

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

October 15, 2013
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Commissioners Beighle, Perelman, Plaskon, Stout

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Chairperson Yantis, Commissioners Bruels and McEachran

STAFF PRESENT: Emily Leslie, Camron Parker, Cathy Von Wald, Department of Parks and Community Services; Janet Lewine, Department of Planning and Community

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Commissioner Perelman who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Chair Yantis and Commissioners Bruels and McEachran, all of whom were excused.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. September 17, 2013

A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Plaskon. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Beighle and it carried unanimously.

4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Michael, last name not given, thanked the Commission for its support of the Bellevue Boys and Girls Club. He said the support helps make it possible to provide after-school programs like Project Learn and summer camps for children. During the summer of 2013 the programs reached 1400 kids in Bellevue and provided \$82,000

in scholarships for them. The funds also make it possible to take kids on field trips to the aquarium, the zoo and museums.

Alea, a fifth grader at Phantom Lake, said the Boys and Girls Club is fun because new friends can be made there and old friends can be met there. They help with homework and let the kids play games.

Michelle, a fifth grader at Phantom Lake, said when she first went to Boys and Girls Club she was very shy but has made lots of friends there. She said she got to go to a Sounders game with the Boys and Girls Club and got to hold a player's hand. She said it is fun to play games like capture the flag and to learn about things like bugs.

5. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Stout reported that on October 10 she attended the leadership training program called Bellevue Essentials that was put on by the city. She said she and former Planning Commissioner Pat Sheffels did some role playing with the 30 class attendees on the topic of blue tarps. It was all well done and very well received.

Commissioner Perelman said she has been taking her small child to the Lake Hills library for story time. She said those who frequent that library are quite diverse; several even speak Portuguese and are individuals from Brazil.

Human Services Manager Emily Leslie said there have been a number of agency fundraisers over the last two weeks. She said she attended the Imagine Housing fundraiser breakfast along with Commissioner McEachran; the event raised about \$50,000. Congregations for the Homeless held its lunch fundraiser the week before and they raised almost \$64,000.

Ms. Leslie reported that Chair Yantis presented the CDBG funding recommendations to the City Council on October 14 and did an excellent job. The Councilmembers were very complimentary and had only a few questions. The Council bemoaned the decrease in CDBG funding that has occurred over the last few years and concluded the issue should be on its federal legislative agenda.

Commissioner Beighle said she attended the Council meeting and listened to the discussion. The questions asked by the Councilmembers were about the Home Repair Program, affordable housing, and keeping elders in their homes longer.

Commissioner Stout added that at the Bellevue Essentials class Councilmember Robertson gave a lecture on the roles of the city's boards and commissions and the role of the City Council. She said her talk was very supportive of the boards and commissions and often used the Human Services Commission as an example in walking through the various roles.

6. DISCUSSION

A. Update from Bellevue Network on Aging -- Older Adults and the Comprehensive Plan

Ms. Leslie said the Bellevue Network on Aging has in its meetings been talking about the Comprehensive Plan. She said she felt the Commission would benefit from hearing the thoughts of the Network relative to the Comprehensive Plan and specifically older adults. She proposed the idea of developing a joint communication from the Human Services Commission and the Network on Aging to the Planning Commission on issues around older adults.

Ms. Leslie introduced Cathy Von Wald, manager of the city's older adults programs for the Department of Parks & Community Services, and Bellevue Network on Aging member and former Human Services Commissioner Diane Thompson, and welcomed back Senior Planner Camron Parker with the Department of Parks & Community Services and Associate Planner Janet Lewine with the Department of Planning and Community Development.

Ms. Von Wald explained that the Network serves in an advisory capacity on all issues related to aging in Bellevue. The mission of the group is to help the aging in the community through information and resources, sharing with and listening to older adults. The Network has three subcommittees: Outreach, Advocacy, and Housing and Transportation.

The Outreach Committee has attended all community fairs and the farmers market to hand out information and continues to promote the Vial of Life program; it has also met with other communities to discuss senior issues. The committee actively distributes to senior citizens the gold card, which is a countywide discount program; the cards are available at the North Bellevue Community Center to persons who can show they are at least 60 years old.

The advocacy committee has been busy monitoring the happenings in Olympia and has been meeting with legislators. They are also working with the Kirkland Senior Council on a Legislative Forum for legislators from the Kirkland and Bellevue districts that will be held on December 11 at the Kirkland City Hall.

The Housing and Transportation Committee has been working on suggestions for updating the Comprehensive Plan. They have been involved with the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative, have provided input at Sound Transit meetings, have attended the Eastside Human Services Forum to comment on homelessness and housing, and the Aging and Disability Services Transportation Forum. They have worked with ARCH to develop a senior housing website that is part of the ARCH website.

Members of the Network also serve on the Parks and Community Services Board, the city's Special Events Committee, the Aging and Disabilities Services Advisory

Council, the Eastside Human Services Forum Advocacy Committee, the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative, the Time Bank of Puget Sound, and with many other organizations. Recruitment to fill the vacancies on the Network is under way.

With regard to the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan, Ms. Von Wald said the Network has highlighted a number of issues, including the need to increase funding for the ARCH Housing Trust Fund, continued support for the Housing Repair Program, and giving support to the notion of allowing accessory dwelling units. The Network also supports promoting universal design and accessibility in new housing, a variety of housing options, quality and inclusive neighborhoods, affordable housing, and pedestrian connectivity. The Network has talked about supporting the implementation of a wide range of mandatory regulations and development incentives aimed at achieving affordable housing.

Ms. Lewine said currently the city has a voluntary affordable housing incentive program. Developers can achieve up to 15 percent additional units by setting aside a percentage of the total number of units as affordable; the multifamily housing and PUDs incentive applies citywide. A program that applies in the Bel-Red corridor allows additional density and height in exchange for the provision of affordable housing. The city believes the Bel-Red incentive program will yield results where the citywide incentive program has not. The affordable housing called for in the Bel-Red code is aimed at the moderate-income 80 percent of area median income level.

Ms. Leslie added that affordability below that level is addressed through funding for ARCH. Imagine Housing's development at Andrews Glen and Francis Village falls into that category.

Mr. Parker said the area's median income currently for a family of four is about \$86,000. Affordability tracks lower for smaller households.

Commissioner Plaskon asked how many housing units at the affordable level are expected to be developed over the next ten years in the Bel-Red corridor. Ms. Lewine said the projection is that 5000 housing units will come online over the next 30 years. The incentives are anticipated to make seven to ten percent of those units affordable.

Commissioner Plaskon asked which neighborhoods in the city are the most welcoming to the elderly. Ms. Von Wald said the Network has not had that discussion. She said seniors prefer single story homes for obvious reasons. They also want smaller homes on smaller lots that are within walking distance of services. The Lake Hills and Crossroads neighborhoods fit that description. Additionally, seniors do not necessarily want to live separate from everyone else; the ideal neighborhood would be one in which there is a mix of generations.

Commissioner Stout said there used to be a large older adult population in Vuecrest, but redevelopment is tragically doing away with many of the single story homes.

Some of the new large homes, however, do have elevators. She said affordable housing will continue to be a big issue for the city, particularly in the downtown where the cost of land and construction is so high that affordable housing does not pencil out.

Ms. Von Wald said the Network is interested in the accessory dwelling unit argument. Currently the code allows accessory dwelling units if they are attached but not if they are detached. Detached units would be great workforce and older adult housing, though there are concerns in the neighborhoods that the city needs to be cognizant of.

Ms. Thompson commented that the neighborhoods need to be protected. People who purchase properties in single family neighborhoods do so in the anticipation that they will remain single family neighborhoods. Attached accessory dwelling units are fine for giving an adult child or relative an affordable place to live, but if detached units are rented out for the purpose of generating income the character of the neighborhood will change.

Ms. Von Wald said there may be a way to balance the attached/detached accessory dwelling unit positions. What is really needed is some out-of-the-box thinking about different living arrangements.

Ms. Thompson said seniors in general want to be able to continue living in their homes. To accommodate that there are some things that will need to be addressed. One thing is transportation that will get people where they need to go.

Commissioner Perelman said her neighborhood has seen a number of remodel projects aimed at accommodating an elderly family member of the homeowner. Often such projects only involve the installation of ramps. Commissioner Stout added that ramps alone are not enough for some homes, especially those that have several levels.

Ms. Leslie pointed out that some immigrant families in Bellevue have multiple generations living together and they are effecting changes to their homes to accommodate everyone; the changes needed run the gamut from more square footage to more bathrooms. Ms. Von Wald said there is just such a home in her neighborhood and the approach is one way older adults are being cared for. Commissioner Stout added that the practice is standard fare in some ethnicities but suggested the practice may spread to the Caucasian community as the costs of housing and non-family care continue to increase.

Ms. Leslie said the issue of adult family homes has become prevalent in Bellevue. She asked if the number of such facilities is expected to increase as the population continues to age. The facilities serve seniors who do not need nursing home care but who cannot care for themselves in their own homes and who do not have family that can provide the care they need. Ms. Lewine said much was learned in working with

ARCH to develop the senior housing website, not the least of which was how many different categories of care there are. Ms. Von Wald commented that a complete community is one in which there are a variety of options for everyone, not just for seniors.

Ms. Leslie asked if it would be appropriate to mention adult family homes in the Housing Element. Ms. Lewine said the use is not specifically mentioned. The State licenses them and they are allowed in any neighborhood provided they have six or fewer residents. There are no requirements for them to be dispersed. Ms. Leslie suggested the Housing Element would benefit from having some mention of the need for the different types of housing as people get older.

Ms. Thompson said the concern of many regarding adult family homes arise after the series of articles was run in the *Seattle Times*. The articles made it clear the State was lax in regulating the homes. Senior groups pressured the legislature to enact new regulations regarding adult family homes, including a substantial increase in the cost of obtaining a license. Additional requirements are set to come online soon.

Ms. Leslie said her notes from the Commission's earlier discussion regarding the Housing Element included how fair housing is shown in the Comprehensive Plan in general and making mention of how it might apply to older adults. She said Bellevue's approach is in line with the federal requirements; it does not allow landlords to discriminate based on Section 8 vouchers, but there may be other particulars in need of mention. Ms. Lewine said one of the highest complaints regarding fair housing relates to disabilities, and frequently the dispute centers on whether or not the landlord will allow the tenant to make necessary changes. Mr. Parker said there is definitely a training and education element involved. There are robust State and Federal laws, and Bellevue has some of its own elements. There are places both landlords and renters can go to seek assistance. Ms. Lewine agreed and said the city's neighborhood mediation experts take on the issues frequently.

Commissioner Stout asked if the people who really need assistance have the wherewithal at the time they need assistance to be able to pursue getting what they need. Ms. Von Wald said that is always the question and is in fact the reason the Network created the bookmark that has on it a listing of available information and assistance services for older adults. The problem is people do not want to know until they need to know, and often when they need to know they are in crisis and too embarrassed to ask for help. The Network is always trying to get the word out about who to call when in crisis.

Ms. Leslie said the special housing needs section of the Housing Element includes a focus on the issue of homelessness. The staff have been talking about beefing up that section given all the changes that have taken place in the homelessness arena since the element was last updated. One change is the fact that organizations serving homeless women are reporting that they are seeing increased numbers of older homeless women. Often the women have health problems and are in need of a

variety of services, and every attempt is made to find housing for them as quickly as possible. On the men's side organizations are reporting that older men who have been homeless for years are getting to the point where they have health issues. Many have come into the winter shelter seeking warmth and have found staff there anxious to help them. Human service agencies are conducting outreach in an attempt to find homeless older adults, but the issue of housing them is more difficult to address.

Commissioner Stout said she has been involved in meetings where the focus has been on various pieces of the Comprehensive Plan. She said the city has tended to think about the various issues in silos. What is really needed is a full integration of issues because the solutions do not lie just with human service providers.

Turning to the Human Services Element, Ms. Leslie said the discussion in September highlighted two issues having to do with older adults, namely policies aimed at removing barriers to accessing human services and the need to make a clear statement in support of populations that are disproportionately affected by poverty, discrimination or victimization. Services to seniors do tend to be provided by specialized non-profit agencies, so to some degree it can be said the older adult population is segregated in the human services world. Ms. Von Wald said part of the segregation issue falls at the feet of the Older Americans Act, which is Federal legislation that applies only to those 60 years old and older. The funding received from the federal government gets funneled down to the agencies providing the services to seniors.

Ms. Von Wald shared with the Commissioners draft language for the Human Services Element regarding the Network. The language highlighted the fact that the Network supports the city's commitment to planning, facilitating, funding and informing functions of the human services division and the Human Services Commission and believes that the city should continue to allocate funding and other resources or services which address the full spectrum of community needs in partnership with both public and private human services networks.

Mr. Parker noted that the Commission had also previously talked about the issue of health care. Most of the conversation was around the need to incorporate a policy around health care in the Human Services Element. There was agreement that because the issue continues to be unresolved policy language would be difficult to draft. A placeholder has been included that may be filled in as things work out over the next six to eight months.

Ms. Von Wald pointed out that the Affordable Care Act does not really affect Medicare clients except those that are dual eligible for Medicaid and Medicare.

Ms. Thompson said persons between the ages of 50 to 65 have had difficulties getting medical insurance if they are not covered by their employers. The Affordable Care Act does not solve that problem because insurers can still charge more for

policies covering that age group than they charge for those who are younger. The legislature has included funding in the budget for dental services for Medicaid clients, but hearing aids and vision services are not covered. Medicaid is not required to provide those services, and there is no money in the State budget to fund them.

Commissioner Stout said the Downtown Livability Initiative CAC is set to discuss whether or not the zoning in the downtown should accommodate medical facilities. A statement in the Comprehensive Plan around accessibility to medical facilities, including pharmacies, should be included.

There was agreement that staff should draft a list of ideas to discuss in a joint session with the Network, and that the two groups should submit to the Planning Commission memos outlining issues to be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Stout stressed the need to include a tie between transportation and human services issues in the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Parker said the Planning Commission is scheduled to take up a Comprehensive Plan item at least once per month for the foreseeable future. Some of their study sessions will include panel discussions. Ms. Lewine added that the Planning Commission is a step behind the Human Services Commission relative to reviewing the Human Services Element and the Housing Element. Their work of going through specific policy language will not occur until after the first of the year, and that will give the Human Services Commission plenty of time to pull together its recommendations and comments.

7. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Leslie informed the Commissioners that city of Bellevue staff are continuing to work hard to find a site for the winter shelter. She said currently the focus is on a property that is owned by Sound Transit. Negotiations are under way to lease the vacant building office space on 120th Avenue NE in Bel-Red. The building, which has been empty for two years, is very large and has an office space in the front totaling 4000 square feet, the exact size needed for the shelter. Ms. Lewine has been instrumental in serving as a connection with Sound Transit. With access granted to the building, the city's building and fire inspectors toured it to see if it is workable, and city staff and the shelter manager toured the building to look at it from a programmatic standpoint. Some modifications will be needed, including the addition of portable toilets. The fire and safety inspection highlighted a few tweaks needed as well. The heating and electrical systems still need to be inspected.

Continuing, Ms. Leslie said the kicker is the fact that the building was purchased with Federal dollars for a transit use. For Sound Transit to lease the building to a non-transit use, sign-off by the Federal Transit Administration will be required, and that process cannot be initiated until the government shutdown ends.

Ms. Leslie said the effort is fully on the shoulders of Bellevue. Parks and Planning staff are working on it along with the Legal department, the City Manager and others,

and the City Council has been alerted. Barrier Audi, which is located adjacent to the site, has been alerted, as has Congregations for the Homeless. While the process is complicated, everyone has their fingers crossed that the building will be available for use and open by mid-November. If it does not work out, however, Plan B is a church that has been identified by Congregations for the Homeless; it is off of 156th Avenue NE in a residential neighborhood. From a permitting standpoint, the church site represents the much easier option, but it is not the ideal site because of its location in a residential neighborhood.

Commissioner Perelman asked staff to keep the Commission posted.

- 8. NEW BUSINESS -- None
- 9. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS -- None
- 10. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Perelman adjourned the meeting at 8:11 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date