

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

Thursday
February 4, 2020
6:30 p.m.

Zoom

1. CALL TO ORDER:

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

ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Vanja Knezevic (Chair), Diann Strom (Vice Chair), Neal Hines, Negin Khanloo, Ken Wan, Ling Zhuang

COUNCIL LIAISON: Conrad Lee

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Anne Howe

OTHERS PRESENT: Brian Bartle, Deputy Director, Utilities; Nav Ota, Director, Utilities; Lucy Liu, Resource Management and Customer Service Assistant Director, Utilities; Cherish Jackson, Senior Administrative Assistant, Utilities; Joe Harbour, Operations and Maintenance Assistant Director, Utilities; Don McQuilliams, Operations Manager – Regulatory Compliance, Utilities; Heather DeWitt, Utility Rate and Tax Relief Program Administrator, Utilities; and Laurie Hugdahl, Minutes Taker

2. TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF BYLAWS

Chair Knezevic and Deputy Director Brian Bartle read an introductory statement regarding online meetings and procedures.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Deputy Director Bartle offered to provide a brief update on AMI projects during staff reports since there has been a lot of interest from Council and from the ESC.

Motion made by Commissioner Khanloo, seconded by Commissioner Zhuang, to approve the agenda with the addition of the AMI Report during Staff Reports. The agenda was approved unanimously (6-0).

4. ORAL and WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Oral and written communications were solicited. There were none received before or during the meeting.

5. COMMUNICATION FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

None.

6. STAFF REPORTS

Deputy Director Bartle gave an update on the AMI smart metering project. He reviewed the historical background of this project and COVID impacts. There has been a challenge to the production of the transmitters. A revised installation schedule incorporates a 6-month late start but keeps the end date near mid 2022. On a positive note, 90% of commercial meters have been installed with zero customer calls or complaints. Amendment #2 is coming soon which will address the compressed schedule. Staff plans to begin 10,000 residential meter installation in the next month or two, field testing of transmitters in April, and installation of transmitters in Q3 of 2021.

Commissioner Zhuang expressed appreciation for the report and asked if it is possible the transmitter will be further delayed.” Deputy Director Bartle explained they expect delivery in Q3. The meters were purchased early, but the transmitters were delayed due to production delays as many other industries were because of COVID. The normal reading process will continue until the transmitter is installed.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A) 1/7/2021 MINUTES

Motion made by Commissioner Wan, seconded by Commissioner Khanloo to approve the 1/7/2021 minutes as presented. Upon a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously (6-0).

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

9. NEW BUSINESS

a) 2021 Draft Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) Update & Public Meeting

Operations Manager Don McQuilliams presented the 2021 Stormwater Management Program Plan. He reviewed the history of the permit, 2019-2024 permit requirements, and the 2021 SWMP including significant changes from previous permits. The SWMP must be annually prepared and/or updated and submitted to Ecology by March 31. This year the City will be required to include a written description of internal coordination mechanisms. Highlights of the plan were reviewed. These included: Administration; Stormwater Planning; Public Education & Outreach; Public Involvement & Participation; Mapping & Documentation; Illicit Discharge Detection & Elimination (IDDE); Controlling Runoff from New Development, Redevelopment, & Construction Sites; Operations & Maintenance; and Source Control Program for Existing Development.

Mr. McQuilliams summarized that Bellevue was fully compliant in 2020. They are still gathering final numbers for reporting to Ecology. Over 12,000 public and private structures and stormwater facilities were inspected. Education & Outreach and training programs were affected more than other program areas by COVID. Illicit discharge investigations and private drainage inspection efforts were also affected to a lesser scale.

Regarding Public Involvement & Participation, Commissioner Zhuang asked how many public individuals participate in the process. Operations Manager McQuilliams replied that it is very few. Commissioner Zhuang recommended a specific social media marketing plan to help people recognize the importance of the topic. Operations Manager McQuilliams replied that the response to this section is different than the social media marketing aspect. The social media activity is very high, but the response to this particular plan is low. He indicated that they might be able to step up marketing efforts to increase participation.

Commissioner Hines asked how many public tips they receive about illicit discharge. Operations Manager McQuilliams replied that they respond to about 300+ spills in the community. These tips come from various sources, but a lot of them are from the public.

Commissioner Zhuang asked if the Source Control Program includes the source control of events like salt from the snow events. Operations Manager McQuilliams noted there is already a program to pick up salt after snowstorms. The Source Control Program will put more light on where and how those materials are stored so there is not the potential to pollute in a rain or snow event. Commissioner Zhuang asked about source control of fertilizer for the golf courses. Operation Manager McQuilliams replied that the golf courses will be part of this program to make sure those materials are stored safely. The City's approach is to work with organizations and residents to achieve voluntary compliance.

Commissioner Wan asked about the likelihood that the City could be moved into Phase 1 due to the population increase in Bellevue. Mr. McQuilliams explained that DOE plans on getting rid of Phase 1 and Phase 2 permits and having just one permit. Commissioner Wan also asked what areas of concern there are about not meeting compliance requirements. Mr. McQuilliams stated that they will meet all the permit requirements.

Public Hearing

Chair Knezevic called the hearing to order.

Motion made by Vice Chair Strom, seconded by Commissioner Khanloo, to open the hearing at 7:21 p.m. Motion passed unanimously (6-0).

Commissioners Present: Vanja Knezevic (Chair), Diann Strom (Vice Chair), Neal Hines, Negin Khanloo, Ken Wan, Ling Zhuang

Chair Knezevic read the purpose of the hearing and the Commission's role. Written comments were solicited. There were none. Public comments were solicited. There were none.

Commissioner Khanloo asked about how the ESC could help increase public involvement. Operations Manager McQuilliams indicated he could check with staff and get back to the Commission with any ideas.

Commissioner Hines asked what percentage of stormwater discharge is from streets or untreated impervious surfaces. Operations Manager McQuilliams commented that the vast majority of the water in the stormwater system comes from untreated sources and is unfiltered. Commissioner Hines referred to a study showing the dust from tires is lethal to salmon and the importance of filtering it or allowing it to settle. Operations Manager McQuilliams indicated that the City is aware of this and is working with Ecology to find ways to address it.

Motion made by Commissioner Zhuang, seconded by Vice Chair Strom, to close the hearing at 7:31 p.m. Motion passed unanimously (6-0).

b) Republic Services' Action Plan to Meet Satisfaction Requirements on Annual Customer Surveys (7:31)

Assistant Director Liu introduced this item.

Kent Kronenberg, General Manager Republic Services, shared details of the Action Plan. For missed pickups, if a customer calls in a missed pickup Republic has 24 hours to return and collect the container. Failure to do so results in a \$100 penalty and a free month of service for a residential customer and one free week

for commercial customers. On the Customer Satisfaction Survey all questions must have an 80% or greater satisfaction score or there is a penalty of \$50,000. For missed pickups Mr. Kronenberg emphasized that management must push dispatchers and drivers to guarantee all customer calls are covered. He stressed more accountability for employees, better driver training, a sense of urgency from management, and better training for customer service representatives.

Commissioner Khanloo asked if drivers still track their pickups on paper. Mr. Kronenberg noted that they do, but they also track via GPS. They have a target of early next year to provide tablets with real-time tracking. Commissioner Khanloo suggested with that tracking they could provide notification to the customers when they pick up. Mr. Kronenberg thought they might have something like this for large customers, but he hasn't heard about it on the residential side.

Commissioner Zhuang asked for clarification about the penalty fees. Assistant Director Liu reviewed these. Commissioner Zhuang asked if the customer credit for a missed pickup is applied automatically. Mr. Kronenberg replied that it is.

Commissioner Wan asked what has changed in this action plan versus prior years. Mr. Kronenberg replied that it comes down to increasing accountability and a sense of urgency from management.

Commissioner Strom asked why drivers honk their horns in her neighborhoods. Mr. Kronenberg replied that they typically honk when they are backing up.

Commissioner Khanloo asked about customer service improvements. Mr. Kronenberg indicated he could get back to them with the data. He thought there was improved performance in Q3 and Q4. He spoke to the importance of better staffing levels with this.

Chair Knezevic commented that she lives downtown and has always been pleased with the service from Republic.

c) Utility Rate Relief Programs and COVID-19 Response

Heather DeWitt, Utility Rate and Tax Relief Program Administrator, reviewed some program background, efforts during COVID-19 and next steps. Guiding principles of the Utility Rate Relief (URR) were reviewed. The URR provides for a utility bill discount or rebate for low income seniors and disabled residents. The Emergency Assistance Program is for residents who are experiencing a temporary financial shock and can waive up to four months of utility bills.

Enrollment has been declining over the past five years. Reasons for denied applications were reviewed. The main reason was that they did not meet the income requirements. This was followed by incomplete applications.

The Emergency Assistance Program helps low income households who do not qualify for other rate relief programs. Due to COVID-19 there has been a large increase in applications. Reasons why applications were not approved were due to incomplete applications, over income levels or no actual financial shock.

Ms. DeWitt discussed ways the Rate Relief Program adapted during COVID-19. This included assisting customers with short renewal forms, secure electronic submittals, and telephone assistance. Other methods of reaching customers included city-wide publications, working with community partners, and community action agencies referrals. Enrollment has been declining, but there is a plan to bolster enrollment. They plan to continue the efforts made in 2020, create a brochure in the top languages, provide electronic forms and exploring additional avenues for promotion.

Commissioner Wan referred to the decline in participation in the URR and asked if there is a goal number. Ms. DeWitt replied that the target set by staff is to reach 20% of eligible customers who meet the requirements based on census data. Right now they are reaching 15%. Commissioner Wan expressed surprise about the low number of approved applications for 2020. Ms. DeWitt commented that getting the applications completed was a significant issue. She attributed this to the lack of urgency because there were no water shutoffs during the pandemic. Staff has been working with customers to find ways to get applications completed.

Commissioner Khanloo asked if technology barriers or language barriers are reasons for the incomplete applications. Ms. DeWitt indicated that didn't appear to be the case.

Chair Knezevic asked how these programs are communicated to multifamily residences that don't get direct bills. Ms. DeWitt noted that Mini City Hall does some outreach to people who live in the Crossroads area. The City also communicates with King County Housing Authority about the programs and the low-income senior apartments that are not associated with King County Housing Authority. *It's Your City* newsletter also goes out to all residents in Bellevue, including multifamily residents.

10. REVIEW OF COMMISSION & COUNCIL CALENDARS

Deputy Director Brian Bartle reviewed the ESC Calendar and the Council Calendar. He pointed out that the May 6 O&M Field Trip is probably not going to happen and will likely be moved to September.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Chair Knezevic, seconded by Vice Chair Strom, to adjourn the meeting. Upon a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously (6-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 8:19 p.m.