

CITY OF BELLEVUE
SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

January 11, 2024
8:30 a.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Virtual Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Susan Freeburg – Chair
Andy Heider – Parks (Sub)
Mark Anderson – Fire
Kyle Nelson – Fire
Kevin Masseth – Police (Sub)
Casiano Atienza – Transportation
Neal Christiansen – Community Representative East
Mike Ogliore – Business Representative Downtown
Meredith Langridge – Visit Bellevue
Laurie Scott – Downtown Resident Representative
Jonathan Rose – King County Metro

OTHERS PRESENT: Emily Martella, Parks, Maggie Whittemore – Fire,
Christopher Rivera – Transportation, Claude Iosso – City
Manager’s Office, Mark Heilman – Neighborhood
Outreach Manager, Lizette Flores, Eric Stewart, Brett
Berntsen, Lisa Siegman

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:33 a.m. by Chair Freeburg who presided.

2. COMMUNICATIONS: Written and Oral – None

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Kevin Masseth. The motion was seconded by Laurie Scott and the motion carried unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A motion to approve the December 14, 2023, meeting minutes as submitted was made by Jonathan Rose. The motion was seconded by Laurie Scott and the motion carried unanimously.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

❖ Routing and Location Subcommittee Report

Casiano Atienza noted that the New Year’s Eve Night Market event occurred subsequent to the last meeting. Nothing has been heard specific to that event.

Chair Freeburg commented that the event had a record attendance.

Maggie Whittemore noted having been the fire prevention officer for the event and reported that everything went smoothly.

6. OLD BUSINESS – None

6. NEW BUSINESS

❖ Applications of Intent: Returning Events

A. 7 Hills of Kirkland

Chair Freeburg said the charity bike ride runs primarily through other cities but does touch on a part of Bellevue. In 2023 the event was not required to have a Special Event Permit, but the organizers did work with Bellevue police.

Christopher Rivera said transportation would be reaching out to the event organizer to make sure the 2024 event will be consistent with the 2023 event.

Andy Heider said Parks had no concerns.

Kevin Masseth asked if in the past police officers had been posted to the intersection of 116th Avenue NE and Northup Way. Chair Freeburg said the event organizer worked with other agencies, and there were no real concerns.

Mark Anderson said Fire would want to have a map of the route just in case there is a need for a response.

There was consensus not to require a Special Event Permit for the event.

B. Chamber Music in the Park

Chair Freeburg said the event was held for the first time in 2023 in Downtown Park. The proposal is to hold the event on July 13 with a start time of 7:00 p.m. for the one-hour event, with setup at 9:00 a.m. and take down finished by 9:00 p.m. There are about 500 spectators anticipated. In addition to live music, there will be signs, banners and tents, but no vendors.

Emily Martella confirmed there are no conflicts for the date.

Chair Freeburg said no changes are planned for the event in terms of the footprint and setup location. The only change is there will not be any vendors. There were no issues with the event in 2023.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the event was made by Laurie Scott. The motion was seconded by Neal Christiansen and the motion carried unanimously.

C. Bellevue School District Back to School Event

Chair Freeburg said the event was first held in Crossroads Park in 2023 and saw some 1200 attendees. The plan for the event is the same as before, including the footprint. The event will run

from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., with setup at 10:00 a.m. and breakdown from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. There will be food and beverage catering, and there will be signs, banners, live music and vendors with information to share. The organizer is looking to have the marching band come in and play a couple of songs.

Andy Heider asked if the stage is brought in by truck or if the event just uses the plaza. Chair Freeburg confirmed they used the plaza in 2023.

A motion to approve date, time and location was made by Neal Christiansen. The motion was seconded by Andy Heider and the motion carried unanimously.

D. Lake to Lake Bike Ride

Chair Freeburg said the Parks event has been going on for years. No changes are planned to the format of the event. The event date is June 8 starting at 9:00 a.m. and going until 2:00 p.m. Cleanup will be completed by 3:30 p.m.

Neal Christiansen asked if the event has been required to have a Special Event Permit in the past. Chair Freeburg said the event did have a permit in 2023. However, the event is on the threshold of not needing to have a permit given the dwindling number of participants.

Christopher Rivera suggested the event should have a permit, same as in past years. The riders do follow the rules of the road and no closures have been required in the past.

Chair Freeburg stated that even absent needing a permit, the event can still be brought before the Committee every year just to keep everyone informed.

Casiano Atienza recalled that the event had received some police assistance in past years in the park. Chair Freeburg pointed out that having the police involved does not automatically trigger the need for a Special Event Permit.

Kevin Masseth voiced support for tabling approval of date, time and location for the event until February to allow for gathering the historical background information.

Chair Freeburg pointed out that the event includes amplified sound and suggested the Committee should continue to require a permit for the event.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the event was made by Kyle Nelson. The motion was seconded by Laurie Scott and the motion carried unanimously.

E. Jubilee REACH Celebration in the Park

Chair Freeburg said the August 25 event in Downtown Park celebrates volunteers. The event starts at 8:00 a.m. and runs until 12:30 p.m. Setup occurs the day before and take down follows the event and is completed by 3:00 p.m. No changes are planned regarding the event.

Chair Freeburg allowed that only one sound complaint was received after the 2023 iteration of the event.

Neal Christiansen asked how accurate the projected number of participants is. Chair Freeburg said attendance has fluctuated since Covid, with an uptick occurring in 2023 to about 1500 after

a low of about 900. The projection of 1800 has been reached in past years prior to the pandemic.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the event was made by Neal Christiansen. The motion was seconded by Andy Heider and the motion carried unanimously.

F. Downtown Movies in the Park

Chair Freeburg said the free outdoor movie series that runs through August will have the same footprint and there are no planned changes to the event. Last year there were issues in checking the sound levels and ending on time, but those issues were quickly addressed. The series has been a fixture since the mid-2000s.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the event was made by Kyle Nelson. The motion was seconded by Laurie Scott and the motion carried unanimously.

G. Garden d'Lights

Chair Freeburg said the free holiday season event takes place at the botanical gardens. The event details are not set to change. The expected number of spectators is 70,000. The transition from open ticketing to reserved ticketing has made a huge difference.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the event was made by Kevin Masseth. The motion was seconded by Kyle Nelson and the motion carried unanimously.

H. Arts in the Garden

Chair Freeburg stated that the event, also at the botanical gardens, is slated for August 23, 24 and 25 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The footprint for the recurring event is unchanged. There were parking issues in the past but the organizer's revamped plan has addressed them.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the event was made by Laurie Scott. The motion was seconded by Neal Christiansen and the motion carried unanimously.

I. IACS Night Market

Chair Freeburg said the Crossroads Park event transitioned to a night market in 2023. The same is proposed again for June 22 from 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., with setup starting at 10:00 a.m. and breakdown completed by 10:00 p.m. No changes to format or footprint are indicated.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the event was made by Kyle Nelson. The motion was seconded by Casiano Atienza and the motion carried unanimously.

Neal Christiansen commented that it appears the event has secured overflow parking at nearby locations, adding that a good parking plan will be one of the stipulations for the event. Casiano Atienza confirmed the event has alternative parking locations. Chair Freeburg added that Transportation always does a good job of making sure events at Crossroads Park have solid parking plans that do not impact the mall.

J. NW Ukrainian International Festival

Chair Freeburg said the festival was held in Downtown Park for the first time in 2023 and it saw

close to 20,000 participants. The same is expected for 2024. There were concerns with the event, including some significant impacts to the park from fish being thrown into the pond along with sand and grass, and from large stakes being left in the grass. There also were some food vendor issues. A post-event meeting was held to discuss the concerns.

Chair Freeburg proposed tabling approval of date, time and location until February to allow for the event organizer to come in and talk with the Committee about the plans to mitigate the concerns for the coming year event. It is possible that if things do not go well, the event might not be allowed to continue at Downtown Park.

Kevin Masseth reported having been the incident commander for the 2023 event. From the start it was a massive event with a huge number of attendees and that continued throughout the day and into the evening hours. The organizer did not want to shut down at the determined hour so the event continued until about 9:30 p.m. None of the vendors left until midnight and a large contingent of police officers was needed. Attendees were flying drones in violation of FAA rules in and around the park. Tabling approval of the date, time and location to allow for speaking to the event organizer is a good idea.

Andy Heider suggested that enough is enough and the Committee should vote not to approve the event. Every year the organizer is given a chance to come back with an explanation, and every year it goes bad going all the way back to 2015 or so. Parks is not in favor of the event.

Kevin Masseth agreed with tabling the event, which is always well attended and enjoyed by a large number of people. There have indeed been problems with the event, but the community really enjoys it.

Neal Christiansen agreed with postponing making a decision for all the reasons cited and added that it might be somewhat politically insensitive to just not allow the event.

Mike Ogliore agreed with Andy Heider but also voiced understanding of the larger political impacts. The organizer has been saying and doing the same things for many years and nothing has changed. At some point the Committee will have to hold their feet to the fire.

Laurie Scott agreed and asked if the organizer could be required to have more support, or to have a different organizer altogether. Without changes to the management of the event, the event will continue on the same path going forward.

Neal Christiansen asked if the event covers the costs of the damages the event causes. Chair Freeburg allowed that in the past there were some disagreements as to exactly what the damages were, and the organizer did not completely cover those costs. Parks has in the past levied charges for damages, and the department did not receive full reimbursement.

Laurie Scott asked if the Committee could require a significant damage deposit. Chair Freeburg agreed to look into that possibility.

Meridith added that the organizer should be informed up front that there will be fines if certain activities or damages occur as a result of the event. Chair Freeburg said that position has been made clear in the past and could be reiterated again. The conversation following the 2023 event was very firm and clear, and the organizer was told the event may not be approved again.

Kevin Masseth allowed that the event is good for the city, but approval should be made

contingent on the issues raised.

A motion to table to the next Committee meeting approval of date, time and location for the event was made by Kevin Masseth. The motion was seconded by Kyle Nelson and the motion carried with only Andy Heider voting no.

K. Bellevue Arts Museum (BAM) Arts Fair

Chair Freeburg said the event is slated for July 26 through 28, running from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, and from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Sunday. The recurring event has had essentially the same footprint for a long time. The event occurs the same weekend as the Bellevue Downtown Arts Market.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the event was made by Kevin Masseth. The motion was seconded by Mark Anderson and the motion carried unanimously.

L. Bellevue Children's Business Fair

Chair Freeburg said the event was held for the first time in 2023 and it was not at that time required to obtain a Special Event Permit. The event ended up having 50 vendors of children selling their wares, and there between 700 and 800 attendees from the public. For 2024 the focus is on expanding the number of vendors to 100. A map showing where the additional vendors will be located has not yet been submitted.

Answering a question asked by Neal Christiansen, Chair Freeburg explained that the event occurs only on one day. The application included an alternate date, making it look like the event would be held on two consecutive Sundays.

Neal Christiansen commented that if there are as many as 700 attendees, the event should have a Special Event Permit.

Andy Heider pointed out that an ice cream event is proposed for the 20th and 21st in Downtown Park. The question asked was if the two events are working together. Chair Freeburg said the two events are separate, and the Children's Business Fair application was received first and is a recurring event, giving it priority. If it is approved, the ice cream event will need a different date.

Laurie Scott observed that the ice cream event has listed two possible dates and asked if there is a conflict with the second date indicated in the application. Emily Martella allowed that there is a conflict with the 28th date. That is the Downtown Arts Market weekend. Chair Freeburg added that the ice cream event can be asked to suggest another date.

Chair Freeburg suggested that going from 50 to 100 vendors is a big jump and it might make sense to table approving date, time and location for the event until after the organizer submits a map showing where the vendors will be located on site.

Neal Christiansen stated that doubling the number of vendors will likely increase the public attendees closer to 2000.

Kevin Masset agreed approval of the date, time and location for the event should be tabled until the organizer submits all the necessary documentation.

A motion to table approval of the date, time and location for the event was made by Kevin Masseth. The motion was seconded by Andy Heider and the motion carried unanimously.

M. All in for Autism

Chair Freeburg said the ongoing 5K run/walk event anticipates no substantial changes to the map. The organizer has not yet submitted the map, however.

A motion to table approval of the date, time and location for the event pending submission of all pertinent documentation was made by Mark Anderson. The motion was seconded by Jonathan Rose and the motion carried unanimously.

❖ Applications of Intent: New Events

A. Juneteenth Community Celebration

Chair Freeburg said the June 15 event is proposed for Crossroads Park. The event is co-sponsored by the city's Diversity Advantage Team. There will be 30 or 40 vendors, a number of volunteers, and some 400 participants. There will be live music, amplified sound, signs and banners, tents, and food service and recycling.

Andy Heider noted not being fully supportive of back-to-back events. The IACS Night Market event is slated for June 22. However, the projected number of spectators is fairly low. If the event grows, it might be necessary to consider having some date separation.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the event was made by Andy Heider. The motion was seconded by Neal Christiansen and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Bellevue International Festival

Chair Freeburg said the event organizer offered as possible dates August 16 and 17 as the first choice, and August 9 and 10 as the second choice. The event is to be hosted by the city's Diversity Advantage Team and as such is solely a city event. The application calls for the use of amplified sound, vendors, signs and banner, and tents. The projection is that there will be 500 participants but no spectators or volunteers. The hope is that the event will become an annual event.

Neal Christiansen said it was hard to believe that with 40 vendors there will only be 500 participants. Chair Freeburg allowed that 40 vendors was likely a guess on the part of the organizer.

Kyle Nelson asked if a stage will be brought in, or the existing stage will be used. Chair Freeburg allowed not knowing. Kyle Nelson added that stages greater than 400 square feet require an additional permit.

A motion to approve the August 16 and 17 date along with the time and location was made by Andy Heider. The motion was seconded by Kyle Nelson and the motion carried unanimously.

C. Correctional Peace Officers Memorial, Paws & Pride

Chair Freeburg said the June 14 event is located in a different city every year. Several years ago

it was held in Downtown Park. The anticipated attendance is 400. The start time is 10:00 a.m. and likely will be concluded by noon, with setup starting at 7:00 a.m. and cleanup concluded by 1:00 p.m.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the event was made by Laurie Scott. The motion was seconded by Kyle Nelson and the motion carried unanimously.

D. Paws & Pride

Chair Freeburg said the event was first held in 2023 in Ashwood Park. The event organizer wants to move to Downtown Park for 2024, and instead of hosting the walk on the roads, staying in the park. The projected number of participants is 600.

Andy Heider asked why the location change was proposed. Mike Ogliore explained that the event originally was held on July 4. In 2023 the event was shifted to June in partnership with Eastside Pride. It is a struggle financially to justify all the traffic control costs for the 600 or so participants. The good thing about having the event at Ashwood Park is the parking available at the library. If moved to Downtown Park, it will be necessary to identify one of the new garages in Old Bellevue for participant parking. It is likely the number of participants will actually exceed 600.

Andy Heider asked how many laps around the park are anticipated and Mike Ogliore said it will begin on the south end and likely there will be a max of two laps before funneling everyone back into the park for possibly a loop on the north end in the grass, concluding with a celebration on the south end where the booths and stage will be. Andy Heider suggested it might be better to loop around the inside of the canal on the grass. Mike Ogliore agreed to explore that idea further with Andy Heider.

Mark Anderson asked if the event would need to have an aid car on site for the event. Mike Ogliore said with the total number of participants it would be good to err on the side of having an aid car.

Laurie Scott said moving the event to the park is a great idea and may draw more people.

Mike Ogliore commented that a pretty good job has been done in the past of making sure participants keep their dogs leashed. That will be the rule in the park as well.

Andy Heider stressed the need to relay to all participants information about the scoop laws. Mike Ogliore concurred and added that steps will be taken to minimize all impacts on the walking path.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the event was made by Neal Christiansen. The motion was seconded by Laurie Scott and the motion carried unanimously.

E. Holi Festival of Color

Chair Freeburg said the organizer is seeking April 6 for the event, with March 30 as a secondary choice. The Committee previously approved the CRY Holi event for March 24, but the Festival of Color is a new event with a new organizer. The event was held in 2023 at Marymoor Park and is seeking to hold it in 2024 in Downtown Park. Between 1000 and 2000 spectators are projected to participate. Given that the event is new, it might make sense to ask the organizer to attend a

Committee meeting to discuss the plan.

Neal Christiansen asked if the Crossroads event would also be happening. Chair Freeburg said that event did not apply for 2024. Neal Christiansen asked what was behind the move from Marymoor Park. Chair Freeburg said according to hearsay things did not go well there. There were parking issues there as well.

Mark Anderson suggested talking with the city of Redmond before approving the event for Downtown Park to confirm whether or not they any concerns.

Christopher Rivera highlighted the need to see a parking plan for the event, especially given that many attendees.

Andy Heider said Parks has concerns with the color. Parks worked extensively with the organizer of the Crossroads event on containing the site plan and things did get better over the years. It is concerning that another event is scheduled for just two weeks before. Color events are always a concern; while they do not necessarily cause damage, they certain re-color infrastructure that stays around for three to four weeks. It does not easily clean up.

Neal Christiansen asked if there are concerns about the water feature in Downtown Park getting colorized. Andy Heider said the greater concern is with the structural part of the feature. There have not been any issues with the waterfall or canal with past events.

Andy Heider asked if the various color groups would consider banding together to hold a single event. Chair Freeburg said that question would need to be put to the organizers.

A motion to table approval of the date, time and location for the event pending more information was made by Andy Heider. The motion was seconded by Laurie Scott and the motion carried unanimously.

F. WA Ganesh Festival

Chair Freeburg said the same group is looking to do a multi-day Ganesh festival in 2024 in Downtown Park, September 5 through September 9. The anticipation is for 2000 spectators over the length of the festival. The organizer wants live music, vendors, generators, technics fireworks, amplified sound, tents, food service and recycling. Given that the organizer will be asked to attend the next Committee meeting to talk about the Holi Festival of Color event, questions about the Ganesh festival could be asked at the same time.

Emily Martella pointed out that the Northwest Ukrainian Festival has asked for November 7 in Downtown Park.

Neal Christiansen noted the large number of events wanting to use Downtown Park and asked if any attempt has been made to push some events to Crossroads Park. Chair Freeburg said event organizers typically want to be in Downtown Park. Where there are conflicts or other concerns, the organizers can be asked to consider Crossroads Park instead. Crossroads Park would be a great location for the color event. It is simply not possible to host every event in Downtown Park.

Andy Heider said a four-day event would not be approved by Parks. The park simply cannot be shut down for that many days. There is also the concern of having the event back-to-back with

the Ukrainian festival. If approved, the Ukrainian festival will cause damage that will take time to repair. Approval of the Ganesh festival should be tabled pending more information, and the organizer should be encouraged to consider moving the event to Crossroads Park. The event should be two days maximum.

Chair Freeburg said those concerns and suggestions will be voiced with the event organizer.

G. Indian Independence Day Celebration

Chair Freeburg said the event is the third event by the same organizer. The date is August 17 and the ask is for Downtown Park. The number of attendees is projected to be 1000 throughout the day.

Emily Martella said the International Festival has been proposed for that same weekend in Crossroads Park. Chair Freeburg allowed that the Committee has not typically permitted two large events on the same weekend.

Kyle Nelson said Fire could accommodate two events the same weekend provided there is sufficient time to allow for ensuring staffing levels.

Kevin Masseth said the same was true for Police.

Neal Christiansen suggested that because there are a lot of people from India living in the greater Eastside area, it is likely that those who attend the event will all be there at the same time.

Andy Heider said more needs to be known about the organizer's plans for fireworks, including the launch point. Chair Freeburg said they will not be allowed to launch the fireworks from within the park, which may preclude having fireworks at all.

A motion to table approval of the date, time and location for the event pending more information was made by Kevin Masseth. The motion was seconded by Andy Heider and the motion carried unanimously.

H. Shade of Brilliance Artwalk

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the event was made by Neal Christiansen. The motion was seconded by Kyle Nelsson and the motion carried; Kevin Masseth and Andy Heider voted no on the belief that additional information was needed.

I. Bellevue Schools Foundation Block Party

Discussion of this item was deferred to the February Committee meeting.

J. Scooped All You Can Eat Ice Cream

Discussion of this item was deferred to the February Committee meeting.

❖ Comments/Follow-up – None

7. NEXT MEETING

❖ February 8, 2024

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Freeburg adjourned the meeting at 10:06 a.m.