

**CITY OF BELLEVUE  
COMMUNITIES OF COLOR COORDINATING (CCC) TEAM  
Meeting Minutes**

August 24, 2023  
5:30 p.m.

City Hall  
Conference Room 1E-120

**ATTENDEES:** Monik Martinez, Vice Chair  
Ruhi Gadde (Remote)  
Joel Leiva-Rodriguez  
Kananu Mason (Remote)  
Dr. Randy Nunez  
Ricardo Perezchica  
Jeri-Elizabeth Tiernan  
Ryan Qualls (Remote)  
Royce Yuen (Remote)

**ABSENT:** Amirah Haque, Chair  
Lalita Uppala

**STAFF:** Dr. Marcus Johnson, Diversity, Inclusion and Outreach  
Administrator, City Manager's Office  
Sara Boyle, Equity Coordinator, CMO

**CONSULTANT:** Joshua Barr

**BDAN LIAISON:** Jim Lauinger

**MINUTES WRITER:** Kelly Wilson, City Clerk's Office

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 5:41 p.m. by Ms. Martinez.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Attendance is reflected above.

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Ms. Tiernan moved to approve the agenda. Dr. Nunez seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

#### **4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Dr. Nunez moved to approve the meeting minutes through May 25, 2023. Mr. Leiva-Rodriguez seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

#### **5. CHAIR'S COMMENTS**

Ms. Martinez noted that Ms. Haque is now in college and would be unable to continue serving on the committee. There was a consensus to appoint Ms. Martinez to serve as Chair.

Dr. Nunez moved to appoint Ms. Tiernan to serve as Vice Chair. Mr. Leiva-Rodriguez seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

#### **6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.**

#### **7. STAFF UPDATES**

Dr. Johnson said he needed photos of all members to post on the CCC web page.

#### **8. COMMUNITY DIALOGUES WITH JOSHUA BARR: PHASE 2**

##### **(a) Community Dialogue Reflections**

Jim Lauinger said that participating in the community dialogues was a rewarding experience and he enjoys working with the CCC committee. He believes this initial work will have a lasting influence on the City's policies and practices going forward. He said the community dialogue participants were authentic and open in sharing their concerns and suggestions.

Ms. Tiernan said she has attended a number of Bellevue events and she feels that the communications with the public are improving and becoming more inclusive. She said there was a good mix of community dialogue participants in terms of jobs, ages and racial/ethnic backgrounds.

Mr. Leiva-Rodriguez said it was great to observe the conversations between the participants and he especially appreciated the input from police officers.

Mr. Yuen said he participated in two dialogues. He appreciated the robust discussions and noted that a member of his church, who previously lived in Section 8 housing, was actively engaged in sharing her experiences. He said it was rewarding to see that she felt validated and affirmed. He thanked Ms. Barr for his guidance and facilitation throughout this process.

Mr. Lauinger said we have not said enough about Mr. Barr, who participated in all of the community dialogues. Mr. Lauinger praised Mr. Barr for his ability to handle this type of work so gracefully and to help people feel at ease.

Mr. Perezchica said he especially appreciated Mr. Barr's training and tips on how to deal with different types of people and how to nudge people into sharing and elaborating on their comments to further enrich the discussions.

Ms. Martinez observed that the community felt safe in discussing their concerns, criticisms and suggestions. She thanked Mr. Barr for his role in ensuring that the dialogue sessions were community led and that people felt comfortable providing genuine feedback. She noted that one community dialogue raised concerns about the relationship between the City and the Bellevue School District.

Ms. Martinez suggested that going forward, the CCC committee think about who in the community was missing from the dialogues and how outreach could be improved. She said the City Councilmembers who attended provided positive feedback about the process and she wished more of them had been able to participate. She would like to see the City continue to host community dialogues.

Dr. Johnson said he heard positive comments as well, including from City Manager Miyake and Deputy City Manager McCommon who indicated they would like to see even more community involvement.

Dr. Johnson said the CCC committee can now begin to determine how the information collected will inform their policy recommendations. He said he spoke to Councilmember Janice Zahn at one of the dialogues and she was impressed and pleased with the process and discussions. Dr. Johnson said he looks forward to the next phase of this work.

(b) Dialogue Summary

Mr. Barr commented regarding the post-dialogue policy work. He said nearly all of the dialogues addressed affordable housing, inclusionary zoning, adding different types of housing in the community, workforce housing, mixed use neighborhoods and/or housing for seniors. He noted that one group discussed the need for community navigators and family events in the evenings and weekends. He said there was discussion about how to duplicate the active and diverse experience of Crossroads shopping center and Crossroads Park in other areas of the community. He noted discussion about how to re-brand community centers to be more welcoming to residents and how to bring government services to people.

Mr. Barr said public transportation was a key topic during two of the community dialogues, with an interest in enhanced bus service into neighborhoods and in helping senior adults to utilize apps to navigate public transportation. He said issues related to schools surfaced in all of the dialogues.

Mr. Barr said the next work for the CCC committee is to document the things that the City is already doing, to what depth, and the impact or outcomes. He noted the issue of how to involve more City Councilmembers in the process. He praised the city manager for his listening and occasional commenting without getting defensive.

Mr. Barr said a common theme he heard at every community dialogue was about building a total economy where all persons who work and play in Bellevue have the ability to live in Bellevue. He observed that living costs are the segregating factor in today's communities. He said the cost of living in Bellevue sends a message that this is a community for a certain group of people. However, he noted that if a community's cost of living excludes service workers, then residents will need to travel farther for access to services like auto mechanics, medical care and schools. He said three elementary schools in Bellevue closed this year, which reflects that families with children cannot afford to live here.

Affordable housing was the top concern throughout the community dialogues. Mr. Barr noted an interest in mixed zoning and all types of housing (e.g., duplexes, accessory dwelling units, senior housing) and affordability levels. He said there was discussion about enabling senior adults to remain in Bellevue, mandatory inclusionary zoning, government employee and teacher housing support, lower income home ownership opportunities, Section 8 housing in all types of neighborhoods, how to make community centers more inclusive and welcoming, Board and Commission appointments, transportation, and indoor farmers and artists markets.

Mr. Barr said the City is currently focused on growth in two areas: BelRed and Wilburton. He asked whether the City will take a more downtown approach to guiding development in those areas or more of a Crossroads approach. He recalled comments during the dialogues about making City Hall more accessible and welcoming, the need for more community navigators, and enhanced collaboration between the City and the Bellevue School District.

Ms. Martinez suggested that the City should be more involved in helping residents in certain situations, for example, following the recent apartment building fire in which a number of residents were displaced.

Mr. Barr noted additional themes and issues including police officer involvement with community groups, outreach to address domestic violence, small business support, food truck regulations that differ for certain areas of the community, and School Resource Officers.

Ms. Barr said this is the point in the community dialogue where the real work begins, which is to analyze the results, learn about what the City already does, and formulate ideas and recommendations for the City Council and City Manager to consider.

Mr. Lauinger suggested advocating for affordable housing policies with the Planning Commission.

Mr. Barr suggested researching best practices in other cities in a number of topical areas to inform the CCC Team's recommendations.

Dr. Nunez said the Bellevue School District owns property in Bellevue and has entertained the idea of affordable housing for educators. He said the King County Housing Authority has explored that option as well.

Mr. Lauinger said he sits on the Board for A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH), which provides housing in a number of Eastside communities. He said they are always searching for property and work with the development community and ARCH member cities to provide affordable housing.

Responding to Mr. Barr, Dr. Johnson said he often hears comments from the community encouraging Bellevue to be more like Kirkland in addressing certain issues. Dr. Nunez commented that Kirkland and Redmond are more likely to have affordable housing than Bellevue. He said one factor related to the decrease in enrollment in Bellevue schools is the cost of living.

Mr. Lauinger said a BDAN subcommittee is studying ordinances related to human services in other cities. He said some cities have passed a safe rental policy requiring landlords to provide 120 days notice if rental rates are to be increased by more than 10 percent. He noted there were a number of comments during the community dialogues, especially from people of color, who feel they do not belong in Bellevue. Dr. Johnson commented on incidents of racist language directed toward him in Bellevue.

Mr. Leiva-Rodriguez said he recently volunteered with Habitat for Humanity in Bellevue, which provides affordable housing and a path to home ownership.

Mr. Barr asked everyone to send him any photos they took at the community dialogue sessions.

Ms. Martinez raised the issue of renter protections and how to keep people in affordable housing. She said it is very difficult for people to be able to move when apartment deposits are so high.

Moving on, Dr. Johnson said he sent an email to the committee with login information for their new City email accounts. He encouraged everyone to use those emails for any business related to the CCC Team. If personal emails are used for City-related communications, those personal email accounts could be subject to public disclosure requests.

Dr. Johnson said the City Council recently approved new rules regarding oral communications and appropriate conduct during meetings. He said those rules also apply to Boards and Commissions and to the CCC Team meetings.

(c) Next Steps

Mr. Barr reiterated the need for the committee to research best practices in other cities and jurisdictions and to learn about what the City of Bellevue is already doing related to the themes and needs identified through the community dialogues.

Committee members briefly discussed the challenges in working with developers to provide affordable housing, including the high cost of land in Bellevue.

**9. CLOSING**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

/kaw