

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Special Meeting  
**Council Retreat**

February 3 & 4, 2012

Alderbrook Resort  
Union, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Lee, Deputy Mayor Robertson, and Councilmembers Balducci, Chelminiak, Davidson, Stokes, and Wallace

ABSENT: None.

**Friday, February 3, 2012**

The meeting was called to order at 8:45 a.m., and all Councilmembers were present.

Mayor Lee opened the meeting and welcomed the group to the annual Council Retreat. He made opening remarks about his role as mayor, and encouraged mutual respect, fairness, and input by all Councilmembers. He described the purpose of the retreat as team building, and commented on the philosophy of using all Councilmembers' strengths and contributions to lead the region and become a world-class city.

Mayor Lee spoke to the importance of spirited debates and open, collaborative problem solving before taking Council action. However, he encouraged unified support of majority decisions. His goal as mayor is to demonstrate the highest level of professionalism, build trust, and facilitate the Council's work on the behalf of the City.

Mayor Lee said he would like the Council to achieve productive working relationships and to discuss higher level goals and objectives, long-term projects, and how to fund these. He noted that he had asked each Councilmember to provide him with his or her top priorities. These will be discussed later, and the Council will pursue those for which there is a mutual interest.

Rhonda Hilyer of Agreement Dynamics, Inc., introduced her role as facilitator for the workshop on effective communications and productive working relationships. She noted that a session the following day would focus on visioning and goal setting. She reported on the themes that emerged during her earlier discussions with individual Councilmembers. Ms. Hilyer thanked Councilmembers for their willingness to spend the day working on team building and communication to become a more high-performing group.

Ms. Hilyer acknowledged that it is not possible to absorb all of the team building and communications principles in one day. However, the concepts and practices will continue to be reviewed and enhanced over time.

Ms. Hilyer presented suggested guidelines for the day's discussions and interactions. She referred the group to the Success Signals workbook, which focuses largely on communication styles and how we relate to each other. Studies show that words account for approximately seven percent of the interpretation of a speaker's message; and more than a dozen other signals are sent including tone of voice, volume, speed, facial expressions, energy level, eye contact, and how we dress. Communication is about maximizing the effectiveness of our styles, and avoiding differences or conflicts based on style.

Ms. Hilyer described four color cards that reflect different communication styles, noting that everyone is a blend of styles. However, under stress or conflict, we tend to communicate more intensely based on our primary style/color. Councilmembers discussed their styles and how that information can be used in communicating with one another.

Mayor Lee reflected that this is a tool that Council can use in working together. Individuals need to know the goal or intended outcome, and to be able to persuade and solve problems in an effective way. He believes that this approach to assessing and understanding communication styles will be a valuable tool in learning to separate style from the message.

Ms. Hilyer led the group through a series of communications exercises, outlined in the *Hear Well, Speak Well* tools for enhanced communications and productive working relationships.

The group broke for lunch at noon, and the meeting resumed at 12:50 p.m.

Ms. Hilyer and the group continued with the communications workshop and then moved to developing a list of specific ways to enhance communication and relationships using the achieve–preserve–avoid model.

The meeting recessed at 5:15 p.m. for dinner and a break.

The meeting resumed at 8:40 p.m.

City Manager Steve Sarkozy distributed the *Retrospective* document which summarizes information for the past 10 years on the City's key vital signs (Responses to citizen surveys), population and demographics, development activity, the City's financial health, achievements toward reaching the Council's audacious goals/major milestones, and major projects by department.

Mr. Sarkozy reviewed the section on vital signs, which includes responses from surveys of residents regarding key services and programs.

Councilmember Chelminiak observed that the document reflects the stability of the City's taxing sources, especially in light of what is going on in the economy.

Councilmember Davidson noted that the City is auditing its own performance through the accreditation programs, and he questioned need for the State Auditor's performance audit program. He observed that the accreditation programs result in higher caliber services and programs.

Mr. Sarkozy said that Police Chief Linda Pillo will be on the national Police accreditation team, and will be able to bring ideas back for consideration by the City's Police Department.

Mr. Sarkozy spoke to the initiative to enhance the overall fiber network throughout the community and to provide unlimited capacity at nominal costs. Chief Information Officer Toni Cramer will be looking at the Google roll-out in Kansas City to evaluate their deployment there.

Myrna Basich, Assistant City Manager, highlighted new features of the *Retrospective* document, and went through the section on major development activity.

Referring to the 2012 Budget Survey, Mr. Sarkozy walked through the identified problems facing the City. This survey is done by an independent firm and is statistically valid. Council discussed results of several items on the survey. Mr. Sarkozy observed that there is a need for more information related to the "too much growth/congestion" survey item. He said that affordable housing continues to be identified as an issue of concern, even with significantly reduced property values. Councilmember Balducci questioned the trend in housing rental rates.

Councilmember Davidson opined that the survey results are the opposite of politics and involve addressing citizens' perceptions. He said the Council cannot control growth, but the City can design the community and infrastructure around growth. He observed that there were no questions about Sound Transit projects or services in the resident survey.

Councilmember Stokes spoke to the rankings of the highest budget priorities and questioned how the Council connects with the public on related issues. Referring to the results related to the funding of city services and facilities, he noted that there was not a statistically significant change from the previous survey.

Mr. Sarkozy introduced discussion of Eastside economic development taking place in neighboring cities. He discussed how this affects the marketability of Bellevue and the ability to attract and retain people who want to live in town. He described several projects being developed or contemplated in neighboring cities. Mr. Sarkozy expressed concern that some of the development planned in neighboring jurisdictions could pose a threat to maintaining building occupancy in Downtown Bellevue.

Responding to Councilmember Balducci, Mr. Sarkozy commented on the Bel-Red Overlake Transportation Study (BROTS).

Councilmember Davidson questioned whether BROTS is still a viable concept, or whether the City of Redmond is now proceeding outside of the context of the BROTS plan. Microsoft is exploring what to do with their original "star" buildings, and changes could cause significant congestion. Dr. Davidson suggested the need to review the BROTS plan and to work with the City of Redmond on transportation issues.

Councilmember Balducci suggested this might be an appropriate time to do conduct an East Bellevue and Redmond transportation study.

The Council discussed areas of competition for economic development and whether development in surrounding jurisdictions is actually competition or contributing to a positive regional synergy. It has been generally thought that growth on the Eastside helps Bellevue, regardless of whether it is in Redmond or Issaquah. Bellevue's Downtown is only approximately one-third developed, and the City has invested in infrastructure while other communities may or may not have. The Council discussed that there are considerable opportunities, and the Downtown is ready for additional development. This highlights the need to engage in reviewing and updating the Downtown Transportation Code and address livability issues, and to consider modifications to the Bel-Red and Eastgate plans. The Council is interested in amending Codes to provide an incentive to move forward.

The group discussed that development is a long-term prospect. If someone is willing to invest in significant property acquisition, the City should be listening. The group discussed the importance of investing in infrastructure in the Bel-Red corridor and preparing the way for future light rail.

Staff provided copies of the Achieve/Preserve/Avoid lists developed earlier, which were sorted into categories for review and further discussion tomorrow. Mr. Sarkozy noted that, the next day, the Council would shift to a S.W.O.T. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis and a discussion of individual priorities.

At 10:15 p.m., the meeting recessed for the day.

### **Saturday, February 4, 2012**

The meeting resumed at 8:35 a.m.

Ms. Hilyer distributed data collected from more than 5,000 elected officials on the top ten things to do to build trust. She reviewed the plan for the day which was to determine commitments, discuss individual Councilmembers' priorities, and conduct the S.W.O.T. analysis.

Ms. Hilyer reviewed the list of Achieve/Preserve/Avoid statements and suggested developing a list of commitments among Councilmembers. The Council discussed making the following commitments:

#### General Objectives:

- Stay at policy level.
- Work collaboratively and acknowledge pros/cons (do not discredit others' views).
- Move beyond the past and do not assume negative intent.
- Focus on getting things done and on public purpose versus personal issues.

#### Council Meeting Preparation:

- Come prepared. Get questions answered ahead of time when possible/appropriate.
- Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Staff call other Councilmembers after Mayor's meeting on material issues or changes that may come up.

#### Meeting Management/Participation:

- Mayor ensures that each member has an opportunity to state their positions and interests.

- Mayor keeps single issues from dominating and ensures that no one person drives the agenda.
- Mayor summarizes comments.
- A clear roadmap is provided for the steps and timeframes for decision making on major issues.
- All Councilmembers minimize surprises and do not spring unilateral decisions on the group.
- Councilmembers speak for themselves and not one another.
- Councilmembers are respectful of time limits and avoid repeating themselves or getting bogged down in minutia.
- Texting and multi-tasking are avoided at meetings.
- Council members are respectful of staff and strive to provide criticism privately.

After the Meeting:

- Councilmembers provide informal feedback to Mayor/Deputy Mayor (what went well/what didn't).
- Decisions made are respected and implemented.
- If a change is sought to prior Council's decisions/planning, it is done openly and inclusively.

Staff Work:

- Provide full materials in packet, not in the PowerPoint presentation.
- Seek additional input on requirements of Open Public Meetings Act
- NE 4th/120th (scheduled for Council discussion on 2/13/12).
- Resume Quarterly CIP report and financing plan discussion.
- Develop work plan with milestones (big stuff).
- Staff needs to be clear on "ask" of Council.
- Need Council discussion of financial assumptions on CIP (e.g., NE 4th) and financial strategy--relook at plans for financial feasibility.

The group moved to a round-robin discussion of priorities identified by individual Councilmembers:

- Reduce the City's obligation under the Sound Transit East Link Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by \$60 million, and successfully completing the Collaborative Design Process.
- Work to build a collaborative Council focused on policy.
- Work through the budget process by reprioritizing the Operating Budget and Capital Budget.
- Rework the 20-year, long-term finance plan, in light of current economic conditions. Determine how to fund the Mobility and Infrastructure Initiative (MII).
- Update the City's Cultural Diversity Plan.
- Develop a cultural/diversity leadership program.
- Determine the delivery date of light rail (including construction timeframe, compliance with MOU, etc.), as this will be a primary driver for how the City phases other projects.
- Consider new revenues for major projects.
- 12 year mark of the Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP).

- Review revenue sources and uses for the next 20 years. Reexamine local improvement district (LID) assessments and impact fees.
- Consider an East Link MOU funding alternative this fall.
- Determine whether to pursue an arena and what the City's contribution would be.
- Review Downtown Transportation Plan and land use planning.
- Review the Eastgate plan.
- Make decision on red-light camera program; consider using revenue toward signal improvements.
- Develop a roadmap for meeting Parks Levy commitments.
- Create new partnerships for economic development; consider funding and hiring new Economic Development Director.
- Enhance management training and consistency in Development Services to make the City a more inviting place to develop.
- Focus on what the Development Services Department is doing well.
- With regard to light rail, look at other capital projects the Council might want to prioritize over the next ten years to complement and/or leverage light rail development.
- Add Bellevue Way to the Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP) to address traffic issues.
- Plan for Surrey Downs Park.
- Focus "place-making" on smaller events such as the Jazz Festival, Wintergrass, Indian Community Association celebration, Asian festival at Bellevue College; idea of more frequent events versus less frequent large events.
- With regard to economic vitality and development, there is a need to look at the proposed budget and business plan (including deliverables and performance measures). The business plan should focus on what the City is striving to accomplish. Positive results can help the City to achieve additional revenues.
- Foster a collaborative Council focused on policy making.
- Consider multicultural activities, engagement, and facilities.
- Build Bellevue into a city of excellence in terms of public safety, education, and other areas that it can influence.
- Revisit the Bel-Red Plan. What is realistic from a financing standpoint?
- Address the redevelopment of neighborhood shopping centers.
- Strengthen work in the legislative area, including a more concerted effort to advance priorities with the state legislature and to work more with regional groups.
- Discuss the role the City should take, if any, in trying to establish an Eastside economic development forum to maintain the Eastside's competition in the region. Incorporate a philanthropic foundation approach as well as an emphasis on arts and cultural activities.
- Develop a regional strength that competes with other areas in this country and internationally.
- Create iconic emblem of Bellevue (e.g., waterfall for City Hall or water feature that runs between Downtown Park and Meydenbauer Bay).
- Discuss Rotary plan for enhancements to Downtown Park (e.g., scent garden).
- Complete development of Downtown Park.
- Analyze Human Services funding.
- Consider Council Mini-Retreats.

- Explore the appropriate role for the City with regard to the Eastside Pathways program.
- Schedule a joint meeting with the Bellevue School District Board.
- Discuss ways to retain auto dealerships.

Deputy Mayor Robertson suggested that future full or partial day mini-retreats provide good opportunities for further discussion of the priorities as well as for the Open Public Meetings Act training.

Responding to the Council, Mr. Sarkozy reported on regional discussions about the potential for a basketball/hockey arena in Seattle or Bellevue. He reviewed the principles for pursuing an arena that were developed with the Council four years ago, and noted that the entities interested in pursuing an arena in this region are aware of the City's principles.

Mr. Sarkozy noted the following upcoming discussions related to Sound Transit/East Link and the capital budget:

- February - Sound Transit and Budget timetables and work plan.
- March – Mini-Retreat on non-Sound Transit Budget items.
- April/May – Mini-Retreat on Sound Transit and Capital Investment Program (CIP) priorities.

Ms. Hilyer thanked Councilmembers for their willingness to participate in the team building work, and staff for their advance preparation of the day's activities.

Mayor Lee thanked Ms. Hilyer for facilitating group activities and for reminding them of how they can best work together. He expressed appreciation to the Council for their willingness to work together. He noted that he is still working with Councilmembers on their priorities and interests, but will be announcing Council committee/liaison roles shortly.

Councilmembers thanked Ms. Hilyer for her work with the Council.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

Myrna L. Basich, MMC  
City Clerk

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