

The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on June 4, 2019

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

May 7, 2019
6:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Mercer, Commissioners Jain, Kline, Ma, McEachran, Oxrieder

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Piper

STAFF PRESENT: Alex O'Reilly, Dee Dee Catalano, Christy Stangland, Department of Parks and Community Services

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Mercer who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Ma, who arrived at 6:06 p.m., and Commissioner Piper, who was excused.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 19, 2019

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

B. April 2, 2019

A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Jain. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kline and the motion carried without dissent; Commissioner Oxrieder abstained from voting.

C. April 16, 2019

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

4. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – None

5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None

6. STAFF AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Kline shared with the Commissioners a flyer regarding a senior at Sammamish High School who has worked with Youth Eastside Services and with counselors and teachers in the Bellevue School District to set up a Latino/Latina graduation ceremony for June 7. The ceremony will honor any Latino or Latina youth who is graduating, whether it be from elementary school, junior high, high school, GED or college.

Commissioner McEachran highlighted the recent Count Us In findings that reported an eight percent decrease in homelessness. He said the *Seattle Times* article tracking who enters homelessness and who leaves was very interesting.

Commissioner McEachran noted that along with Commissioners Ma and Jain he participated in the visit to Renewal Food Bank. He said seven years ago when he visited the agency they were in deep trouble, having just been evicted from their base of operations. Now they have a huge and wonderful operation with a very large capacity. He said he was very impressed.

Commissioner McEachran also reported that the third community conversation at Bellevue College was the most successful. The main issues raised were food, security and homelessness.

Commissioner Jain said she gained great perspective from the joint human services commissions meeting. She said she came to believe that the other Eastside cities do not have the same homelessness and food issues that Bellevue has. She said she saw a clear need for training in each city to help the communities understand the needs. She said she visited the India Association of Western Washington center to meet the person who runs the organization. She said she learned they address a lot of needs in the community. There are many clients who do not know any English and who do not understand the systems that are in place. Every quarter or so they experience about three teen suicide cases, some of which are only attempts. Many who need food assistance are reluctant to visit a food bank, and many who suffer from domestic violence are not willing to seek help. The staff are clearly committed

to meeting the needs of the students.

Human Services Manager Alex O'Reilly said the planning staff from the different Eastside cities meet together monthly. At the next meeting the group will be going over the notes from the joint commissions meeting. Cultural sensitivity training or something similar will be on the agenda for the rest of the year. It was suggested at the joint meeting that agencies should talk directly with people who are experiencing human services issues, such as homelessness, hunger, mental illness and domestic violence. While that approach should be considered, sensitivity should be considered before talking to folks.

Human Services Planner Christy Stangland said she is currently engaged in visiting all of the day centers and setting up community conversations at those locations.

Commissioner McEachran stressed the need for Commissioners to look at the documents that drive their work. The Comprehensive Plan is the backbone of the city and it would be helpful to have an in-service focused on the policies it contains.

Commissioner Ma commented that Renewal Food Bank is well located. The operation is more organic and less administrative. It has a very welcoming atmosphere.

Ms. Stangland reported that she attended the Youth Link Council and presented some questions regarding the youth survey. She said she got lots of good feedback that has been taken into account. The questions have been framed to avoid asking about personal experiences and to focus more on their perceptions of their community. The survey has since been finalized and it has gone live.

Assistant Director of the Department of Parks and Community Services Toni Esparza said the visit to the Youth Link Council was intended to help mobile youth in getting their peers to fill out the youth survey.

Commissioner Kline suggested contacting the PTSA organizations about including in their newsletters a blurb about the youth survey.

Grant Coordinator Dee Dee Catalano reported that the RFP for the 2020 CDBG funding went out last month and will close on May 16. The applications received will be seen by the Commission for the first time at the Commission's June 4 meeting.

Ms. O'Reilly noted that she had forwarded an email to the Commissioners from a resident regarding a proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment related to the Human Services Element. She said there is an annual process by which anyone in the city can propose amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission studies, reviews and holds a public hearing on all Comprehensive Plan amendments. She said a public hearing is scheduled for May 22 to discuss the proposed amendment to the Human Services Element.

Associate Planner Janet Lewine explained that there is a two-part process for amending the Comprehensive Plan. The first step is threshold review and at that stage a determination is made as to whether or not a proposal meets the decision criteria for including it on the city's annual work program. The public hearing on May 22 is for threshold review.

Ms. O'Reilly reported that 12 applications had been received for the open seat on the Commission.

7. INFORMATION FOR THE COMMISSION

A. Recreation Plan Update

Parks and Community Services Department Senior Planner Betsy Anderson said her primary role is to lead the department through the long-range planning documents, one of which is the Recreation Program Plan. She said the plan was first created in the late 1990s with a focus on guiding the city's investment in recreation programs, with specific attention paid to meeting the needs of those who have limited opportunities for recreation. There has always been recognition of the fact that the city is one recreation provider among many and as such it plays a partnership role and a gap identifying role. The Recreation Program Plan advances the policy framework in the Comprehensive Plan. Within the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element there is a specific recreation and community services chapter that has some overlap with the work of the Commission in the way the department offers holistic programs and services to support a healthy community. The department is accredited by the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies, a national body that establishes standards for high-quality experiences, facilities and programs. The Recreation Program Plan meets all of the accreditation requirements of that organization.

Ms. Anderson said the current plan has not been substantively updated in 20 years, which speaks to the relevance of the core philosophies and how well they serve the department. There are six goals in the current plan: 1) to ensure that the city provides recreation opportunities that allow all residents to enjoy the positive benefits of recreation; 2) to place special emphasis on the city's recreation programming and spending to meet the needs of teens, youth, older adults, persons with disabilities and those with limited opportunities for recreation; 3) to design and deliver programs collectively with other service providers in the city of Bellevue; 4) to promote the full utilization of the City's current and future recreation facilities as appropriate; 5) to build a healthy community through recreation programs, facilities, and special events; and 6) to understand and plan for future needs and trends in recreation.

The format of the existing plan is unusual in that it has goals in one section and a suite of implementation strategies in a separation section. There are seven implementation strategies: 1) ensure that residents are aware of and can access

programs and services; 2) effectively use technology to build healthy individuals and families; 3) research, evaluate, and where appropriate provide new programming addressing evolving community recreation needs; 4) maintain a multi-faceted evaluation program to ensure relevant, effective, and flexible service delivery; 5) implement a pricing policy which meets revenue targets while maintaining affordability to the general public; 6) increase rental use of facilities to enhance revenue; and 7) leverage partnerships to coordinate and jointly offer programs that address recreation needs in our community.

Commissioner Oxrieder asked what Eastside Pathways does in terms of operating in partnership with the parks and recreation programs. Ms. Anderson said the collective impact model engages students during out of school times. Youth in the community can spend their leisure time recreating, which helps to meet some of the core goals of the organization. Assistant Director of the Department of Parks and Community Services Toni Esparza said one practical element of Eastside Pathways that relates to recreation is Out of School Time. While the collaborative involves child care, it also involves access to activities. In 2018 the collaborative worked jointly with the city in drafting a grant application for \$1 million to provide scholarships to children in shelters.

Ms. Anderson said the core planning team has spent the last six months or so diving into the existing plan and identifying opportunities for the update. The team includes several individuals who have spent decades working in recreation and community services, namely Toni Esparza, Shelley Brittingham, Helena Stephens, Brad Bennett and Colin Walker. Their work will serve as a springboard to inform conversations with the city's boards and commissions and the public over the summer. Community outreach is slated to occur during the summer months as well and it will be used to inform, refine and change where necessary the planning framework. The plan ultimately will be formally endorsed by the Parks and Community Services Board.

There are a number of core similarities with the existing plan. The updated plan will continue to focus on meeting the needs of residents with limited opportunities for recreation and filling needs not provided by other entities; emphasize well-coordinated recreation programs and collaboration with partners; focus on health and community building; and identify the need for ongoing data collection to inform program offerings. The key differences will lie in the fact that the updated plan will be more streamlined and user friendly; and it will be in alignment with the citywide Diversity Advantage Initiative, the plan more strongly emphasizes the role of equity, diversity, accessibility, and cultural competence in program planning and delivery. The planning team will undertake public outreach to vet the proposed goals and strategies and collect information to help refine the actions in the plan.

The draft vision for recreation serves as the guiding light for the plan document. As drafted, it reads "Bellevue is a healthy community where all people participate in a range of recreation activities of their choosing, offered by any service provider, allowing them to be physically and mentally healthier and better connected to their

neighbors and to the community.” The draft guiding principles in support of the vision emphasis being health focused, building community, a culture of excellence, and being dynamic and resourceful. While the vision and the guiding principles will be static elements, the goals and strategies will change over time. The draft has four overarching goals and associated strategies: 1) ensure that every Bellevue resident can access recreational opportunities and community services, to be accomplished by evaluating and improving department programs and services to make sure they are equitable and accessible in development and delivery, connecting with new audiences through expanded outreach and communication efforts, and identifying opportunities to expand program access for those who work or go to school in Bellevue; 2) offer programs and services that are consistent with the guiding principles and reflect the community’s interests and needs, specifically those of underserved groups, to be accomplished by placing special emphasis on programming and spending to meet the needs of those with limited opportunities for recreation, identifying and addressing gaps in program and service delivery in collaboration with community members and organizations, empowering staff to respond nimbly to the changing recreational needs of a growing city, and engaging with new and established partners to enhance program and service delivery; 3) promote community well-being through programs and services that instill a sense of belonging and inclusion, to be addressed by expanding recreation choice for people with disabilities by promoting both adaptive recreation opportunities and inclusion services throughout the system, to better connect residents to the community, and promoting recreation, gathering places, special events, and time to connect as important facets of a livable community and healthy economy; and 4) foster individual health and wellness through opportunities for structured and unstructured play, exercise, and recreation by providing resources and programs that promote lifelong fitness and healthy lifestyles, developing programs and tools that get people outside and encourage exploration of parks and trails, designing programs and facilities that provide opportunities for play for residents of all ages, and providing recreation programs and community services that support children and youth in the development of physical, cognitive, and social skills, and through expanded learning opportunities and risk reduction.

A multipronged outreach strategy is envisioned. It involves meeting with the city’s boards, commissions and advisory groups; scheduling focus groups and stakeholder meetings; an open web survey; questionnaires and in-person engagement; and e-newsletter, social media and flyers. It is hoped that the process will serve to build longer-term connections that can be turned into a feedback loop. The bulk of the outreach efforts will move forward during the summer. The Parks and Community Services Board will be provided with an update in the fall, and the schedule calls for the plan to be endorsed in early 2020.

Commissioner Oxrieder said she did not see the Boys & Girls Club on the list of engaged organizations and asked about the relationship with the facility at Hidden Valley Park. Ms. Anderson said the need to engage with that organization has specifically been identified, along with the YMCA and Jubilee REACH, relative to Out

of School Time groups. What could be altered in terms of programming in the Hidden Valley facility is something that would need to be addressed during the process of engagement with the Boys & Girls Club.

Commissioner McEachran asked how the aquatic center fits into the mix. Ms. Anderson said a facilities study is currently under way as part of a Council priority. It is being led by the department and the thinking is that the information gathered as part of the outreach process will mesh with that.

Chair Mercer noted that the Commission's big topics of conversation recently have been transportation and access. She said the draft plan is all about providing great programs for folks that perhaps cannot regularly get to them and she suggested the plan should have a section that discusses how folks will access them. Ms. Anderson agreed with the importance of that suggestion. She said the issue of access is being considered by the team in a holistic way. In going out to the community, the strategies will hopefully be broken down into more specific actions, including some that are related to transportation access.

8. INFORMATION FOR THE COMMISSION

A. Affordable Housing Strategy Update

Senior Planner Janet Lewine shared with the Commissioners a photo of the new Imagine Housing project that is close to opening. She noted that the Imagine Housing website has a picture of the homemade quilts that have been made for every family that will be moving into the development. The units are for the very low income, including households that are coming out of homelessness and disabled households. It was developed on surplus property provided by a church.

Ms. Lewine explained that the city's affordable housing strategy was adopted by resolution in June 2017. It is an implementation document for the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan and it includes 21 actions organized under five interrelated strategy headings. The delivery of affordable homes will increase over the implementation period as all of the strategies are implemented and gather momentum. The Council adopted a two-phase work program in August 2017 and is being regularly updated with regard to implementation. Some of the actions provide incentives for affordable housing targeted to growth areas in the city, including Bel-Red, Eastgate and the downtown. The multifamily tax exemption was updated in February 2018, the same month the Council reviewed the C-1 screening criteria, which entails larger incentives for achieving units affordable at the lowest income levels.

The Council in March wanted to know how many units have been created, how long it would take to implement the remaining actions, if things were on track to meet the goal, where the affordable units are relative to light rail investments, and how many units could be expected to be achieved under voluntary versus mandatory incentives.

The affordable housing strategy was developed through the work of the technical advisory group and consultants. The work included developing an extensive list of specific actions. The Council was presented with a lot of information about what might be expected to be gained from the actions. The greatest need is for units affordable to those earning 50 percent of area median income or less, which is about 9000 households in Bellevue. There are currently only about 3000 units affordable to that group. The number of subsidized units in the city is, interestingly, about 3000. The greatest need across King County is in the same category.

Ms. Lewine shared with the Commissioners a chart showing the number of affordable homes realized since adoption of the affordable housing strategy, which she noted was 226. She noted that the total came about through a variety of methods, including direct funding, accessory dwelling units, land use incentives in the downtown, and the multifamily tax exemption program.

Commissioner Oxrieder asked for what period of time affordable units must continue to be affordable. Ms. Lewine said anything Bellevue funds must remain affordable for the life of the project, or 50 years. The units brought about through the multifamily tax exemption are only required to be affordable for 12 years. Projects resulting from density incentives must also remain affordable for the life of the project. Accessory dwelling units may or may not continue affordably, but most seem to be coming in at about 80 percent of area median income.

The Commissioners were told that the target goal of 2500 units over ten years is less than the need. It is rather the expected efficacy of the actions the Council chose to implement. The technical advisory group identified the need for some 6000 affordable units over ten years to address the actual need. It was pointed out that with mandatory incentives, it is likely that some 260 units would be achieved over ten years in the city's growth areas compared to voluntary incentives; such units would be affordable at the 80 percent of area median income level.

Ms. Lewine informed the Commissioners that 152 affordable homes have been or are in the pipeline to be developed within a half mile of a light rail or transit station. The new development coming online around the light rail stations are including affordable units. She highlighted the 30 Bellevue, Highland Village, Park East, 888 Bellevue Tower, Ceresa, LIV and Hyde Square developments.

Commissioner Kline asked how many units in general are being added to the city's housing supply by the developments that include affordable units. Ms. Lewine said the 30 Bellevue and Highland Village developments were brought about through direct subsidies and as such have only affordable units. For the other developments, the affordable units represent only ten percent or less of the total number of units. She said Seattle's HALA program started earlier than Bellevue's affordable housing strategy and it offered extra development in exchange for affordability. That program has resulted in a large uptick in the number of units and to a certain extent it has positively impacted rising rents. Bellevue's program is less aggressive but the overall

picture can certainly be improved by increasing both the housing supply along with the number of affordable units.

The Commissioners were shown a chart showing the affordable housing unit delivery trajectory for the first ten years of the affordable housing strategy. She reiterated that by Year 10 the goal is to have 2500 affordable housing units online. In the first year of the program 151 units were achieved, and in the second year the total decreased to 75. The projected progress, however, continues to be upward. Interestingly, no affordable projects were funded either by the city or by ARCH during 2018, but the pipeline is strong and there are Sound Transit surplus properties the city will seek to make the most of in terms of achieving affordable housing units.

Ms. Lewine said staff are working on a number of the affordable housing strategy actions. Work is underway on reducing the parking requirements for developments around light rail stations, with the hope of encouraging micro apartments. Staff are also working on the surplus properties near the 130th station and the Operations and Maintenance Facility East to facilitate new affordable housing units at those locations. Work to update the tax exemption programs has been completed. The promotion of energy efficiency in the design and construction of affordable units as a way of reducing costs for residents is continuing. Density incentives and inclusionary zoning for the downtown and Eastgate have been adopted, and implementation of the same in East Main and Wilburton is in progress.

Commissioner McEachran pointed out that the affordable housing technical advisory group used words such as “priority” and “bold collaborative action” in its presentation document. Their recommendation to the Council was for move toward providing 2500 units for people earning less than 50 percent of area median income, and 2000 units affordable to people earning between 50 and 80 percent of area median income. Amazon plans to move 25,000 employees to Bellevue over the next ten years. If they are all high-paying jobs, that will accelerate the increasing cost of home purchases and it could harm rental rates as well. Microsoft has pledged half a billion dollars to develop workforce and affordable units on the Eastside, but the cities will need to have tools in place to take advantage of the offer. Things are and will continue to move quickly, and the city will need to be bold in taking actions in order to keep up and advance.

Commissioner McEachran commented that the five-year action plan from the regional affordable housing task force suggests there is a need for 102,000 units affordable at zero to 30 percent of area median income. Vision 2050 puts forward two alternatives: do nothing more than what is already being done, and focusing growth on transit areas, including in Bellevue. It is clearly time to think beyond mere two-year funding cycles. Ms. Lewine added that the alternatives in the Vision 2050 plan will worsen the jobs/housing balance. The growth in jobs in Bellevue is exacerbating housing affordability given that the number of jobs is increasing much faster than the number of housing units. The approach likely to be adopted by the City Council will focus growth along light rail.

Commissioner Ma noted that meeting the need is part of the Comprehensive Plan and asked what reasons are being given by the Council or stakeholders for not setting goals. Ms. Lewine said there are good voices in the city. The business survey listed affordable housing as the top concern. The human services survey has every year for many years had affordable housing as the number one issue in Bellevue, and the margin of people who hold that view is growing. The pledged funds from Microsoft is challenging leaders to approve actions that will create more affordable housing units.

Chair Mercer said the Commissioners asked the economic development folks how they were responding to the offer from Microsoft and they did not really have an answer. She asked how the city will be addressing the issue. Ms. Lewine said staff has not been able to formulate a response because Microsoft has not said yet how they will implement the program. They have clarified that about \$250 million will go to a loan fund for market developers to use in helping to lower housing unit prices, particularly in the gap market of between 60 and 120 percent of area median income. Microsoft wants from the city assurances that there will be enough appropriately land zoned, and Bellevue believes it does. Another \$220 million in Microsoft funds in the form of loans is earmarked for giving non-profits access to capital. A smaller amount will be set aside for grants to address homeless housing and services.

Commissioner Ma asked if the amount of appropriately zoned land is sufficient to meet the need or just the goal. Ms. Lewine said the capacity is sufficient to meet the projected need, particularly in the Bel-Red and Eastgate areas. Commissioner Ma asked if there has been any pushback from single family homeowners against allowing additional density. Ms. Lewine clarified that no additional density has been proposed for any single family area, and said the city has very strong transition zones in place between multifamily and single family developments.

Commissioner McEachran pointed out that Imagine Housing has no pushback against any of the units they have established in any municipality. There is a clear need, however, to educate residents that affordable housing is not ghetto housing, and to explain the percentages relative to area median income.

Ms. O'Reilly commented that for a previous presentation staff had put together an estimate of how many churches may have land in Bellevue that potentially could be used for affordable housing units. Ms. Lewine said the Council wanted to put guardrails up for where additional density might be located for affordable housing. They did ask about church lands and their distribution throughout the city, and the map that was subsequently developed came about in answer to the question. The majority of the churches are located in single family zones, so only a few meet the criteria.

Commissioner McEachran said it was his recollection that church properties could support as many as 270 units affordable at 50 percent of area median income. Ms.

Lewine said that figure includes church properties along with non-profits and surplus public lands.

Commissioner Kline asked what steps ARCH is taking to address the units that apparently are slipping through the cracks and being converted from being affordable units. Ms. Lewine said an ARCH hired a consultant to conduct an audit who looked at all of the units in their projects. The ownership units primarily are where the problems are occurring. Some units have been lost by foreclosure actions, some have been lost to fraud, and some have been lost due to people being in violation of their contracts by not living in them and renting them out. The recommendations from the audit are currently being shared with the partner cities and with the executive board. Included is a recommendation for more staffing to do better monitoring. There always will be, however, some units lost to foreclosure and fraud given the value of the units. ARCH intends to step up its efforts to get properties back into compliance and keep them there.

9. OLD BUSINESS – None

10. NEW BUSINESS

Chair Mercer reported that she will be traveling and will miss the June 4 meeting. She sought the permission of the Commission to be allowed to participate electronically.

A motion to allow Chair Mercer to participate electronically in the June 4 Commission meeting was made by Commissioner McEachran. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ma and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. O'Reilly commented that there had been some media attention given the recent Point In Time homelessness count. She said the final report is not yet in hand and should be available by the end of the month. Information about the breakouts for each region will be shared with the Commission when it is available.

Ms. Stangland said the tour of Friends of Youth was tentatively set for May 22.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Jain, Ms. O'Reilly said two Commissioners had indicated they will be able to attend the Alliance of Eastside Agencies luncheon on June 5. She said there was still time for others to indicate their intention to attend.

11. CONTINUED ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

12. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner McEachran. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ma and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Mercer adjourned the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date