

East Bellevue Community Council
Summary Minutes of Regular Meeting

January 2, 2013
6:30 p.m.

Lake Hills Boys & Girls Club Meeting Room
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Chair Kasner, Vice Chair Seal, and Councilmember Capron

ABSENT: Councilmembers Gooding and Hughes

STAFF: Carol Hamlin, Senior Land Use Planner
Paul Inghram, Comprehensive Planning Manager

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm with Chair Kasner presiding.

2. **ROLL CALL**

The Clerk called the roll, all members were present with the exception of Councilmembers Gooding and Hughes.

Chair Kasner led the flag salute.

3. **COMMUNICATIONS - WRITTEN AND ORAL:** None.

4. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chair Kasner amended the agenda to include under Department Reports a report from Paul Inghram related to the upcoming Comprehensive Plan Open House on January 29th.

Councilmember Seal requested the addition of the Huang Short Plat located at 441 140th Avenue NE and retail auto sales in Office Limited Business districts.

Chair Kasner suggested the above be added under New Business.

The agenda was approved as amended by consensus.

5. **PUBLIC HEARING:** - None.

6. **RESOLUTIONS:** - None.

7. **REPORTS OF CITY COUNCIL, BOARDS, AND COMMISSIONS:**

(a) Community Council Business and New Initiatives

Councilmember Capron reported the development at Kelsey Creek Center is progressing quite well. Traffic lights on 148th synchronization difficulties seem to have been resolved.

Councilmember Seal reported on his attendance at a City Council Session where a presentation was made related to zoning procedures. He next reported that he attended the December Eastside Transportation Alliance meeting.

Councilmember Kasner reported time spent reading the master thesis written by Loraine McConaghy about the Lake Hills area and review of related archival materials. He also reported on an upcoming Jr. Taxing District, Municipal Corporations & Local Government Finance Committee meeting on January 7, 2013.

8. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

(a) Palmer Short Plat

Carol Hamlin, Senior Planner, provided a staff overview of the proposed land use action. She stated the application is proposing a two lot short plat within the single family R-5 zoning district. Ms. Hamlin noted Mr. Palmer's previous short plats within the general area.

In response to Mr. Kasner, Ms. Hamlin stated present and previous short plats accomplished by Mr. Palmer are accumulatively within the nine lot short platting threshold. Mr. Palmer must comply with all City infrastructure requirements.

In response to Mr. Seals concerns about lot averaging, Ms. Hamlin explained that it is allowed by Code. There was continued Council discussion with Ms. Hamlin.

Chair Kasner commented that although this short plat meets the letter of the law, the re-short platting at five year intervals seems a questionable practice. He stated his desire to understand in broad strokes the intent of the law, noting the undesirable effects of multiple under sized lots.

In response to Mr. Kasner, Ms. Hamlin state minimum lot size can be reduced by 10% in some zones while in other zones up to 15%. For this particular property, the minimum lot size of 7200 square feet can be reduced no more than 10%.

Councilmember Capron stated no objections to this application. He noted the value of redevelopment for adjacent neighborhoods and the area in general.

Agenda Interruption

11. **NEW BUSINESS:**

(c) Retail Auto Sales

Paul Inghram stated the above is in response to interest in auto sales in Eastgate's Office Limited Business (OLB) District.

In response to Mr. Kasner, Mr. Inghram stated that the Eastgate Safeway was located in Community Business which allows auto dealerships. The property in question is the old Bally Fitness Center which is currently zoned OLB. In the past, auto dealerships in select locations within OLB have been allowed via footnotes.

Mr. Inghram stated he believed the above proposes an addition or modification of those notes that would allow for auto dealerships at the Bally Fitness location. From a code perspective, this change would affect OLB on a citywide basis, but the proposed note would just affect the location in Eastgate.

Chair Kasner noted that currently there is no OLB zoning in the Community Council area.

In response to Mr. Kasner's concerns about use allowances by note within specific zoning districts, Mr. Inghram stated future plans to look at redoing zoning categories within this corridor strip. In another year or so, OLB could be replaced with a new zone that could allow auto dealerships outright.

There was continued Council discussion.

Return to the agenda

8. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

(b) Comprehensive Plan Open House

Paul Inghram, Comprehensive Plan Manager, reviewed planning for the January 29th Open House at the Crossroads Community Center and the Community Council's role as host.

There are two main sections to the Comprehensive Plan. The first section applies citywide and contains policies related to land use, housing, transportation, parks and recreation. The second section refers to individual subarea plans. The East Bellevue Community Council area contains, in part, four different subareas.

Mr. Inghram stated consideration of providing at the open house a limited write up on each of the main chapters to provide context, information about what's new and what's out of date, demographic changes and future forecasts, as well as, accepting public comment about the vision and direction moving forward.

In response to Council, Mr. Inghram stated the purpose of open house and staffs hope for a dialog with area residents about the future they envision for Bellevue. Information gathered will be used to help evaluate how accurately the Comprehensive Plan reflects that future.

Chair Kasner stated that updating the demographics of the subareas is a key factor. If the demographics are different now then defined in the Comprehensive Plan, the conclusions might not be the same.

Councilmember Seal stated there has already been a series of presentations on the future development of Crossroads. He asked if there is anything else to consider other than the changes to Eastgate previously discussed?

In response to Mr. Kasner, Mr. Inghram stated at this point only one open house for the public is planned in the near term. He reviewed presentations held or planned at the board and commission level. Over the course of the Spring and Summer, staff will be doing more to engage school students, collecting public comments at events such as the Strawberry Festival and Arts Fair, and, possibly an event at City Hall. However, in the near term, this open house is the key event for residential input. He stated his attendance expectations of 50 to 100 participants.

Mr. Inghram reviewed logistics for the January 29 open house and the role of the Community Council as ambassadors.

Mr. Seal provided an historic perspective of changes he has seen and the difficulties in getting communities to think beyond the present.

Mr. Kasner stated East Bellevue's aging infrastructure and the challenge of thinking prospectively related to replacement and/or change. As an example, he noted his attendance at the Beyond Oil Conference in January and the testing of cars without drivers in California next year.

Mr. Inghram reviewed past thinking to push future growth toward Downtown, Bel-Red and, to a lesser extent, Eastgate. The strategy has been to increase zoning capacity in the commercial corridors and encourage more mixed use development that includes both commercial and residential development. One of the purposes of this open house is to ask or confirm this strategy with the community. Other questions include light rail, residential access and the future of community shopping centers.

John Kappler, Bellevue business owner, suggested residential engagement faster versus longer to maintain their involvement.

Adrian Chalker, Bellevue resident, suggested the use of roundabouts in place of four way stops which only slow traffic. Also, he stated his preference for small shops at Crossroads versus big box stores. It is all about community.

Rich Erwin, Mercer Island resident, stated it is all about scale. He suggested the creation of small spaces such as kiosks for startup businesses.

There was discussion related to cyber businesses.

Mrs. Rossman, Bellevue resident, stated the old thinking has got to be retired. She suggested more density and that transportation keep pace to accommodate a denser population.

Mr. Erwin noted the higher per capita usage of King County's mass transit in Bellevue versus Seattle. He stated the importance of understanding existing and future populations.

There was further discussion related to demographics.

In response to Mr. Kasner, Mr. Inghram stated in some ways the Comprehensive Plan is a good tool for addressing demographic and economic diversity. It is usually thought of as the document that captures the City's demographic profile. He noted affordable housing and cost of transportation as key issues. The challenge is to correlate how a short plat, such as the one discussed earlier, relates to age, race and income status. Although we can have that discussion here, it is not the perfect place for that discussion.

Cheryl Kuhn, Bellevue resident, stated that resources should be included as part of this discussion. She spoke to the aged infrastructure, the preservation of neighborhoods and the need for earmarked resources to maintain and preserve what is built. Ms. Kuhn stated her desire that the City's quality of life be preserved.

Mr. Erwin stated the above statement brings up a key point and what he sees as a moving target: What is quality of life?

Ms. Kuhn suggested maybe the topic for discussion should be how residents define quality of life now and for the future to help the City identify commonalities.

Ms. Rossman stated she would like transit to be readily available and accessible.

Continued open discussion. Chair Kasner thanked participants.

9. **COMMITTEE REPORTS:** None

10. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

(a) Jr. Taxing District, Municipal Corporations & Local Government Finance Committee

Discussion moved to the conclusion of Item 11.

11. **NEW BUSINESS:**

(a) Introductory Review of LUC exceptions in East Bellevue Community Council Area

Chair Kasner opened for discussion review of Land Use Code exceptions in the East Bellevue area.

Mr. Inghram stated the advantages of a single code applied consistently throughout the City.

Mr. Seal stated he could not see any significant differences.

Chair Kasner stated the most striking difference is in the handling of RV parking and the issue of blue tarps. He questioned if a different code application for East Bellevue is still viable.

Mr. Seal provided an historic perspective of the time of the Community Council's disapproval of the RV ordinance.

Mr. Kasner stated he felt this was more a policy question. Should we do more to aesthetically work on neighborhoods or not?

Ms. Kuhn stated the issue of RV parking and blue tarps came to a head in her early years with the City. She recalled that the City Council had a great amount of pressure to act on RV storage and an equal amount of backlash from those who did not want the proposed restrictions. She remembers tremendous discord at the time. In the end, the City moved forward with required screening of recreational vehicles and/or storage, leaving many people bitter. On a personal level, she stated she feels it has worked out very well largely because Bellevue has complaint based enforcement. If neighbors are troubled by RV parking, the owner must comply. If the individual neighborhood is not troubled by a few Code violations and they are not life safety issues, then they are not enforced.

Mr. Seal noted areas in the City with large lots have room to make provisions for RV storage while areas in the Community Council do not have the same luxury forcing the cost of storage.

Mr. Kasner stated his interest in the number of complaints filed in the East Bellevue area only to be told that the restrictions do not apply in this area. Now, almost twenty five years later, the question is do the neighbors care.

Ms. Kuhn stated that other issues related to property maintenance do come up.

Mr. Kappler suggested that Code inconsistencies be closely examined and aligned where possible. Relevant to the upcoming Comprehensive Plan discussion is retail space size limits in East Bellevue compared to the rest of the City. He recommended that the Community Council listen carefully for subjective terminology and try to weed it out as soon as possible.

Mr. Seal provided the redevelopment history of the Kelsey Creek Center, stating the original development objection related to day-lighting the Creek per the concomitant agreement and not the size of allowable retail space.

Mr. Kasner questioned the number of land use categories going forward. In response, Mr. Inghram stated Bellevue has one of the simplest zoning classification systems compared to other jurisdictions in the region. Bellevue has nine categories that apply citywide plus the Downtown

and Bel-Red, totaling about twenty-five or thirty zoning classifications. He agreed that the exceptions/notes were a problem and that it is hoped to address some of those issues through the Comprehensive Plan update and discussions like tonight's.

Community Council discussion continued with Mr. Inghram including the disallowance of R-7.5 lot size within East Bellevue.

Mr. Seal stated did not think any of the arguments made during past disapprovals would be much different if studied today. He stated he would not favor a R-7.5 zoning category in East Bellevue.

Ms. Kuhn stated reconsideration of the recreational vehicle storage and blue tarp issue would most likely again raise controversy, so, careful thought as to the value of such reconsideration for the community should be taken into account.

Chair Kasner stated his objective was to become knowledgeable about East Bellevue's code exceptions and that he felt that has been achieved.

Mr. Kappler reiterated that the exceptions dealing with building size and housing density should be reviewed in this new look at the Comprehensive Plan. He stated he is not suggesting action to retain or reverse disapprovals, only that they are worthy of a relook.

Mr. Seal stated that unless there are some specific areas where problems exist, he suggested that the Council not take up any of the current exceptions.

(b) Huang Short Plat

Mr. Seal requested additional information.

10. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

(a) Jr. Taxing District, Municipal Corporations & Local Government Finance Committee

Chair Kasner reported the Committees final recommendation to make no changes to provisions governing community councils.

12. **CONTINUED COMMUNICATIONS:** None.

13. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None.

14. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Councilmember Seal moved to approve the summary minutes of November 26, 2012 Special Meeting as presented. Councilmember Capron seconded the motion which carried 3-0.

15. **ADJOURNMENT**

Councilmember Capron moved to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Seal and approved by a vote of 3-0.

At 8:59 pm, Chair Kasner declared the meeting adjourned.

Michelle Murphy, CMC
Deputy City Clerk