

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES

November 14, 2024  
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  
Lisa Siegman – Development Services  
Jonathan Rose – King County Metro  
Neal Christiansen – Community Representative - East  
Laurie Scott – Community Representative - Downtown  
Mike Ogliore – Business Representative - Downtown  
Meredith Langridge – Event Promoter, Position 1

OTHERS PRESENT: Emily Martella, Parks; Bella Chaffey Lakic, Alexander’s  
Hope; Lizette Flores – Community Development; Hazel  
Phillips, Emergency Management; Claude Iosso, City  
Manager’s Office; Eric Stewart, King County Metro;  
Michael Anderson, King County Metro

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 Jonathan Rose. The motion was seconded by Meredith Langridge and the motion carried unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A motion to approve the October 10, 2024, meeting minutes as submitted was made by Casiano Atienza. The motion was seconded by Meredith Langridge and the motion carried unanimously.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

❖ Routing and Location Subcommittee Report

Casiano Atienza reported no significant updates. The subcommittee is working on logistics for the night market, and recently held a meeting focused on Snowflake Lane.

Robert Spingler said the Snowflake Lane production meeting held on November 13 included all of the involved parties with the aim of finalizing plans. Everything is on track.

6. OLD BUSINESS – None

7. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2025 Applications of Intent

❖ *Alexander's Hope*

Chair Freeburg said the new event is looking to come to Bellevue in February.

Bella Chaffey Lakic explained that the race is in support of the nonprofit Alexander's Hope, a local organization that partners with the Nick of Time Foundation to provide heart screenings at local high schools. The organization also works with the University of Washington Medical Center to perform EKGs, echocardiograms, teach CPR, and show students how to use AEDs. One high school is visited each month and about 500 kids are typically screened per month. The race helps raise awareness and funds for the work. The organization has hosted the race for the last five years and the February event will be the sixth. For the first four years, the race was held in downtown Kirkland at Marina Park, running along the waterfront. Last year the event was moved to the Sammamish River Trail, but a more permanent location is being sought, and the thinking is that Bellevue would be a great fit. Many of the sponsors are based in Bellevue, and the location could help the event grow. The race is a 5K run/walk that attracts a lot of families and participants, not just for the run itself but for the cause it supports.

Chair Freeburg asked about how many participants the race usually has. Bella Chaffey Lakic said there are typically 500 participants.

Rob Spingler asked if the race is timed, and Bella Chaffey Lakic confirmed that it is.

Rob Spingler asked if the event typically has enough volunteers to help with things like protecting private driveways. Bella Chaffey Lakic said the event in Downtown Kirkland included plenty of volunteers serving as course monitors. Rob Spingler suggested it would be helpful to have a van or something following the race to pick up those not able to make it or who are falling behind. That helps in reopening streets. In the past a lead bike or motorcycle has been used, but if following a lead vehicle would be better that would be okay.

Casiano Atienza asked if the race involves closing the roadway entirely, or if one lane is left open. Bella Chaffey Lakic said usually one lane is closed and the other is kept open. Casiano Atienza voiced a desire to minimize the traffic impacts, particularly along arterials like Bellevue Way.

Casiano Atienza asked Bella Chaffey Lakic about working with a vendor for traffic control before and the answer given was yes, National Barricade.

Mike Ogliore asked what options are under consideration for the start/finish area. Bella Chaffey Lakic said the intent is to use Downtown Park but allowed being open to suggestions.

Mike Ogliore also asked if an external contractor is typically brought in to assist with planning for the event or if everything is done internally. Bella Chaffey Lakic said Fizz Events plans the route and coordinates with National Barricade.

Chair Freeburg sought confirmation that the intent is to use the park only for start and finish and not for any festival type activities. Bella Chaffey Lakic said there will be no festival activities but there will be a couple of 10x10 sponsor booths.

Maggie Whitemore said a follow-up via email will be sent about the tents that will be used, adding that it does not sound like there will be any issues.

Andrew Oltman asked if the plan is to leave one lane of traffic open and Bella Chaffey Lakic confirmed that. Robert Spingler said the route will be closely reviewed once it is nailed down. Some roads may require full closures, depending on their layout, and coordination will be needed to reopen them once runners have passed.

Casiano Atienza said the first option seems to be the best choice from a transportation standpoint. It was also noted from the application that setup will begin at 5:30 a.m. and all will be done by 1:00 p.m., including cleanup. Bella Chaffey Lakic said the team is typically done with cleanup within an hour of the race ending.

Rick Bailey noticed from the application both that the event has requested power and intends to use generators. Bella Chaffey Lakic said that issue will need to be clarified by Fizz Events. If power is easily accessible, it will be used, otherwise generators are typically sufficient. Rick Bailey said the preference would be to use generators given that there is no accessible power in the southwest parking lot identified in the application. It was also pointed out that if it rains, the crushed granite surface around the promenade at Downtown Park can get quite muddy, which is something that should be kept in mind.

Jonathan Rose noted that Route Option One is also the preference of King County Metro as it has the least impact on transit. It will probably be necessary to reroute the 271 bus on NE 8th Street, but options two and three would be much more disruptive.

Jonathan Rose asked if a minimum pace will be enforced. Bella Chaffey Lakic noted being open to whatever the city prefers. In the past slower participants have been moved to the sidewalk to finish. Most participants finish around the same time, so it has not been a big issue.

Bella Chaffey Lakic asked when the Committee will be able to provide confirmation that

everything is good to go. The aim is to hold the event on February 8 and the desire is to get that date and the location locked in. Chair Freeburg said confirmation should be available following the meeting.

With regard to the estimated police staffing number of 25 officers, which is a considerable expense, Bella Chaffey Lakic asked if there a way to reduce that number with volunteers. Robert Spingler said if Option One is selected, the work of determining exactly how many officers will be needed can begin with an eye on optimization. For liability and traffic control reasons, officers will need to be posted at each intersection.

Bella Chaffey Lakic noted that something had been said about removing the trail section in the park. If that is the case, it will be necessary to add about a quarter-mile elsewhere to make up for it. Casiano Atienza explained that the section in question is between 97<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and 98<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE which is actually a private easement rather than a trail. Shifting the route there to a more direct route to avoid the trail would make sense.

Laurie Scott asked if there is a parking plan. Chair Freeburg said there is not one in hand yet, but Casiano Atienza will work with the event organizer to have one in place if the Committee approves the event.

Casiano Atienza said the typical approach is to offer some initial suggestions, like using nearby churches or schools, and let the organizer decide what works best for them.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the Alexander's Hope Valentine's Day Dash event on February 8, starting and ending at Downtown Park and running through parts of Bellevue, with the understanding that conditions are still to be determined, was made by Neal Christiansen. The motion was seconded by Jonathan Rose and the motion carried unanimously.

#### ❖ *Pakistan Independence Day*

Chair Freeburg said the Pakistan Independence Day event has occurred for several years in Downtown Park. No changes are anticipated to the application from previous years in terms of the footprint, the number of attendees at about 1000 people, and the vendor count. The date is August 16.

Laurie Scott asked if there have been issues in the past with the event. Chair Freeburg said the main issue has been vendors trying to drive into the park. The issue was successfully addressed last year and the event went smoothly overall.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the Pakistan Independence Day event, the conditions still to be determined, was made by Neal Christiansen. The motion was seconded by Laurie Scott and the motion carried unanimously.

#### ❖ *Bellevue Beats & Bites*

Chair Freeburg said the returning event from the Bellevue Downtown Association has been held for several years. The event has been held at various locations from June through the end of July during lunchtime, and it features food trucks and live music.

Mike Ogliore said no major changes are planned. The setup will be the same as before.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for Bellevue Bites & Beats was made by Jonathan Rose. The motion was seconded by Meredith Langridge and the motion carried unanimously.

❖ *Bellevue Downtown Arts Market*

Chair Freeburg said the returning event occurs annually toward the end of July in the downtown corridor, often alongside the Bellevue Art Museum. The museum typically held a sister event at the same time. The date is July 25, 26 and 27 and the footprint will be similar to previous years.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the Bellevue Downtown Arts Market event was made by Laurie Scott. The motion was seconded by Meredith Langridge and the motion carried unanimously.

❖ *Bellevue Downtown Ice Rink*

Chair Freeburg said the long-standing event has a consistent footprint and no changes are planned.

A motion to approve the date, time, and location for the 2025 Holiday Ice Rink was made by Casiano Atienza. The motion was seconded by Robert Spingler and the motion carried unanimously.

❖ *India Republic Day Celebration*

Chair Freeburg said Beats of Washington, formerly Beats of Redmond, plans to repeat their event held last January, which featured speeches, live music, cultural performances, and a flag-raising ceremony. The call is for the event to be held on January 26, with a slightly expanded footprint.

Casiano Atienza asked if the organizer is proposing a parade or anything similar. Chair Freeburg said there will be no parade, only a ceremony.

Answering a question asked by Rick Bailey, Chair Freeburg said the layout will involve a similar but slightly more robust layout comparable to their Holi event in March.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the India Republic Day Celebration event was made by Rick Bailey. The motion was seconded by Mike Ogliore and the motion carried unanimously.

❖ *Downtown Movies in the Park*

Chair Freeburg said the event is hosted in Downtown Park on Tuesdays from July 15 through August 19 from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. No major changes are planned.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for Downtown Movies in the Park was made by Mike Ogliore. The motion was seconded by Rick Bailey and the motion carried unanimously.

Post-Event Evaluations

❖ *Bellevue International Festival*

Chair Freeburg said the event in Crossroads Park involved crafts, Mexican flowers, Paddington Bear projects, face painting, and other family-friendly interactive activities. There was a pretty good attendance estimated at between 500 and 800 people, which was a good turnout for an inaugural event. The weather was good. The follow-up survey results were overwhelmingly positive, with most respondents being from the 98008 area. Attendees praised the festival's diversity and equity celebration and the performers appreciated being included in the festival. Overall, the event was well-received by the workforce, the committee, and the city.

Chair Freeburg said there were no significant issues with setup or crowd control. There were some delays in performances and there were some technical difficulties with sound. Two lost children were swiftly reunited with their parents. There were no safety or security concerns during the event, aside from one incident during setup involving alcohol use in the park to which homeless outreach staff intervened and explained the park rules. The event organizer believes the event could be improved by contracting with a production company for future events.

Robert Spingler said police had nothing to add. The same was true for fire, transportation, fire operations or parks.

Chair Freeburg said the event went smoothly overall, with no complaints or concerns. Everyone seemed happy with how it turned out.

❖ *Kelsey Creek Farm Fair*

Chair Freeburg said the Kelsey Creek Farm Fair event was held on October 5. The beloved city event has been held for many years. It was a beautiful sunny day. The park was decorated with scarecrows, corn stalks, and other festive elements. Crowds were consistent throughout the day, with many visitors staying for hours to enjoy activities with family and friends. There were pony rides, a pumpkin patch, wagon rides, a children's area, educational displays, and Eastside Heritage activities like bee and honey displays. Free family activities included games, live entertainment, and photo areas.

Chair Freeburg said the parking and shuttle services worked well at Wilburton Park and Ride and

Banner wood Park, with additional parking at the International School within walking distance. Event setup went smoothly, with volunteer groups assisting on three days prior to the event. The city's grounds and structural crews helped with setup and cleanup. Food trucks arrived early and cooperated with staff to ensure roadways were clear for vendor arrivals. The ticket sales system, which was introduced last year, worked well after some initial struggles. Two sponsors enabled having live entertainment on stage.

There were some unforeseen problems, included delays caused by a late pony ride vendor and a few lost children during the event, all of whom were quickly reunited with their parents. No safety concerns were reported.

The event would be improved by having an earlier arrival time for the pony vendor, and by assigning staff to collect tickets at the face painting booth.

No additional feedback was offered by police, parks or transportation.

❖ Comments/Follow-Up

Chair Freeburg shared that along with Emily Martella work has been progressing on an updated event application system, Eproval. Departments will be able to review applications more efficiently, and the process will be streamlined into two steps. The first step will involve an intent-to-apply form with the basic details needed for the Committee to vote. The second step will include more detailed questions, which organizers can fill out in the system, reducing the amount of back-and-forth communication by centralizing the information. There will still be routing and location subcommittee meetings, but the new system will help everyone keep up with the growing number of events. The system will hopefully be launched by mid-December, following which there will be training sessions.

Additionally, Chair Freeburg reported that city leadership is brainstorming ways to improve event support for both organizers and city departments. With the rapid increase in event numbers, ways are being explored to make the process easier and more sustainable for everyone involved.

8. NEXT MEETING

❖ December 12, 2024

9. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Freeburg adjourned the meeting at 9:33 a.m.