

CITY OF BELLEVUE
SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

February 12, 2026
8:30 a.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Virtual Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

OTHERS PRESENT:

Emily Martella, Parks; Vaishnavi Sannidhanam, Puranava;
Mumtaz Malik, Safaa Aldib; MAPS Eid Celebration;
Sandy Vo, BelRed Arts Night Market, Ross Fryberg, Fire;
Nathan Hasselblad, Transportation; Tyler Pederson, King
County; Claude Iosso, City Manager’s Office; Hazel
Phillips, Emergency Management; Christopher Rivera,
Transportation; Mia Davison, Development Services;
Lizzette Flores, Development Services

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 Rob Spingler. The motion was seconded by Rick Bailey and the motion carried unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A motion to approve the January 8, 2026, meeting minutes as submitted was made by Laurie Scott. The motion was seconded by Rob Spingler and the motion carried unanimously.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

❖ Routing and Location Subcommittee Report

Casiano Atienza reported that the subcommittee met recently where the discussion included the All In For Autism event. The event is planned to proceed without change from years past. Preparations are also underway for the upcoming Alexander's Hope Valentine's Day Dash, which will for the first time be a timed race rather than untimed. Traffic control for the event will involve single-lane closures rather than reliance solely on sidewalks, which is a change from the previous year.

6. OLD BUSINESS

❖ The Legion 5K

Chair Freeburg noted the Committee had previously tabled discussion of the event pending more information. The organizers ~~requested to use Kemper Development Company space but were denied, so the~~ application has been withdrawn.

6. NEW BUSINESS

❖ 2025 Post-Event Evaluations

A. Garden d'Lights

Chair Freeburg reported that the event had once again been successful, with approximately 66,000 attendees over a 32-day period, slightly fewer than the prior year due to inclement weather. Overall, all operations went smoothly. There was positive feedback from visitors regarding the creativity of the displays and the helpfulness of the staff. Many guests reported being annual attenders. A full sensory-friendly night was introduced, expanding from a one-hour offering in the previous year, and it was very well received by families. The Visit Bellevue mobile visitor center attended several evenings, creating mutual benefit. Use of the LAV parking site and Peak Pro for scheduled ticketing worked well. There were no significant challenges reported, and only minor operational tweaks are being considered for future iterations of the event regarding entry and exit.

B. Snowflake Lane

Chair Freeburg said the Snowflake Lane evaluation indicated that the continued expansion into the Lincoln Square side of the street was deemed successful, and the event ran smoothly. Vendor management and all safety protocols were improved through adoption of a road team and scheduled approach. Security successfully prevented a large group of protesters from entering the parade route, although some individuals approached families to distribute leaflets, causing minor discomfort. Overall, no new security concerns were identified, and crowd management was improved overall in the second year of the expanded layout.

Casiano Atienza reported that the traffic signals team had indicated some concerns about congestion caused by pedestrian and vehicle buildup, adding that the concern has yet to be shared with Kemper Development Company.

Robert Spingler noted having heard the same concern, adding that it is possible that adjusting signal timing could improve the traffic flow.

C. Bellevue Downtown Ice Rink

Mike Ogliore reported that the event enjoyed a strong season with no major issues. Weather-related wind conditions caused one precautionary closure, though it was later determined the rink might have safely remained open. The season was the second best on record, aided by the absence of a competing Seattle event, though a new rink in Kirkland did have a minor impact. Appreciation was expressed for the parks department's assistance with setup and teardown. The organizers are looking forward to next year and are exploring the possibility of opening one week earlier while maintaining Martin Luther King Jr. Day as the closing date.

D. New Year's Eve Night Market

Chair Freeburg reported that the New Year's Eve Night Market was held on December 31 in Old Bellevue using the same footprint as the previous year. The event incorporated additional signage, a DJ in the wine garden, and adjusted booth layouts. The police and fire recommendations were implemented, including use of barriers and earlier street closures that which significantly improved flow and safety. Despite the cold weather, conditions remained dry, and all operations proceeded smoothly. Load-in and load-out were efficient, and guests expressed satisfaction. Vendor sales were reported to be approximately 30 percent lower, but overall sentiments were positive. The required number of crowd managers posed some staffing challenges, though a compromise with fire officials was reached. There were no significant security concerns, and the prior safety issues involving the placement of police vehicles were resolved. The organizers praised the Eproval portal and expressed interest in maintaining the earlier street closures, but expressed a desire to be allowed to go forward with fewer crowd managers given that it is challenging to find persons to fill the slots.

❖ 2026 Applications of Intent

A. Puranava, An Asian Indian Festival

Vaishnavi Sannidhanam described the event as a cultural festival modeled after similar programs held in cities such as Houston, Atlanta, and in the Bay Area since approximately 2017. The festival includes three primary components: educational quiz competitions, cultural performances, and vendor participation. The quiz component features Indian heritage, math and science, and world sports quizzes for youth participants, with prizes awarded and multiple rounds depending on participation levels. The performance portion includes a range of artistic expressions such as dance, vocal music, instrumental performances, and small theatrical presentations. Outreach has begun to local organizations, including a regional accordion society,

with the intention of incorporating Indian musical themes and offering a diverse cultural experience beyond traditional dance and music. The goal is to create a varied and engaging program for attendees.

Continuing, Vaishnavi Sannidhanam said vendor participation is also planned, with an emphasis on local and emerging small businesses, nonprofit youth initiatives, and boutique vendors. Guidance was sought in regard to the permissible number of vendors and tents within the park, and on the process for coordinating vendor participation. Additionally, a heritage village concept was proposed, dependent on volunteer capacity, that will consist of approximately ten to fifteen booths arranged to simulate a traditional village environment. The area will include interactive cultural demonstrations, crafts, and potentially a small constructed structure to enhance the immersive experience. Carnival-style games, designed and built by volunteers to reflect cultural themes, were also proposed. The activities will be free to participants, consistent with the organization's intent to provide a free-entry event.

While admission and most activities will be free, revenue will be generated through vendor fees, possible performer participation fees, and contest entry fees. The tentative pricing includes a performance participation fee of approximately \$25 per performer, and a quiz entry fee of about \$15 per participant. The organization also intends to seek sponsorships and grants to offset the costs given that the costs for stage rental, tents, and audio equipment are significant. Compliance with all local sound regulations will require professional audio support, and that has an estimated cost of \$3,500.

Chair Freeburg said the proposed date for the event is May 9 from 10:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Attendance is projected to be about 1500 people, though that is only an estimate.

Rick Bailey commended the thoroughness of the application before seeking clarification regarding a reference to a parade within the event description. Vaishnavi Sannidhanam explained that the parade concept refers to a small, walking-style procession, potentially involving an accordion society performing while moving along pathways around the park. The parade will not involve floats or large structures. The element can be removed if it poses safety or logistical concerns. Rick Bailey acknowledged the clarification and indicated that a walking parade without large vehicles or floats will likely be acceptable.

Casiano Atienza commented that an event with an anticipated attendance of up to 1500 people requires a parking management plan. The suggestion was made to consider overflow parking options at nearby schools, churches, or similar facilities to prevent congestion at the park. Vaishnavi Sannidhanam inquired about the parking capacity at the park and was told that the available on-site parking is limited. There are some 150 spaces along with some additional spaces nearby belonging to neighboring organizations such as Kinderling and Youth Eastside Services. Those entities can be contacted directly to request permission for weekend use of their lots. Documentation of any agreements obtained need to be submitted. Additionally, attendees should be encouraged to carpool, use public transportation, or choose rideshare options. The organizer was advised against directing attendees to park at Bellevue Square, which typically does not permit event parking.

Emily Martella clarified that the application under review constitutes only the first phase of the application process, and said additional information and review steps will follow.

Rob Spingler indicated that family-oriented cultural events typically present minimal safety or security concerns. However, due to the anticipated number of attendees, the police department will generally assign two officers to be present. The associated details and costs will be provided as part of the approval process.

B. Muslim Association of Puget Sound Eid Celebration

Mumtaz Malik said the Muslim Association of Puget Sound (MAPS) celebrated Eid al-Adha, one of two major annual Muslim observances, the previous year at a smaller venue in Redmond. The proposal for the current year is to hold the celebration in Downtown Park on May 30. MAPS is a large nonprofit Muslim organization headquartered in Redmond that has additional campuses in Snohomish and Seattle. Founded in 2006 and registered with both the state and the IRS, the organization serves approximately 5000 families representing about 50 countries and engages in a wide range of religious, social service, cultural, and interfaith activities. Its broader mission is to foster a more connected, inclusive, and compassionate society through community engagement and service.

The proposed Eid al-Adha celebration and anniversary event will be modeled after similar cultural celebrations previously hosted by related organizations. The event will take place in the park's plaza area and will include vendor stalls, a small stage for performances, children's inflatable play features, and a variety of food and cultural activities. The layout will feature two food trucks, multiple food and merchandise stalls offering items such as clothing and jewelry, and a modest stage approximately 20 feet by 12 feet and 16 inches high with a canopy. Audio support will be provided for light programming that will consist primarily of soft music and religious or cultural performances rather than a large-scale concert. Seating will be arranged in front of the stage, similar to past comparable events.

Saafa Aldib, outreach coordinator for MAPS, clarified that the organization is a faith-based nonprofit engaged in cultural, social, and community programming throughout King County. The organization previously hosted public Eid celebrations in Redmond and Kirkland, events that drew thousands of attendees.

Saafa Aldib asked if there are any unique requirements associated with hosting an event in the park, what the organization's responsibilities are at the current stage of the process, and whether the park will remain open to the general public during the event. Mumtaz Malik explained that the park will remain open to the public during the event.

Chair Freeburg Staff confirmed that if approved their event will be the only permitted event scheduled for that date. It was noted the current discussion was to review the proposed date, time, and location, after which a routing and location meeting will be conducted. There will be additional coordination through the Eproval system to address the detailed requirements and

questions. The proposed event date and time were confirmed as May 30 from 11:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Downtown Park.

Ross Fryberg with fire prevention asked for clarification regarding the stage and whether any trusses or additional structures will be installed, while emphasizing the importance of documenting all structural elements during the application process to ensure safety compliance. Mumtaz Malik explained that the stage will consist of standard modular platform sections provided by a rental company, set approximately 16 inches off the ground and having a canopy tent overhead that is secured appropriately. No additional structural elements are planned.

C. BelRed Arts Night Market

Chair Freeburg noted that the application from the BelRed Arts District was for an event that was previously held on private property but which for the current year seeks to expand into a portion of the public right-of-way.

Sandy Vo explained that the inaugural event had been held in 2025 in a Sound Transit parking lot. It featured approximately ten live cultural performances, more than forty artist and vendor booths, local creative business participation, and food trucks. The event attracted between 400 and 500 attendees. The upcoming event is proposed for September 12 from approximately 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., with an expected attendance of roughly 700 people. The intent is to expand the event by closing a portion of 130th Avenue NE, which has been designated as a festival street, increasing the number of booths, and adding a beer garden within the Sound Transit parking lot. Photographs from the previous year were shared to illustrate the event layout and atmosphere.

Robert Spingler referred to the application materials and said it appeared that much of the parking lot would not be used for tents, and asked if it would be used for parking. Sandy Vo explained that Sound Transit requires a portion of the lot to remain available for transit users and therefore will not permit the full use of the parking area.

Casiano Atienza emphasizing that approval of the street closure will be contingent upon submission of a certified traffic control plan, including detour routes for both pedestrians and vehicles. Sandy Vo confirmed that work on such a plan was already underway with a traffic control company, and added that nearby businesses have been notified of the anticipated closure. Casiano Atienza added that if the event is approved, there will also be a requirement to submit a parking plan. Sandy Vo reported working with the city to gain access to an empty lot across the street for parking for vendors and the like.

Ross Fryberg advised that all structural elements, including stages, food trucks, and any associated equipment or trusses, must be clearly documented within the application to ensure compliance with safety requirements and avoid complications during inspections.

Chair Freeburg explained that the Committee would discuss the date, time, and location of the event. If approved, the event will proceed to a routing and location meeting to address detailed planning and requirements.

Sandy Vo asked if Sound Transit should participate in future coordination meetings, and Chair Freeburg advised that while it might be helpful to involve them as needed, their participation in all ongoing discussions will not necessarily be required.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the Puranava event in Crossroads Park was made by Laurie Scott. The motion was seconded by Rick Bailey and the motion carried unanimously.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the Muslim Association of Puget Sound celebration scheduled for May 30 at Downtown Park was made by Robert Spingler. The motion was seconded by Casiano Atienza and the motion carried unanimously.

With regard to the BelRed Night Market event on September 12, Emily Martella reminded the Committee members that the Ukrainian festival is slated for the same day in Downtown Park, and that another application, which was submitted before the Night Market application, also seeks the same date for an event in Crossroads Park.

Robert Spingler said if barricades are going to be required, it will be on the organizer to secure them. Those details can be worked out later.

Chair Freeburg asked if that many events can be handled on the same day. Robert Spingler said the police department can handle them as far as officers are concerned, but not if an event requires vehicle barricades.

Casiano Atienza noted being unaware of 130th Avenue NE being designated as a festival street, and said the more substantive concern was the need for a certified traffic control plan as a condition of approval. The organizer will also need to provide their own barricades if city resources are stretched. The traffic control plan remains the key element needed to ensure the event can proceed.

Chair Freeburg confirmed that the traffic control plan is a condition and explained that approval at the initial stage addressed only date, time, and location of the event. Later phases will determine whether the event can satisfy all of the required conditions.

Robert Spingler added that the concerns could be reduced if the organizer chose not to close 130th Avenue NE given that eliminating the street closure will remove many complications. Chair Freeburg agreed and noted that if the street is not closed, the event will match the prior year's footprint and will not require a Special Event Permit.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the BelRed Night Market on September 12 was made by Robert Spingler. The motion was seconded by Mike Ogliore and the motion carried unanimously.

D. Juneteenth Community Celebration

Chair Freeburg said the Juneteenth Community Celebration event was proposed for June 13 from 11:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at Crossroads Park. The event had been hosted at Crossroads Park the prior year with approximately 500 attendees. It is organized by the Eton School and will include booths and entertainment. It is free to the public.

With no concerns raised, a motion to approve the date, time and location for the Juneteenth event on June 13 from 11:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at Crossroads Park was made by Laurie Scott. The motion was seconded by Rick Bailey and the motion carried unanimously.

E. Bellevue Arts Fair

Chair Freeburg said the Bellevue Arts Fair event was seeking July 24 through July 26 in the Downtown.

Casiano Atienza raised an issue related to a development project identified as ANI-606, which is associated with the former Barnes & Noble site and which has an approved permit. The project might begin development during the year and that could affect how the parking lot space traditionally used for the fair will be utilized. Greater implications are anticipated in 2027 if construction gets underway.

Mike Ogliore said the organizers have been coordinating with the developer and are planning to make adjustments for the current year. Specifically, the vendor booths previously placed in Section D of the parking lot will be relocated. The approximately 40 booths will be located in the northwest corner of the Park Plaza lot, something that has been coordinated with PACCAR. The plan is to not have any live music or food trucks.

Robert Spingler asked if all if the impacted booths will shift to the PACCAR-arranged location. Mike Ogliore confirmed that the plan is to relocate artist booths there while avoiding food trucks and live music in that area.

Casiano Atienza added that based on prior year experience additional attention will need to be given to the traffic control details, particularly near the roundabout on the northwest side near the mall.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the Bellevue Arts Fair was made by Laurie Scott. The motion was seconded by Mike Ogliore and the motion carried unanimously.

F. Bellevue International Festival

Chair Freeburg said the Bellevue International Festival was seeking August 8 at Crossroads Park from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The estimated attendance is about 5000. The city-sponsored event is entering its third year and the layout will be similar to the previous iterations.

Robert Spingler said attendance at the event in 2025 was actually only 500. Emily Martella

allowed that the estimated 5000 was likely a typo.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the Bellevue International Festival event was made by Rick Bailey. The motion was seconded by Casiano Atienza and the motion carried unanimously.

G. Washington State Martial Arts Festival

Chair Freeburg said the Washington State Martial Arts Festival was proposed for September 12 at Crossroads Park from 10:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and has an anticipated attendance of approximately 2000. It is concerning that two large events are planned for the same day.

Rick Bailey indicated that staffing could likely accommodate the two events, but pointed out that the festival had taken place later in September the previous year and suggested the organizers might have the flexibility to move to another date, particularly since the remainder of September at Crossroads Park appears to be open.

Chair Freeburg reminded the Committee members that the bylaws discourage scheduling multiple large events on the same day.

Robert Spingler asked the order in which applications are received influences the Committee's decision making. Chair Freeburg explained that the Ukrainian festival submitted first and had already been approved. The martial arts festival came in ahead of the BelRed event. Approving multiple large events on the same day will set a precedent.

Robert Spingler allowed that there would be staffing and resource impacts associated with having two large events on the same day. While manageable, concurrent events require careful coordination and the allocation of personnel and equipment.

Laurie Scott asked if the overlapping events might compete for attendance, and suggested exploring alternative dates to avoid conflicts.

Andrew Oltman proposed tabling the proposal to the next meeting to ascertain if the organizers might be willing to shift dates and thereby alleviate the resource pressures and align better with the committee bylaws.

A motion to table further discussion of the event pending further information about date flexibility was made by Andrew Oltman. The motion was seconded by Robert Spingler and the motion carried unanimously.

H. Garden d'Lights

Chair Freeburg said the Garden d'Lights event is proposed for November 28 through December 31 at the Bellevue Botanical Garden, operating nightly from 4:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. The event had been successfully conducted for many years.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for Garden d’Lights as requested was made by Robert Spingler. The motion was seconded by Rick Bailey and the motion carried unanimously.

7. NEXT MEETING

❖ March 12, 2025

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Freeburg adjourned the meeting at 9:56 a.m.