

CITY OF BELLEVUE
SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

June 13, 2024
8:30 a.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Virtual Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Susan Freeburg – Parks
Chad Charbonneau - Parks
Andy Oltman – Fire
Kyle Nelson – Fire
Landon Barnwell – Police
Christopher Rivera – Transportation
Casiano Atienza – Transportation
Mike Ogliore – Business Representative Downtown
Laurie Scott – Downtown Resident Representative
Jonathan Rose – King County Metro
Meredith Langridge -

OTHERS PRESENT: Emily Martella, Brad Bennett, Parks; Anand Sane,
Debadutta Dash, India Independence Day, Andy Heider,
Parks; Shelley Brittingham, Parks; Claude Iosso, City
Manager’s Office; Nathan Hasselblad, FAM

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:33 a.m. by Chair Freeburg who presided.

2. COMMUNICATIONS: Written and Oral – None

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Jonathan Rose. The motion was seconded by Laurie Scott and the motion carried unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A motion to approve the May 9, 2024, meeting minutes as submitted was made by Laurie Scott. The motion was seconded by Jonathan Rose and the motion carried unanimously.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

❖ Routing and Location Subcommittee Report

Casiano Atienza reported the subcommittee has been focused on the Snowflake Lane and the Indian Independence Day Celebration events, and most recently met to discuss the Bellevue International Festival.

6. OLD BUSINESS

❖ Event Application – Snowflake Lane

Landon Barnwell noted that the event represents a huge drain on police resources, with 26 nights with 22 to 23 officers assigned to the event per night. Fire also is taxed by the event in terms of assigning personnel to it. Originally the event organizer proposed as its Plan A option having two shows per night on Saturdays and Sundays, but police have made it clear that adding nine additional shows is not sustainable. Officers would have to be posted to the site for five and a half hours on two-show nights. Additionally, it is being recommended that ten additional officers be added on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights based on safety and security needs given the crowd sizes.

Continuing, Landon Barnwell said the Plan B option would not include two shows per night on Saturdays and Sundays. The event would run from after Thanksgiving to Christmas Eve. To allow for more space, spectators would be allowed to move out into the roadway and occupy one lane once the roadway is closed down. Still to be worked out is how the area is to be marked off given that fencing would not be possible. It could be a rope line or something similar, and Kemper Development Company is working on a plan for that element. Another option presented involved allowing folks to come out into the roadway on both sides of the street. However, they still want to have the parade and thus need space for the floats on Bellevue Way, and they need to make sure there is a safe distance between the spectators and the motorized floats. There still is no complete agreement as to what the event will look like relative to using both sides of the roadway or just one side.

Landon Barnwell commented that the event causes the police department a lot of concern. The police can only take reasonable efforts to mitigate the type of threats that any large gathering is susceptible to. It is an open event, what the police call a soft target event. There is no controlled access into the event.

Casiano Atienza commented that there are three lanes on the east side of Bellevue Way and two on the west and asked if it matters which side should be closed when it comes to security.

Kyle Nelson suggested that ideally it would be best to have more space on both sides of the road, but so long as the fences are gone it should not really matter to fire. Landon Barnwell voiced a preference for the east side given that officers are posted to elevated positions during the event for overwatch and the west side provides for a better viewing advantage. It is simply not known how many will show up for the events nightly.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for Snowflake Lane was made by Kyle Nelson. The motion was seconded by Meredith Langridge and the motion carried unanimously.

7. NEW BUSINESS

❖ Event Application: Indian Independence Day Celebration/Parade

Anand Sane with Beats of Redmond, the organizer for the Indian Independence Day Celebration/Parade, said the event is partnering with the Consulate General of India. The event will include dance performances, live music, floats, shopping and food booths all highlighting cultural diversity and strengthening the bond between India and the United States. The event will

celebrate community, friends and family and everyone is welcome to attend.

A map indicating the proposed layout for the event was shared with the Committee. The grandstand, originally planned to be sited at the top of the stairs, is proposed to be sited at the bottom of the stairs to give a better experience for all the dignitaries. As planned, there would be vendors on both sides of the City Hall plaza selling merchandise and food. The flag hoisting will be next to the handicapped ramp unless the city allows the use of its existing flag pole. A stage closer to 110th Avenue NE will be sited so as to leave enough space for people to walk by. The performance area will be located on 110th Avenue NE, which will need to be closed off. A lane will be reserved for emergency vehicle access, and for pedestrians. Some seating will be provided, mostly for elderly persons, otherwise attendees will be encouraged to bring their own portable chairs.

With regard to the parade route, Anand Sane said the public parking lot will be reserved as the staging area for the floats. The parade will start at the intersection of 110th Avenue NE and NE 8th Street. Volunteers and police officers will make sure the area will not be blocked. Only one float will pass through the intersection at a time when there is no traffic coming in. The floats will continue down 110th Avenue NE to NE 4th Street where the floats will be queued by volunteers. Each float will stop to allow for a performance in front of the delegates. The parking lot near Meydenbauer Center is proposed as the location for dismantling the floats. Talks are being had with other property owners about using their parking lots as well.

Chair Freeburg asked how many floats there will be. Anand Sane said the plan is to have 30 to 40 floats. The size of each float will be limited.

Kyle Nelson asked who will be providing the stage. Anand Sane said it will be provided by one of the vendors.

Kyle Nelson asked if the food vendors will include food trucks or people cooking under tents. Anand Sane said there will not be space for food trucks. The food to be sold will be pre-prepared, warmed up but not cooked. Kyle Nelson noted that an outdoor assembly permit would be required, and a number of volunteers or staff members will need to go through a crowd management training. Anand Sane said 30 volunteers have valid certificates already.

Landon Barnwell noted having no concerns about what is planned for the plaza area. With regard to the parade route, it was noted that roadway closures always involve the entire roadway to prevent mixing vehicles and people. With respect to allowing Metro access to the transit center, it was stated that only uniformed police officers can be in the roadway flagging traffic; it cannot be volunteers. If a bus were to come up NE 6th Street from 112th Avenue NE moving toward the transit center, there would need to be a stopping point for it and for any vehicular traffic; only buses would be allowed to continue. Likewise on 108th Avenue NE, on the west side of the transit center, buses come in from that side and exit out onto 112th Avenue NE, and that area could be problematic in terms of controlling the traffic.

Landon Barnwell asked if the vehicles exiting onto NE 4th Street will be road worthy and able to operate like any other vehicle. Obviously they will be traveling at a slower rate, and bits of them may actually fall off. Mixing the floats with other vehicles on an open roadway could be problematic. Anand Sane said the reserve lane was identified based on feedback from the transportation department, in part to accommodate accessing parking for Skyline Tower and City Hall. There is no other good way to allow access to those sites. Volunteers will assist with the floats but will not serve to control traffic at any intersection. As the floats complete the parade

route, they will be dismantled and secured to before being allowed back onto NE 4th Street. Another option would be to have the floats turn back to where they were assembled.

Nathan Hasselblad asked if the stage will be physically raised or just a red carpet. Anand Sane said it will be physically raised. It will not be used for performances, only for dignitaries to sit and have a better view of the activities.

Nathan Hasselblad asked about the background LED. Anand Sane said the fabric background is 10 feet by 24 feet and will be hung on the top of the stairs. If allowed, an LED screen will be brought in and powered with a generator.

Anand Sane assured the Committee that the number of vendors will not exceed the capacity of the space where they will be located. Nathan Hasselblad said the total number of vendors will need to be disclosed, along with details about how the tents will be secured, noting that sandbags are preferred.

Chair Freeburg asked if trash, recycling and portable toilets will be required. Nathan Hasselblad said trash and recycling bins will be required, as well as portable toilets.

Kyle Nelson asked if the event will include any fireworks, and Anand Sane confirmed there would not be any used.

Christopher Rivera commented that access was intended to be maintained to the Skyline Tower during a recent event, but it was not. Skyline Tower has been clear about wanting to maintain access to its garage 24/7, and that needs to be taken into consideration. Additionally, access to City Center Plaza and the Bravern will also need to be addressed. The transit center will also need to have access maintained. If access to adjacent businesses and residential uses is not going to be maintained, written agreement from the property managers will be needed. More details are needed with regard to traffic control, the setup, event signage and the like.

Jonathan Rose noted that most concerns had been addressed during the routing and location subcommittee meeting. Both King County Metro and Sound Transit will be impacted by the event. Everything hinges on access and whether or not the police will feel comfortable allowing the buses to pass through. Losing access to the transit center would be a huge impact on at least seven routes directly and other routes indirectly. With the event running from 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., the road closure likely will start around 3:00 p.m., just at the beginning of the evening peak time on a Thursday. King County Metro will work closely with the police and transportation departments to address the issue of access. Anand Sane clarified that the requested road closure would start at 6:30 p.m. when the parade is scheduled to start.

Chair Freeburg asked if permission has been obtained from Meydenbauer Center to use their parking lot. Anand Sane said has not yet been done pending feedback from the Special Events Committee. Permission to use various parking lots will be sought.

Debadutta Dash with the Consulate General of India, thanked the Committee members for their due diligence in considering the event.

Landon Barnwell offered no comment on the proposed parade route, but suggested the Committee should consider what the event might look like without a parade. Chair Freeburg said that is something that would need to be discussed with the organizer.

Christopher Rivera allowed that there remained many unresolved details given the location of the event, the parade route, the time of day, and the fact that approval for the use of parking lots has not yet been obtained. Approval of the event should await having more answers.

Chair Freeburg commented that given the short timeframe, an emergency meeting of the Committee may need to be called to take a vote. Everyone who needs to reach out to Anand Sane for answers should do so as soon as possible.

❖ Event Application – Stance Wars

Chair Freeburg said the event has been happening for many years at Bellevue College. In the past the event has not been required to have a Special Event Permit, though they have been asked to fill out an application. In 2023 the event worked with the police department for the event that occurs where there is ample parking on private property, and no permit was required.

Landon Barnwell noted having been in contact with the event planner. The event triggers a number of impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods. Police will work with the organizer specifically on having a police presence surrounding the event.

Casiano Atienza noted the application mentions traffic control and asked how much staging there will be off campus, if any. Landon Barnwell said event uses the Bain parking garage so the only traffic control is on the campus. The police will work with the organizer and provide guidance and advice, but will not have a presence on the campus.

Kyle Nelson said fire would also be meeting with the event host to talk about issues.

Casiano Atienza said transportation had no concerns.

Landon Barnwell said police had no concerns.

There was agreement that Stance Wars should not be required to have a Special Event Permit.

❖ Post-Event Evaluations

A. All In For Autism

Landon Barnwell said the reduced event did not include a 10K run and there were no issues.

Casiano Atienza said transportation had no concerns.

Andrew Oltman said fire heard no feedback one way or the other.

Chair Freeburg noted from the evaluation form that there were 1089 participants. The weather was good, the outdoor PA system worked well, the parking lot for the race village was the perfect venue, and all the park logistics around load-in/load-out went well. The shuttles and vans worked well, and there were an ample number of volunteers. The police were a pleasure to work with. There were no challenges or safety issues encountered. The event was family and dog friendly; 126 dogs participated in the race. No significant changes are anticipated for next year.

B. Kelsey Creek Sheep Shearing

C. Paws and Pride

D. CRY Holi

Chair Freeburg said CRY America, the color event in Downtown Park, had about a thousand participants. The weather was terrible. The site plan worked but modifications were needed due to the wet ground. Load-in/load-out went well, as did the shuttle service. The attendees enjoyed the event. It was challenging in that it was not possible to bring trucks into the grass area, making loading and unloading more difficult.

Chair Freeburg noted from the evaluation that the city of Redmond sponsors a massive Holi event because it brings color to the community, and it would be great if the city of Bellevue would sponsor the event. Food inspection was a hassle and the food vendors are fretting about signing up for events due to that. The inspector at one point called out the fact that the restrooms were too far away, but apparently moving the food vendors closer is not safe since the other side of the park is slippery. Food safety should continue to be a priority, but it should not be such a difficult and stressful experience. Good effort was put into cleaning the park after the event, even going so far as to hire external help. However, the report from parks was that there was trash left behind. The city should resume providing the spiderboxes; the event had to rent them at a cost of more than \$500. There were no trash cans accessible on the event side of the park and it would be helpful if the city were to have trash cans on both sides of the park.

There were no safety concerns. Police were not posted near the DJ area, and there were no difficult attendees. It would be good to have police in the DJ area between 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. when the peak of the dancing happens. The same model will be used again next year.

Chad Charbonneau said parks will not next year be adjusting expectations in regard to trash brought into the park. Parks was very clear before the event about the need for the organizer to remove all trash. The turf in the area of the event was destroyed, but that was due to the weather.

Kyle Nelson said fire had no concerns.

Landon Barnwell said there would be some follow up in regard to why the police officers are there.

Casiano Atienza said transportation had no comments.

❖ Comments/Follow-up

Chair Freeburg reported that the Bellevue School District welcome back event at Crossroads Park slated for August 26 had been canceled.

7. NEXT MEETING

❖ July 11, 2024

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Freeburg adjourned the meeting at 10:00 a.m.