

CITY OF BELLEVUE
SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

December 11, 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
Laurie Scott – Community Representative - Downtown
Mike Ogliore – Business Representative - Downtown
Camilo Penuela – King County Metro
Meredith Langridge – Visit Bellevue

OTHERS PRESENT:

Emily Martella, Parks; Mark Sizemore, Ascend Eucharistic Revival Procession; Joedy Morrow, Utilities; Nathan Hasselblad, FAM; Hazel Phillips, Emergency Management

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:31 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 Laurie Scott. The motion was seconded by Meredith Langridge and the motion carried unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A motion to approve the November 13, 2025, meeting minutes as submitted was made by Andrew Oltman. The motion was seconded by Rick Bailey and the motion carried unanimously.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

❖ Routing and Location Subcommittee Report

Casiano Atienza reported no significant updates, adding that there had been few events requiring subcommittee meetings recently. The subcommittee anticipates more activity in the coming weeks or early in the new year due to upcoming events.

6. OLD BUSINESS – None

6. NEW BUSINESS

❖ 2026 Applications of Intent

A. Ascend Eucharistic Revival Procession

Mark Sizemore, child and family minister for St. Brenden Catholic Church in Bothell, noted having been appointed to serve as chair of the security committee for the Ascend Eucharistic Revival set to take place on May 16, 2026, at Meydenbauer Center. Both active duty and retired police officers and a fire marshal all make up the security committee for the event. The all-day gathering will be open to the public and will feature national speakers and authors. Ticket sales are anticipated to begin in January and the expectation is that there will be some 3,500 attendees. A principal component of the event will be a Eucharistic procession. Such processions have longstanding historical precedent and are intended to be peaceful and reverent rather than political or protest-oriented. Along with the security team, a traffic-control contractor has been retained to support planning and operations. Additional coordination is underway to accommodate the access needs of nearby facilities.

Mark Sizemore said the participants will form up inside Meydenbauer Center and exit through the large roll-up door into the north parking lot before proceeding along the proposed route, which is up 112th Avenue NE to NE 8th Street, west on NE 8th Street to 110th Avenue NE, then down to NE 4th Street, returning to 112th Avenue NE and reentering the building. The participants will utilize the sidewalk and a single traffic lane so it will not be necessary to fully close the streets to traffic. There will be plainclothes volunteer officers interspersed throughout the group to support both safety and crowd management, including facilitating periodic breaks to allow vehicles or buses through. The procession pace will be roughly two miles per hour. No given location along the route will be impacted for very long, and the traffic-control devices will be removed as the procession advances.

Robert Spingler said he has met with the organizer and additional information has been sought from National Barricade.

Casiano Atienza concurred that prior discussions had occurred and said the primary remaining need is to receive additional traffic-control documentation from the traffic control contractor. The routing and location subcommittee reiterated that traffic control is the central issue along with the importance of safe access and operations.

Mark Sizemore said the traffic control contractor's plan is expected in early January. The

contractor will be in contact with all relevant committee representatives.

Casiano Atienza said from the start one of the main concerns centered on the anticipated density of approximately 3,000-plus participants along the sidewalk route. The concern was mitigated, however, by the proposed traffic control plan, which aims to keep one lane open, utilize the sidewalk, and take advantage of the open central area near the Meydenbauer Center, allowing the group to spread out. Particular emphasis has been placed on ensuring that the procession will pause as necessary to allow buses to pass through to and from the Bellevue Transit Center, which is identified as a critical operational issue. With confirmation that bus movements will be accommodated, there has been an increased comfort level with the proposal.

Camilo Penuela said a primary concern has been the high level of activity at the Bellevue Transit Center and the potential for the pedestrian route to impede multiple streets. Provided buses will be able to continue operating without interruption, it should be okay.

Rob Spingler said it was access to all of the surrounding driveways, residences, and City Hall that had initially been a significant issue, but the discussions with the organizer have addressed those points. There is a commitment to pause the procession when needed and to maintain sufficient spacing to preserve access. With those mitigations in place, there is confidence that the access issues can be managed effectively.

Chair Freeburg thanked Mark Sizemore for participating.

Robert Spingler suggested that because the event will involve some street closures, a Special Event Permit should be required. The event will affect a number of city departments.

Casiano Atienza agreed, noting that it will be necessary to have help and involvement by the police. Mark Sizemore has acknowledged a willingness to work with the designated traffic control contractor. The event will be able to proceed safely under those conditions.

Mike Ogliore raised an issue of fairness and precedent and asked if similar requests from other faith-based organizations would be treated in the same way. Chair Freeburg responded that because the event will be open to the public, the religious nature of the gathering is not a determining factor. The Committee's responsibility is to evaluate safety, route feasibility, attendance size, and operational impacts. Mike Ogliore allowed that Mark Sizemore has demonstrated the level of preparation and cooperation expected of a responsible event producer.

Chair Freeburg said should there be a rush of similar requests, it could become necessary to evaluate frequency or seasonal considerations, something that is done with other recurring events.

A motion to approve the date, time, and location of the Ascend Eucharistic Revival procession for May 16, 2026, from 2:00 to 2:45 p.m. was made by Meredith Langridge. The motion was seconded by Robert Spingler and the motion carried unanimously.

B. CRY Holi

Chair Freeburg said the CRY Holi Festival of Colors is proposed for March 7, 2026, in Downtown Park from noon to 5:00 p.m. The event had been held for many years.

Rick Bailey observed that the application materials appeared substantially similar to prior years, with the same map and description but a different contact person. Introductions will be made during the routing and pre-event site meetings.

Maggie Whittemore asked if the proposed 700 to 1,500 attendees is in line with previous iterations of the event. Chair Freeburg said the number of participants has fluctuated over the years owing to weather conditions.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for CRY Holi Festival of Colors on March 7, 2026, in Downtown Park was made by Rick Bailey. The motion was seconded by Laurie Scott and the motion carried unanimously.

C. Kelsey Creek Sheep Shearing

Chair Freeburg said the city event has been ongoing for many years at Kelsey Creek Farm. It is proposed for April 25, 2026, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Maggie Whittemore pointed out the need to relocate the Kettle Corn stand further away from the building.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the Sheep Shearing event at Kelsey Creek Farm on April 25, 2026, was made by Rick Bailey. The motion was seconded by Casiano Atienza and the motion carried unanimously.

D. Holi Festival of Color

Chair Freeburg said the Holi Festival of Color event is proposed for Crossroads Park on March 8, 2026, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.. The estimated attendance is 1,500 people. The festival will be the third color festival added to the calendar. It is proposed to occur on the same weekend as CRY Holi but on a different day and different location.

Rick Spingler said the total attendance for the previous Holi Festival was significantly underestimated. While 500 were projected to attend, closer to 1,000 actually attended. The higher estimate for the 2026 event appears to address that concern. Chair Freeburg added that prior to the pandemic attendance at the event was approximately 1,500, which would seem to indicate that the new estimate is more accurate.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for Holi Festival of Color on March 8 from 11:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Crossroads Park was made by Rick Bailey. The motion was seconded by Robert Spingler and the motion carried unanimously.

E. IACS Night Market

Chair Freeburg said the recurring event is proposed for June 20, 2026, from 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., at Crossroads Park with a proposed attendance of 5,000. The recurring event is facing its fourth or fifth iteration.

Andrew Oltman asked if previous attendance numbers were in line with what is projected for 2026. Emily Martella said attendance at the 2025 event was under 5,000. Chair Freeburg added that the event has seen fewer than 5,000 every year.

Rick Bailey noted from the application that there appears to be a different contact person.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the IACS Night Market on June 20, 2026, from 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Crossroads Park was made by Meredith Langridge. The motion was seconded by Laurie Scott and the motion carried unanimously.

F. Downtown Movies in the Park

Chair Freeburg said the annual city event consists of multiple movie nights over a four- to six-week period.

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

G. Kelsey Creek Farm Fair

Chair Freeburg said the Kelsey Creek Farm Fair is proposed for October 3, 2026, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., at Kelsey Creek Farm. The estimated attendance is 3,400 people.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for Kelsey Creek Farm Fair on October 3, 2026, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., was made by Rick Bailey. The motion was seconded by Meredith Langridge and the motion carried unanimously.

❖ Post-Event Evaluations

A. Kelsey Creek Farm Fair

Chair Freeburg said the event was held in October. Reading from the evaluation, Chair Freeburg said the beloved community event is well-attended and well-run. It benefited from favorable weather and seasonal decorations, and the actual attendance was approximately 4,400 people. Highlights included the introduction of a new children's play area featuring crafts, games, and face painting, which proved so popular that tickets ran out. There were live stage performances that were well received. Operationally, the event ran smoothly. Strong support was supplied by Bellevue probation services during setup and cleanup. There were no permitting or safety issues,

but the organizer did note difficulty recruiting volunteers due to the event coinciding with high school homecoming weekend. Suggestions for future improvements included expanding the children's play area to reduce lines, adding another musical act if the budget allows, and securing an additional food truck to better meet the demand. The plan is to hold the event next year on October 3, 2026.

B. Out of the Darkness Walk

Chair Freeburg said the event was held in Downtown Park on October 19. While the organizers had anticipated 500 participants, the actual reported attendance was approximately 75, largely attributable to poor weather conditions and the presence of a major protest in the area the day before. Despite the lower turnout, event operations, including parking, routing, and load-in and load-out, proceeded smoothly, and the event concluded around 10:30 a.m. The only noted safety issue involved noncompliant tents, one of which tipped over in strong winds despite added weights. Recommendations for future events included stricter enforcement of tent compliance, minimum base-weight requirements, and a shorter event duration. The organizers reported feeling well supported throughout the process and indicated plans to hold the event again, tentatively in September of 2026. Chair Freeburg stressed that no application had yet been submitted.

8. NEXT MEETING

❖ January 8, 2026

Chair Freeburg reminded the Committee members that the January meeting would be particularly full given the large number of events scheduled for review. The importance of advance preparation and attendance was highlighted. The members were encouraged to review their packets carefully and to contact staff with any questions ahead of time.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Freeburg adjourned the meeting at 9:09 p.m.