

The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on February 20, 2014

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

February 4, 2014
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Commissioners Beighle, McEachran, Perelman, Plaskon, Stout

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Chairperson Yantis, Commissioner Bruels

STAFF PRESENT: Emily Leslie, Alex O'Reilly, Jessamyn Findlay, Department of Parks and Community Services; Kevin McDonald, Department of Transportation

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Vice Chair Perelman who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

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

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. January 7, 2014

Commissioner Beighle referred to the third paragraph on page 2 and said the first sentence should read "Commissioner Stout reported that she along with Commissioner Beighle and city staff participated in the Eastside Human Services Forum...."

Commissioner Stout called attention to the fifth paragraph on page 6 and asked that it be revised to read "... triggered by residents of the adjacent apartment who were making cannabis oil."

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

4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS - None

5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A motion to open nominations for Commission chair was made by Commissioner Beighle. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Stout and it carried unanimously.

A motion to nominate Commissioner Perelman to serve as chair was made by Commissioner Beighle. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Stout.

There were no other nominations made.

A motion to close nominations for Commission chair was made by Commissioner Beighle. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Stout and it carried unanimously.

The motion to elect Commissioner Perelman to serve as chair carried unanimously.

A motion to open nominations for Commission vice-chair was made by Commissioner Stout. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Beighle and it carried unanimously.

A motion to nominate Commissioner McEachran to serve as vice-chair was made by Commissioner Stout. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Beighle.

There were no other nominations made.

A motion to close nominations for Commission vice-chair was made by Commissioner Stout. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Beighle and it carried unanimously.

The motion to elect Commissioner McEachran to serve as vice-chair carried unanimously.

6. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner McEachran said he attended the City Council study session at which the Needs Update was presented and discussed. The Council commended the Commission and the staff for the work that went into creating the document.

Commissioner Beighle said she participated in a visit to the Congregations for the Homeless' day center along with Chair Perelman and Commissioner Bruels. She noted that the facility is only open to men who have a connection to the Eastside. The facility is open Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and averages

about 60 clients per day. In 2013 they served 337 unduplicated clients. Breakfast and lunch are served and local businesses supply day-old bread and individuals bring food on a regular basis. The program boasts a recidivism rate of less than ten percent.

Chair Perelman said the program began about a year ago and has gone from serving about 13 per day to 60 per day. The program will not be able to operate from its current location in about a year because the church has been sold and there is currently no solution on the table. The program is not tied to any religious institution, but religious counseling is made available to anyone who asks. Clients are connecting to other services through the program.

Commissioner McEachran noted that the program recently added client services that assists felons in finding employment. The service boasts an 80 percent placement success rate.

Commissioner Beighle reported that Councilmember Robinson and Leslie Miller from Sophia Way participated in the One Night Count along with Emily Leslie and Alex O'Reilly. Ms. Miller has agreed to become the new coordinator for the Eastside One Night Count. The count numbers were down for the Eastside, which was not surprising given the success of the winter shelter, but the counts in Seattle were up. Overall there was a 14 percent increase.

Commissioner Beighle stressed that there is no science involved in the count so fluctuations can be expected year to year. Commissioner Beighle also noted that the count areas have stayed the same for nine years, but she agreed that the areas themselves have changed over that time. She added that she has been saying for quite a while it is time to change the count boundaries.

Commissioner Beighle reported that she spent the first part of the day in Olympia talking with legislators about education. She said while there seemed to be agreement that early learning provides more bang for the buck, the big focus is on STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education in the state. Washington state ranks first in the nation in the concentration of STEM jobs but is ranked 46th in the nation when it comes to students enrolling in science and education graduate programs. The research shows that between 2012 and 2017 there will be an estimated 30,000 unfilled jobs in the state because of a lack of skills in STEM education.

Commissioner Stout reported that she identified and introduced to Jeff Brandt of Eastside Adult Day Services a consultant with a lot of non-profit experience who is eager to work with Mr. Brandt on creating a non-profit cooperative in which administrative services could be shared. She said he is aware of similar attempts made in other parts of the country, and that few of them actually reduced costs for the organizations involved.

Commissioner Stout reported that at the January meeting of the Downtown Livability Initiative CAC the group wrapped up some of the parking issues and moved on to refining the list of things in need of further study. Mention was made about providing more pressure to get non-profit facilities and services located in the downtown, but of course the big issue is cost. The group will meet next on February 19 at City Hall in Room 1E-108 at 6:30 p.m.

Commissioner Stout stated that the celebration for Nan Campbell on January 24th was perfectly done and the attendance was excellent.

Commissioner Plaskon said he traveled to Olympia and testified in both houses regarding two bills meant to give foster kids legal counsel during their dependency hearings. The bills are HB-1285 and SB-6126. He said studies have shown that having legal representation makes good sense. The bills are being opposed by judges and by state and county commissioners who say they will lose money. One of the state's smallest counties has for the past ten years funded attorneys for all of its foster kids through the age of 21 and the county has the best record relative to the shortest amount of time in dependency in the core system, the quickest time to reunification or permanency, a much lower rate of criminal mischief for foster kids, and a higher graduation rate for foster kids. Their experience speaks to the wisdom of the bills.

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly provided the Commissioners with copies of the Eastside Pathways summary baseline report. She noted that the document was released in December and said the Commission will be given an update at a future meeting.

Ms. O'Reilly said on February 3 she and intern Jessamyn Findlay attended a Seattle City Council briefing given by two outstanding researchers who conducted the evaluation for the city of Boston public school system on the implementation of universal preschool. Seattle is looking at models and details that might be implemented. The presentation validated much of what the Commission knows about the importance of early learning.

Commissioner Stout noted that Child Care Resources is heavily involved in the issue and is providing much of the technical assistance. She said it will be exciting to see what direction Seattle and the area takes.

7. DISCUSSION

A. Downtown Transportation Plan Update; Comprehensive Plan Update - Transportation Element

Human Services Manager Emily Leslie commented that at the Eastside Human Services Forum there was discussion about the Human Services Element and the Housing Element in Comprehensive Plans as well as the Transportation Element.

Transportation is a big issue in human services and always comes up in the needs assessment. The Transportation Commission has begun the process of updating the Transportation Element but is not all that far along.

Senior Planner Kevin McDonald said the Transportation Commission began its work on the Downtown Transportation Plan in 2011. He said the work to update the plan has involved many stakeholders from the downtown community and has focused on what it is like to get around and what the vision for the future of mobility in the downtown should be.

Mr. McDonald said in the fall of 2013 the Transportation Commission transmitted its recommendations on downtown mobility to the Council. The Council in turn provided direction to the Transportation Commission to develop policies and recommendations to implement the vision, and the Transportation Commission is currently in the process of doing that. The Council understands the direct relationship between land use and transportation and directed the deferral of several items to the Downtown Livability Initiative CAC for further review and analysis. Ultimately the work of the Downtown Livability Initiative CAC will be merged with that of the Transportation Commission into amendments to the downtown subarea plan and the downtown land use code.

Mr. McDonald said the public involvement strategy including walking and biking tours, traditional open house events, meetings with downtown stakeholders and with Councilmembers. The Transportation Commission had the topic on its agenda a number of times between June and September 2013, and in 2014 has continued to work on policy recommendations.

The Council directed planning for multiple modes of travel within, to and from downtown Bellevue in recognition of the fact that the downtown is a dynamic and changing environment. Until quite recently, transportation planning relative to the downtown has focused on personal automobile travel. The focus now has shifted to getting around on foot, by bicycle and by transit.

Commissioner Stout stressed the need to include a focus on mobility for disabled persons. She suggested that someone should arrange to do a wheelchair tour of the downtown to identify issues. Mr. McDonald agreed. He said the downtown tours during the outreach efforts included sight- and hearing-impaired persons as well as some with mobility impairments. The references to accessibility are broadly construed to include everyone.

Mr. McDonald said the downtown is growing in both employment and population and the growth is expected to continue through the horizon year of 2030 and beyond. Between 1990 and 2010 arterial traffic counts have remained steady despite all the growth that has occurred. The number of persons walking, biking, carpooling, vanpooling and taking the bus during the same years has increased substantially. The population and employment density in the downtown will by 2030 be more

condensed in the core of the downtown. One thing the Downtown Livability Initiative CAC may recommend is a Land Use Code change to allow for increased density in the area along the freeway.

The Transportation Commission has developed recommendations relative to mobility options. With regard to vehicles, the recommendations relate to access to and from the downtown, within the downtown, and to and from the adjacent neighborhoods. The intelligent transportation system implemented in the downtown allocates signal time adaptively based on demand and travel direction, resulting in the efficient use of the roadways.

The Commissioners were shown a chart indicating the amount of vehicle delay at intersections. It was observed that with a couple of notable exceptions, most of the downtown functions relatively well. By 2030, vehicle delay is forecast to increase. The model output shows traffic going from west to east will be slower than any other direction during the evening peak period, evidence that traffic will have difficulty accessing a congested freeway. A number of projects are being recommended by the Transportation Commission that are aimed at improving mobility to, from and within the downtown. Perhaps not surprisingly, most of the recommended projects are not in the downtown but rather are focused on areas outside of the downtown where some of the east-west pressures approaching the freeway can be relieved.

The Transportation Commission has recommended finding additional space in the downtown for on-street parking, some available all the time and some available during off-peak times. Staff has also been directed to look into a pay-for-parking system for on-street parking spaces. Currently there are about 300 on-street spaces and by taking advantage of opportunities that number could be almost doubled. Any pay-for-parking program would need approval by the Council prior to implementation.

Mr. McDonald said many things happen along the curbs whether planned for or not. The Transportation Commission identified the need to plan for the establishment of loading zones, allowing for bicycle parking corrals, and electric vehicle charging stations.

Transit is an increasingly important part of downtown mobility, including to and from the downtown and within the downtown. Ridership has increased steadily since 1985 and continues to rise. Coverage has improved as well. The Transportation Commission recommended some changes to the bus network which if implemented will by 2030 provide access to a bus stop within 600 feet of 97 percent of the people living and working in the downtown. The Transportation Commission has focused on a Frequent Transit Network that will enjoy transit service every 15 minutes or less, typically less in the peak period. The city does not, of course, provide transit services but does serve as an advocate for the levels of service projected to be needed.

Mr. McDonald said the downtown transit center will increase in importance once the light rail station opens near City Hall. The Transportation Commission has looked at

options that will provide for weather-protected passage between 108th Avenue NE and 110th Avenue NE.

A number of bicycle projects are being recommended to improve the ability of riders to get to and from the downtown from the region and the neighborhoods. Those who commute by bike need facilities in which they can securely park their bikes while in the downtown. The roads in the downtown are as wide as they are going to get so it would be very difficult to add width to allow for bike lanes, or to narrow the existing lanes in order to squeeze in bike lanes. Accordingly the Transportation Commission is working to develop a series of shared roadway facilities to be implemented over time.

With regard to pedestrians in the downtown, the Transportation Commission has recommended that not all crosswalks should be created equal. Currently all crosswalks consist of two parallel white lines and a signal that allows a few seconds of crossing time. The Transportation Commission recognizes that some crosswalks warrant more attention to detail relative to who is using them, how many are using them, and the relationship between crosswalks and adjacent land uses. Their recommendations include the establishment of standards for enhanced crosswalks and exceptional crosswalks in addition to the standard crosswalks.

Ms. O'Reilly highlighted the need vision impaired persons have for audible signals.

Mr. McDonald said sidewalks are typically developed by private developers as projects occur. The Transportation Commission is recommending that some sidewalks should be treated differently, with some wider to accommodate more pedestrians, and some with different kinds of landscaping providing buffer separation from the roadway. The Downtown Livability Initiative CAC will be reviewing and commenting on the sidewalk and through-block connections recommendations. The Downtown Livability Initiative CAC will also be looking at design components of the pedestrian corridor with an eye on making it more accessible for all users.

8. DISCUSSION

A. 2015-2016 Funding Focus Areas

Ms. Leslie said planning is under way for the next funding cycle. She reminded the Commissioners that many of the focus areas put in place for the last cycle were related to the economic recession. Funding applications are due in April, following which the funding process will be off and running.

Ms. O'Reilly said she went back through the Needs Update and reviewed the gaps identified in the report. She stated that some of the issues are repeats from the past, but a couple of overarching issues stood out, including the need for culturally and linguistically appropriate services to address the city's growing diversity, and affordable and accessible transportation options so critical to all residents.

Chair Perelman said healthcare continues to be a large and important need for many in the community. Ms. O'Reilly said at the Council meeting at which the Needs Update was presented, two of the Councilmembers indicated a desire to see healthcare issues tracked to determine the impact of the Affordable Care Act. It is too soon to know if those in a healthcare exchange or the expanded Medicaid program will continue to need other resources, but it is known that undocumented immigrants will not be able to purchase healthcare through the exchanges and will continue to need services. Chair Perelman suggested it would be a good idea to include on the application a question asking if the agency has a navigator to help clients walk through the healthcare options.

Commissioner Stout said it will also be important to watch those who chose not to sign up under the Affordable Care Act and who for a while may fall through the cracks.

Commissioner Stout highlighted the need to continue tracking the homelessness issue and moving people into permanent housing. She added that a clear distinction needs to be made between affordable housing and low-income housing given that they are two completely different things.

Commissioner Plaskon said the traditional focus on providing a safety net may be wearing on the City Council. Now that the economy is improving, the focus should be on engaging people and moving them toward stability by getting them back into the community through job training and proper housing.

Commissioner McEachran said he wanted to see the Commission continue to focus on collaborative impact and investing in humans first. Ms. O'Reilly said the application will continue to seek more than just comments about partnerships and ask for real evidence of authentic collaborations.

Commissioner Stout said because a large percentage of Bellevue's population is getting older, the application should include a statement addressing the needs of that demographic.

9. NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner McEachran took a moment to note the accomplishments of Commissioner Yantis as Chair and his service on behalf of the Commission. The Commissioners readily agreed with his observations.

10. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS - None

11. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Perelman adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date