

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Study Session

September 2, 2014
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room
Bellevue, Washington

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

ABSENT: Councilmember Robertson

1. Executive Session

Deputy Mayor Wallace called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m., and declared recess to Executive Session for approximately 15 minutes to discuss one item of property acquisition.

The meeting resumed at 6:46 p.m., with Mayor Balducci presiding.

2. Study Session

(a) Bellevue Diversity Initiative: The Diversity Advantage

City Manager Brad Miyake introduced staff's presentation of the Diversity Initiative, which was undertaken in 2011 following Council direction to staff.

Patrick Foran, Director of Parks and Community Services, thanked staff not seated at the table: Julie Ellenhorn (in the audience), Andrew Kidde, and Victoria Hollerbach.

Chris Salomone, Director of Planning and Community Development, commented on this cross-departmental effort which has been strongly supported by the Leadership Team. The City has conducted cultural competence training for staff as well. Mr. Salomone said the initiative is interwoven with two other major initiatives undertaken by the Council, the Economic Development Strategy and the Environmental Stewardship Initiative. The goal is that the practices and values of all three initiatives will become an invisible part of the City's operations.

Mr. Foran commented on the importance of understanding Bellevue's diversity, defining the City's leadership role, improving outreach and the effectiveness of public services, and leveraging The Diversity Advantage. Bellevue is a multi-cultural community and a key objective is to empower the community.

Kevin Henry, Diversity Program Coordinator, said diversity is not just about race but about a number of factors including language, culture, class, ethnic background, ability, age, religion, gender, and sexual orientation. He recalled that the 1993 Diversity Community Action Plan initiated the Cultural Diversity Program which has offered programs, forums and events on a number of topics. The plan also resulted in culturally competent youth services, domestic partner benefits for employees, support of substance abuse programs, and support for affordable housing.

Mr. Henry described the community's demographics and the layers of diversity including race, age, ethnicity, hearing and vision difficulties, cognitive difficulties, ambulatory difficulties, and self-care/independent living difficulties.

Mr. Henry described the extensive public outreach activities involved in developing the updated diversity plan including focus groups, stakeholder interviews, broad community outreach, an internal review of the City's organization, and cultural competence training research on best practices. Themes from the public outreach included shared leadership and collaboration, equitable access, responsive public services, initiative sustainability, outreach and communication, and cross-cultural interaction. Mr. Henry said cross-cultural experience should be encouraged and Bellevue's heritage should be integrated into the diversity discussion on a continuing basis. Mr. Henry said feedback from City employees indicates that: 1) a high value is given to improving employees' cultural competence, 2) independent departmental efforts are insufficient, and 3) leadership support is critical.

Camron Parker, Senior Planner, described The Diversity Advantage plan, which outlines the initiative's commitments to keep growing as a culturally competent organization by enacting and upholding equitable policies and practices, training and hiring culturally competent staff, and providing programs that are accessible to all. To keep growing as a culturally competent community, Bellevue must provide safe and welcoming living and working environments, correct system inequities, and express diversity through arts and culture. To keep growing as a culturally competent economy, Bellevue must attract a diverse workforce, empower entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds, provide community services to support small business startups, and make culturally specific products and services available.

Mr. Parker described implementation activities underway including cultural competency training for the Leadership Team, adding a Budget Guiding Principle regarding responsive and equitable access to public services, and allocating a budget proposal to implement the Diversity Initiative. Diversity is a key theme in the Comprehensive Plan Update process and in the recently adopted Economic Development Strategy as well.

Mike McCormick Huentelman, Neighborhood Outreach Manager, highlighted recommended actions from the plan falling within the One City approach including integrating diversity themes within policy and strategic plans, attracting candidates that reflect Bellevue's demographics, developing strategies for effective communication with diverse populations, and hiring a cultural competence and equity professional. Action items under community capacity building are the Bellevue Diversity Institute, Bellevue Entrepreneur Center, ensuring Bellevue is a safe place for

reporting crime and discrimination, supporting additional Third Places throughout the community, and potentially replicating the Mini City Hall model. Mr. McCormick Huentelman said the Council's role is to provide feedback and input on the draft plan and to provide leadership for implementation by setting supportive policy.

Mayor Balducci said she is impressed with the level of work and outreach conducted to develop The Diversity Advantage plan, which involved the community and yielded tangible benefits. She said the community has changed significantly and it is appropriate to update and renew the City's diversity focus. She thanked staff for their work.

Councilmember Chelminiak said the Council has been looking forward to this work. He thanked Mayor Balducci and Councilmember Lee for their leadership, as Mayors, in renewing the focus on the cultural diversity program. He complimented staff on their good work and the quality of the meeting materials.

Mr. Chelminiak questioned whether the Bellevue Diversity Institute would be a City function. Mr. Foran said more work will be done to develop the structure for this action item. This idea arose because one of the deficiencies of the 1993 plan was that a similar attempt lost its focus with the community over time. Staff envisions creating a community-based organization with a strong connection to the City. However, the City would want the entity to have a certain amount of independence and not have the City driving the agenda.

Councilmember Chelminiak said a number of entities already exist in the region that work on international economic development. He suggested considering a community ambassador program, in which individuals are trained and would participate in trade missions and activities. With regard to communication, he said the plan refers to translating City documents. However, he noted the importance of not just translation but what is called transcreation, which takes into account the subtleties and cultural cues of communication.

Councilmember Lee said he is happy to see this update to the City's diversity program. He complimented staff on their work, which did a good job of reflecting the complexities presented by a multi-cultural community. The challenge is knowing what to do internally and determining the City's role versus community's role for specific action items.

Mr. Lee said a high priority for him is engaging the community and demonstrating that the City is responsive to citizens' needs. He said that many in the community do not seek help and often do not know where to go for help. He would like to continue to work to build leadership within the community and to provide opportunities for public engagement. He said Bellevue should fully realize the benefits of the talent and contributions of individuals and groups.

Councilmember Stokes said he spent a large part of his professional career helping to implement Title 6 and Title 9 of the Civil Rights Act, as well as many years as Chair of the Bridging the Achievement Gap committee for the Bellevue Schools Foundation. He noted his involvement with Eastside Pathways and said he is very excited about the updated diversity plan. He would like to see more diversity at all levels of civic involvement, from the City Council to

Boards/Commissions to neighborhood groups. Mr. Stokes encouraged Human Services staff to continue supporting the Human Services Commission in addressing the needs and implications of diversity in terms of programs and other services that could be provided.

Councilmember Robinson commended the Council for its direction and support of staff on this initiative. She said it is helpful to see the broad definition of diversity as described at the beginning of the presentation.

Ms. Robinson said she received an email from Jubilee Reach regarding how difficult it is for individuals from diverse cultures to obtain funding for startup businesses. She expressed support for the marketplace concept that the Council will be talking about in the near future. In attending community forums, Ms. Robinson said citizens consistently commented on their interest in a Third Place in their neighborhood (e.g., parks, coffee/social settings).

Ms. Robinson suggested the idea of a cultural ambassador, which in her mind would be someone to help citizens navigate City services and public involvement opportunities.

Mayor Balducci said that, in looking at the list of recommendations, she is impressed with the breadth and complexity of the issues and ideas presented. She said it is important that the Council find a way to fund some of the action items during the current budget cycle.

Ms. Balducci raised the issue that some cities have civil rights commissions or similar advisory bodies to the Council. She asked whether staff considered this concept. Mr. Foran said that could be one function of the Bellevue Diversity Institute. Mayor Balducci suggested that would be a beneficial function to advise the Council.

(b) Environmental Stewardship Initiative Update

City Manager Miyake opened staff's update on the Environmental Stewardship Initiative.

Planning Director Dan Stroh recalled the K4C (King County-Cities Climate Collaboration) discussion with the Council in July. He said the Environmental Stewardship Initiative is a cross-departmental initiative to coordinate and improve the City's and community's environmental performance. It is guided by the goals of the Comprehensive Plan and the Mayors Climate Protection Agreement.

Paul Andersson, Program Administrator, provided an update on municipal operations and community programs under the ESI, which was established in 2007 when the City signed on to the Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. The City utilized federal stimulus funding from 2008 to 2012 for a number of programs.

Mr. Andersson thanked Councilmember Robertson for her vote in support of Countywide Planning Policies establishing new greenhouse gas reduction targets, and Councilmember Robinson for her involvement with and advocacy to join the K4C forum.

Mr. Andersson said the City's Resource Conservation Manager Program established in 2009 has had a positive impact. Accomplishments in overall municipal operations include reduced paper and printing charges, the City Hall "plug load" pilot program (He noted that laptops use less energy than desktop computers.), BSC's solar system which is the City's first investment in renewable energy, LED street lighting, the City's hybrid and electric fleet, greener buildings and infrastructure (e.g., Bellevue Botanical Garden Visitor Center, Bellevue Youth Theatre), and maintaining the tree canopy. All of these efforts contribute to the City's greenhouse gas emissions inventory.

Mr. Andersson said that, so far, these measures have taken City Hall from a 92 Energy Star score to a score of 98. However, he noted that the City's operations are less than one percent of the overall community's emissions.

Mr. Andersson described community-based programs including increasing electric vehicle infrastructure (both public and private parking facilities), Solarize Bellevue program (Visit www.greenWA.org for more information.), competition for the Georgetown University Energy Prize, the Energy Efficiency Market Transformation initiative, and the K4C forum.

The Georgetown University Energy Prize will award \$5 million to the small or medium-sized city that can reduce the most energy in residential accounts. Approximately 50 percent of all residential energy consumed in the United States is wasted. The process is currently in the semifinal stage, and Bellevue needs to submit a strategy to be accepted to compete over the next two years. The City is working with community partners, including Puget Sound Energy (PSE), the Bellevue School District, and home energy upgrade businesses, to work to reduce residential energy use. The process will involve community stakeholder groups and the City's Leadership Team, and staff is seeking funding opportunities (e.g., grants, ways to leverage PSE and provide incentives related to home energy assessments). Implementation is anticipated through 2016.

The Bellevue Energy Efficiency Market Transformation study was completed last year through a grant from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). It provides recommendations for growing the energy efficiency sector and "clean technology."

Mr. Andersson said the City has worked with PSE to develop a Bellevue Urban Smart concept, which would provide large-scale commercial facilities in Downtown Bellevue with more information in the form of a real-time energy feed. This is based on the Envision Charlotte model, which was an economic development program that brought together approximately 75 building owners in Downtown Charlotte for a 98-percent participation rate. The idea is to make Bellevue an energy-smart place to do business.

Comparing to the Georgetown University Energy Prize of \$5 million, Mr. Andersson noted that Bellevue could save that much through a seven percent energy reduction in residential energy use or through a five percent reduction in commercial energy use.

Mayor Balducci thanked staff for the extensive information presented in such a short time.

Councilmember Robinson said she is excited about the City's involvement with K4C. She attended the Safe Energy Leadership Alliance meeting and said she would like the Council to consider joining that effort as well. She said the Georgetown University competition is very timely with the Energize Eastside project and the broad community interest in reducing energy usage.

Mayor Balducci thanked Mr. Andersson again. She said it is great to hear about these broad citywide initiatives. She said her husband is working on getting solar panels for their house through the Solarize Bellevue program.

At 8:01 p.m., Mayor Balducci declared recess to Regular Session.

Myrna L. Basich, MMC
City Clerk

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