CITY OF BELLEVUE
SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

April 9, 2026 Bellevue City Hall
8:30 a.m. Virtual Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Susan Freeburg – Parks
Rick Bailey – Parks
Andrew Oltman – Fire
Robert Spingler – Police
Casiano Atienza – Transportation
Laurie Scott – Community Rep. - Downtown
Mike Ogliore – Business Rep. - Downtown
Meredith Langridge – Visit Bellevue
Eric Stewart – King County Metro

OTHERS PRESENT: Emily Martella, Parks; Anthony Mackay, Old Bellevue Merchants Association; Camilo Penuela, King County Metro; Tesslyn Matthes, Emergency Management; Lizzette Flores, Community Development; Christopher Rivera, Transportation; Nathan Hasselblad, Transportation; Emily Sherman, Economic Development; Claude Iosso, City Manager's Office; Hazel Phillips, Emergency Management

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 – None

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Andrew Oltman. The motion was seconded by Meredith Langridge and the motion carried unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A motion to approve the March 12, 2026, meeting minutes as submitted was made by Andrew Oltman. The motion was seconded by Robert Spingler and the motion carried unanimously.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- ❖ Routing and Location Subcommittee Report

Casiano Atienza reported that since the previous meeting the subcommittee had coordinated with

several community events, including the MAPS Eid celebration, Puranava, An Asian Indian Festival, the Shades of Brilliance Art Walk, and the IACS Market. In addition, the subcommittee has been continuing with preparations for the upcoming Ascend Eucharistic Walk scheduled for May 16. Planning efforts will continue as additional agenda items and events approach.

6. OLD BUSINESS – None

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

- ❖ 2026 Applications of Intent

A. Old Bellevue Summer Passport & Night Market

Anthony Mackay with the Old Bellevue Merchants Association outlined the proposal for a one-night summer market activation as part of the broader seven-week summer series. The event was described as a community-focused initiative intended to feature approximately 20 to 30 local artists, vendors, food trucks, and merchant pop-ups, along with small-scale live music designed to maintain a family-friendly environment. The proposed closure of Main Street will occur on one night only. The non-profit organization has a history of community engagement that includes prior successful activities such as a soccer-themed scavenger hunt that drew substantial participation and increased foot traffic to local businesses. A potential future component involves a community mural project as part of the Grand Connection, contingent on securing external funding.

Anthony Mackay outlined the area of the proposed street closure, which originally was envisioned as only the area between 102nd Avenue NE and 103rd Avenue NE. In working with city staff, the option of closing the entire intersection was floated. The organization plans to collaborate with experienced partners for operational guidance and has scheduled meetings to refine the implementation details should approval for the event be granted. Safety measures will be emphasized, including maintaining a 20-foot fire lane through the center of the event space, clearly defined entry and exit points, and close coordination with the police and fire departments regarding traffic control and barrier placement. If the event proves to be successful, the intent is to make it an annual event and to grow it over time. Operational assurances were given, including confirmation that the organization will secure appropriate event insurance and utilize the city-provided templates for traffic management planning.

Anthony Mackay said the organization has prior experience managing events with significant attendance, including a Halloween event that attracted more than 1000 participants; the twice annual wine walk events that see attendance approaching 800 individuals; and seasonal programming funded by the city that draws several hundred attendees. The examples were offered to demonstrate the organization's capability to manage crowd safety and logistics effectively, even in settings without full street closures.

The Committee members were informed that the proposed summer night market is intended to support local businesses, enhance community engagement, and capitalize on increased tourism associated with a major international soccer tournament expected to bring visitors to the region.

The event was described as a carefully controlled pilot initiative designed to establish a foundation for potential future expansion if successful.

Casiano Atienza asked if the organizer would be prepared to finalize the traffic control plans, secure the necessary barricades, and coordinate with vendors within the proposed timeline for the June 27 event. Anthony Mackay expressed confidence in being ready, explaining that a preliminary list of potential vendors has already been developed, but the outreach has been intentionally delayed until permit approval is given. There are planning resources in place. The primary outstanding concern is obtaining confirmation of barrier availability for the event date. Casiano Atienza said should the event be approved, additional logistics will need to be addressed, particularly those affecting residential access.

Chair Freeburg suggested reaching out to the barrier companies as soon as possible given that the regional demand has increased significantly due to the presence of the major international soccer tournament; that has resulted in limited supply across multiple jurisdictions. Anthony Mackay expressed appreciation for the guidance.

Robert Spingler indicated that many initial concerns were addressed during the presentation and by the comments made by Casiano Atienza. The police department could potentially provide access to certain vehicle barriers, although not to standard roadway closure barriers, and a willingness was expressed to coordinate directly with transportation staff and the event organizer to refine the event footprint in light of seasonal demand and concurrent large-scale activities. Anthony Mackay welcomed the collaborative support and expressed openness to receiving expert guidance in refining the operational plans.

Andrew Oltman identified several safety considerations, including that no more than seven ten-by-ten tents can be grouped together without triggering additional spacing requirements. Additional fire extinguishers might be necessary to meet the proximity standards; the proposed placements appear to exceed the allowable distances. Asked about the possibility of cooking activities within the tents, Anthony Mackay allowed that one vendor had expressed an interest in outdoor cooking but added that any such activity will be subject to compliance with the fire department requirements and the permitting processes. Andrew Oltman clarified that the responsibility for submitting the relevant permits rests with the event organizer, and explained that additional safety requirements would vary depending on the type of cooking involved. Anthony Mackay committed to facilitating follow-up communication through the Eproval to ensure compliance, and agreed to address the matters in coordination with the appropriate authorities.

Chair Freeburg reassured Anthony Mackay that cooking activities can be accommodated provided the permitting and safety requirements are satisfied. Subsequent coordination meetings will address any remaining operational details.

Meredith Langridge offered supportive remarks and expressed enthusiasm for the proposed event and its potential to enhance visitor experiences during the period of increased tourism associated with the international soccer tournament. Anthony Mackay allowed that street closures can

create meaningful gathering spaces that encourage visitors to remain in the area, support local businesses, and participate in community activities. The proposed mural component is an innovative feature that is likely to extend visitor engagement.

Casiano Atienza reiterated the importance of promptly confirming the availability of traffic control contractors once the outcome of the approval process is known, citing recent instances in which suppliers required early confirmation due to the seasonal demand. The presenter acknowledged this recommendation.

Jazz with King County Metro requested clarification regarding the scope of the street closure and asked specifically if Bellevue Way NE would remain open. Anthony Mackay confirmed that no closure of that roadway is planned. An apparent inconsistency resulted from formatting limitations on the presentation slide.

Chair Freeburg briefly outlined the next steps in the approval process, explaining that the Committee would take a vote regarding the event, the outcome of which will be known by the end of the week. If approved, there will be a subsequent Routing and Location meeting during which departmental representatives and the event organizer will collaborate to finalize the requirements, permits, and logistical arrangements necessary to implement the event.

Anthony Mackay expressed appreciation for the guidance and acknowledged that the street closure will be a first. As such it is prudent to rely on experienced partners and community supporters to ensure successful execution.

Anthony Mackay invited the Committee members to attend the upcoming fundraising wine walk organized by the Old Bellevue Merchants Association.

A motion to approve the date, time and location of the Old Bellevue Merchants Association Summer Passport and Night Market was made by Meredith Langridge. The motion was seconded by Robert Spingler and the motion carried unanimously.

B. BelRed Arts Night Market

Chair Freeburg explained that the event is scheduled for September 19 from 5:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. at the former Kelly's Auto Body property on 130th Avenue NE, a site that is owned by the city. The organizers are seeking authorization to close a portion of 130th Avenue NE adjacent to the property and are concurrently working to finalize the site use arrangements with the city.

Robert Spingler said the primary outstanding issues relate to the roadway closure logistics and maintaining business access in the surrounding area. Confidence was expressed that the operational details can be resolved through further coordination with the event organizer. The suggestion was made to utilize the Kelly property's parking lot more extensively to accommodate the food trucks and to reduce the reliance on roadway closures.

Casiano Atienza reflected on the prior year's configuration of the event and recalled that the

activities had been contained within a parking lot rather than extending into the roadway. The rationale for expanding into the street for the current proposal was questioned. While noting that the location remains workable, it was emphasized that the roadway use could introduce additional requirements, including formal traffic control plans, detour signage, and barrier placement, all of which will increase operational complexity and cost. Retaining all activities within the parking lot could reduce the requirements and the associated costs.

Additional context was provided indicating that city staff were actively working to establish temporary use agreements for the Kelly property, and that approval of the event would be contingent upon final confirmation of site availability. With no further comments raised, the chair asked whether the committee felt prepared to proceed with a vote. A motion was made and seconded to approve the Bell Red Arts Night Market scheduled for September 19, 2026, at the Kelly property site, including a partial right-of-way closure.

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

C. Crossroads Movies in the Park

Chair Freeburg said the annual event is put on by the city. It will run August 6, 13, 20 and 27 from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. The event typically draws 1000 attendees for each movie.

A motion to approve the Crossroads Movies in the Park event was made by Rick Bailey. The motion was seconded by Casiano Atienza and the motion carried unanimously.

D. Soccer Celebration @ the BelRed Arts District

Chair Freeburg said the BelRed Arts District Community Alliance is looking to hold the event on June 26 from 1:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The event is expected to draw 1000 attendees. The event is partnered with the city. The proposed location is the Kelly property on 130th Avenue NE.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the Soccer Celebration event was made by Meredith Langridge. The motion was seconded by Robert Spingler and the motion carried unanimously.

❖ 2026 Post-Event Evaluations

A. Holi Festival of Color

Chair Freeburg said the Holi Festival of Color was held on March 8 at Crossroads Park. Reading from the event summary, it was noted that the day began with heavy rain, which significantly reduced attendance levels. Volunteers completed the setup activities despite the adverse weather conditions. Because the event is a recurring program, the organizers are familiar with the operational procedures. As a result, both setup and takedown were completed smoothly, and no logistical or safety issues were reported. Parking availability remained adequate due to the reduced number of participants. The permitting process was described as straightforward, and the weather was identified as the primary factor affecting turnout. In reflecting on potential improvements, the organizers indicated that scheduling the event on a Saturday had proven to be

beneficial, and they expressed an interest in maintaining the scheduling the same in future years. Overall the event was managed effectively despite the unfavorable conditions.

B. Holi: The Colors Fest

Chair Freeburg said the Color Fest held at Crossroads Park on March 14 was organized by Beats of Redmond. Reading from the evaluation, attendance was about 1000 rather than the anticipated 5000 due to severe weather conditions, including snowfall immediately prior to and during the event. The conditions negatively affected vendor participation, visitor traffic, and overall site utilization. Despite the challenges, the event programming was carried out as planned, with only minor adjustments implemented on-site to maintain safety and the efficient use of space under the weather conditions. The team was responsive and flexible and ensured continued compliance with city requirements throughout the event. The parking operations were reported to have been well coordinated, minimizing congestion and facilitating the orderly arrival and departure of attendees. Additionally, setup and removal occurred within the permitted timeframes, and pedestrian movement throughout the park was managed effectively. There was strong volunteer engagement and the advanced planning was credited with supporting smooth operations despite the reduced turnout.

The evaluation noted that the permitting process had been completed in accordance with city standards and that no major unforeseen operational problems occurred beyond the weather-related challenges. The principal recommendation offered by the event organizers involved establishing a formal contingency plan that would include approval of an alternate backup date in the event of severe weather, given the heightened likelihood of adverse conditions during March. The organizers also expressed concern regarding scheduling overlap with another similar event held at the same location approximately one week earlier, suggesting that the presence of multiple similar festivals may have divided vendor participation and reduced attendance. In addition, the organizers requested consideration of enhanced municipal support, including funding and partnership involvement, to help offset the financial impact of uncontrollable factors such as weather and scheduling conflicts. The organizers intend to host the event again in 2027.

Chair Freeburg clarified that the organizers had not been promised exclusivity regarding similar events at the park. There have been two color events at Crossroads Park for many years. The reason for allowing only one color event in Downtown Park has nothing to do with the nature of the event, rather it is due to the need to protect the turf. It is unfortunate that the weather was bad, which was the primary factor in influencing the attendance challenges.

Rick Bailey reported that the event organizers had not clearly disclosed during the application process that a semi-truck and trailer would be used to transport equipment into the park. The vehicle caused damage to the north parking lot during departure due to space and maneuverability constraints. The third-party freight company responsible for the vehicle has agreed to cover the cost of the repairs. Future planning discussions will need to address the transportation logistics more explicitly. The parking lot cannot safely accommodate semi-trailer access due to the limited space and exit capacity.

- ❖ Comments/Follow-up – None

7. NEXT MEETING

- ❖ May 14, 2026

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Freeburg adjourned the meeting at 9:18 a.m.