

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Study Session

March 17, 2008
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room
Bellevue, Washington

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

ABSENT: None.

1. Executive Session

Deputy Mayor Balducci called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. and announced recess to Executive Session for approximately 45 minutes to discuss one item of labor relations and to review the qualifications of Council candidates.

The meeting resumed at 7:02 p.m. with Mayor Degginger presiding.

2. Study Session

(a) Selection Process for Filling Council Vacancy

Councilmember Davidson observed that the Council is not yet ready to make a decision regarding the Council vacancy. He proposed continuing the matter to the following week, and the Council concurred.

(b) 2006 Water Comprehensive Plan Update

City Manager Steve Sarkozy made introductory comments related to staff's report on the 2006 Water Comprehensive Plan Update.

Wes Jorgenson, Utilities Assistant Director, explained that the City is required by state law to update the Water Comprehensive Plan every six years. The plan has been reviewed by the Environmental Services Commission, and is scheduled for Council adoption on April 7. The plan update process is an opportunity to review and evaluate the water utility system and its policies, and to update population and employment growth projections to plan for meeting future demand.

John Rogers, Environmental Services Commission, commented on the Commission's work with staff to review and discuss the update to the Water Comprehensive Plan. A major theme of the process was comparing how Bellevue operates its water utility in comparison to other jurisdictions.

Responding to Councilmember Chelminiak, Mr. Jorgenson explained that a fire flow source is considered a regional benefit when equipment is oversized to the extent that it provides value beyond the immediate area's needs.

Mayor Degginger noted Seattle Public Utilities' interest in purchasing the Eastgate Reservoir from Cascade Water Alliance. Mr. Jorgenson confirmed that the reservoir would then be considered a regional facility. Regional facilities are not intended to provide local distribution services but are used to assist in meeting regional peaking needs.

Responding to Councilmember Lee, Mr. Jorgenson confirmed that the City addresses water system maintenance and replacement needs through a long-term reserve funding program.

(c) Potential Parks and Open Space Voter Initiative

Parks and Community Services Director Patrick Foran described staff's interest in obtaining authorization from the Council to proceed with a parks and open space ballot measure. Two more Study Sessions are scheduled for these discussions. The Council has until August to adopt the ordinance that will allow for a voter initiative.

Mr. Foran reviewed staff's voter initiative work plan and timeline. Master planning is underway for several park properties that might be included in a voter initiative including Surrey Downs and the Botanical Garden. Mr. Foran explained that voter initiatives have built much of Bellevue's parks and open space system. The 2002 Parks bond measure was supported by a majority vote (58.9 percent) but failed to meet the required 60 percent approval. Past projects funded through voter initiatives include Kelsey Creek Park, Lake Hills Greenbelt, Crossroads Park, Wilburton Hill Park, North Bellevue Community Center, Bellevue Aquatic Center, and Highland Center.

Doug Sanner, Parks Fiscal and Quality Control Manager, explained that the last voter initiative passed in 1988. The City fully retired the bond this year. The two voter-approved property tax funding mechanisms available for a voter initiative are a bond and a levy lid lift. Bonds require super-majority (60 percent) approval and a validation requirement of 40 percent of the previous General Election. Bonds require separate ballot measures for capital funding vs. maintenance and operations funding. A levy lid lift requires 50 percent voter approval with no validation requirement. M&O funding can be combined with capital funding using this mechanism.

Mr. Sanner compared property tax rate impacts as well as optional funding levels that could be provided through a bond or levy. He noted that Bellevue's property tax rate is the lowest among Eastside jurisdictions and one of the lowest in the state. Mr. Sanner briefly reviewed a list of

potential projects for a 2008 bond or levy, which represent \$229 million in unfunded capital needs and approximately \$2.5 million annually for maintenance and operations costs.

Mr. Sanner reviewed community outreach activities of the Parks and Community Services Board including community gatherings, a public hearing, and an online survey. Residents expressed a willingness to extend current taxes for continued development of the park system. Priorities for additional funding are acquisition, maintaining the quality of the system, and completing existing parks.

Mr. Foran described one potential scenario for a voter initiative. The citizen survey indicates that 68 percent of residents are willing to pay \$67 in annual property taxes for a park bond or levy. Next steps are continued Council discussions on April 7 and April 21, and Council approval on August 12 of an ordinance approving a ballot measure for the November election.

Mr. Foran responded to questions of clarification.

Noting strong community support for the park system, Deputy Mayor Balducci encouraged moving forward with a voter initiative. Councilmembers Noble and Davidson concurred.

(d) Eastgate Area Properties Master Plan

Mr. Foran explained that Agenda Item 8(c) of the Regular Session represents an agreement with The Portico Group for master planning services for the Eastgate area properties. He noted the email included in Council's desk packet describing insurance requirements associated with the consultant's work.

Glenn Kost, Parks Planning Manager, said the master planning process involves three Eastgate area properties: 1) 14.5 acres purchased from The Boeing Company in 2003, 2) 10.5 acres acquired from Bellevue School District in 2004, and 3) 2.5 acre utility zone. The purchase and sale agreement with The Boeing Company contained conditions involving the development of a shared road and the future use of 150 parking spaces in an adjacent office complex for the park site.

Mr. Kost reviewed elements of the 2002 feasibility study including geotechnical, environmental, lighting, noise, traffic, and land use issues and impacts. The master plan will develop a long-range vision and development plan for the site as well as phased implementation plans and preliminary cost estimates. Key planning issues are existing neighborhood uses, sports field interests, environmental stewardship, indoor recreation facility, parking, and trail connections. Mr. Kost briefly reviewed the typical master planning process.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Balducci, Mr. Kost confirmed that the master planning process will involve working with the community to define and create the park.

(e) Update on Crime Statistics

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[Postponed to March 24 meeting.]

At 8:01 p.m., Mayor Degginger declared recess to the Regular Session.

Myrna L. Basich
City Clerk

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