

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

February 2, 2010
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Emily Leslie, Alex O'Reilly, Joseph Adriano, Terry Smith, Cynthia Sessoms, Department of Parks and Community Services; Shelly Shellabarger, Volunteer Coordinator – City Manager's Office

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present.

3. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS - None

4. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Hoople reported that he participated in the One Night Count with the group that focused on the downtown area generally, including staff members Emily Leslie and Alex O'Reilly. The homeless persons found and counted were mostly in the downtown core area.

Human Services Manager Emily Leslie said having the map of the areas where homeless persons had been reported by police officers was very helpful. She allowed, however, that the areas where the homeless are observed during the day are not necessarily the areas where they sleep at night.

Grant Coordinator Joseph Adriano said the map was drawn up after eight separate briefings with the police. Officers were asked to indicate on a map where they had

observed or had contact with homeless persons. The bulk of the marks on the map were in the downtown, Bel-Red and Crossroads areas, as well as the area under the interchanges of I-405 and I-90. Many of the areas, however, were not counted because they could not be safely accessed during the night.

Commissioner Beighle said team members visited areas not previously counted and found quite a few homeless persons; those persons, however, were not included in the total count. She said there is clear evidence that the areas counted every year should be expanded. She said most of the areas in the downtown are relatively safe to access after dark, but there are wooded areas in Factoria that simply are not. Some known encampments are not counted. Homeless persons often choose to sleep in their cars, which can be moved from place to place; the teams count those persons as well when encountered.

Ms. Emily reported that the count numbers were down five percent from 2009.

Commissioner Stout voiced concern about misleading the public when saying the number of homeless persons counted was less than in 2009 when so many known homeless persons were not included simply because they were staying outside the usual counting places. She said she would have trouble blessing the report for that reason. The scope needs to be expanded.

Commissioner Bruels reported that he attended the Mental Illness and Drug Dependency Oversight Committee meeting with Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly. Ms. O'Reilly said she was involved in the Strategy Subcommittee focused on funding school-based mental health and substance abuse programs in schools. The project was put on hold for a period of time while the issue of budget cuts and how to deal with them was discussed. The King County Council opted to restore some of the funding to the project and so it is fully funded for two years. The subcommittee at first looked at funding programs in school districts with school-based health clinics, which would have left out both the North and East King County school districts. The subcommittee was persuaded to broaden its scope and move to a geographical distribution. Some Eastside agencies are planning to submit applications for MIDD funds.

Commissioner Bruels stated that the Crisis Diversion Center has plans to move ahead with a request for proposals in March, and it appears King County is willing to hire a program manager to help shepherd the program along. There are also ongoing discussions with some of the municipalities in South King County to try and smooth anxieties related to establishing the Crisis Diversion Center.

Ms. O'Reilly said the group has plans to offer crisis intervention training for law enforcement officers and first responders. That will occur in the spring. Trainers are already in the queue to help law enforcement know how to work with the mentally ill and if possible keep them out of the jail system. Once the Crisis Diversion Center

opens, it will offer a place for officers to take those in trouble with the law but suffering from a mental illness.

Commissioner Stout encouraged the Commissioners to read the series of articles in the *Seattle Times* about adult family homes. She said following publication of the first article she received an email from the president of her local community association asking if Bellevue has any specific regulations dealing with adult family homes. She suggested the Commission should keep an eye on that issue. Ms. O'Reilly said the advocacy subcommittee of the Bellevue Network on Aging is planning to write a letter to the *Seattle Times* and the reporter who wrote the articles commending them for putting a spotlight on the issue. She said a bill was introduced in the house at the request of Attorney General Rob McKenna on the issue of quality of care in adult family homes.

Commissioner Beighle said she visited Olympia on February 1 and spoke with Representative Clibborn, Representative Maxwell's aide, and new state Senator Gordon. She said she talked with each about budget cuts for comprehensive medical care programs for women.

Chair Huenefeld Gese took a moment to introduce Councilmember Chelminiak and noted that he has been tapped to serve as Council liaison to the Commission. Councilmember Chelminiak said he was very happy to take on the role, noting that he previously served as Council liaison to the Park Board. He said he is proud of the fact that Bellevue takes a holistic approach by having all of its human services programs under the umbrella of Parks and Community Services. Bellevue is well known as the city in a park, but is less well known as the city with a heart. The city's approach to human services, and the role it plays at the regional level, has been and continues to be very important. He said he will serve the Commission in every possible way, including helping to shape proposals from the Commission that are headed to the Council. He added, however, that he would shy away from lobbying the Commission to do something one way or the other.

Councilmember Chelminiak allowed that the Council has been spending a great deal of its time lately on the issue of transit. He commented that transit in all its formats is vitally important to the city and has direct ties to human services.

At the Council meeting on February 1 there was a discussion about bringing back the Cultural Diversity Task Force from 1993. That group made a number of very good recommendations, many of which have been implemented. Cultural diversity is one of the city's greatest strengths. However, as the new task force develops, if there is a role for the Commission to play it will be asked to get involved.

A study of the Eastgate area is gearing up. It will focus on land uses and other issues, and the study will likely involve a citizens advisory committee that could be peopled with representatives from the city's boards and commissions.

Councilmember Chelminiak said he strongly believes in education. He said he has carried forward that focus in his work as president of the board of the Economic Development District. Recently the group received presentations from the president and vice-president of Washington State University, and the group has also had presentations concerning childcare. The group has learned that an undergraduate education at the University of Washington is less expensive than a year of childcare, and that bargain needs to be made known widely. The University of Washington is a huge economic generator for the area.

Ms. Leslie called the attention of the Commissioners to the notice included in the desk packets of the Affordable Housing 101 Workshop scheduled for March 31. She noted that ARCH staff will be present at the February 18 Commission meeting to report on how well Bellevue is doing in meeting its affordable housing targets.

Assistant Parks Director Terry Smith reminded the Commission that a new budget process has been initiated in the city. He said as staff learns more about how it will work, the details will be shared with the Commission.

Mr. Smith announced that the city received some federal dollars to expand the Wraparound Program. Through the efforts of both Congressman Reichert and Senator Murray, the city is in line to receive \$125,000 per year for three years. That is an exciting turn and says something about the program.

5. DISCUSSION

A. Bellevue's Volunteer Program

Volunteer Program Coordinator Shelly Shellabarger said she facilitates about 58 individual programs throughout the city. The mission of the program is to offer meaningful opportunities for civic engagement to the residents of Bellevue, and to ensure a positive volunteer experience. The broader vision is to connect organizations across the community and the region, establishing a premier volunteer network. The guiding principles are to encourage civic engagement; to make it easy for people to volunteer; to make sure volunteers are acknowledged as a valuable resources; to encourage volunteer-managed programs; to create sustainable efforts; to enhance volunteer satisfaction; and to foster strategic partnerships.

Ms. Shellabarger said there are two focus areas for the program, one internal and one external. The internal effort is focused on supporting existing city programs, marketing and outreach, and creating the community volunteering guide. The latter is a document housed on the city's website that lists all known volunteer opportunities in the city. Ms. Shellabarger said recruitment is a very large part of her job. In 2008 a total of 111 referrals were made, and in 2009 there were 356 referrals. The referrals come from telephone calls, emails, and through the online form.

Commissioner Hoople asked if there is a link between the city's volunteer program and the Wraparound and VIBES programs. Ms. Shellabarger said the programs are linked. She said she works very closely with both.

Ms. Shellabarger said she worked in conjunction with Kevin Henry and the city's Diversity Program to craft a Social Media Training Seminar. She said she also coordinated the Eastside Volunteer Managers summit during which people were invited to attend a full day of sessions and networking; more than 250 people participated and the event was highly successful.

Ms. Shellabarger said she also heads up the Recognition Program. The Presidential Volunteer Awards were recently handed out, and the focus has turned to the Bellevue Volunteer of the Year Award. She said she also works with program managers to help them retain their volunteers and to improve their programs.

In 2008 the city had over 5000 volunteers. The community-wide volunteer network was developed to bring together the various organizations that work with volunteers, most of which are social service agencies and non-profits. The development of the network led to the development of the Volunteer Coalition, a group that meets regularly to talk about issues relative to volunteering. Ms. Shellabarger said she also meets with representatives from local governments and the business community.

Commissioner Stout asked what interaction the program has with United Way and its volunteer program. Ms. Shellabarger said she is regularly in contact with the manager of that program, and all training notices received from United Way are forwarded to the coalition list-serve.

Ms. Shellabarger said she can provide and locate volunteers for special events and programs. Recently a call came in from Sophia Way seeking help in finding a person to coordinate their volunteer program. The need was made known to people listed as being interested in social services and to some businesses, with good results. The next day Sophia Way expressed a need for an IT volunteer, and sending out that message garnered nine responses.

With regard to enhancing marketing and outreach in Bellevue, Ms. Shellabarger said the Community Volunteering Guide can be found on the city's webpage. She said she conducts targeted messaging by sending out information about volunteer opportunities directly to those who have expressed an interest in specific areas. The same approach is used to get the word out about human services needs in the community.

Ms. O'Reilly said the Eastside Human Services Forum has a time-banking project starting up. When some potential liability issues were highlighted, an attorney was needed to conduct some research. The need was made known to Ms. Shellabarger and she immediately responded by providing some resources. She said she also serves on the Outreach Subcommittee of the Eastside Homelessness Advisory

Council. She said that group is looking at ways to work with the faith communities to get out information about homelessness and issues facing the community. She said Ms. Shellabarger will be involved in that effort as well.

6. DISCUSSION

A. 2011-2012 Funding Strategies

Ms. Leslie noted that as suggested by the Commission at its last meeting a subcommittee was formed with Commissioners Beighle and Yantis working with Ms. O'Reilly and herself. The Commissioners were provided with copies of the draft developed by the subcommittee.

Commissioner Beighle said the group developed as the primary focus those in the community who have been impacted by the economic recession. While giving that group the most attention is in fact reactionary, it was concluded the group should be given the top priority. The decision was also made to recommend prevention be given the secondary focus.

Commissioner Beighle said the subcommittee also drafted a response to several of the questions the Council had asked, especially the questions around partnerships with different organizations and how well they have been meeting the criteria set out for them.

Commissioner Yantis suggested the document can serve several purposes, not the least of which will be to provide guidance to the Commission. He said an attempt was made to make the document clear enough to help steer the Commission when it comes time to make some very difficult decisions. Secondly, the document can serve as a communication tool in outlining what will guide the Commission and as a reminder to all who read it about what the Commission believes is important.

Ms. Leslie said a conscious decision was made to take a lot of the issues and criteria the Commission feels is important and wrap it all into the introduction section. The list includes cost-effectiveness of services, prevention and early intervention, how Bellevue's funding fits into larger regional systems, contract performance, and outcomes. The notion of funding the full spectrum of needs is retained as an overarching strategy.

Recognizing the unique economic situation facing the citizens of Bellevue, the group concluded that the primary focus should be on intervention programs that serve the residents most affected by the recession. That focus was further broken down into two categories: the gaps identified by the gaps analysis that fall into the intervention columns, and the need to keep in mind that significant funding reductions in other areas could threaten the human services infrastructure.

The secondary focus area is broken down to include areas where Bellevue funds are used to leverage dollars from other sources and are the most cost-effective, and partnerships.

Chair Huenefeld Gese commented that the language of the document utilizes a fiscal or business approach; while not the usual language used by the Commission, it might speak to the Council and explain how all the pieces fit together. She thanked Commissioners Beighle and Yantis for their work on behalf of the full Commission.

Commissioner Hoople agreed that the subcommittee did a great job. He referred to the latter part of the document where the primary and secondary focuses are spelled out and suggested that a lead-in sentence would be in order for the second section to make the structures parallel.

Commissioner Stout suggested the document needed a wrap-up statement. She proposed using the third paragraph under the introduction. Her proposal was accepted.

Commissioner Yantis stressed the fact that the introduction section was drafted to clarify the intent of the Commission to continue to respect the full spectrum of services that have been funded in the past, and the desire to continue funding them in the future. He said if that concept is reiterated in conjunction with the focus areas, the document will lose its ability to differentiate programs away from the Commission. The Commission will need something to base decisions on when grading one proposal against another when it comes time to make tough decisions.

Answering a question asked by Councilmember Chelminiak, Commissioner Yantis said the Commission has always been interested in programs that use Bellevue funds to leverage additional dollars. The suspicion is, however, that the economic realities make it necessary to emphasize partnerships. Commissioner Beighle added that the language of the document hopefully will encourage organizations to develop partnerships as a channel for receiving funding from Bellevue.

Mr. Smith noted that the new budget process being implemented in Bellevue directs the departments to break down walls and work together, and the document asks human service agencies to do the same thing.

Councilmember Chelminiak asked if any agency mergers have been observed due to economic conditions. Ms. Leslie said mergers for economic reasons seem to run in cycles and allowed that there may be more on the horizon. There have been steps taken by many organizations to improve their coordination with other organizations that provide similar services, especially in ways to improve client access to services.

Ms. Leslie reported that there are now 17 cities working on a common application process through HSConnect. A small group from the north, east and south cities plan to meet soon to coordinate everything. Two funding workshops are planned, one in

Redmond on March 8 and one in Renton on March 10, and some 60 people are already signed up to attend.

The online applications are due April 29. The Commission will be reviewing the applications in May, June and July. Extra Commission meetings will be added in each of those three months. Staff from the various cities will work together and share information throughout the process. The Commission's preliminary funding recommendations will be subjected to a public hearing in early September, then the final recommendation will be presented to the Council.

Motion to approve the funding strategies with the proposed changes as outlined was made by Commissioner Yantis. Second was by Commissioner Hoople and the motion carried unanimously.

7. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. O'Reilly said she has been tracking a lot of different bills in the state legislature. She highlighted the Housing Trust Fund, which is vital to providing capital dollars for constructing affordable housing. A bill pending in the House would provide \$100 million for the Housing Trust Fund, which would keep the program at its current level. The bill would generate funds by instituting a document fee.

Another bill being watched involves early learning and childcare. One of the cuts in the Governor's budget will affect childcare subsidies. A bill has been introduced that would restore childcare funds that were previously cut and assure people eligibility for up to 12 months.

Ms. O'Reilly said that Washington 2-1-1 information network is earmarked for a substantial funding cut. She said there is no new news with regard to how the funding can be made up, but there is a lot of support from advocates for the bill that would seek to do that.

8. NEW BUSINESS – None

9. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Huenefeld Gese adjourned the meeting at 8:08 p.m.

Secretary of the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson on the Human Services Commission

Date