continues to learn about the best experiences for everyone, including visitors.

Councilmember Lee encouraged publicizing the Grand Connection and the multimodal transportation system and finding more opportunities for storytelling. Mr. Bannon said the Grand Connection and downtown redevelopment provide a great opportunity to increase pedestrian activity throughout the downtown. Responding to Councilmember Lee, Mr. Bannon speculated that Meydenbauer Center's visibility and activities, including the theater, will increase as the pandemic restrictions are lifted and with the beginning of light rail operation in 2023.

Councilmember Lee said he would be interested in City staff exploring how it could apply the BDA's approach to neighborhood businesses throughout Bellevue.

Mayor Robinson said the BDA kept the spirit of the downtown alive throughout the pandemic through communication, activities and engagement opportunities. She concurred with suggestions to apply the same model to neighborhood businesses.

Ms. Robinson said she would like to make it easier for restaurants to provide outdoor dining with heaters and covered dining spaces. She wants to ensure that the overall efforts in the downtown are good for everyone. For example, if QR codes are posted in the downtown, she suggested providing information in multiple languages. Ms. Robinson said that, as a physical therapist, she has noticed that it almost impossible to find handicapped parking in the downtown and in Old Bellevue. She thanked Mr. Bannon for his work in the community.

Mr. Bannon thanked BDA and City staff for their cooperative efforts and accomplishments.

At 7:35 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared a short break. The meeting resumed at 7:45 p.m.

(b) 2022 State Legislative Agenda

Mr. McCommon said staff is seeking Council direction regarding the draft 2022 state legislative agenda.

Lacey Jane Wolfe, Interim Director of Intergovernmental Relations, said the legislative agenda identifies Bellevue's priorities and describes the City's positions on issues that are likely to be addressed by the legislature. She said the Council typically adopts the legislative agenda in January or February. However, legislators are already working to prepare for the 2022 legislative session. Ms. Wolfe said staff recommends Council adoption of the legislative agenda tonight if it is aligned with the Council's priorities and positions. She said that will enable staff and the Council to engage in early discussions to advocate for Bellevue's priorities.

Ms. Wolfe said the legislative session will begin on January 10 and extend over 60 days. In 2021, the state legislature adopted its 2021-2023 operating, capital and transportation budgets. She recalled that Bellevue secured \$2 million in the capital budget for the Eastgate men's shelter with great support from the City's legislative delegation. For the 2022 session, the legislature will amend the budgets and new policy bills will be introduced. Ms. Wolfe said that legislation proposed during the last session and not approved will continue to be under consideration in 2022.

A highlight of the 2022 legislative session is the potential transportation revenue package and the completion of projects along the SR 167/I-405 corridor. Ms. Wolfe noted the decline in toll revenue throughout the pandemic. She said the City worked with the BDA and the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce to ensure that high-priority items are reflected in the legislative agenda.

Councilmember Robertson thanked staff for working so closely with every Councilmember and the City's partners to develop the legislative agenda. She expressed support for moving forward tonight.

Mayor Robinson said she testified before the state legislature a number of times during the last session regarding transportation funding. While she is very appreciative of the funding identified for Bellevue, she said more needs to be done to support the continued growth in Bellevue.

Councilmember Zahn said she appreciates staff's effort to approve the state legislative agenda early this year. She said the table provided in the meeting packet is helpful to understanding the revisions to the previous document as well as the relevant context. She thanked Ms. Wolfe for adding the sentence about reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent by 2030.

Councilmember Stokes thanked Ms. Wolfe for her great work. He noted that transportation is a vital part of Bellevue's continued growth. He expressed support for the legislative agenda as presented.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis thanked Ms. Wolfe for her work with Councilmembers and staff. He expressed support for the legislative agenda, which encompasses all of the key priorities including transportation, housing, economic vitality, criminal justice, the environment, and local control.

Councilmember Lee complimented Ms. Wolfe for working with individual Councilmembers to develop the legislative agenda. Mr. Lee noted his interest in technology, including autonomous technology related to the transportation system. He commented regarding the importance of transportation funding.

Councilmember Barksdale thanked Ms. Wolfe for doing a great job in pulling all of this work together.

→ Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to approve the 2022 State Legislative Agenda, and Councilmember Robertson seconded the motion.

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

12. Land Use: None.

13. Unfinished Business: None.

14. New Business: None.

15. Executive Session: None.

16. Adjournment

At 8:03 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared the meeting adjourned.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC
City Clerk

/kaw