

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

January 9, 2024
5:30 p.m

Conference Room 1E-110
Bellevue City Hall

ATTENDEES: Monik Martinez, Chair
Jeri Tiernan, Vice Chair (Remote)
Ruhi Gadde (Remote)
Amirah Haque
Joel Leiva-Rodriguez
Ricardo Perezchica
Lalita Uppala (Remote)

ABSENT: Kananu Mason
Dr. Randy Nunez
Ryan Qualls
Royce Yuen

STAFF: Dr. Marcus Johnson, Diversity, Inclusion and Outreach
Administrator, City Manager's Office
Justin Chan, DEI/CMO
Erik Mercado, DEI/CMO
Brooke Brod, Community Development Department

BDAN LIAISON: Jim Lauinger

GUESTS: City Councilmember Janice Zahn
Tone Austin (Chair) and Angela Cheung, BDAN

MINUTES WRITER: Kelly Wilson, City Clerk's Office

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:42 p.m. by Chair Martinez.

2. ROLL CALL

Attendees are listed above.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Haque moved to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Perezchica and carried unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Perezchica moved to approve the meeting minutes to date. Ms. Haque seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

5. STAFF UPDATES

(a) COB Department Visits

Dr. Johnson said the Diversity Advantage Team (DAT) is currently involved in citywide trainings, updating the Diversity Advantage Plan, cross-cultural programming, and event planning (i.e., Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration and health fair, Black History Month).

Dr. Johnson introduced Brooke Brod, Community Engagement Lead, Community Development Department.

Ms. Brod said some of the issues discussed to date by the CCC Team are already being reflected in the Comprehensive Plan periodic update that is underway. She said staff has heard concerns and comments from the community about public safety and law enforcement. She said the discussions have provided a different lens on public safety that focuses on community collaboration with law enforcement and a more explicit policy related to creating supportive systems for deterring racism and racially motivated hate crimes. She said those themes will be reflected in the Neighborhoods Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Brod said the Community Engagement Element includes new policies that provide direction on more inclusive and equitable community engagement. Issues include offering grants or stipends to individuals or community organizations when appropriate to support engagement, ensuring that staff is looking for opportunities to co-create what engagement should look like with the community, reporting back to the community, and acknowledging that more equitable engagement might require additional time and resources. Ms. Brod said there are also policies related to investing in community leadership programs and developing leadership in diverse communities.

Ms. Brod said the definition of community in the Comprehensive Plan update has been revised to clarify that community includes residents, workers and visitors. She said a major emphasis of the update has been to be more explicit about equity throughout the plan. She said there was quite a bit of interest during one of the community dialogues in how the City supports community gathering spaces and event spaces, which is also a focus of the cross-cultural programming (cross-cultural center without walls) initiative. She said the Economic Development Element of the plan includes new policies about supporting spaces for arts and multicultural activities. The Housing Element reflects significant revisions including policies related to housing stability, especially for renters.

Responding to Mr. Perezchica, Ms. Brod said the Comprehensive Plan is the City's foundational document with a 20-year horizon and is updated every 10 years. The policies tend to focus on what the City plans to do but is not detailed about how or when items will be implemented because that direction will come from the City Council as initiatives arise. Ms. Brod said the Comprehensive Plan includes numerous goals to be implemented over time in conjunction with the community, boards and commissions, and others.

Responding to Ms. Martinez, Ms. Brod said the proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan would be released to the public the following week. The information will be available online in six languages and during two public events in the near future. Ms. Brod said there will be an online survey to solicit public input and an open house is planned for Saturday, January 20.

Ms. Brod said BDAN is hosting a Comprehensive Plan Community Conversation on Thursday, February 8.

Ms. Brod said the public comment period for the Comprehensive Plan update will extend through February 16. The public input will then be compiled and shared with the boards and commissions. The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing and will ultimately make a formal recommendation to the City Council about the overall plan.

Mr. Lauinger encouraged everyone to reach out to as many people/organizations as possible to invite them to participate in the meetings.

Dr. Johnson welcomed City Councilmember Janice Zahn to the meeting.

Mr. Chan encouraged CCC committee members to attend the Comprehensive Plan public meetings if possible, especially to address issues regarding housing and other top priorities.

Ms. Brod said they are printing flyers in multiple languages. She said she could create messaging language, including for social media posts, in multiple languages as well.

Responding to Ms. Cheung, Ms. Brod said the City collects limited demographic information from attendees of public meetings. She noted the need to hear more from individuals 25 years old or younger. She said half of Bellevue residents are renters, who also often tend to be younger. She said Bellevue is now 60 percent non-White and approximately 30 percent of community engagement participants are non-White.

Ms. Brod said public meeting attendees are not typically asked about their income level. However, income levels are reflected in a statistically valid survey related to the Comprehensive Plan update. She said staff held focus groups through the family connections coordinator at the Bellevue School District, community conversations at Mary's Place, and outreach through schools that tend to have more students receiving free and reduced lunches.

Mr. Chan said staff is finalizing the data atlas work, which uses approximately nine metrics to identify neighborhoods with less equitable opportunities. He said the effort uses a GIS web app to document the challenges and help analyze and guide funding allocations.

Councilmember Zahn asked whether the City provides a stipend to community based organizations to encourage input. Ms. Brod said stipends were not approved for use during the Comprehensive Plan update outreach. However, staff has attempted to address overcoming other potential barriers to community participation including providing food and child care. Ms. Brod said the City has spent approximately \$40,000 on language assistance and translation over the two-year public process related to the Comprehensive Plan update.

Ms. Zahn said she looks forward to seeing the CCC Team's recommendations.

Ms. Gadde said she appreciates the outreach efforts associated with the Comprehensive Plan update process. She concurred with the interest in increasing youth participation in planning activities and boards and commissions.

Ms. Brod said that last fall she reached out to social studies teachers in the Bellevue School District. The City will be providing presentations and workshops at Bellevue High School, Newport High School and the Big Picture School through February.

Ms. Martinez said those activities are consistent with the CCC's interest in enhancing access to local government. She expressed support for exploring stipends for board and commission members and potentially other committees and groups.

Tone Austin, BDAN Chair, said BDAN members are looking forward to having CCC members join them for the Comprehensive Plan Community Conversation on February 8.

Dr. Johnson thanked Ms. Brod for the information and discussion.

Mr. Lauinger said that of the City Council's 23 priorities, equity is number 15. He said the top priorities are economic development and transportation, which support and rely on equity. He suggested that equity should be at the top of the list of priorities.

Councilmember Zahn recalled that two years ago, the Council added both equitable communities and environmental sustainability to the list of priorities. She said she will share the CCC Team's input at the upcoming Council retreat and noted that the items are not necessarily in ranked order. She said equity and environmental stewardship should be grounded in everything the City does.

(b) DAT Staff Project Updates

Mr. Mercado reminded everyone about the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration and health fair on January 15 at Crossroads Mall.

Mr. Mercado said the City mailed stipend checks to CCC members the previous day. He said the next round of checks will be issued on January 22.

6. CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Ms. Martinez said that she, Ms. Tiernan and Dr. Johnson have been meeting with staff in a number of departments/divisions: Community Development Department (economic development and planning staff), Parks and Community Services Department (human services staff), and the City Clerk's Office. Dr. Johnson said they met with staff in the Community Development Department who focus on affordable housing and talked about small businesses with economic development staff. He said they are researching best practices and examples of programs and services in other cities.

Ms. Martinez said they are trying to learn about the City's existing programs and initiatives that are already underway that may overlap or be consistent with the CCC Team's work. She said staff will provide an update to the City Council on February 12 regarding the human services needs assessment. She said the CCC Team will be asked to provide input to the human services strategic plan in the near future.

Ms. Martinez said that after the department meetings, the CCC Team will review all of the input as it starts to develop its recommendations. She said the goal is to then have CCC Team members go out into the community to gain support with partners and gather their feedback.

Dr. Johnson said it has been enlightening and rewarding to meet with other staff.

Ms. Martinez noted that potential partners include nonprofit organizations, schools, corporate entities and others. She said it might be helpful for the Council to see the support of community partners when the CCC Team makes its presentation to the Council.

Councilmember Zahn concurred that it is important to show that what the CCC Team is doing is supported by community. However, if we are asking communities to do one more thing, sometimes they do not have the staffing and resources to advocate for themselves. She suggested that the role of the CCC Team is to be a trusted messenger and advocate. She said the City will be recruiting to fill positions on the boards and commissions this spring.

Ms. Martinez confirmed that the CCC Team is exploring the application and appointment process and met with the City Clerk's Office to discuss related issues. Dr. Johnson said they would talk to City Clerk's Office staff again to discuss social media usage.

7. WORK GROUP UPDATES

(a) Strategic Planning

Dr. Johnson said the CCC Team was initially established for a three-year period. He suggested thinking about the next phase of work for the committee and incorporating that into the strategic plan.

Mr. Chan noted that as the leader of the Diversity Advantage Plan update process, he has been trying to determine the community's needs for the next phase of the CCC Team's work. He encouraged moving toward a community-led and City-supported model.

Ms. Martinez said the committee has discussed whether to recommend that the CCC Team be established as a board or commission.

Dr. Johnson said he has heard questions from the community about who will oversee and hold the City accountable for implementing new policies.

Mr. Lauinger concurred with the recommendation to establish a board or commission for the CCC Team's work. He would like to see the City consider rental protections.

Dr. Johnson said the CCC Team's work has helped to enhance trust between the City and community. He said community engagement is critical to the CCC Team's work and the public has responded positively to the City's efforts.

Councilmember Zahn suggested that the specific language used in the policy recommendations will be important in terms of transforming systems that have been in place for a long time. She said certain words and terms could generate resistance.

Ms. Martinez said the work group will be drafting the CCC Team strategic plan. She noted that the CCC committee and BDAN have a little more flexibility in their activities than the boards and commissions.

8. ROUNDTABLE

Ms. Martinez recalled that CCC liaisons to different boards and commissions were made during the last meeting. She asked them to provide periodic updates to the CCC Team going forward.

Ms. Martinez noted that there are currently vacancies on the Planning Commission and the Parks and Community Services Board.

Ms. Martinez announced that planning is underway for the 2024 BOOM (Breaking Out of the Margins) Experience, which will be held at Bellevue College on March 28. The program for Bellevue School District students is an all-day event of workshops, speeches and other activities. Approximately 400 students are expected to participate. She said they are looking for volunteers to help with the event and for panelists and presenters for workshops and panel discussions. She suggested that some CCC Team members might want to host a community dialogue that day.

BDAN Chair Tone Austin said he would be interested in serving as a panelist.

Mr. Perezchica said he is interested in expanding his community engagement this year.

Councilmember Zahn told the CCC Team to let her know how she can advocate for certain issues for them. She wondered whether the CCC Team might want to have a role in the city manager recruitment process.

Ms. Lauinger suggested that with nearly 60 percent of Bellevue residents as non-White, the candidate pool should reflect that diversity.

Dr. Johnson said his understanding is that it is solely the Leadership Team that interviews candidates.

Councilmember Zahn said the city manager is the only position hired by the City Council. She suggested that the CCC Team think about whether they believe they should have a role and how their voice would be shared with the Council.

Ms. Uppala said the Bellevue Police Department includes community members on their interview panels. She would like to see both Dr. Whitehead and a CCC Team representative serve on the interview panel for hiring the city manager.

Ms. Martinez said the Bellevue School District implemented an equity-driven decision-making tool that might have elements applicable to the City's processes.

Dr. Johnson and Mr. Lauinger commented on their interest in demographic information for the City's employees.

Ms. Cheung expressed support for involving the CCC Team in recruiting.

Mr. Mercado noted that February is Black History Month and there will be a special art exhibit in City Hall all month.

Mr. Leiva-Rodriguez commented on the benefit of his college coursework in establishing and enhancing his nonprofit organization focused on housing.

Ms. Gadde said she is looking forward to the BOOM Experience event.

Dr. Johnson thanked Councilmember Zahn for attending the meeting.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

/kaw