CITY OF BELLEVUE
SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

June 11, 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
Neal Christiansen – Community Rep. - East Bellevue
Laurie Scott – Community Rep. - Downtown
Mike Ogliore – Business Rep. - Downtown
Eric Stewart – King County Metro

OTHERS PRESENT: Emily Martella, Parks; Nathan Hasselblad, Transportation; Chris Randels, Parking Day; Mia Davison, Development Services; Lizzette Flores, Community Development; Tesslyn Matthes , Fire; Ross Fryberg, Fire

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

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A motion to approve the May 14, 2026, meeting minutes as submitted was made by Robert Spingler. The motion was seconded by Rick Bailey and the motion carried unanimously.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- ❖ Routing and Location Subcommittee Report

Casiano Atienza reported that several meetings had been held since the previous SEC meeting to focus on events such as Bubbles, Fairways and Fun, Youth for Impact, and the Children's Business Fair. There were also sessions focused on planning for larger upcoming events, including the Bellevue Family 4th and the Bellevue Arts Night Market.

6. OLD BUSINESS

- ❖ Tabled Applications: Bellevue Farmer's Market @ 106th

Chair Freeburg noted the event had previously been tabled to allow departments additional time to gather information. Although an amended route had not been submitted, the committee agreed that final location details could be resolved through future routing and location meetings.

A motion to approve the date, time and location subject to final route and location refinements was made by Robert Spingler. The motion was seconded by Casiano Atienza and the motion carried unanimously.

6. NEW BUSINESS

- ❖ 2026 Applications of Intent

A. Park(ing) Day

Chris Randels, founder and director of Complete Streets Bellevue, addressed the Committee regarding the organization's annual Park(ing) Day event, which is a global event held each September in cities around the world. The focus is on community groups temporarily repurposing on-street parking spaces for public activities and placemaking. The objective is to demonstrate alternative uses of public street space beyond vehicle storage, with installations ranging from seating areas and games to community art projects and informational exhibits. Bellevue's inaugural participation in the event was on September 19, 2025, and it was funded through a Community Programming Fund grant. The event occupied approximately ten parking spaces on NE 1st Street near the Pride Crosswalk, just south of Downtown Park. Participating organizations transformed the parking spaces into a community mural project, resource tables, a bicycle parking demonstration, games, and a children's activity area. The event was successful and was viewed as a potential pilot project supporting Bellevue's broader curb activation and curb management objectives. For the current year, the organization is proposing to hold the event on Saturday, September 19, at the same location, with the possibility of expanding around the corner onto 102nd Avenue NE as the number of attendees increases. Attendance at the inaugural event was estimated to be several hundred people. The organizers plan to implement better attendance tracking going forward.

Robert Spingler asked if there had been any security or traffic issues during the prior year's event. Chris Randels responded that no security concerns had been encountered. The organization had worked with city right-of-way staff to install water-filled barriers along the parking bay to prevent vehicle intrusion, and while the barriers effectively addressed the safety considerations, there have been discussions about whether alternative protective measures might be appropriate, such as unfilled water barriers, given the low-speed nature of the street and the upcoming speed-limit reductions. A similar traffic control plan will be developed for the upcoming event.

Casiano Atienza stated that if water barriers are used, they will need to be filled. Any barrier substitutes will need to be discussed.

Answering a question asked by Casiano Atienza, Chris Randels said the inaugural event exceeded all expectations for a first-time undertaking for the organization and for the first

implementation of the concept in Bellevue. Several community organizations participated, including Eastside for All, Africans on the Eastside, Eastside Urbanism, and others, helping to showcase a variety of community-focused activities. The public feedback was overwhelmingly positive. One nearby resident initially expressed concerns before the installations were fully set up, but their reaction became favorable once visitors could see and experience the completed displays. Many attendees expressed enthusiasm and interest in seeing the event return in future years. The primary logistical challenge was the use of water barriers. Beyond the expense of renting the barriers, it was difficult to obtain the water needed to fill them. Ultimately, city utility crews assisted by filling the barriers with a water truck at no cost to the organization. However, the process left surrounding pavement wet for an extended period of time, creating aesthetic issues and affecting at least one chalk-based installation. Hopefully alternative safety measures will be identified for future events. Aside from those challenges, the event was a successful demonstration of community creativity and an effective way to encourage residents to reconsider how public parking spaces might be used.

Casiano Atienza asked about attendance figures in other cities. Chris Randels answered that the attendance figures vary considerably depending on local circumstance. Park(ing)ing Day is not typically intended to function as a destination event like a festival or street fair. Its purpose is to engage people as they go about their normal daily activities and unexpectedly encounter transformed public spaces. Consequently, attendance is largely determined by the amount of pedestrian activity in the surrounding area. For Bellevue, it is anticipated that several hundred visitors will be attracted, primarily individuals already traveling through the Downtown Park area on a typical Saturday.

Chair Freeburg put to the Committee the question of whether or not the event should be required to obtain a Special Event Permit. The event appears to be relatively modest in scale, with an anticipated attendance of 200 to 300 people.

Neal Christiansen asked if the event will occur at multiple locations or just in the one place. Chris Randels said as part of the grant the organization indicated a series of events. There will be a Park(ing) Day-like event held on June 12 in the Spring District on 122nd Avenue NE. It will involve a full closure of the private street. Those are the only two that will be part of the series. The hope is that in future years the event will be expanded to additional sites.

Casiano Atienza expressed the view that the event should be considered a special event because it is organized as an annual public gathering that occupies a portion of the public right-of-way. Although attendance figures do not approach the threshold typically associated with large special events, it does utilize parking bays within the public right-of-way and could potentially expand in future years. The event shares similarities with other public gatherings such as farmers markets and therefore warrants being treated as a special event.

Emily Martella pointed out that many activities are commonly described as “events,” including small gatherings in city parks, yet those activities are not necessarily subject to the special event permitting process. The special event criteria generally includes attendance exceeding 500 participants, significant impacts on city services, or substantial effects on streets and public rights-of-way.

Casiano Atienza suggested that the use of parking bays within the public right-of-way constitutes an impact on city infrastructure, and argued that the event fits within the broader intent of the special event framework.

Robert Spingler indicated that the police department did not anticipate any operational involvement provided appropriate barriers and traffic-control measures are put in place.

Chair Freeburg observed that transportation appears to be the only department significantly affected by the event and asked what additional value will be gained by imposing the special event process, associated fees, and interdepartmental review requirements. Casiano Atienza maintained that right-of-way permits are traditionally intended for construction activities and similar uses rather than public events and expressed a concern about approving the event solely through a right-of-way permit. Safety measures, including properly secured barriers, will be necessary regardless of the permitting pathway chosen.

Mia Davison asked if the event could appropriately fall under a street-use permit rather than a Special Event Permit. Casiano Atienza referenced language from the city's special events criteria that indicated that activities affecting city streets or public rights-of-way may qualify as special events. Certain activities historically have been processed through right-of-way permits, such as parades, more appropriately fit within the special event framework. Park(ing)ing Day should likewise be treated as a special event, particularly given the organizer's stated desire to maintain and potentially expand the event in future years.

Chair Freeburg acknowledged the differing perspectives and moved the discussion toward a formal vote on whether a Special Event Permit should be required before considering approval of the event's date, time, and location.

Neal Christiansen sought clarification regarding the event's funding and relationship with the city. Chair Freeburg explained that the organizer had previously received a grant from the city to support the event, but the activity was not considered a city partnership. It remains an independently organized event that has received grant funding to assist with implementation.

Laurie Scott recalled that the applicant had indicated uncertainty about the permitting requirements given that a permit had not previously been required. Chair Freeburg confirmed that the applicant's understanding was based on the prior year's experience and that no strong argument had been presented by the organizer regarding the necessity or lack of necessity of a permit beyond that observation. Obtaining a Special Event Permit will cost the organizer approximately $1,570.

Ross Fryberg suggested that because the event did not trigger the need for a Special Event Permit in 2025, and because the organizer intends to replicate the event for the current year with no real changes, a Special Event Permit should not be required, even if there are aspirations to grow the event in the future.

Laurie Scott noted that the application projected an attendance of approximately 300 people and asked how that compares with the prior year. Chair Freeburg noted that the organizer had indicated about 200 people attended the inaugural event, although no formal attendance count had been conducted because the event primarily attracts passersby. The event as outlined does not currently meet the attendance thresholds that ordinarily requires a Special Event Permit, though that might change in future years should attendance continue to grow.

Chair Freeburg asked the Committee members to vote on whether or not the event should be required to obtain a Special Event Permit. There was only one vote in favor of requiring a permit.

B. Snowflake Lane

Chair Freeburg said the annual event has been tweaked over the years to address crowd control.

Laurie Scott asked if there will be any changes from the 2025 event. Chair Freeburg and Robert Spingler allowed that nothing new is planned.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the 2026 Snowflake Lane event was made by Laurie Scott. Second was by Robert Spingler and the motion carried unanimously.

- 2026 Post-Event Evaluation

A. Ascend Eucharistic Revival Procession

Robert Spingler reported that the event went well from the perspective of police.

Casiano Atienza said there were no problems encountered in terms of transportation. National Barricade reported that the police department had been helpful.

Chair Freeburg said the organizers indicated that weather conditions were perfect. Police support was effective, enabling the procession to move as a continuous line. The process was clear, communication was generally helpful, there were no significant safety or security concerns encountered, and the event went well. There was a concern regarding communication and notifications that was raised by the accounts payable representative, but no broader operational issues were identified.

- Comments / Follow-up

Mia Davison reported that Steph Collier, the staff member responsible for small business and public space initiatives, will be formally join the Special Events Committee beginning in July.

7. NEXT MEETING

- July 9, 2026

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Freeburg adjourned the meeting at 9:15 a.m.