

CITY OF BELLEVUE
SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

December 9, 2021
8:30 a.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Virtual Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Susan Freeburg – Parks
Andy Heider – Parks
Dane Waisanen – Fire
Mike Shovlin – Police
David Sanabria – Police
Casiano Atienza – Transportation
Weijun Zhu – Transportation
Erin Hislop – Utilities
Claude Iosso – City Manager’s Office
Neal Christiansen – Community Representative East
Mike Ogliore – Business Representative Downtown
Jonathan Rose – King County Metro

OTHERS PRESENT: Brad Bennett, Imane Elmesbahi, Parks; Councilmember Barksdale

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:31 a.m. by Chair Freeburg who presided.

2. COMMUNICATIONS: Written and Oral

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Mr. Heider. The motion was seconded by Mr. Waisanen and the motion carried unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A motion to approve the October 14, 2021, meeting minutes as submitted was made by Captain Sanabria. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ogliore and the motion carried unanimously.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

❖ Routing and Location Subcommittee Report – None

6. OLD BUSINESS

Chair Freeburg reminded the Committee members about the previous discussion about how returning events are approved. She said read aloud the pertinent code language and said her

interpretation was that the Committee would hold the date and/or dates for recurring events which have until January 15 to submit applications. If applications for recurring events are not submitted by January 15, their dates will be made available for use by another event.

Mr. Christiansen asked Chair Freeburg if she was concerned about the inconsistency between the two notes. Chair Freeburg said in November when the Committee went to approve the Pakistan event there was a question around why the approval was needed then rather than in January. She indicated that she had said at that meeting that she would pull the language from the documents and present it to the Committee. Mr. Christiansen said it would not make sense to require events that occur early in the year to wait until January 15 for approval. He suggested the January 15 date is less of a requirement and more for convenience. Chair Freeburg agreed.

Captain Sanabria said it was his understanding that recurring events are given date, time and place priority, thus if a new event were to come in before the January 15 deadline wanting a date a recurring event has, the new event would have to wait until after the January 15 deadline passes to gain approval. Chair Freeburg said that was correct and added that sponsors for new events are encouraged to submit alternative dates in case their first choice is not available.

Councilmember Barksdale suggested said new events could face conflicts both in terms of date and location. In some ways it is easier for events to change a location than a date. Chair Freeburg said as applications come in seeking a specific location that is not available, she does her best to recommend other locations that might work. She said she does the same where there are date conflicts.

Councilmember Barksdale said it would be helpful to have a calendar listing the annual recurring events for new event organizers to plan around. Chair Freeburg said she is working on a calendar that will be available for all to see that will show all confirmed events. It will likely not show recurring events that sponsors have not in some way confirmed, though it could indicate dates potentially held for events.

❖ Tabled Events: Pakistan Independence Day Celebration

Chair Freeburg said the celebration has in the past taken the form of small picnic events and in 2021 moved to a the full scale event on August 7 complete with amplified sound. The organizer is requesting to hold the event again in 2022 and has requested August 14 to line up with celebrations in their culture on that date.

Mr. Heider said the 2021 event went off very well and without issues.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the Pakistan Independence Day Celebration pending any guidelines from the city was made by Mr. Christiansen. The motion was seconded by Mr. Waisanen and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Zhu stressed the need for the event organizer to provide a parking plan. Chair Freeburg said she would follow up on that.

Mr. Bennett reminded the Committee of previous discussions about what should and should not be included in parking plans. One thing highlighted was the need to include on the event website and promotional materials a clear indication of which parking areas are not approved for use by the event.

6. NEW BUSINESS

- ❖ Applications of Intent – None
- ❖ Applications Deadline Discussion

Chair Freeburg noted that several months ago the Committee talked about the January 15 deadline by which returning events must submit an application and whether or not it should be moved. The decision was made to keep it at January 15. From an administrative point of view, however, it would be helpful to move the date to or near the end of December to allow time to address the events in January. The bulk of the applications are submitted just before the January 15 deadline, which is after the Committee's January meeting. Moving the date back to December would facilitate starting the review process in January.

Mr. Christiansen suggested moving the deadline to December 15 would avoid the holiday push. Chair Freeburg said that date would be fine.

A motion to move the submittal deadline from January to December 15, beginning in 2022, was made by Captain Sanabria. The motion was seconded by Mr. Waisanen and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Freeburg referred to the email she previously sent to the Committee members about the Rock and Roll marathon coming to Bellevue in 2022. She said the application has been received and will be discussed at the January meeting with the event organizer in attendance. The focus will be on developing a route that will work for the event and for the city in terms of minimizing the impacts.

Answering a question asked by Mr. Waisanen, Chair Freeburg said the event has previously been held in cities across the nation but for the last several years it has been held in Seattle.

Mr. Ogliore said during his tenure with SeaFair the event hosted both a full and a half marathon in Bellevue. Rock and Roll came in and partnered up with SeaFair and moved the marathon to Tukwila for two years before moving it to Seattle where it has been since 2019. The event is now seeking a new home.

Captain Sanabria asked if Bellevue had to compete and bid to get the event to come to the city. Chair Freeburg said there was likely some solicitation but ultimately the organizer came to Bellevue seeking to hold the event in the city.

Mr. Ogliore said the Seattle Sports Commission played a role in identifying options for the event.

Captain Sanabria commented that Tempe, Arizona, is slated to hold a Rock and Roll marathon on January 15 and 16. He said he has reached out to their police department for insights and suggestions. The event is significant and the city of Tempe is bearing the cost, though the event does provide a significant lift. Bellevue has not traditionally borne the costs for events not generated by the city.

Mr. Iosso noted that he has been in touch with Philly Marsh in the Economic Development division who has indicated the event will be a big opportunity for the city. A big component of the marathon is community participation, with community groups giving performances every

mile or so long the route in parks. There likely will be also be performances at Downtown Park as well, which is where the start and finish line will be.

Chair Freeburg said the event organizer shared with her his goal of minimizing the cost to the city to the extent possible. She said Ms. Marsh has shared her understanding that the event would be paying the full price.

❖ Code/Administrative Manual Updates

Chair Freeburg shared with the Committee that she and Mr. Bennett participated in discussions with the legal department about the code. Only a couple of changes were recommended, including changing “application of intent” just to “application.” Because the code currently indicates an application of intent, the recommendation was made to continue using the term until it is officially changed or determined that it should be retained. The city attorney’s office also felt there would be merit to keeping the fee structure in the fee chart in the code rather than referencing them in several places. That way when the Council needs to approve changes to the fees, all that would need to be done is make changes to the fee chart itself, not the entire code.

Chair Freeburg said the administrative manual is close to being completed.

Mr. Bennett agreed that it makes sense to house all fees in the fee schedule. He stressed that the table will ultimately look different than it does currently and will be more in line with what other cities do across the country.

The Committee was told that the user guide is geared more toward the organizers. She shared the guide with the Committee but stressed that it is still in draft form. Information still needs to be dropped in from the various departments. All conditions and forms will be housed in appendices, and there will be links in the online documents.

Councilmember Barksdale urged Chair Freeburg to keep the user guide focused on the end user and to abstract the city’s structure from it. For example, forms should be included that align with the goals of the user rather than having a form for each department.

Chair Freeburg said she has been looking at software to help improve the process. She said at the right time she will share it with the Committee along with a representative of the software, which is specifically for approving special events. A number of cities are using the software.

Chair Freeburg shared the draft guide, noting that ultimately it will have a front page with inviting graphics depicting events in the city. The intro page will thank event organizers for choosing Bellevue, and there will be a table of contents, all of which will be followed by an explanation of the process. The document will be clear up front about the requirement for completed applications to be received no later than 90 days prior to the event date. The permit application process will be outlined along with the application fee and will indicate the submittal date of December 15 for returning events. The introduction section will be followed by the specific application and permit fees. The chart will include the updated fees, with a flat permit fee, proposed to be \$250, and fees incurred through the various departments involved in approving the permit. The hope is that the a la carte approach will be cleaner and include fees only for the services used.

Councilmember Barksdale suggested the document should allow organizers to understand what they need to do before an event, during an event and after an event. He allowed that there will be

some nuance in each of those phases. A later section of the document should profile the different departments that will be involved. He said it should be process first and details later.

Mr. Ogliore agreed with Councilmember Barksdale. He said any streamlining that can be done would be helpful. In the final analysis, the document should be more inviting to the users and should do all that can be done to remove barriers.

Mr. Bennett suggested that once a more complete draft is in hand it would be a good idea to have event organizers review it and weigh in before finalizing it. It will also need a review by legal. Chair Freeburg agreed and said non-profit and some of the newer organizers should be invited to review it and share how it could be improved.

Chair Freeburg invited the Committee members to share with her via email any suggestions they might have.

- ❖ Post-Event Evaluations – None
- ❖ Comments/Follow-Up

Mr. Zhu took a moment to introduce Casiano Atienza, new to the transportation right-of-way group, who will be taking over his old spot.

Mr. Bennett commented that there are three big events during the holiday season: the ice rink in Downtown Park, Snowflake Lane on Bellevue Way, and Garden d’Lights at the Botanical Garden. He asked how things are going.

Mr. Ogliore said things were going very well indeed. People are all masked up and enjoying the ice rink. There has not been a need for any enforcements. Folks appear to be eager to just go out and celebrate being a community again. The ice rink is up 20 percent year to date from two years ago. Opening up a full week before Thanksgiving helped. He said he also heard that Garden d’Lights is also doing very well. He gave a shout out the Downtown Park grounds crew who always do great job but they outdid themselves getting things ready after the setup of the ice rink.

Captain Sanabria said the crowds for Snowflake Lane have been somewhat lighter than in years past, which was expected given the congested nature of Bellevue Way. The crowds have been steadily growing, however. There have been no incidents and there have been a lot of positive interactions. Some drones have been spotted flying overhead and they have been addressed to the degree possible. None of them have been a cause for concern. A portable messaging board was put up on 100th Avenue NE outside the Downtown Park west parking lot with a modified exhaust warning and crime prevention information and he said any feedback on that would be appreciated.

Mr. Zhu said he had not received any complaints about traffic congestion or parking issues for either Snowflake Lane or the ice rink.

Sgt. Shovlin agreed that the crowds have been down over previous years for Snowflake Lane. The show has been good and there have been no parking problems. There have also been no problems with Garden d’Lights.

Mr. Ogliore said there have been no issues with parking for the ice rink.

Captain Sanabria said the command post is situated at NE 12th Street and Bellevue Way. He said from that position has not seen any backups on Bellevue Way southbound. All seems to be working very well.

7. NEXT MEETING

❖ January 13, 2022

8. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Ogliore. The motion was seconded by Captain Sanabria and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Freeburg adjourned the meeting at 9:39 a.m.