

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION  
MINUTES

November 17, 2009  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Stout, Commissioners Beighle, Bruels, Hoople, Huenefeld Gese, Plaskon

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Yantis

STAFF PRESENT: Alex O'Reilly, Joseph Adriano, Terry Smith, Cynthia Sessoms, Department of Parks and Community Services

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by Chair Stout who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Yantis who was excused.

3. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS. None

4. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Hoople said he attended the Veterans Day parade in Auburn. He noted that Mayor Pete Lewis of Auburn was one of sponsors of the Veterans and Human Services Levy.

Commissioner Hoople said he also attended the annual Bellevue memorial on Veterans Day at Sunset Memorial Park. He said the event traditionally draws very few local elected officials.

Commissioner Hoople reported that on November 13 he attended the Washington State Military Kids and Family Summit. He said it is always interesting to learn what the families of military personnel have to go through.

Commissioner Hoople said that Strategy #5 of the King County Veterans Oversight Committee is focused on best practices and reporting. He said in 2010 the committee will be producing a book with a full outline of each of the strategies.

Commissioner Hoople noted that earlier in the day he attended the Alliance for Human Services meeting with most of the staff.

Commissioner Bruels said he attended the Alliance meeting as well. In his talk, King County Executive-elect Dow Constantine voiced his support for not zeroing out the general fund budget for human services. Of course, he also stressed that the funding will not be restored.

Commissioner Bruels said he has been working with the Mental Illness and Drug Dependency Oversight Committee and participated in providing testimony to the city of Tukwila recently regarding their decision to ban development of the crisis diversion facility. In the end, the city extended its moratorium until March, citing disappointment for having been excluded from the decision-making process.

Assistant Director Terry Smith suggested that the economic downturn brings with it an opportunity for the Commission and the city to look at things a bit differently in planning for the future. The data from the Needs Update will be very important in determining how the city's dollars should be spent for human services. The internal initiative Bellevue Cares was presented to the Council recently, following which it was evident that the Council is appreciative of the work being done by the staff and those in the community.

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly reminded the Commissioners about the upcoming community conversation regarding transportation issues. She noted that the event would occur on November 19 at Crossroads Community Center from 10:00 a.m. to noon. A panel will be seated to talk about ongoing coordinated transportation planning efforts.

## 5. DISCUSSION

### A. B-GLAD (Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, Trans & Questioning Adolescent Drop-In) Presentation

Ms. O'Reilly told the Commissioners that in seeking out groups to speak with about scheduling community conversations for the Needs Update she called David Downing from Youth Eastside Services and asked him to suggest groups to talk with. One of his first recommendations was B-GLAD. The community conversation they helped set up at the Old Redmond Fire House was very helpful.

Ms. O'Reilly introduced Megan Kennedy, Outreach Counseling Supervisor for YES, and noted that her duties include supervising staff and providing outreach counselors at the Kirkland Teen Union Building, the Old Fire House Teen Center in Redmond,

Ground Zero Teen Center, Spiritwood Manor, the Boys and Girls Club, Crossroads Community Center, Latino Heat and B-GLAD. Ms. Kennedy was honored by the Alliance of Eastside Agencies as staff person of the year for 2009, and B-GLAD was honored as the top youth group of the year.

Ms. Kennedy said she has worked at YES for five years and was involved with the B-GLAD program that entire time. The program is the only LGBTQ resource east of Seattle and has been in existence since 1986. The organization has been very busy creating community. Kids who feel they cannot come out to the parents at home or their friends at school often feel isolated, which leads to feeling depressed. When they do come out they are often kicked out of their homes by their parents and must stay with others who are supportive or seek outside support. It has been estimated that about half of all homeless youth identify as LGBTQ; many of them come from affluent families.

Ms. Kennedy said a support group is conducted every Thursday night from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Firehouse Teen Center. More recently an educational component has been added under which staff go out to the schools to conduct peer education. The focus of the educational component is on keeping kids from being bullied or harassed and from dropping out of school. Many turn to substances as a coping mechanism. One-on-one counseling for LGBTQ youth is also provided at the Kirkland Teen Union Building, a free confidential setting teen youth can go to and access services without telling their parents.

Ms. Kennedy said the program was awarded funding in 2008 by the Eastside and Issaquah Community Networks and the King County Community Organizing Program because of their interest in youth suicide prevention. LGBTQ youth were interviewed on camera. The interviews were then edited into a 42-minute documentary film intended to train teachers, parents and non-profit employees about the experience of LGBTQ youth. The documentary has been finished and titled *Put This on the Map*.

Chair Stout asked what proportion of the teen population are LGBTQ. Ms. Kennedy said the last time that statistic was determined was in 1997. A recent survey conducted of the youth at the teen center suggested that 34 percent of the youth identify as something other than straight.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Bruels, Ms. Kennedy said 26 youth were interviewed for the film and 50 youth participated by providing feedback in one form or another. At least 100 youth come to B-GLAD annually.

Mr. Brandon Walter said he is 18 years old and has lived in the area for a little over two years. He said he moved to the Eastside from North Dakota and quickly learned there is a big mindset difference between the Eastside and Seattle when it comes to accepting gays and lesbians. He said his openness about his lifestyle led to a great deal of harassment at his high school. He said he contacted YES and was connected with Ms. Kennedy and the B-GLAD program and felt very comfortable and

accepted. He said word about B-GLAD has spread among Eastside high schools and things are changing on the Eastside. He said he wished more could be done.

Mr. Walter said he started an organization in 2008 called Eastside Diversity Coalition which seeks to connect all of the Gay Straight Alliances (GSA) around Washington state. YES has gladly allowed the use of their facilities to support the organization.

Chair Stout asked Mr. Walter what his ambitions are with regard to higher education. He responded by saying he plans to get a degree in public affairs.

Ms. Linda Schulman said she is an 18-year-old senior at Redmond High School. She said she was active in her school's GSA during her junior year. She said following a talk given in a health class by Ms. Kennedy about queer youth she signed up to become involved in panel discussions. The support of YES has helped her learn how to support herself; it provided a safe haven in which to allow for soul searching.

Ms. Schulman said she was elected president of her school's GSA for the current school year. On sophomore day alone more than 70 kids signed up to show their support. In just the last month there have been three or four kids come out at a GSA meeting. She said she also recently set up a faculty meeting with the Queer Youth Panel at her high school and intends to follow that up with panel discussions with faculty at other area high schools.

Commissioner Beighle asked if work is being done with middle schools. Ms. Kennedy said she meets middle school youth all the time, and some of them join B-GLAD as seventh and eighth graders. In the film many of those interviewed talk about knowing their orientation during the middle school years. To date there have been no panel discussions in middle schools. Commissioner Beighle thought such a presentation would be helpful for the instructors in middle schools.

Commissioner Hoople asked what happens to kids in the B-GLAD program after the age of 19. Ms. Kennedy said they can no longer get services through the teen center. She allowed that there is a gap of services after that age. Seattle Counseling for Sexual Minorities offers resources for youth beyond the age of 19, but for the most part all that is open to them is private counseling. Youths who age out can turn around and volunteer with the organization and stay involved that way.

Commissioner Plaskon asked if there are any statistics regarding graduation rates for LGBTQ youth. Ms. Kennedy said the available statistics focus on the dropout rate but said she did not have the figure on the top of her head.

Chair Stout asked Ms. Schulman about her plans for higher education. Ms. Schulman said she plans to become a teacher.

Commissioner Huenefeld Gese asked how the message would be presented to teachers. Ms. Schulman said she would approach that group the same as any other. She said the staff at her school are open, generous and caring, though at other high schools the message may not be received as well. The fact is, the message is what is important. Ms. Kennedy said as the student panelists talk they are talking about positive experiences they have had and what some teachers have done to make them feel safe. Those are the kinds of messages teachers need to hear.

Chair Stout suggested the documentary *Put This on the Map* should be viewed by the entire Commission followed by some dialog. Ms. Kennedy said she would be happy to arrange for that.

Mr. Smith asked how many Bellevue kids are part of B-GLAD. Ms. Kennedy said the makeup of the group changes annually. In 2008 all of the kids were from Bellevue, whereas more recently there has been an influx from Sammamish. She added that transportation is an issue for many of the youths, so there are discussions as to whether the program should be kept at the Firehouse or if there should be more than one group.

## 6. DISCUSSION

### A. Final Review of 2009-2010 Human Services Needs Update

Ms. O'Reilly provided the Commissioners with a rundown of the latest data to be added to the Needs Update draft. She said new information from the Bellevue School District indicates that enrollment is up for the school year. Their statistics show that the district has not had 17,000 students since 1982. Many school districts have seen enrollment jumps and the speculation is that some families can no longer afford private school tuition.

Commissioner Hoople asked if the economy has contributed to a reduced number of homeschoolers owing to the fact that previously non-working parents may have had to seek work. Ms. O'Reilly said she had not been supplied with that data but agreed to ask the school district to see if they track that.

Ms. O'Reilly said there has also been an increase in the number of students participating in the free and reduced price lunch program. The rate has held steady for the last ten years or so at 17 percent; as of October, the rate had climbed to 21 percent. Typically, participation in the program is tied to household incomes at 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Another change indicated by the school district data is the total number of languages spoken. There are currently some 81 different languages and dialects spoken by students in the school district, up from the previous mark of 72. The increase accounts to some degree for the reduced number of students categorized as white; there was a slight increase in the number of kids categorized as multiethnic, a slight

increase in the number of Latino students, and a slight increase in the number of Asian/Pacific Islander youth.

Ms. O'Reilly said the number of students determined by the school district to be eligible for homeless services, including bus service to and from shelters, increased to 93 students in 2009, which compares to 48 students in 2008. The data fits with the anecdotal information that has come in from school district staff which came out of the community conversations and the providers survey.

Ms. O'Reilly said the recently published unemployment rates will be included in the Needs Update. She noted that the rate for Washington state was close to the national rate of ten percent; the rate in King County was 8.8 percent, and in Bellevue the rate was 7.2 percent.

The Washington State Office of Employment Security conducts a survey every two years of employers that have varying numbers of employees. The study asks, among other things, about the benefits provided to employees. Not surprisingly, many companies have cut back on the benefit they provide, including sick leave. That makes it more difficult for families to stay home with their kids when they are ill, or to stay home themselves when they are sick; many cannot afford to lose time, and others fear losing their jobs if they do not show up for work.

Ms. O'Reilly said the updated draft includes additional information regarding housing and homelessness. She noted that the first draft had not included information about foreclosure rates. Staff in the Department of Planning and Community Development are starting to track those figures for Bellevue. Foreclosure tracking has not been included in past Needs Updates because the rate has been very low. However, with folks losing their jobs and with all the mortgage issues, the number of foreclosures has increased substantially. Foreclosure is a many step process, and the data to be included in the Needs Update relates to the actual recording of foreclosure notices in King County.

Ms. O'Reilly noted that data from the street count portion of the One Night Count was all that was included in the first draft. The new draft includes information from the survey report of emergency shelters and transitional housing. Many who are homeless are actually employed but do not make enough to stay in permanent housing. The survey found the number of employed homeless at 18 percent was lower than for the 2003 One Night Count when the figure stood at 26 percent. The number of persons reporting incidents of domestic violence was slightly up countywide.

Ms. O'Reilly reminded the Commissioners that during the last legislative session there were discussions about General Assistance Unemployable (GAU) funding; it was at first eliminated in the Governor's budget but was reinstated with cuts to certain services. About nine percent of the households that participated in the survey indicated they rely on GAU; if the program were to go away, there would be an

additional 350 households without any income to rely on. About six percent of the households completing the survey indicated their last permanent address was in east King County.

Ms. O'Reilly informed the Commissioners that the American Communities Survey (ACS) data from 2006 to 2008 was the most recent data available when the first draft of the Needs Update was published. The freshest ACS data will be included in the next draft due out in December.

The number of Bellevue residents who are foreign-born stands at 30.9 percent, which represents a slight increase over the last ACS report. The number of households that speak a language other than English in the home also increased.

Ms. O'Reilly allowed that the challenge will be to decide what to do with the Needs Update data. Clearly the economic crunch has not gone away: jobless recovery has been slow, and there are fewer resources available overall. Unless something drastic happens on the positive side, there will likely be a lot of decreases when it comes time to review applications and budgets. King County and state budget cuts have been in the headlines and there do not appear to be many glimmers of hope. Fundraising is proving to be a very big challenge for many agencies; even the agencies that met or came close to meeting their fundraising goals for 2009 are very concerned about 2010.

Ms. O'Reilly pointed out, however, that there are some opportunities to be addressed. Typically the Commission has chosen a few focus areas during the funding allocation process, but that approach may be more difficult in the next round because there are so many potential gaps. There will be value in seeking a better understanding of how agencies collaborate with each other and make an effort to seek efficiencies. The Commission likely will want to pay close attention to best practices and good outcomes, and will probably want to encourage agencies to find new funding partners. The Commission may want to discuss how agencies should be prioritized to preserve the infrastructure of an agency or service area. A moratorium on funding new programs might need to be discussed; that was the approach taken with the CDBG funding.

Ms. O'Reilly said a study session with the City Council is tentatively scheduled for January 4, 2010. She said there will be about 20 minutes allotted to give a brief outline of the Needs Update findings. The Needs Update will remain in draft form until after it is presented to the Council, after which it will be printed and distributed to all agencies and those who contributed to the community conversations. The document will also be posted to the city's website and updated as new information comes in.

Grant Coordinator Joseph Adriano reported that because of the new joint application process with the south county cities, the application release date will likely be in late March. The applications will be due back by April 29.

Mr. Smith stressed the need to be as clear as possible in sharing the story of the Needs Update findings and the relative impact on Bellevue residents. He said the Council will want to understand both where things have been and where it appears they are going. That will help them frame the question of human service funding in general.

Commissioner Hoople commented that four years ago when the Commission went to the Council seeking an increase in funding, one strategy used was Commissioners were assigned Councilmembers to talk to about the need. He said that approach proved to be very successful and could bear repeating.

The Commission discussed the need to have ready for the presentation to the Council a high flyover of the key findings and needs. They agreed that there will be ways to educate the Council regarding human service needs through the Bellevue Cares initiative, and that the Commission should carefully weigh the traditional approach it has had to funding in the past to determine if some changes might be appropriate.

There was agreement to keep December 15 open as the date for a possible Commission meeting to help frame the issues for the Council presentation.

7. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. O'Reilly reminded the Commissioners of the annual holiday get together with the Parks and Community Services Board and noted that rather than having food brought in it will be a potluck.

8. NEW BUSINESS. None

9. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS. None

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Stout adjourned the meeting at 8:32 p.m.

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Secretary to the Human Services Commission

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Date

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Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

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Date