

Neighborhood News

City of Bellevue

News for and about Bellevue Neighborhoods

April 2009

Calling all neighborhoods: it's time to lend a hand

No one is exempt from the impacts of a down economy, but some local families are suffering more than others. Every day City staff are fielding requests for help from residents who have lost jobs, lost their savings, faced eviction, missed mortgage and rent payments. Meanwhile, local agencies – those that normally provide a safety net for hurting individuals and families – are now hurting, themselves, thanks to funding cuts and declining contributions.

To help meet the growing needs, City staff members are gearing up to gather food and resources. And a City task force is looking for ways that the organization as a whole can configure its services to help the community survive and thrive during difficult times.

In addition, the City is looking for ways to partner with neighborhoods and community groups that want to be part of the solution for families in need. Spring and summer events are being planned to support the concept of “neighbors helping neighbors.” The first of these opportunities include the following.



Help get the food out. Hopelink needs help sorting food at its Bellevue location. Thousands of pounds of food will be collected by letter carriers on Saturday, May 9, and volunteers are needed to sort and bag this food for needy families in the community.

Gather your neighbors, young and old (groups need to be a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 30) and take a shift at the food bank. What a great way to get out and perform a community service project together, build camaraderie and make a difference! Children are welcome with an adult. Choose a shift for your neighborhood and contact Julie in Neighborhood Outreach at 425-452-5372 to sign up!

Shifts are: May 11, 3-5 p.m.; May 13, 12-2 p.m.; May 13, 3-5 p.m.; May 13, 5-7 p.m.; May 16, 10-12 p.m.; May 16, 12-2 p.m. Additional shifts are available on request.

Help end summer hunger. Watch the May *Neighborhood News* for information on the Bellevue Food Drive Neighborhood Challenge or call Julie at 425-452-5372 for information on how to get your neighborhood involved now!

Use your green thumb. Bellevue Parks & Community Services is offering a new way for neighbors to help their neighbors as everyone experiences the negative effects of the national recession. Within the next two months, approximately 20 new Seasonal P-Patch Community Gardening Plots will be opened at Crossroads Community Park. Before these plots are offered to the general public, the City will first make new plots available to local neighborhood or community groups. These volunteer groups will commit to tend a plot of approximately 400 square feet for the upcoming gardening season (April-October) and provide the majority of their produce harvest to a local food bank or feeding program.

The intent of this program is to help build a sense of community for groups through shared cultivation of a garden, and to grow a meaningful amount of produce to help feed local families in need at a time when food banks struggle to keep up with demand. To



meet both goals, the City is asking that volunteer groups make a commitment to the full five-month gardening season and include a leader who has vegetable gardening experience.

If your group is interested in serving the community in this way, please contact Camron Parker at cparker@bellevuewa.gov or (425) 452-2032 before Friday, April 3. Once Parks & Community Services has determined if there is sufficient interest to offer this program, groups will be provided with more detailed registration information and asked to make a firm commitment before the end of April.

Don't come empty-handed. Food will be collected at a number of neighborhood and community events this spring and summer. Remember to share good times with others; bring food with you to city-sponsored events.

Adopt a cause. If your group is weathering the downturn in good shape, you may want to share your good fortune by “adopting” a cause. You could sponsor the summer camp fee for a needy child. Or how about providing a complete set of school supplies? Paying for a month’s utility bill for a family? Or even “adopting” a particular human services agency for a week or month?

More information will be coming out on opportunities for “neighbors helping neighbors.” But if you’d like to start helping right away, or get more information on the ideas above, or suggest ideas of your own, contact Neighborhood Outreach, 425-452-6836.

Planning underway for new, expanded parks

Eastgate ~ On March 9, the City Council reviewed three alternative plans for a new park that could include lighted sports fields, an indoor recreation building, off-leash dog area, picnic facilities and trails. Currently referred to as the Eastgate Area Properties, the 28-acre park site includes land purchased from the Boeing Co. and Bellevue School District, along with an existing stormwater pond. The area, between SE 26th St. and Microsoft's Advanta office campus, was a former landfill and airfield, and is located near the Spiritridge and Phantom Lake neighborhoods. It is currently open space and woodland.



Park alternatives were developed during a master planning process that began in May and included significant input from the community. Based on community input and City Council and Parks & Community Services Board direction, staff will develop a single vision for the park to be presented at a community meeting later this spring.



Surrey Downs ~

On March 16, the City Council adopted a master plan for an expanded park in the Surrey Downs neighborhood that will feature an open lawn, two baseball fields that can be converted to a soccer field, picnic spots, play areas, a skateboarding area, walking trails and a small basketball court. Located at 546 112th Ave. SE, the park already has small baseball fields and a basketball court, but it will grow to include an area now occupied by a King County District Court. A community center and parking may be added to the plan later after further discussion with the community.

The master plan was developed over a couple of years, with intensive public participation and an environmental review. Improvements will be funded from the parks levy passed last November. Design and permitting will take about 18 months to complete, and construction can begin when the District Court is relocated. For more information on Eastgate or Surrey Downs park planning, contact Glen Kost at (425) 452-5258 or gkost@bellevuewa.

Neighborhood parks will see field upgrades

Two Bellevue neighborhoods will see their local parks refitted with synthetic turf soccer fields next fall, thanks to voters in the last general election. Last month the City Council hired firms to design new fields at Newport Hills Park and Wilburton Hill Park. Installation of synthetic turf – at an estimated cost of \$3 million – will allow these lighted fields to be used year-round. Previously, rainy season usage was limited by muddy conditions. Both upgrades were included in the Parks and Natural Areas Levy approved by voters in November.

Neighborhood Liaisons join team

In March, the Neighborhood Liaison team had a festive send-off for longtime neighborhood liaisons, Scott VanderHyden (Eastgate/Cougar Mountain) and Tom McFarlane (Northeast Bellevue).



Replacing Scott VanderHyden is former West Lake Hills liaison, Patricia Knight. Patricia has been with the city for 12 years and is a member of the Neighborhood Outreach Team. She is coordinator for the Neighborhood Match and Little Match Programs, programs committed to building strong sense of community. Patricia can be reached at (425) 452-7917 or pknight@bellevuewa.gov.

The new liaison for West Lake Hills is Arturo Chi. Arturo is with the Utilities/Engineering department and his current position is Utilities Review Professional in Development Services. Art has previously worked for the cities of Sedro-Woolley and Monroe. Arturo is Spanish bilingual. He can be reached at (425) 452-4119 or achi@bellevuewa.gov.



Taking over for Tom McFarlane in Northeast Bellevue is Hiedi Popochock. Hiedi is Billing Administrator in the Development Services Finance Division and previously worked for the Bellevue Police Department. She has a strong interest in community organizing and community involvement with City initiatives. Recently relocated to the Northeast Bellevue area, she is looking forward to meeting her new neighbors. Hiedi can be reached at (425) 452-4863 or hpopochock@bellevuewa.gov.



Assuming the duties of West Bellevue liaison from Julie Ellenhorn is Janet Lewine. Julie will remain neighborhood liaison for the Downtown Bellevue area. Janet is a planner with Bellevue Planning & Community Development (PCD). Formerly a housing planner with ARCH (A Regional Coalition for Housing), she specialized in affordable housing plans and programs. Her current work continues to include housing and neighborhood planning issues. Janet can be reached at (425) 452-4884 or jlewine@bellevuewa.gov.



Your neighborhood liaison is your *City Hall connection*. He or she can direct you to the right people and resources, and help you resolve any city-related concern. For more information on how your liaison can serve you and a complete list of all neighborhood liaisons, see http://www.bellevuewa.gov/neighborhood_liaisons.htm

Public hearing set on Neighborhood Character issues

Meeting last month, the Planning Commission set May 13 as the public hearing date for a second phase of proposed regulations addressing the impacts of large new homes, and vacated homes, on existing neighborhoods.

Proposed regulatory and procedural changes, known as Neighborhood Character Phase 2, include:

- Development standards for houses over the size threshold of 0.5 Floor Area Ratio (building square footage exceeding 50 percent of lot square footage) to protect neighboring homes from loss of sunlight and privacy.
- Limiting single family building height (35 feet from average existing grade to the ridge of a pitched roof);
- Limiting the highest façade of a single family building to 40 feet from the ground to the top of the roof.
- Maintenance standards specific to abandoned building sites and vacant houses;
- Increase in the tree retention requirement from 15 percent to 30 percent for new subdivisions.
- Revision of construction hours for remodels and additions (7 a.m.-8 p.m. weekdays, 9 a.m.-8 p.m. weekends);
- Reduction of the lifespan of building permits from three years to two years for single family residences.
- Modification of setback requirements for mechanical equipment installed with new single family homes.

Comments can be submitted by e-mail to NeighborhoodOutreach@bellevuewa.gov or in writing to: Neighborhood Outreach, PO Box 90012, Bellevue, WA 98009. Additional information is available on the web site, <http://www.bellevuewa.gov/neighborhood-character.htm> or by contacting Cheryl Kuhn, Neighborhood Outreach Manager, 425-452-4089 or Julie Ellenhorn, Community Relations Coordinator, 425-452-5372.

I-90 bridge work over Richards Road to cause delays

As part of an effort to bring 172 area bridges up to current earthquake standards, the state Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has scheduled a series of lane closures on Richards Road and on I-90 ramps to Richards Road beginning April 20. Most closures are expected to take place from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekdays and from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. on weekday nights; no weekend closures are planned. Some traffic backups and travel delays are anticipated. The work is expected to be completed in October 2009.

At various times, closures will include: one or two lanes on Richards Road, both northbound and southbound; one lane on the ramp from Richards Road to westbound I-90; and the eastbound and westbound lanes of I-90 itself. For details, see <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/i90/eastsidebridgeseismic/>

April meetings

(All meetings are in City Hall unless otherwise noted. Agendas are subject to change. You may confirm with Neighborhood Outreach the day before or day of the meeting. Or consult the city web pages listed below to download agendas.)

4/2 Environmental Services Commission (6:30, 1E-112) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) regulatory options, briefing on Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) efforts, update on Storm & Surface Water Comprehensive Plan http://www.bellevuewa.gov/environ_serv_comm.htm

4/2 Bellevue Network on Aging (8:30 a.m., 1E-120) Elder Mediation Program overview, network outreach discussion, regional partnership discussion, legislative update, committee reports http://www.bellevuewa.gov/network_on_aging.htm

4/6 City Council (6:00 study session, Council Conference Room) Neighborhood Fitness work program; A Regional Consortium for Housing (ARCH) proposal; year-end financial monitoring (8:00 regular session, Council Chambers) Crime statistics report; action on red light camera enforcement contract, consolidated Land Use Code Amendments (LUCAs) http://www.bellevuewa.gov/council_overview.htm

4/7 East Bellevue Community Council (6:30, Lake Hills Clubhouse, 15230 Lake Hills Blvd.) Swearing in of newly appointed Community Council member, Neighborhood Character Phase Two proposed land use amendments courtesy hearing http://www.bellevuewa.gov/EBCC_Homepage.htm

4/7 Human Services Commission (6:30, Council Conference Room) Public hearing on housing, community development, human service needs, use of 2010 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds http://www.bellevuewa.gov/human_serv_comm.htm

4/13 City Council (6:00 extended study session, Council Conference Room) Decision on NPDES regulatory options; multi-family tax exemption; update of growth targets http://www.bellevuewa.gov/council_overview.htm

4/14 Parks & Community Services Board (6:00, Council Conference Room) Agenda to be determined http://www.bellevuewa.gov/parks_board.htm

4/20 City Council (6:00 study session, Council Conference Room) Impact fees; report on winter snow and ice response (8:00 regular session, Council Chambers) First pre-annexation hearing on Coal Creek Park annexation; consent agenda http://www.bellevuewa.gov/council_overview.htm

4/21 Human Services Commission (6:30, 1E-120) Briefing on severe weather shelter (Jan.- March 2009), planning for winter of 2009-2010 shelter http://www.bellevuewa.gov/human_serv_comm.htm

4/22 Planning Commission (6:30, Council Conference Room) Shoreline Master Program study session, 2009 Comprehensive Plan Amendments threshold review public hearing http://www.bellevuewa.gov/planning_commission.htm

4/23 Transportation Commission (6:30, Council Conference Room) 2010-2015 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) update, Rapid Ride & Circulator update, Transportation Development Code outreach update http://www.bellevuewa.gov/trans_comm.htm

4/27 City Council (6:00 extended study session, Council Conference Room) Arts Commission work plan and funding; Bel-Red incentive program and catalyst project discussion; Downtown character update; regional issues – updates on Sound Transit decision making; legislative session, jail study, court study, SR 520 and I-90 configuration and tolling http://www.bellevuewa.gov/council_overview.htm