

CITY OF BELLEVUE
SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

August 14, 2025
8:30 a.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Virtual Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Susan Freeburg – Parks
Rick Bailey – Parks
Andrew Oltman – Fire
Maggie Whittemore – Fire
Robert Spingler – Police
Casiano Atienza – Transportation
Neal Christiansen – Community Representative - East
Bellevue
Laurie Scott – Community Representative - Downtown
Mike Ogliore – Business Representative - Downtown
Eric Stewart – King County Metro

OTHERS PRESENT:

Emily Martella, Parks; Councilmember Sumadiwirya; Jera
Gilmore, Parks; Claude Iosso, City Manager's Office;
Hazel Phillips, Emergency Management; Camilo Penuela,
King County Metro; Alex Clark, FAM; Mia Davison,
Development Services; Bethany Kogut, Utilities

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Chair Freeburg who presided.

2. COMMUNICATIONS: Written and Oral

Chair Freeburg reported having received a communication from a resident concerned about noise levels at Crossroads Park and about people parking in their apartment complex. The issue of not parking in adjacent apartment complexes is one more thing to raise with event organizers.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A motion to approve the July 10, 2025, meeting minutes as submitted was made by Casiano

Atienza. The motion was seconded by Robert Spingler and the motion carried unanimously.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

❖ Routing and Location Subcommittee Report

Casiano Atienza reported the subcommittee met to discuss four events since the last Committee meeting: the Northwest Ukrainian International Festival, the Washington State Martial Arts Festival, the Bellevue School Foundation Block Party, and the Fiesta del Maiz. The Northwest Ukrainian International Festival was noted as being the largest upcoming event. Coordination among the various departments continues as needed.

The representatives from Police, Parks and Fire reported no additional updates.

6. OLD BUSINESS – None

6. NEW BUSINESS

❖ Post Event Evaluations

1. IACS Night Market

Chair Freeburg remarked that the IACS Market was held on June 21 and it had approximately 2500 attendees, which was down from the anticipated 5000 due to the weather. The planning process was clear and well-structured, aided by the city's new website, though there was a learning curve involved. The event ran smoothly, with manageable crowds and efficient load-in and load-out procedures. The organizers in the evaluation voiced appreciation for the presence of police and fire for improving safety. The suggestions for improvement included creating a department-specific printed checklist to complement the city's online resources, which are detailed but potentially more useful in a condensed manual format.

2. Flavors of India

Chair Freeburg said Flavors of India event enjoyed an attendance of approximately 3000, which is up from the typical range of 1800 to 2000. The weather was favorable, and the parade and festival activities went as planned. The parking arrangements utilizing four churches and shuttle services were successful. The permitting process was described by the organizer as being more cumbersome than in past years. The safety measures included eight Bellevue police officers during the parade, two at the park during the event, and overnight private security. The organizers expressed interest in expanding the festival and changing the parade route for higher visibility.

Casiano Atienza noted that the initially proposed route was problematic given a crossing in front of Crossroads Mall. Coordination efforts with the organizer were required to make adjustments.

Robert Spingler stated that extending the route to and then north on 164th Avenue NE created bottlenecks without sufficient benefit, and said the same extension would not be recommended for next year.

Chair Freeburg said the organizers have expressed interest in discussing alternative routes and long-term possibilities on the understanding that there were some issues with the routes. The idea of moving to Downtown Park has been mentioned by the organizer.

3. Bellevue Family 4th

Chair Freeburg said the Bellevue Family 4th saw an attendance of 64,000, which was down from an estimated 75,000 previously.

Jera Gilmore said the event was highly successful and was carried out nearly flawlessly. The cool weather contributed to attendee comfort, and the site plan closely followed the previous year's layout, which minimized staff having to make adjustments. The primary change was the expansion of the Red Lot into a larger food court area, which doubled its capacity and increased offerings for the public. As a result, ADA and VIP parking were relocated to the Bellevue Square lot, which improved safety and accessibility and provided more parking for ADA attendees. The snack and beverage vendors were again positioned around the park's perimeter, and the event featured family game courts, a selfie tent, merchandise vendors, and live entertainment.

Operationally, staff lunches were provided on July 3 during setup, preventing delays from offsite meal breaks. The parking arrangements included the use of the Chase Bank lot for staff, the Boys and Girls Club lot for excess vendor parking, and the Bellevue Row Shopping Square lots, which were intended for police and fire but were not significantly used by them. The Goldfarb Jeweler lot was also utilized. The importance of continuing the partnerships in the future was stressed as part of ensuring parking access for staff and vendors. The expanded food court successfully reduced wait times from the previous year's two-hour lines. Vendors who refused to stop selling at closing were addressed by cutting power at 10:00 p.m., though that did not affect mobile food trucks with independent generators.

Continuing, Jera Gilmore said the list of improvements included the use of an on-site storage unit for essential equipment, a red balloon marker above the parking garage to help visitors identify the fireworks launch area, and digital park maps accessible via QR codes. The city's new quench buggy, modeled after previous rental units, was introduced with assistance from the utilities department and performed without issue.

The challenges included adapting to the new approval system, which required more detailed submissions and altered communication practices for certain departments, such as Fire. Vendor compliance was a major issue, with some arriving outside of their assigned times, causing traffic and staffing problems. There were safety concerns involving an initially misaligned fireworks drop zone, which was quickly corrected through coordinated efforts by Parks and Police, and there were also some incidents involving lost children. In case, the child was able to indicate to

staff that their parents did not speak English, which necessitated the need for a staff member fluent in Chinese to make public announcements. That led to the suggestion of having pre-recorded multilingual announcements for future use.

With regard to the 2026 iteration of the event, Jera Gilmore proposed recruiting more staff for the July 3 setup day. On the day of the event, there were some ten fewer recreation staff members compared to the previous year. Staff from other departments suggested including staff from other departments, making the event more of a city-supported event in line with the One City message. Going forward it may be a good idea to research securing an alternate location for the food vendor check-in location, possibly Chinook Middle School, to control arrival timing. Plans under consideration for future events includes expanding the family activities and keeping them open later in the evening. A special emphasis will be placed on preparing for the 250th anniversary of the United States in 2026, with expectations for a larger and more impressive celebration.

Mike Ogliore commended Jera Gilmore and the team, noting that there were minimal changes on the Bellevue Downtown Association side except for enhancing the fireworks show. The strength of the public-private partnership was highlighted and the contributions of the title sponsor, Kemper Development Company, was acknowledged in underwriting the event, hosting parking, and managing behind-the-scenes logistics.

Neal Christiansen voiced appreciation for the event as a valued annual tradition. The city and the Bellevue Downtown Association were praised for putting on the event.

4. Stance Wars

Chair Freeburg said the car show Stance Wars was held at Bellevue College and for the first time was required to obtain a Special Event Permit. Overall, the event went smoothly, aided by slower ticket sales that made marketing and attendance management easier. However, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) closures created significant access issues for attendees coming from both the north and south along I-405, with some reporting delays of up to ninety minutes. Several vendors arrived late because of the closures. An additional ice cream truck was brought in to help keep attendees cool on what was a warm day. The Friday setup proceeded efficiently, allowing for a smooth start on Saturday with ample time to be ready for customers. The primary issue was the WSDOT closures, compounded by the presence of multiple other events in the area on the same day.

There were no major safety or security incidents, and the lower turnout helped ease traffic and parking concerns. There was an unrelated police matter involving a person of interest in an unrelated case for which details were not shared. The organizers appreciated having police visible in the show area and engaging with attendees.

The suggestions made for improvements included better advance communication with WSDOT,

earlier permit preparation, and greater community involvement.

Robert Spingler recommended that if the Special Event Permit requirement continues next year, the costs for police services should be recovered from the event given that multiple officers are needed to manage post-event traffic compliance outside the venue.

5. Chamber Music in the Park

Chair Freeburg said the Chamber Music in the Park event was presented by the Seattle Chamber Music Society in Downtown Park. The attendance was anticipated to be about 515 but closer to 600 attended. The weather was favorable, the program was well received, and no modifications were needed. The logistics were handled smoothly, and appreciation was voiced for the fountain being turned off at 2:00 p.m. There were no unforeseen issues or safety concerns. The organizers praised the online permitting system for its efficiency and organization.

6. Youth for Impact

Chair Freeburg said the first-time Youth for Impact Children's Business Fair event had expected to have 30 booths and some 300 attendees, but in actuality there were 42 booths and approximately 150 attendees. The event occurred on a hot day with temperatures around 85 degrees. Most booths had tents or shades, and all vendors were present. The site plan worked well overall, though some vendors did not follow the designated layout, which required volunteer intervention. Parking arrangements were adequate, but once traffic cones were removed, non-attendees occasionally occupied reserved spaces. Load-in and load-out went smoothly and the pedestrian flow was trouble free. Attendance was lower than hoped, which has prompted plans for holding the event earlier in the year, for increased promotion, and for the addition of food permits to attract more visitors. There were some minor operational challenges, including vendors not complying with the tent weight requirements and a malfunctioning electrical outlet, which was addressed during the event. There were no safety concerns. The event organizers voiced appreciation for the city staff and especially the permitting guidance and pre-event inspection.

7. Seattle International Culture and Arts Festival

Chair Freeburg said the estimated attendance for the July 19 Seattle International Cultural and Arts Festival at Crossroads Park was close to 600, which matched the expectations. The event featured performances from various ethnic groups which fostered appreciation among the attendees. The event involved over 40 volunteers. Government officials from Seattle and Bellevue participated in the opening ceremony. The event began on schedule at 5:00 p.m. and ended at 8:00 p.m. with minimal disturbances to the community. The available park space exceeded the needs, and the organizer has indicated that for next year less space will be needed, possibly reducing the overall costs. The main challenge was unauthorized private parties using park pavilions despite posted notices, leaving behind trash and debris that required volunteer

cleanup. The organizer in the final report suggested more posting more prominent signage in advance to prevent such conflicts.

8. Bellevue Downtown Arts Market

Mike Ogliore reported that the attendance for the July 25-27 Bellevue Downtown Arts Market was approximately 15,000. The event officially partnered with the Bellevue Arts Museum to promote a unified Bellevue Arts Weekend as a means of reducing public confusion between the two events. The operating hours were adjusted to align more closely, and there was a coordinated marketing approach implemented. Transportation, police and fire provided strong logistical support for managing the large crowds. The weather was ideal with only light rain on Friday morning. The Arts Museum increased public engagement through programming at its facility, and additional signage was installed to improve wayfinding from the transit center to the west side of the mall. There are ongoing discussions with fire services regarding the increased costs for medical unit coverage. Overall, the event benefited from the strong public-private collaboration and favorable conditions.

Robert Spingler stated that the event went very well from the perspective of the police department. The partnership with the organizers was positive. The use of the meridian barriers was beneficial and the team learned valuable lessons on how to deploy them more effectively. Plans are already in place to work with Casiano Atienza and the transportation team to address identified gaps and to improve barrier placement for the next iteration of the event.

Casiano Atienza agreed with that assessment. The event went well and opportunities for how to improve things for next year are under review. Appreciation was expressed for working with Mike Ogliore on the event.

Maggie Whittemore added that all communications with Fire during the event were seamless and that there were no concerns.

Chair Freeburg remarked that it was another great year for the Arts Fair, an event the community appreciates.

❖ Comments / Follow-Up – None

7. NEXT MEETING

❖ September 11, 2025

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Freeburg adjourned the meeting at 9:14 a.m.