

**CITY OF BELLEVUE  
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday  
May 21, 2015  
6:30 p.m.

Conference Room 1E-112  
Bellevue City Hall  
Bellevue, Washington

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Chair Helland<sup>1</sup>, Vice Chair Swenson, Commissioners Howe, Wang, Morin, and Mach

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** Commissioner Pauley

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Andrew Lee, Deputy Director; Susan Fife-Ferris, Manager Environmental Communications & Outreach; Councilmember Roberts; Paul Bucich, Engineering Manager; Brian Ward, Senior Engineer; Doug Lane, Senior Engineer

**MINUTES TAKER:** Laurie Hugdahl

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Swenson at 6:33 p.m.

**2. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

None

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Motion made by Commissioner Howe, seconded by Commissioner Morin, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

April 16, 2014 Regular Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Wang noted that from *Service Ownership* on page 7 continuing on through page 15 the text is duplicated.

**Motion made by Commissioner Wang, seconded by Commissioner Morin, to postpone the approval of the minutes until these can be reviewed. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

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<sup>1</sup> Chair Helland arrived at 7:01 p.m.

## 5. REPORTS AND SUMMARIES

- ESC Calendar/Council Calendar

Deputy Director Lee stated that staff hopes to appoint a new commissioner in the beginning half of June so that person can start coming to the June meeting.

- Conservation & Outreach Events & Volunteer Opportunity

## 6. NEW BUSINESS

- Solid Waste Contract Performance Audit & Customer Satisfaction Surveys Review – Continued from April 16<sup>th</sup> ESC Meeting  
*Susan Fife-Ferris, Manager Environmental Communications & Outreach*

Ms. Fife-Ferris thanked the ESC for their feedback on the survey at the last meeting. Based on that input staff made some changes to the process for the survey that will run this fall. The survey will limit the scope of the questions to the past year; ask for more specifics regarding customer dissatisfaction; ask respondents to share specific compliments or complaints; and consider other options to conduct the survey other than by telephone and cell phone to reach a wider cross-section of customers and more customers in general.

There were no comments or questions from the ESC.

- Storm System Plan  
*Paul Bucich, Assistant Director, Engineering*  
*Brian Ward, Senior Engineer*

Paul Bucich reviewed background on the Storm System Plan. He explained that starting tonight staff would start discussing five Strategic Stormwater Initiatives. The mission of the Storm and Surface Water Mission is to be a surface water system that controls damage from storms, protects surface water quality, supports fish and wildlife habitat, and protects the environment. The final Storm System Plan with the strategic initiatives will be taken to Council this fall for adoption.

The Stormwater System is a combination of private and public ownership which grows organically as development occurs. This System currently consists of 32 square miles with 79 miles of streams within the City. There are 26 basins, 3 small lakes, and a significant amount of lake shoreline.

### Strategic Initiatives:

1. Utilities Department Property Management Plans
2. Primary Stormwater Infrastructure

3. Improving Water Quality
4. Open Streams Assessment
5. Watershed Planning

#### Property Management Initiative

The utility owns 430 acres on 23 parcels. There are 136 acres on 60 parcels which are in or near sensitive areas. There are great opportunities to leverage these to achieve the Mission Statement goals outside of just stormwater detention. The Property Management Initiative would compile a list of all the properties, a site assessment of the properties, and an estimation of what could be done with those properties. This would provide the City with a long-term vision for the properties and assist with achieving the Mission Statement goals. The outcome will be a set of discreet long-range management plans.

#### Primary Stormwater Infrastructure Initiative

Brian Ward explained that the stormwater conveyance system is a mixture of privately-owned and publicly-owned infrastructure. There are nearly 400 miles of publicly owned storm pipes. He pointed out that the water conveyed from the top of the watershed down to lower areas flows through pieces of infrastructure which are not in public ownership. This leaves the City potentially vulnerable to a system problem if it is not known where the primary parts are and how they will be maintained. He reviewed some of the stakeholders in stormwater management including the City, the general public, developers, King County and adjacent cities, the State, and federal government. This initiative is about identifying the components of the primary conveyance system and coming up with a long-range management plan to make sure it's viable.

Commissioner Morin asked if the City has an easement to access private systems. Mr. Ward replied that sometimes there are easements, but not always even though easements are an important component of maintenance. If there are not easements, the City has to identify the property owner to discuss the situation.

Vice Chair Swenson asked if the City had accepted the lines in the street, but not the connectors on private property between the streets. Mr. Bucich replied that it had happened. However, if the City can show that the intent of the pipes going through private property was to convey public drainage then the interpretation from the City Attorney is that there can be a prescriptive easement for that pipe. The difficulty is in the situation where it is not clear at all.

Chair Helland arrived at 7:01 p.m.

Commissioner Wang referred to the map and asked if the City is considering converting certain sections of private pipes into public system. Mr. Bucich replied right now staff are just interested in defining management alternatives. Commissioner Wang commented that the planning for subdivisions should extend all the way to the planned use point when subdivisions are reviewed. Mr. Bucich replied that water law in the State of Washington says that as a property owner you are allowed to drain your water across your neighbor's property if that's the natural historic way it flows, and your neighbors have to accept that water and can then pass it on to the next property owner. From a developer perspective, the developer has no control over the system downstream.

Mr. Ward summarized that sometimes there were easements put in place, but not always. The City's goal is to identify where those situations are.

#### Improving Water Quality Initiative

Bellevue was 38% developed when stormwater regulations were implemented. Water quality treatment is primarily accomplished through development or redevelopment. About 21% of the city area is in the right of way and most runoff is untreated. The NPDES permit will help, but it alone will not achieve the desired outcome. The objectives of this initiative are to improve surface water quality, assess system opportunities to implement BMPs independent of redevelopment actions, and prioritize locations and BMP techniques. He discussed the results of the 2014 salmon release into Kelsey Creek and Coal Creek to illustrate water quality issues. In Coal Creek there were many spots where salmon had their "nests" but not a single one in Kelsey Creek; all the salmon were dead in Kelsey Creek within a week. The water quality initiative will help to assess this situation.

Mr. Ward summarized that staff had discussed three initiatives tonight. Next month staff will discuss the remaining two. There will be a public meeting in July and the goal is to have Council adoption in the fall.

#### Farewell to Commission Chair Brad Helland

Director Nav Ota and Councilmember Robertson presented Chair Helland with a plaque and a gift for his ten years of service and expressed appreciation for his work. Cake was served to celebrate.

- Water System Plan  
*Paul Bucich, Assistant Director, Engineering*  
*Doug Lane, Senior Engineer*

Deputy Director Lee commented that staff would be focusing on the storage policy.

Senior Engineer Doug Lane reviewed the policy for Drinking Water Storage for Emergency Supply Outages. He reviewed the background of Department of Health (DOH) requirements for water storage for operational, equalizing, fire, and standby purposes. DOH generally recommends standby storage based on two days of average water usage minus a volume credit where there are multiple water sources, but allows for a minimum of one day. Bellevue's longstanding practice has been to provide at least the one-day storage minimum as recommended by DOH plus also provide separate fire storage. Mr. Lane discussed how Seattle Public Utilities has handled the situation, and that their analysis shows all indoor water usage could be met for at least 5-days based on modeling of three hypothetical water supply emergencies. He also discussed the chart showing the impacts vs. benefits for increasing to two-day standby storage. Benefits would be an additional 24 hours of water in the event of a complete supply outage. Impacts would include the cost of reservoir construction (engineering, permits, etc.); land acquisition; water quality degradation and increased water age; additional cost for pumping and transmission capacity; community impacts; increased O&M; and potential property condemnation costs.

Commissioner Morin asked how the cost of construction was calculated. Mr. Lane replied it is a rough estimate of present day worth with the approximate cost per gallon to construct reservoirs in the past. This number would inflate over time. Commissioner Morin asked about the frequency of these types of events. Mr. Lane replied there have been three times when one of Seattle's two supply sources was shut off from a couple hours to a couple days, but there were no service interruptions from any of these events, due to the redundant supply and operational efforts. Commissioner Morin asked about the cost per capita. Mr. Bucich was not sure. He noted that the underlying issue is about the risk. He commented that the entire time that Bellevue Utilities has been in place there has never been a complete shutoff of water. He stated Bellevue theoretically has six days of water, based on SPU's assessment of their ability to provide five days alone. Additionally the City has existing groundwater rights and is interested in exploring and developing those. Mr. Lane said that the City has broached the subject of using the wells as emergency supplies to Cascade Water Alliance, who thinks it's a great idea to add resiliency.

Commissioner Morin asked if volcanic activity was one of the scenarios considered. Mr. Lane replied that increased turbidity is one of the potential situations that could cause a Cedar River Watershed outage, but it wasn't looked at specifically. This could be ash from volcanic activity or from a forest fire. Particulates in the water could apply to any open reservoir.

Mr. Bucich was asked if Bellevue has had a situation where they have had to get into the one-day storage. Mr. Bucich said he has not heard of any.

Bellevue would likely only encounter that situation when the water feeds are shut off. Staff is not recommending a two-day storage situation, but wanted to discuss it since it is the DOH default recommendation, and DOH recommends that community expectations be considered first before adopting the one day minimum storage standard. Mr. Bucich discussed staff's recommendation to look into groundwater rights and development in lieu of an additional day of water storage.

Commissioner Wang noted that AWWA had a meeting in town a couple weeks ago. He commended Doug Lane for making several presentations at that meeting and doing a great job. Commissioner Wang encouraged other staff members to participate and make good use of opportunities. Mr. Bucich concurred and noted that other utilities staff members also made presentations.

Deputy Director Lee commented that Councilmember Robertson had requested a recommendation from the ESC about the water storage issue. Mr. Lane and Mr. Bucich added that staff would be asking the ESC for a recommendation after the policies have all been completed and the final document is presented in the fall.

## **7. NEW BUSINESS**

None

## **8. COMMISSION REPORT**

Commissioner Wang noted that August is still listed as a recess. Deputy Director Lee said he would like to solicit dates for a retreat to find out the Commission's availability. He will be discussing this more at the June meeting.

## **9. DIRECTOR'S OFFICE REPORT**

Deputy Director Lee had the following items:

- Based on the Governor's declaration of a state of emergency of drought, staff is trying to get the word out to Bellevue residents that there is actually enough water because the Seattle Public Utilities water system relies not only on snow melt, but also on rainfall. Seattle Public Utilities' water outlook for the summer is actually very positive. The City wants water users to practice wise conservation measures, but there is not a water supply issue at the current time. Commissioner Wang discussed the dire water situation in California.
- Commissioner Mach asked about the demand side of water. Deputy Director Lee explained that the demand has been 5-10% higher in the last few billing cycles. He attributed this to the excellent weather. Commissioner Mach noted that there has been extra water the last few years, and wondered about providing some of the extra water to areas that might need it. Deputy Director Lee replied that Cascade Water Alliance has been partnering together with

Seattle Public Utilities, Tacoma Water, and Everett Water on the Puget Sound Regional Water Supply Forum to look at ways to increase the resiliency of the region's water supply.

**10. CONTINUED ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

None

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.