

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Extended Study Session

January 14, 2008
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Degginger, Deputy Mayor Balducci, and Councilmembers Chelminiak, Davidson, Lee, Marshall and Noble

ABSENT: None.

1. Executive Session

Councilmember Chelminiak called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. and announced recess to Executive Session for approximately 30 minutes to discuss one item of pending litigation, one item of labor negotiations, and one item of potential litigation.

The meeting resumed at 6:34 p.m., with Mayor Degginger presiding.

2. Oral Communications

- (a) George Joyner, City Electrical Inspector, spoke on behalf of inspectors and plan reviewers who are members of Local 763. He thanked the Council for approving the addition of 13 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. Mr. Joyner submitted his comments in writing and reviewed the union's reasons for rejecting the City's contract proposal in mid-December.

Responding to Mayor Degginger, City Manager Steve Sarkozy noted that the Council is aware of ongoing negotiations with Local 763. He explained that the City compares its compensation levels with those throughout the metropolitan area. Some of the comparisons indicate that the City's salaries for inspectors and plan reviewers are well above market average, which presents a significant dilemma for the City as fiscal stewards of the public's money.

3. Study Session

- (a) King County Report – Issues Affecting Bellevue

King County Councilmember Jane Hague provided an update to the Council, noting she has been elected to serve as chair of two King County Council committees and vice chair for three committees. She expressed her commitment to working to represent Bellevue's interests.

Councilmember Lee thanked Councilmember Hague for her work and responsiveness to the Bellevue Council and staff. Councilmember Noble concurred.

Councilmember Chelminiak commented on the need for more accessible public transportation in Bellevue, and he urged the County to accelerate plans for expanding transit services to the Eastside. He encouraged continued discussions regarding the annexation of remaining areas within Bellevue's potential annexation area (PAA).

Mayor Degginger noted that the Cascade Water Alliance has submitted a franchise application to the County for a pipeline that will hopefully begin construction by the end of the year. He requested her support of the application. Ms. Hague said she will talk to the County Council Chair about the potential for expediting discussions on the application.

Councilmember Davidson thanked Ms. Hague for her role in achieving a legislative amendment relating to the delivery of wastewater services.

(b) Council Business and New Initiatives

Councilmember Marshall announced that she is retiring from the City Council, effective after the January 22 meeting. She has served on the Council for 10 years and has accomplished what she wanted in terms of guiding Bellevue's vision to be the transportation, cultural, economic, and medical hub of the Eastside. Mrs. Marshall highlighted transportation, arts, and development achievements of the past several years. The City has facilitated the expansion of medical services including the addition of Group Health to the Overlake Hospital Medical Center campus and the future development of Children's Hospital. Mrs. Marshall noted the expansion of programs and services for the City's increasingly diverse population.

Councilmember Marshall thanked City staff for their hard work over the years and for all that she has learned from them relating to public administration and public transportation services. She thanked current and past Councilmembers for their work toward achieving common goals for the community.

Mayor Degginger commended Councilmember Marshall's leadership within the community and the region. He feels her influence in achieving transportation and arts projects, as well as moving into the new City Hall, will benefit the community for many years to come.

Deputy Mayor Balducci thanked Mrs. Marshall for her role as a public servant and her legacy as a leader.

Councilmember Chelminiak thanked Councilmember Marshall for her support of his campaign and her significant role in creating the new City Hall.

Councilmember Lee thanked Mrs. Marshall for her vision and leadership.

Councilmember Noble said he has enjoyed working on transportation issues with Councilmember Marshall over the years. He will miss not having the opportunity to continue to work with her on the Council, and he praised her as a strong advocate for and representative of Bellevue.

Councilmember Davidson commended Mrs. Marshall's service to the community. He praised her effectiveness as a leader and consensus builder within the Council and the region.

(c) Report of the City Manager

(1) MyUtilityBill Update

Anne Weigle, Assistant Director of Utilities, announced the implementation of MyUtilityBill, which was released to the public as of January 2, 2008. The program will enable customers to view and pay their bills, communicate via email with Customer Service, and to receive email notification when bills are ready for their review.

Councilmembers expressed support for the service enhancement, and Ms. Weigle responded to brief questions of clarification.

Responding to Councilmember Chelminiak, Ms. Weigle confirmed the potential for expanding this capability to the eGovAlliance web site in the future.

(2) Trade Mission to Dalian and Qingdao, China

City Manager Steve Sarkozy opened staff's report regarding the City's economic development strategy and promotion of international trade.

Bob Derrick, Economic Development Director, opened his report by thanking Councilmember Marshall for her support of economic development activities within the community.

Mr. Derrick described a proposal for a trade mission to Dalian and Qingdao, China, in late February 2008 in cooperation with the Seattle branch of the Dalian Trade Office. The trade mission will help Bellevue build a strong relationship with this large and growing city and port in China. Packet materials include a proposed trip agenda and a list of interested participants.

Councilmember Lee noted his support of and interest in participating in the mission. He feels it is important to engage corporate citizens in the process. Mr. Lee encouraged the Council to support the proposal.

Mayor Degginger expressed support for the proposed trade mission.

Responding to Councilmember Marshall, Mr. Derrick said several Asian cities have contacted him regarding their interest in establishing a Sister City relationship. He acknowledged Council's past direction to focus on current relationships instead of creating new ones.

Mrs. Marshall encouraged the Council to consider setting specific policies to guide future proposals regarding Sister Cities. Mayor Degginger concurred and requested further information regarding the designations of Sister City and Friendship City. Dr. Davidson agreed with the need for developing policies and criteria to be used in considering Sister City requests. Mr. Derrick suggested that he draft a preliminary policy framework for Council's review before the late February trip.

Deputy Mayor Balducci noted that her discussions with Councilmember Lee, Mr. Derrick, and others have reinforced the value of working to encourage international trade relations. She supports the trade mission proposal.

Councilmember Lee feels there is a need for City-sponsored support of small businesses involved in international trade.

(3) Partnership Grant

Phyllis Varner, Water Quality Supervisor, Utilities Department, explained that Bellevue is one of 12 jurisdictions selected by the Washington State Department of Ecology and the Puget Sound Partnership to participate in a local pollutant source control partnership. Bellevue has been selected to receive a \$180,000 grant.

(d) Meydenbauer Bay Park and Land Use Plan Project Update

Matt Terry, Planning and Community Development Director, opened staff's update regarding the Meydenbauer Bay Park and Land Use planning process. The Steering Committee is scheduled to complete this week the first phase of its work addressing land use issues affecting the upland portion of the area. The Committee will be submitting a recommendation to the Council in the near future.

Mike Bergstrom, Senior Planner, reviewed the portion of the Meydenbauer Bay area included in the current development moratorium area. The City is working toward master planning for a new waterfront park along the bay as well as connections to Downtown Park and the downtown core. The project study has divided the area into the upper block portion and the area south of Main Street because the two areas have different development characteristics. The study and Committee discussions have focused on land use components as well as street and pedestrian improvements, landscaping, signage, and public art.

Mr. Bergstrom briefly reviewed three alternatives identified by the Committee in September 2007. Recommendations regarding the upper block focus on streetscape improvements along existing rights-of-way, incentives for the redevelopment of older buildings, and no changes in land uses or building heights. In the area south of Main, recommendations address coordinated

redevelopment east of 100th Avenue, pedestrian amenities, a connection to Wildwood Park, increased density and expanded land uses, and no building height increases.

Mr. Bergstrom said staff plans to allow the Steering Committee to take a break for a few months to enable staff to conduct technical review and analysis. The moratorium is set to lapse on January 30, 2008.

Responding to Councilmember Lee, Mr. Bergstrom said a goal of the planning process is to create an asset for the overall Bellevue community. The City is seeking to encourage private investment in the area as well.

Mr. Terry highlighted the proposed expansion of pedestrian amenities between Meydenbauer Bay and Downtown Park, which will attract more people to the area to enjoy the waterfront and private businesses. Patrick Foran, Parks and Community Services Director, commented on the objective to blend public spaces and to facilitate access between the waterfront and the downtown through private developments.

Councilmember Chelminiak encouraged a focus on amenities at the intersection of Lake Washington Boulevard and 99th Avenue. He reiterated his ongoing recommendation to discontinue the current development moratorium. He encouraged extensive public involvement in planning for the South of Main Street area.

Deputy Mayor Balducci expressed support for plans to enhance public access to the waterfront. Responding to Ms. Balducci, Mr. Bergstrom commented that the existing development and topography will have an impact on the specific design of waterfront access. Ms. Balducci is in favor of allowing the moratorium on development to lapse.

Staff responded to additional brief questions of clarification.

Responding to Mayor Degginger, Mr. Terry said more specific estimates regarding the number of housing units and the extent of commercial space will be identified through staff's analysis over the coming months. Mr. Foran explained that the land use planning process has been helpful in raising issues related to park planning, including transient moorage requirements, water quality, traffic circulation and parking, and park programming.

At 8:32 p.m., Mayor Degginger declared a brief recess. The meeting resumed at 8:40 p.m.

(e) State Legislative Update

Diane Carlson, Director of Intergovernmental Relations, provided an update on the state legislative session that began today. Legislation reflecting the Governor's request that the Secretary of Transportation conduct a tolling study and report has not yet been released. Both the House and Senate transportation committees will hold discussions on tolling this week. The Governor's proposal for SR 520 endorses a six-lane configuration (four general purpose lanes, two HOV lanes).

Responding to Council, Ms. Carlson said the Governor's proposal anticipates that tolling would begin when the new SR 520 bridge opens. However, a study is to be conducted on early tolling which could begin as early as 2009.

Councilmember Noble noted that the Eastside Transportation Partnership has approved a legislative agenda on governance as it relates to tolling, and he invited comments regarding ETP's position. ETP's statement regarding governance addresses accountability, transparency and openness, a regional approach, the participation of local governments, and the adoption of a clear plan and goals. Tolling governance should not add a new layer of bureaucracy and should not override or interfere with local land use and transportation planning. Taxing authority should be subject to a vote of citizens. Tolling discussions should not detract from transportation projects that are already funded or delay progress on the delivery of regional transportation improvements already underway.

Mr. Chelminiak is not strictly opposed to granting taxation authority to an entity without a vote of the people.

Ms. Balducci said some have argued that if tolling is implemented, it must be applied to both bridges. She feels a thorough study of the overall transportation system is needed to determine the relative impact of tolling both bridges or only SR 520. Mr. Degginger agreed with the need for more information and analysis.

At 8:58 p.m., Mayor Degginger declared the meeting adjourned.

Myrna L. Basich
City Clerk

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