

East Bellevue Community Council
Summary Minutes of Regular Meeting

June 7, 2022
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall, Room 1E-108
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Chair Kasner¹, Vice Chair Dhananjaya, Alternate Vice Chair Epstein and Councilmembers Hummer and Lai

ABSENT: None.

STAFF: Thara Johnson, Comprehensive Planning Manager, Community Development Department
Brian Wendt, Assistant City Attorney, City Attorney's Office

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m., with Vice Chair Dhananjaya presiding.

Councilmember Hummer moved to approve the remote participation of Councilmembers. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Lai and carried by a vote of 5-0.

2. ROLL CALL/FLAG SALUTE

Deputy City Clerk Karin Roberts called the roll and all Councilmembers were present. Councilmember Lai led the flag salute.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilmember Hummer moved to approve the agenda. Councilmember Lai seconded the motion, which carried by a vote of 5-0.

4. COMMUNICATIONS: WRITTEN AND ORAL

John Kappler, Vice Chair of the Houghton Community Council, said he is the owner of an architectural firm in East Bellevue. He expressed his gratitude and appreciation for EBCC members' service to their constituents. He said he hopes the City will commemorate the partnership and contributions of the EBCC over many years.

Gerry Hughes said that any of the EBCC members would be welcome in the Lake Hills Neighborhood Association (LHNA). He noted that Councilmember Hummer has already joined the group and said there are plans to create an EBCC subcommittee to operate within the association. He looks forward to continuing to advocate for East Bellevue.

¹ Chair Kasner was participating remotely.

5. **REPORTS OF CITY COUNCIL, BOARDS, and COMMISSIONS:** None.

6. **REPORT OF THE CHAIR**

Vice Chair Dhananjaya concurred with Mr. Hughes that there are a number of opportunities for East Bellevue residents to stay involved in their community.

7. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

(a) Affordable Housing Strategy Implementation Update

Vice Chair Dhananjaya introduced staff's presentation regarding the City's Affordable Housing Strategy.

Thara Johnson, Comprehensive Planning Manager, Community Development Department, said that updates regarding the implementation of the Affordable Housing Strategy are provided to the City Council every six months. The plan was adopted by the Council in June 2017 with a target of creating 2,500 affordable housing units over a 10-year period, 2016-2026. The plan includes 21 actions under five broader strategies: 1) help people stay in their affordable housing, 2) create a variety of housing choices, 3) create more affordable housing, 4) unlock the housing supply by making it easier to build, and 5) prioritize state, county and local funding for affordable housing.

Ms. Johnson said a total of 1,528 affordable housing units have been created since 2017 including 678 units of preservation housing, 190 shelter beds, 517 new affordable units as well as inclusionary affordable units and accessory dwelling units (ADUs). There are approximately 379 affordable housing units in the development pipeline to be completed in 2022 and 2023.

Ms. Johnson said the City Council's updated list of 2021-2023 priorities calls for exploring code amendments instead of Comprehensive Plan amendments for projects with a high amount of low- and middle-income housing and to strengthen the housing bonus program.

Ms. Johnson said there are three future affordable housing projects in the Eastgate area: 1) men's shelter (100 beds), 2) permanent supportive housing (95 units), and 3) workforce housing (360 units). The City dedicated an additional \$4 million in 2021 to help support the projects. The City partnered with King County and Amazon to preserve 36 affordable housing units at the Illahee Apartments serving households at the 0-30 percent AMI (area median income) level. The City contributed \$4 million in this effort to save the apartments from redevelopment.

Land Use Code Amendments to encourage affordable housing addressed reduced minimum parking requirements for affordable units near transit, the allowance of unit lot subdivisions, and the removal of the three-year waiting period for creating an ADU in new construction. Ms. Johnson said the multifamily tax exemption (MFTE) program was updated in 2021 and is available in all multifamily land use districts. A 12-year tax exemption is provided to developers in exchange for 20-percent affordable housing units. The exemption is intended to provide deeper affordability for extra small units, projects with two or more bedrooms, and units that overlap with other development incentives.

Ms. Johnson said House Bill 1590 approved by the state legislature in 2021 authorized a 0.1 percent sales and use tax for housing and related supportive services. A human services request for proposals (RFP) allocated \$1.7 million toward housing and related services, including behavioral health services. The capital project RFP allowed up to \$1.6 million toward LifeWire's Hope Starts Here program.

Ms. Johnson described the Action C-1 incentive of the Affordable Housing Strategy, which provides a "by right" 50 percent bonus for affordable housing at the 80-percent AMI level on property in multifamily districts owned by a religious organization, nonprofit organization or public agency. The incentive provides the same bonus for property owned by religious organizations in single-family districts. It provides flexibility for dimensional standards and allows duplexes and triplexes for up to 50 percent of the units.

Ms. Johnson noted upcoming work to consider additional land use map and policy amendments to incentivize affordable housing on or near arterials and close to transit services. The housing needs assessment will be initiated this summer. The periodic update to the Comprehensive Plan is due in 2024 and updates will address housing unit targets and map amendments, housing affordability targets and policies for increasing housing options.

Ms. Johnson presented information regarding housing needs in Bellevue and highlighted the AMI levels for different job categories. Almost one-third of Bellevue households spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing. Ms. Johnson said that 16 percent of renters and nearly one-third of senior renters spend more than half of their income on housing. She noted the need for housing serving households at the 0-50 percent AMI levels. She described the concept of missing middle housing which are units ranging from small scale apartments to duplexes in walkable and transit-rich areas. They typically have two or more bedrooms and are more affordable than single-family homes to provide options throughout residents' lives. She noted that 7,053 missing middle housing units were created in the 1970s, compared to 669 units from 2010 through 2020.

Next steps for the implementation of the Affordable Housing Strategy include completing the housing needs assessment, Comprehensive Plan periodic update and other actions identified as the "next right work." Ms. Johnson said staff will provide an update to the City Council in July, which will also include a discussion regarding planning for the Wilburton area.

Councilmember Epstein thanked Ms. Johnson for the presentation. Responding to Mr. Epstein, Ms. Johnson said the City tracks affordable housing units through permit information. However, that information does not include preservation units.

Responding to Councilmember Hummer, Ms. Johnson confirmed that the shelter beds include St. Mary's Place in downtown Bellevue. Ms. Hummer said more than 200 affordable housing units were added in the Lake Hills area and they are not reflected in the presentation. She said the King County Housing Authority and Amazon purchased the Pinewood Apartments and the Carrington Apartments in 2021. She said the Pinewood Apartments are across the street from YMCA low-income housing and the Carrington Apartments are across the street from King County Housing Authority housing. Ms. Johnson said she believed the Pinewood Apartments

purchase was in late 2020 and she noted that a total of 226 preservation units were created in 2020.

Councilmember Hummer asked about regulations for guest cottages and Ms. Johnson said she would follow up with information. Responding to Ms. Hummer, Ms. Johnson said staff will provide an update to the City Council on July 5 regarding HB 1590 funds and anticipated expenditures. In further response to Ms. Hummer, Ms. Johnson said she would follow up with more information regarding land use incentives in the Downtown and BelRed areas and the number of affordable housing units that have been created. Ms. Johnson said staff is still refining the public engagement plan regarding the City's approach to Action C-1. She said there will likely be an open house as well as additional discussion by the Planning Commission and City Council. She noted that more information is provided on the City's web site.

Ms. Hummer said the Lake Hills Baptist Church is not reflected on the list of eligible properties for the Action C-1 incentive. She said the St. Louise Church property is 10 acres but is listed as one-half acre. She said the Church of Resurrection and a small church in the Enatai area are also not on the list. She said the latter site is across the street from the South Bellevue light rail station and would be a good location for housing. She encouraged the distribution of affordable housing across Bellevue, noting her concern about the concentration of affordable housing in the Lake Hills and Crossroads neighborhoods.

Ms. Hummer wondered why developers do not build more cottage-style homes. Ms. Johnson said her understanding is that it is not as profitable for developers as other housing styles. She said Habitat for Humanity is pursuing a project on a church site in Bellevue that will include a mix of housing types and sizes including duplexes and cottages.

Chair Kasner thanked Ms. Johnson for the information. Mr. Kasner noted that preservation housing units represent one-quarter of the added housing units. However, that is not new housing. Mr. Kasner said there is a need for 15,000 affordable housing units in Bellevue. He encouraged the City to engage the community in discussions about the creation of affordable housing. He expressed concern that 80 percent of the growth in affordable housing units is concentrated in the Crossroads, Lake Hills and Newport Hills areas.

Responding to Mr. Kasner, Ms. Johnson acknowledged that the target of creating 2,500 units of affordable housing was not based on an assessment of housing need but rather on what the City thought it could achieve through the action strategies in the Affordable Housing Strategy plan. She said the upcoming housing needs assessment will provide specific information to assist Bellevue for the future. Ms. Johnson said there will be a number of opportunities for public involvement regarding affordable housing, particularly through the Comprehensive Plan update process. She said a number of neighborhood associations have requested presentations from City staff regarding the update.

Councilmember Lai thanked Ms. Johnson for the information. He concurred with his colleagues' comments about the concentration of affordable housing in East Bellevue. He stated his understanding that the need for missing middle housing is a nationwide issue. Responding to Mr. Lai, Ms. Johnson said the City will be evaluating a number of approaches, including expanding housing choice and diversity in various parts of Bellevue. Responding to Mr. Lai, Mr. Wendt said staff would follow up with information regarding the definition of a second kitchen.

Vice Chair Dhananjaya said he shared Mr. Kasner's concern about the affordable housing target. He encouraged a more balanced distribution of housing types. Responding to Mr. Dhananjaya, Ms. Johnson encouraged everyone to watch or attend the City Council meeting on July 5 for an update regarding HB 1590 funding. She said the City anticipates approximately \$8 million annually from the HB 1590 sales and use tax of 0.1 percent.

8. **PUBLIC/COURTESY HEARINGS**: None.

9. **RESOLUTIONS**: None.

10. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**: None.

11. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**: None.

12. **NEW BUSINESS**

(a) Congregations for the Homeless Presentation

Vice Chair Dhananjaya introduced David Bowling to provide an update regarding Congregations for the Homeless (CFH) and their programs.

Mr. Bowling, CFH Executive Director, said that one of the best solutions to address homelessness is to offer different types of housing. He said CFH primarily works with men experiencing homelessness, and men represent approximately two-thirds of the homeless population both countywide and nationally. He said the King County Regional Homelessness Authority has chosen a different way to look at homelessness and they have stated that more than 40,000 individuals are experiencing homelessness.

Mr. Bowling said that partnership with the community is key to the success of programs to address homelessness. He said thousands of volunteers and supporters from the community help to move CFH's mission forward. He said CFH develops relationships with the men to help address the specific issues affecting homelessness. He noted the importance of showing dignity, respect and empowerment for the men. He said the men help with cleaning and cooking chores, which allows them to contribute to their community. He noted the value of housed community members becoming involved with helping individuals experiencing homelessness. He said CFH emphasizes that the men are part of the community, which encourages them to contribute to taking care of the shelter and to helping each other.

Mr. Bowling said CFH receives funding from the City and is currently looking for funding to hire an outreach navigator to help women and families as well. He said the emergency men's shelter in Bellevue has 100 beds and serves approximately 125 men, including those who do not stay overnight but who receive other services such as meals, showers, haircuts and supportive services. He said there is also a 30-bed rotating shelter that moves between different congregations. There are currently 10 rotating shelters in Bellevue, one in Medina and one in Redmond. Mr. Bowling said CFH was funded at the beginning of the pandemic to provide a housing program at the Quality Inn in the Eastgate area that serves approximately 20 men. The

men chosen for that program have medical or other issues that were considered high risk during the pandemic.

Mr. Bowling said supportive services are key to the success of CFH's programs. He said case management helps the men navigate through different services and barriers to affordable housing. He said mental health and addiction recovery services are critical, and CFH is looking to add an employment specialist as well.

Mr. Bowling said CFH operates two different housing programs totaling 90 units of housing for men. All but a few of those units are in Bellevue, with a few in Kirkland and Issaquah. He said the On and Up housing program provides 20 units for men who can afford \$600 in rent and continue to receive supportive services. He said CFH also helps individuals navigate access to market-rate housing. CFH serves 1,500 people annually and nearly 1,000 of those enter programs through the emergency men's shelter. Mr. Bowling said that 60 percent of the men who seek services through CFH identify as Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), and 50 percent disclose that they have some level of a disability. He said that 27 percent of the men served are above the age of 55 and 90 percent have strong roots in King County.

Mr. Bowling said the emergency men's shelter is currently in a building owned by the City of Bellevue. The lease ends at the end of the year and the City is looking into extending the contract. He said CFH is building the Eastgate campus, which will become the new home for the shelter. He said CFH needed only one-third of an acre of the 10-acre Eastgate parcel. King County owned the property and would not divide it to sell it. As a result, CFH secured partners to provide workforce housing and permanent supportive housing on the site. Those facilities are scheduled to open next year. Mr. Bowling said the permanent supportive housing will be able to accommodate individuals coming from the women's program operated by The Sophia Way.

Mr. Bowling said the availability of housing options is critical to solving homelessness. He noted the need for more housing for individuals who are able to pay rent up to the 60-percent AMI level. He said the vast majority of men served by CFH could come out of homelessness if more of those units were available. There is also the need for more supportive services with housing. Mr. Bowling said a number of men struggle with addiction and they want sober-living housing options.

Mr. Bowling said that community involvement and holding the men accountable is important to CFH's work. He said CFH has good relationships with the Bellevue Police Department and the Parks and Community Services Department, who help inform CFH in their operations and practices. He noted the importance of providing meals, both as a necessity and as a way for building community. Additional needs include gloves, hats, underwear, socks, work boots and other clothing. He said CFH relies on both government funding and private donations. He said community members participate with the men in the shelter by providing yoga classes, a running club, financial literacy information and other activities.

Vice Chair Dhananjaya thanked Mr. Bowling for the presentation.

Councilmember Lai thanked Mr. Bowling and CFH for their work in the community. Responding to Mr. Lai, Mr. Bowling said the men's homeless shelter in Bellevue opened in 2008 and was open only six months per year until a few years ago. It did not provide supportive

services. He said funding for case management and mental health services became available only in the past six months and, as a result, he feels CFH does not yet have good data on how the men progress through housing and supportive services. Mr. Bowling said there will be more meaningful data going forward as supportive services become more robust. He said the average stay at the shelter is approximately 3-1/2 weeks. However, two-thirds of the men have been in the shelter for 6-8 months. Mr. Bowling said that funding has not been available in the past to track where the men go when they leave the shelter. He said the recent addition of two mental health case managers has significantly increased the effectiveness of CFH's program.

In further response to Councilmember Lai, Mr. Bowling said CFH currently has approximately 40 staff, which is anticipated to increase to 50 staff when the shelter moves into the new Eastgate building.

Chair Kasner thanked Mr. Bowling for his dedication to CFH's mission. Mr. Kasner expressed support for the efforts to provide activities that bring housed and unhoused individuals together in the community. He encouraged CFH to enhance its efforts to educate the public and offered his help through the LHNA.

Councilmember Hummer thanked Mr. Bowling for the information. Responding to Ms. Hummer, Mr. Bowling commented regarding the Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) and permitting process for the Eastgate project. He said there were a number of lessons learned throughout the process and it gave CFH the opportunity to get to know the community and to solicit input. He said CFH staff meet monthly with Eastgate community members. He noted the importance of developing a project that works for everyone in the community. Ms. Hummer expressed appreciation for the good neighbor agreement related to The Sophia Way women's shelter at St. Luke's Church in Bellevue.

Responding to Ms. Hummer, Mr. Bowling said CFH has been operating permanent housing with light to moderate supportive services since 2006 in Bellevue. Permanent supportive housing, such as the future Eastgate facility, provides 24-hour on-site services.

At 8:30 p.m., Councilmember Hummer moved to extend the meeting by 30 minutes. Councilmember Lai seconded the motion, which carried by a vote of 5-0.

Responding to Ms. Hummer, Mr. Bowling listed some of the congregations involved with CFH and noted that eight of the 12 original congregations are still hosting homeless individuals. Mr. Hummer thanked Mr. Bowling and CFH for their work.

Responding to Councilmember Epstein, Mr. Bowling said that typically the first contact with an individual experiencing homelessness is through the Bellevue Police Department or the Parks and Community Services Department. He said the City is familiar with CFH's shelter and will refer and sometimes transport individuals to the shelter. He said an outreach worker works in the community as well, sometimes in coordination with the City's outreach worker and police officers.

In further response to Mr. Epstein, Mr. Bowling said the number of men turned away from the shelter has increased in recent years. He said the eviction bans initiated during the pandemic helped to keep people housed. However, Mr. Bowling said he is concerned about what will

happen when those bans are fully lifted. He said CFH estimates that there are 750 men on the Eastside experiencing homelessness on any given night.

Vice Chair Dhananjaya thanked Mr. Bowling for taking the time to meet with the EBCC. Mr. Dhananjaya noted Mr. Bowling's comment during the presentation that approximately 90 percent of the men in the shelter have local ties. Mr. Dhananjaya observed that there is a misperception, especially in Seattle, that people migrate to this area for social services. He expressed concern about individuals experiencing homelessness, including high school students who are living in cars or other unhoused situations. Mr. Dhananjaya said he is grateful for the work of CFH.

Responding to Mr. Dhananjaya, Mr. Bowling said the quickest way to an individual gaining independence is to surround that person with supportive relationships. He said the challenge for CFH and society is to do that in a way that is not enabling but rather empowering. In further response, Mr. Bowling said a local employer is interested in funding an employment specialist to work with the shelter. He said King County Parks and Recreation hired 30 of the men, which was significant in helping them to secure housing and to have hope and a sense of purpose. In further response to Mr. Dhananjaya, Mr. Bowling said CFH often helps the men in the shelter to reconcile with family members.

13. **CONTINUED COMMUNICATIONS:** None.

14. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None.

15. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

(a) Summary Regular Meeting Minutes May 3, 2022

Councilmember Lai moved to approve the minutes of the May 3, 2022 Regular Meeting. Councilmember Hummer seconded the motion, which carried by a vote of 5-0.

16. **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Kasner encouraged everyone to attend the EBCC meeting at City Hall on June 23.

Councilmember Hummer thanked everyone for their involvement with the EBCC and noted that she looks forward to participating on the LHNA's legislative committee.

At 8:58 p.m., Vice Chair Dhananjaya declared the meeting adjourned.

Karin Roberts, CMC
Deputy City Clerk

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