

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES

March 13, 2025  
8:30 a.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Virtual Meeting

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Susan Freeburg – Parks  
Rick Bailey – Parks  
Maggie Whittemore – Fire  
Robert Spingler – Police  
Casiano Atienza – Transportation  
Christopher Rivera – Transportation  
Eric Stewart – King County Metro  
Laurie Scott – Community Representative - Downtown  
Mike Ogliore – Business Representative - Downtown  
Meredith Langridge – Event Promoter, Position 1

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Emily Martella, Parks; Councilmember Stokes; Anand Sane, International Day of Yoga; Ruby Daly, National Night Out; Gary Metcalf, Fred Hutch Obliteride; Venkat Iyer, Flavors of India Sharon Li, Seattle International Culture and Arts Festival; Bethany Kogut, Climate Justice Education; Camilo Penuela, King County Metro; Michael Andersson, King County Metro, Claude Iosso, City Manager's Office; Lizzette Flores, Community Development; Hazel Phillips, Emergency Management; Brett Berntsen, Emergency Management

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** Gerry Lindsay

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 8:32 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 Laurie Scott. The motion was seconded by Meredith Langridge and the motion carried unanimously.

**4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

A motion to approve the February 13, 2025, meeting minutes as submitted was made by Laurie Scott. The motion was seconded by Meredith Langridge and the motion carried unanimously.

**5. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

## ❖ Routing and Location Subcommittee Report

Christopher Rivera said the subcommittee met with the Kelsey Creek Sheep Shearing event organizers to address information regarding parking plans. All details for the Paws and Pride Dog Walk and Bellevue Beats and Bites events are looking good.

## 6. OLD BUSINESS

### ❖ Tabled Application of Intent

#### A. Fred Hutch Obliteride

Chair Freeburg noted the returning event starts in Seattle, follows the rules of the road.

Gary Metcalf said the route briefly passes through Bellevue near the start of the event just after crossing over the SR-520 bridge. However, significant rider activity occurs within Bellevue later in the event primarily involving the 100-mile and 50-mile participants. By the time riders reach Bellevue, the groups have mostly dispersed into smaller clusters or individuals.

Christopher Rivera noted that in the past there had been requests to have PCMS message boards to be posted along Newport Way and Coal Creek Parkway and for police support at signalized intersections. Gary Metcalf confirmed the importance of safety measures despite the event following rules-of-the-road. Consistent safety protocols, including using officers at key intersections for presence and message boards to alert drivers, will be utilized. Specific intersection details will be finalized after another route survey is conducted in the coming weeks.

Chair Freeburg shared that police representative Robert Spingler had voiced questions regarding intersections needing police support. Gary Metcalf confirmed the plan to coordinate directly with Robert Spingler regarding detailed rider counts and specific intersection needs. It was confirmed that there are no anticipated route changes within Bellevue.

Chair Freeburg pointed out that historically the event has not been required to obtain a special event permit given that it coordinates directly with transportation and police without surpassing the thresholds that necessitate formal permitting.

There was consensus that no Special Event Permit was necessary.

## 6. NEW BUSINESS

### ❖ 2025 Applications of Intent

#### A. Flavors of India

Chair Freeburg pointed out that the event date had been changed and that the event was slightly changed from before.

Christopher Rivera pointed out the significance of changes proposed in the new route for the event. The proposed route differs notably from past years and involves major roads, including NE 8th Street, an extended portion of 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, and a segment of Bel-Red Road. The committee should closely consider the impact of the changes given their potential effects on

traffic and safety. Chair Freeburg allowed that some tweaking may be necessary after additional discussion involving transportation and police input.

Venkat Iyer shared that the Flavors of India event has been organized annually in partnership with the City of Bellevue since 2012. For 2025 the requested changes include a different date and a new parade route in an effort to expand participation and scale up the event for the benefit of the community. Historically, the event has been held on Labor Day weekend. It is anticipated that the proposed new date will help increase attendance.

With regard to the route, Venkat Iyer explained that previously the parade began at the Jewish Day School and traveled along NE 4th Street and NE 56th Avenue NE before turning onto NE 8th Street. Participation has been relatively low at around 750 to 1000 people along the residential streets but always grew significantly up to about 2000 to 2500 people once the parade reached NE 8th Street. The new route is proposed to start at Highland School and then move along Bel-Red Road, 148th Avenue NE and NE 8th Street in order to attract greater visibility and increased participation from the community.

Captain Spingler raised concerns regarding the new route, pointing out that the shift from smaller residential roads to major thoroughfares, such as 148th Avenue NE, substantially increases the traffic impacts. The new route would significantly increase the need for police resources and officers, consequently raising event costs. In conversations with the police traffic units, some serious safety and logistical concerns were voiced. According, the police may recommend an alternative route. Venkat Iyer acknowledged the concerns, indicated an openness to further discussions and to making adjustments, and acknowledged that the proposed route involves busier streets and that will require more police officers, resulting in increased costs.

Captain Spingler explained that instead of using the highly trafficked 148th Avenue NE, one option would be to shift the route to 156th Avenue NE, a street that could more easily be managed from a traffic control perspective, and which might even increase community participation. Even so, further evaluation is necessary.

Venkat Iyer expressed being open to both the original and the suggested new routes and emphasized a commitment to balancing increased event visibility with maintaining safety. Once a route decision is made, an updated Traffic Control Plan (TCP) will be submitted for approval.

Christopher Rivera cautioned that both 148th Avenue NE and 156th Avenue NE present unique challenges in terms of maintaining residential access, especially given the density of multifamily housing on 156th Avenue NE. The Committee was encouraged to remain open to additional route alternatives that may achieve the event visibility goals while minimizing disruptions.

Casiano Atienza confirmed the requirement for an updated TCP once a route is finalized. Venkat Iyer agreed and reiterated a willingness to collaborate closely with the city to ensure both the event's success and public safety.

Eric Stewart expressed concern that closing intersections on 156th Avenue NE and NE 8th Street would severely disrupt bus service, notably affecting routes such as the B Line, 221, and 245. Venkat Iyer clarified that the event's impact on intersections, particularly at NE 8th Street and 156th Avenue NE, would be minimal, lasting only about five minutes. Eric Stewart pointed out having only very short disruptions would significantly lessen Metro's concerns.

Chair Freeburg confirmed that King County Metro will be included in future route discussions to

finalize details.

Venkat Iyer highlighted an additional change involving a transition from a two-day event to a single-day event, including same-day setup and teardown.

Christopher Rivera emphasized that finalizing a new route will require significant coordination among transportation officials, police, Metro, and event organizers. It was asked that the event obtain a pre-development services (DC) permit, allowing the departments to put time into the new proposed route. Venkat Iyer responded affirmatively and requested further guidance to expedite the permitting process.

Venkat Iyer clarified that the parade is scheduled for Sunday, June 29 from noon to 2:00 p.m., with the parade lasting two hours.

Chair Freeburg pointed out the need for the Committee to approve the date, time and location for the event, with the understanding that the route is pending final approval.

Christopher Rivera questioned whether location approval should be included given uncertainty around the parade route. Chair Freeburg clarified that the primary event location remains Crossroads Park; only the parade route has not yet been determined.

A motion to approve the date, time, and location for Flavors of India was made by Rick Bailey. The motion was seconded by Laurie Scott and the motion carried unanimously.

#### B. Seattle International Culture and Arts Festival

Chair Freeburg noted that the Seattle International Cultural Arts Festival is proposed for July 19 in Crossroads Park from 4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., with setup starting at 10:00 a.m. and concluding at 9:00 p.m. The event has been taking place as an informal gathering over the last few years and it has progressively grown. For the next iteration of the event, the organizer is expecting some 600 attendees, which necessitates a formal review by the Committee. The event activities focus primarily on dance performances and entertainment and includes large canopies, banners, and various interactive components.

Rick Bailey voiced having no questions or concerns aside from addressing a previous minor staking issue.

Chair Freeburg said the standard requirements around having a parking plan and fire inspections will apply.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the Seattle International Cultural Arts Festival was made by Maggie Whittemore. The motion was seconded by Casiano Atienza and the motion carried unanimously.

Arriving after the vote was taken, event organizer Sharon Li spoke representing the Beijing Tongxianghui Association and explained that the event, held successfully in 2024, primarily features diverse cultural arts performances from approximately 24 performing groups. For the 2025 event, there will be additional interactive activities and games at park shelters to further engage the attendees.

Asked if the event will include food vendors or if it is limited only to activities, entertainment

that utilize some canopies, Sharon Li clarifies that while there are no formal food vendors, there may be some potluck-style foods.

Chair Freeburg clarified for Sharon Li that the a separate routing and location meeting will be arranged to clarify event details and conditions, and to address any questions.

### C. Snowflake Lane

Chair Freeburg said the Snowflake Lane event plans to continue the same format as the previous year, with the parade running nightly from late November through Christmas Eve on Bellevue Way.

Answering a question asked by Captain Spingler, Chair Freeburg clarified that there are no changes planned to the event date, time or location. The event organizers are satisfied with the previous year's arrangement.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for Snowflake Lane was made by Laurie Scott. The motion was seconded by Captain Spingler and the motion carried unanimously.

### D. National Night Out

Chair Freeburg pointed out that the growth of the event means it now requires review by the Special Event Committee.

Organizer Ruby Daly said the event is always held the first Tuesday in August. For 2025 that will be August 5 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Crossroads Park. Photos from the 2024 event were shared and it was noted there was an estimated attendance of 300 to 400 people. The event includes bounce houses, games, face painting, an ice cream cart, food trucks, and various public safety demonstrations featuring police motorcycles, bomb trucks, canines, and drones. There are plans to incorporate the city's quench buggy instead of providing bottled water for the 2025 event. The live band and community activities such as face painting, children's ID cards, and tug-of-war are popular.

Answering a question asked by Chair Freeburg, Ruby Daly said last year's event included free ice cream and two food trucks providing American and Mexican food for purchase. Additional parking was arranged with neighboring businesses like KinderCare. The 2025 event will seek to replicate the previous successful format, including the same band and activities, with minor potential changes to food trucks.

Chair Freeburg asked the Committee members to comment as to whether or not the event should be required to obtain a Special Event Permit, or if it should remain under the park scheduling office.

Captain Spingler voiced the opinion that no permit for the event is necessary given that it typically draws smaller crowds throughout the event rather than a large number of attendees all at once.

Rick Bailey agreed and noted that the attendance typically remains below 500 people, which supports not requiring a permit.

Christopher Rivera concurred as well and stated that if attendance remains below 500 with rotating visitors, there is no need for a permit.

Maggie Whittemore also agreed.

Chair Freeburg confirmed the consensus and said the event will be returned to the Parks Scheduling Office for coordination.

#### E. International Day of Yoga

Chair Freeburg explained that the new event is proposed for Downtown Park on June 14 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. The event expects approximately 500 attendees.

Anand Sane described the event as an initiative led by the Indian Consulate. Previously held at Seattle's Olympic Sculpture Park, the event aims to promote global health and harmony. The tentative layout showing the potential placement of participants, vendors, a registration desk, stage location, and amplified sound was shared with the Committee. It was stressed that the plan is preliminary pending further details, including vendor confirmations.

Chair Freeburg asked about the types of vendors who will be involved. Anand Sane explained that they might include yoga academies, health-related food vendors, or sellers of handicrafts. None have yet been confirmed. The vendor layout remains currently tentative given that the event has not yet been publicly announced.

Christopher Rivera asked about plans to accommodate parking and Anand Sane replied that the event communications will inform the attendees about the availability of parking locations nearby, and will emphasize public transit and the transit center. Christopher Rivera called for the development of a formal parking plan with specific locations identified along with promoting the use of public transportation. Anand Sane agreed to do so.

Rick Bailey asked the organizer to consider the need to include portable toilets if multiple food vendors are secured. There are two restrooms at Downtown Park, but one is currently closed. Anand Sane responded affirmatively and said portable restrooms will be arranged for as needed.

Captain Spingler sought confirmation on the number of attendees, to which Anand Sane reported that based on last year's event between 400 to 500 people are expected. Robert Spingler noted that at that level the police may need one or two officers on site depending on the final attendance figures. Anand Sane agreed to closely monitor registrations and update the Committee if necessary.

Chair Freeburg pointed out that yoga events in parks are generally popular and low impact.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the International Day of Yoga event on June 14 in Downtown Park was made by Rick Bailey. The motion was seconded by Laurie Scott and the motion carried unanimously.

#### ❖ Post-Event Evaluations

##### A. Alexander's Hope Valentine's Day Dash 2025

Reading from the event post evaluation provided by the event organizer, Chair Freeburg said overall the event went well, although attendance was lower due to weather conditions. The organizers expressed concerns about the high costs related to police presence and road signage, noting that the costs almost prevented the event from occurring. The numbers should be revisited to come up with a plan that works for the city and the event. Also mentioned were difficulties with a parked car interfering with event setup, and it was recommended that there should be improved towing options in the future.

Rick Bailey said the organizer had asked parks to provide access to potable water. While access was provided, the organizers ended up not using it due to lower-than-expected turnout. There was some uncertainty about whether the required parking lot closure signage was posted, possibly contributing to the car parking issue. Overall the event went smoothly.

Captain Spingler agreed that the event went well overall but explained that the high costs were initially due to the organizers requesting a timed race with road closures. After discussions, they agreed on an untimed event, which significantly reduced the number of officers required and the associated expenses.

Christopher Rivera agreed that the organizer had initially wanted a timed race, which would have required extensive traffic control, driving the costs significantly higher. By switching to an untimed event, with the runners remaining on the sidewalks and following the normal traffic rules, the traffic control needs and expenses were lowered significantly. Transportation had a right-of-way inspector present who observed minimal issues due to reduced attendance. Any increase in attendance or improved weather conditions could change the event logistics going forward, requiring additional consideration.

Chair Freeburg noted the interest of the organizers in possibly working with the Committee to develop an alternative route or event format for the future. In light of the changes that were made to the event, it was successful.

##### B. Garden d'Lights

The post-event evaluation read by Chair Freeburg indicated an estimated attendance of 67,280, or about 4000 each day. The event was a success overall even in light of some inclement weather. There were new light displays and many thought it was the best iteration of the event to date. Parking, load-in and load-out all went well. The piloted a queuing system to keep guests sheltered and out of the walkways and that worked well. There were no real safety concerns encountered.

Christopher Rivera remarked on transportation not having received any negative feedback.

#### ❖ 2026 Application of Intent

#### A. Alexander's Hope Valentine's Day Dash 2026

Chair Freeburg said the application submitted is for February 14, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The organizer intends to grow the event by incorporating additional sponsors and vendor booths. The associated 5K walk/run is intended to spread awareness of and raise funds for the organization.

Christopher Rivera pointed out that the application includes detailed traffic control measures that were previously suggested for a timed race, indicating the organizer may be planning a timed event with increased attendance. No concerns were voiced based on the information provided.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for Alexander's Hope on February 14, 2026, in Downtown Park and the adjacent roads was made by Captain Spingler. The motion was seconded by Rick Bailey and the motion carried unanimously.

❖ Comments/Follow-Up – None

#### **7. NEXT MEETING**

❖ April 10, 2025

#### **8. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Freeburg adjourned the meeting at 10:02 a.m.