

The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on June 7, 2017

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

May 2, 2017
6:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Villar, Commissioners Bruels, McEachran, Mercer, Oxrieder

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners Kline, Perelman

STAFF PRESENT: Emily Leslie, Alex O'Reilly, Dee Dee Catalano, Kayla Valy, Department of Parks and Community Services

GUEST SPEAKERS: Hannah Kimball, Gazel Tan, Dan Lassiter, Bellevue Network on Aging; Joanne Gainen, Pat Schechter, Liz Baze, Keith Heffernan, Eastside Neighbors Network

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m. by Chair Villar who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Mercer, who arrived at 6:52 p.m., and Commissioners Kline and Perelman, both of whom were excused.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. April 4, 2017

A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner McEachran. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bruels and the motion carried unanimously.

4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Ward Urion, Social Change Manager at Lifewire, informed the Commissioners

about a comprehensive prevention project that has been developing at Bellevue College over the past several years as the need for advocacy services on the campus has been identified. Many of the participants in the program are students at Bellevue College who are impacted by the health and welfare of the community there and especially by the connections afforded by the college community. The new and developing partnership has great potential to be a landmark venture between a community based domestic violence organization and a largely commuter college that is transitioning to residents halls.

Ms. Bonny Barry, Grant Director for Bellevue College, said Lifewire has had people teaching in wellness classes about prevention and bystander intervention for domestic violence, stalking and the like for more than 16 years. Mr. Urion has been on the scene for many years acting as an expert advisor in many capacities. The college hired its first Title IX coordinator some three years ago and since that time there has been an increase in the number of students reporting their own domestic violence, stalking and dating violence situations. At any given time the college has between 80 and 100 open cases around which investigations are under way as required by federal law. Accommodations for student victims are being set up as well. In growing the partnership with Lifewire, Bellevue College will move toward having co-located victim advocate services on the campus. With the opening of resident housing on the campus in the fall of 2018, the anticipation is that the dynamics will change.

Commissioner McEachran asked who is funding the program. Mr. Urion said the Lifewire outreach and community prevention work is done solely through the donations of individuals. There is a clear growing need for the services.

Commissioner McEachran asked how the Title IX work center relates to student services. Ms. Barry said student services has hired a dean of student life who has deep Title IX training resulting from his background at the University of Hawaii. The new conduct officer also has deep Title IX training and experience, and the college has been investing in training for some staff in student services and other college areas to help develop capacity.

5. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner McEachran reported that he would be attending the Lifewire gala and auction on May 6. He said he has also been closely following the permanent shelter conversations, and was present as the affordable housing strategy was presented recently to the City Council.

Commissioner Oxrieder said she attended the April 25 meeting of the Diversity Advisory Network with Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly and intern Kayla Valy, and earlier in the day the meeting with King County Library System staff.

Chair Villar said she recently participated in a “Know Your Rights” seminar and immigration clinic with the Eastside Legal Assistance Program. She said she was delighted to see one of the police officers from Bellevue share with the group that there is an information sheet about how and when to engage with the police for a variety of issues. The police department is also working to put out a video on interacting with the police as a way of demystifying the process and holding up the police as people who can help those in the refugee and immigrant communities.

Human Services Manager Emily Leslie reported that the Council took action to move forward with the Eastgate location for the permanent shelter for men, though they are still looking for answers to questions regarding two other sites. A final decision is expected to be made in early June.

Grant Coordinator Dee Dee Catalano informed the Commission that Congress reached an agreement for the fiscal year 2017 federal budget. It has not yet been voted on or signed by the president, but all signs point to approval. That will start the clock ticking toward Bellevue finding out how much its 2017 entitlement amount will be.

6. DISCUSSION

A. Older Americans Month – Bellevue Network on Aging and Eastside Neighbors Network

Mr. Dan Lassiter, North Bellevue Community Center Manager, said he also serves as liaison to the Bellevue Network on Aging. Prior to 2006, the city was encouraged by the Kirkland Senior Council to initiate a similar approach in Bellevue. The Network was formed that same year as an advisory body to the Department of Parks and Community Services. The role of the organization is to study, review, evaluate and make recommendations on all matters affecting older adults in the city. There are 15 members and five liaison members and everyone puts a great deal of effort into getting out into the community and reporting back. There are three subcommittees that focus on communication, transportation and housing. The Network promotes things like universal design; is involved with the Eastside Easy Rider program; is involved in a project with ARCH; actively conducts outreach by attending community fairs and events; and gives out vials of life information and encourages its use. In September the Network goes after new members and has focused on different ethnic groups to better reflect the makeup of the community. The advocacy group has been heavily involved with the legislature and has successfully seen legislation drafted.

Mr. Lassiter said the Network continues to work closely with the Kirkland Senior Council in encouraging other jurisdictions to form senior-centric groups. Redmond and Issaquah have both been approached. The Network also works with the Washington State Senior Lobby, the AARP, the State Council on Aging, Eastgate Time Bank, and the ombudsman program. The group also works with the Eastside Neighbors Network.

The Network meets monthly, as does each subcommittee. Speakers are brought in to share information about various topics of interest to the Network. Members have been involved in the community conversations, and members go out to meet with aging adults in Bellevue to share information about available services.

Ms. Gazel Tan pointed out that the Human Services Needs Update from last year stated that the aging of a large segment of the population profoundly impacts and shapes the type of services and support that are needed in the community. Currently 14 percent of Bellevue's residents are 65 years old or older. In 1990 that number stood at only 10.4 percent. People love living in Bellevue and want to continue being able to do so, but as the population ages, more services are required.

Ms. Hannah Kimball said she moved to Bellevue in 1968, became part of a neighborhood and the community, made friends and raised her family. She said two years after her husband passed away she determined that she had more room than she needed and should downsize by buying a smaller house. She said she discovered, however, that she could not afford to do that. There is an awkward financial position many seniors face in which they have too much income to qualify for affordable housing, but not enough to buy new in Bellevue. She said she faced a balancing act between staying where she was comfortable and happy and moving to a new location while young enough to make new friends and carve out a niche. Many seniors in the community find themselves falling between the housing cracks.

Ms. Tan agreed that as property taxes increase, those on fixed incomes are hit the hardest. The seniors who live in Bellevue have all worked hard on behalf of the community, and the community would benefit from having them stay. Ms. Kimball said there is a sadness involved in creating a spot in a community only to have to leave it later in life. She said she hoped that going forward ways would be found to fix the housing issue.

Ms. Tan said transportation is a clear issue seniors must face. It is difficult to find good options for each transportation for those who have stopped driving. The loss of independence is a major issue for seniors once they give up their own cars. Those who move into long-term care facilities basically must surrender their dignity and independence. Some communities are nice in that they have buses and shuttles, but it is not the same as being able to go where one wants when one wants. Many face strict schedules that involve going to the grocery store only once every two weeks. Many are afforded rides to medical appointments, but going to visit old friends or a spouse in another care facility is very difficult to accomplish.

Mr. Lassiter informed the Commissioners that in early November, Ms. Kimball was involved in an automobile accident that left her with a broken ankle. At that point she needed help getting to and from medical appointments. Ms. Kimball said she needed transportation to doctor and physical therapy appointments and had to put time into cobbling rides together. She said Mr. Lassiter provided her with a copy of a Eastside

transportation services map and went through each option and found they all serve only income-qualified persons or only in certain geographic areas. On the map, very few choices are shown in Bellevue. The only transportation service that worked for her was the Yellow Cab wheelchair accessible taxi, but the cost was \$40 for the round trip from her home to Overlake Hospital and back. Easier, more accessible and affordable transportation alternatives are needed in Bellevue.

Ms. Tan pointed out that while the older adult population is continuing to grow, the number of service dollars earmarked for that population continues to drop. At the current rate, at some point there will be no money at all for older adults, a fact the Network is paying close attention to.

Ms. Tan said 2016 was a magic year in that it was the year the first of the Baby Boom generation turned 70. Many are saying 70 is the new 50. The Boomers are going to be around for a long time. Healthcare is a huge concern for them.

The Network pays close attention to legislative priorities. She shared with the Commissioners the Network's federal and state legislative agendas. One thing being tracked is the observation bill. Patients who are taken to a hospital for observation and who instead of being admitted are discharged to a nursing facility found that Medicare did not cover their stay. The bill passed and has been signed into law. Patients need to make sure they get admitted to the hospital, and the hospitals must now notify patients of the rules. The Network is also focused on the Medicaid coverage for hearing and vision at the state level. Hearing aids used to be covered, but in 2011 due to a budget shortfall, Medicaid coverage ceased, and the Network is trying to get that back. Having hearing aids is important, but they are very expensive.

Ms. O'Reilly said the issue has passed both the Senate and the House, but it is caught in the budget negotiations.

Ms. Tan said legislation regarding protection for victims of elder abuse has passed both houses and is on the governor's desk to be signed.

With regard to cost and care options, Ms. Tan said there are eight assisted living facilities in the city, only one of which accepts Medicaid; all the others are private pay. Assisted living facilities cost between \$3600 and \$5200 per month. There are 126 adult family homes in Bellevue and they range from \$4000 to \$9000 and more. There are two skilled nursing facilities in Bellevue, only one of which accepts Medicaid; skilled nursing costs \$10,000 and more per month. Overall, long-term care support services can cost from \$45,000 to more than \$90,000 per year. Options being considered are tax-free savings accounts of up to \$2000 per year, a rate at which it would take a long time to save up enough for just a single year of skilled nursing care. Given the need for government support at the federal, state and county levels, Bellevue should keep in mind that eventually the local level may become the last safety net.

Commissioner McEachran said he was struck by the need in the community from a transportation standpoint and stressed the need to include it in the Needs Update. He said affordable housing issues have been high on his agenda for the past 33 years. There is a housing group that is currently doing some senior affordable housing in Kirkland; he encouraged looking at the Imagine Housing website. The Network should be doing all it can to share its stories with the Council, particularly in regard to affordable housing.

Ms. O'Reilly pointed out that the ARCH website includes a page for senior housing. Members of the Network personally work to keep the resources listed there updated.

Chair Villar stated that the term "senior" is not commonly defined. In some instances it means 65 years of age, while in other instances it means 67, though it can in other respects be only 62. She asked what resources are available for those who are only 62 but who have had to retire early for health or other reasons, some of whom could make it if they did not have extra needs. Ms. Tan said she retired early and cannot yet collect Medicare. She said her solution has been to make her husband work until she is eligible. Otherwise the cost differential is huge. The Network has a very good resource page with senior information, and it would be good to add that particular issue.

Mr. Lassiter said he has seen many times instances in which families step up to provide care for which they do not get paid and for which they suffer emotionally. That impacts the workforce in a number of ways.

Ms. O'Reilly said she became acquainted with the Eastside Neighbors Network about the time the last Needs Update came out. The group had just formed a steering committee at that time and she said she was invited to address the group on the topic of needs in Bellevue around older adults.

Ms. Joanne Gainen said Ms. O'Reilly has been very helpful by providing information and connections over the last two years. She introduced Liz Baze, Marketing Taskforce Chair; Pat Schechter, Volunteer Taskforce Representative; Keith Heffernan, Governance and Finance Taskforce Chair; Lorene Shepherd, Co-Chair of the Steering Committee; Judith Geller; and Bobbie Azuo, Outreach Chair. She said the goal of the Eastside Neighbors Network is to expand options for older adults and help them live independently in their own homes for as long as possible.

Ms. Gainen said she participated in a class for retired folks that changed her life. The class, which was taught by Ellen Burg, talked about the old school medical model of aging that assumed all older people are frail and dependent. In actuality, that is not the case. The class focused instead on modern old age that involves people living longer, healthier, more active and independent lives.

Ms. Baze said she is an occupational therapist who has worked in a variety of settings. She said there are colliding trends on the horizon, notably a senior

population that is engaged and living longer and infrastructure challenges in the form of the lack of affordable housing and transportation. Additionally, families are far more scattered than they have been in past years, making it challenging for adult children to pitch in and help out with their aging parents. The longstanding medical model that sees all elderly as frail and dependent offers few good options. Community action can disrupt the negative drift, and that is what the Eastside Neighbors Network is all about.

Continuing, Ms. Baze said services are currently provided to seniors by social service agencies, non-profits, faith organizations, and commercial entities. While each option is necessary, it is difficult to patch together a full package of help. Services are fragmented and often difficult to find for those unfamiliar with the system and without a case manager. Ms. Gainen allowed that the 2-1-1 system is helping in getting people connected to services, but people have to know about 2-1-1 first.

Ms. Baze said the barriers to living independently include being just a little too young, having just a little too much money, awareness of programs, and a reluctance to ask for help. With regard to asking, often even those who recognize they need help are afraid to ask for it for fear that they will be seen as being on a downhill path. There are challenges for the community as well when it comes to supporting those who choose to age in place. Affordable housing is a huge issue, and those staying in their homes often have more demands in terms of care services and transportation. Businesses must adapt the way they approach selling to and serving their customers that are aging; delivery by grocery stores is a very good option for those aging in place.

Seniors want alternatives. They want to stay in their homes and they want to stay active. They are willing to volunteer and offer their expertise. They want access to reputable service providers that will not cheat them. They want access to occasional home assistance. They want to be active, healthy and socially engaged.

Ms. Baze said prevention involves doing things the folks want anyway, including remaining active and social engaged. Having coordination of services is useful in supporting people being independent in their homes. Early identification of issues, such as hearing or early dementia, is certainly important. Having needs met and reducing uncertainties leads to peace of mind and not being afraid of the aging process.

Ms. Schechter said she is a geriatric physical therapist. She said when she first began her career, patients in their early 80s were considered to be very elderly. Within 20 years, patients in their early 80s were considered to be young. The Eastside Neighbors Network is not a place, rather it is a plan to promote independent living. The members are viewed not just as people who receive services but also as people who play an active part in the organization as volunteers. The organization is looking at charging a yearly fee of about \$600, with subsidized memberships in cases of hardships or low-income situations. The Network already hosts social events as

well as wellness and cultural activities, but beyond that members will be able to make a single contact by phone or email to initiate a request for service, such as a ride to a medical appointment or the grocery store, or to have someone come by to take out and bring in the garbage cans weekly, change a light bulb, or do other simple things that help seniors remain in their homes. Other services will include wellness calls or coming by weekly to check on things; technical assistance with computers, remote controls and cell phones; simple gardening help; social and cultural wellness programs; and service referrals to trusted carpenters, plumbers and the like.

The Eastside Neighbors Network operates on the virtual village model. A study done by the University of California at Berkeley showed the benefits to the members of their virtual village. The study indicated that 81 percent of those surveyed learned how to get help. Seventy-six percent knew about available community services. Eighty-one percent in the virtual village got to know more people socially, leading to less loneliness and improved quality of life.

Ms. Baze said the thing that stands out in interviews with those who have been in virtual villages is that they say they feel like they are part of a family and that they are not alone. Ms. Schechter said something as simple as joining a book club can keep someone healthy and engaged.

Ms. Schechter said there are also benefits to the families of the members of virtual villages. They are more likely to identify struggles earlier. There are fewer delays in getting help, and unwanted relocation of family members is often prevented. The families are provided with peace of mind knowing their aging parents are part of a connected group. The benefits to the community flow from stronger neighborhood ties, a decreased reliance on government services, better maintained properties, a reduction in the use of emergency services, increased intergenerational interaction, and residents having a new purpose and new inspirations.

Chair Villar said her experience has been that once seniors learn what the annual fee is, even where there is a way to reduce it many will be reluctant to ask for the reduction. Ms. Gainen said every attempt is made to keep any fee reduction transactions quiet. Ms. Schechter added that the organization will be conducting fundraising to be able to help those who are unable to pay the full fee.

Mr. Heffernan said he has been with the Eastside Neighbors Network for a year and a half and that his previous life was in corporate finance. He said he uses his expertise on the governance side of things. The steering committee has done a great deal of work on outreach but has also been focused on infrastructure. Ms. Gainen has done a great job of leading the team. Effort has been put into filling out the committee, but there remain some open positions.

Mr. Heffernan said there is a desire to focus on Bellevue. The thinking is that the rollout should begin with the downtown core area where there are some 70,000 residents, a subset of which might want to become members, hopefully a couple

hundred over a two-year period. The second phase would be roll out to the north and east where there are another 30,000 residents, and the third phase would roll out in the south and east where there are some 40,000 residents. Statistics from other villages, all of which are volunteer organizations that enjoy low overhead costs, show that membership dues typically make up the bulk of the revenues needed to cover expenses. Individual donations are the next largest factor, with the remainder made up from grants and businesses. The challenge is that the projections show a loss of about \$20,000 to \$30,000 in the first year or two of operations, and determining how to cover the gap is something that will need to be figured out ahead of launching the program. Critical mass will be reached at about 150 members, after which the organization will be self-sustaining. At \$50 per month for individuals, the amount of value the members will derive will be substantially greater. A name has been chosen for the organization and a branding campaign has been undertaken. A logo has been established, and a website and Facebook page have been created. The next big step will entail applying for 501(c)(3) status which will be a milestone making it easier to raise money. Recruiting for the board of directors and business partners will be another big step. The business plan has already been locked down. Of course, it will be critical to get into member and volunteer recruiting.

Mr. Heffernan said the hope is to have the non-profit status approved by the fall of the year, setting the organization on the path to launching in the first quarter of 2018. The push to look for members and build up the volunteer base will occur over the next six months or so. With 200 members, it will take 200 or more volunteers to support the base.

Chair Villar commented that the program as described is primarily focused on Bellevue even though the organization name implies it will serve the Eastside generally. She added that the Commission is clear about the need for transportation services in Bellevue, and asked what the organization will do once it launches and folks in the areas to be addressed in the second and third phases want to join up. Mr. Heffernan agreed that the Network will be resource constrained right out of the gate and will necessarily only be able to serve so many people in the community. With enough money and volunteers, widening the circle will gladly be widened. The reason for starting small is to perfect the model and to get the bugs out before going bigger. Other village programs have indicated their growth occurred in direct proportion to the number of volunteers they had, so they on occasion had to avoid taking on new members until they had more volunteers.

With regard to the Eastside-focused name, Mr. Heffernan said the question has come up before. One of the models for the villages is that of a hub and spoke approach. The program could start out with a Bellevue focus and then expand over time. Mercer Island and Kirkland have indicated they want to do something. There are several villages operating in Seattle. One way to lower overhead is to have a single administrative office overseeing various satellite villages. Under that approach, the Eastside Neighbors Network could partner with other organizations on the Eastside and truly become an Eastside network.

Chair Villar said she could see many opportunities for collaboration. She said her concern was that the first 75 members who come on board will not all be those able to pay the full membership rate. There are ways to help folks without the same level of volunteer commitment the full program seeks to offer. The service is important, but the organization should proceed with caution. Mr. Heffernan said transportation is usually the biggest service element accounting for up to 30 percent or more of the services offered. Ms. Gainen said that is one of the constraints but volunteers may not want to drive more than a certain distance. She added that the village approach includes a one-call referral service that connects people not only to the services provided by the village but also by other providers. Mr. Heffernan added that the villages around the country that have proven to be the most successful hone in on a four-mile diameter. Geographically, it is about four miles from one side of Bellevue to the other.

Ms. Gainen said the group is looking for ways to get the word out about the program. NextDoor has been and will continue to be used. The need is being identified in part through the use of a questionnaire to determine what people need currently, what they think they might need in the future, and what things they would be willing to volunteer to do.

Commissioner McEachran noted that there are differing village models throughout the nation. He stressed that collaborative impact will be the key leading to sustainability. Groundsourcing, which involves hitting the ground to see what the needs are, will generate good data, but beyond that there needs to be a clear idea of how the statistics will impact the dollars that will be needed to make the program work over time. He encouraged the group to visit with other agencies to ask some of the deeper questions, including about funding. Mr. Heffernan said the group has been doing outreach with agencies on the Eastside and in Seattle, and has been getting the word out through different community events and at community centers. Faith communities are also on the outreach list.

Ms. Baze said the current focus is on getting the infrastructure set up, and that will take up the summer and early fall months. That work includes establishing partnerships and identifying how everyone can work together without duplicating services.

Commissioner McEachran said he has heard it is easier to have food delivered to a front door than it is to find a ride to physical therapy. That is a staggering insight.

Chair Villar suggested the group should have a conversation with Eastside Pathways. While that group is focused on the cradle to career segment of the population, they also aspire to have an impact on the Eastside. Much of their initial work was done in Bellevue and a conversation with them would be helpful relative to how they went out spreading beyond Bellevue's borders. Ms. O'Reilly pointed out that it took Eastside Pathways about five years to broaden its focus to the wider Eastside.

7. DISCUSSION

A. Review Draft 2017 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Annual Action Plan

Grant Coordinator Dee Dee Catalano shared with the Commissioners the draft 2017 Annual Action Plan. She said the report is required and tells the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) what the city plans to do with the 2017 funds. The 2017 list of projects was recommended by the Commission and approved by the Council in the fall of 2016. The exact entitlement amount, once it is known, will be shown in the report before it is submitted to HUD for approval.

Commissioner Oxrieder asked if there is anything in the Affordable Housing Plan that would help keep homes that are repaired through either the minor or major home repair program available as affordable housing. Commissioner McEachran said the first strategy in the Affordable Housing Plan is to conserve existing affordable housing units. Ms. O'Reilly added that the recommendation includes the creation of a housing trust fund that could be used to preserve affordable housing.

8. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Leslie called attention to the upcoming Youth Link leadership awards event on Wednesday, May 24, and said a request has been made to have Commissioners participate in the presentation of the awards. The Commissioners were asked to RSVP by May 15.

Commissioner Oxrieder said she participated in the recent community conversation with the Diversity Advisory Network, and the community conversation at the library that was held earlier in the day. She said at the meeting with the Network, one question asked sought to identify what human services are. An answer was given, and some of the younger persons in the group suggested the need to better communicate both personally and through social media. The suggestion was also made to include on the Commission's webpage links to the agencies who are receiving grants from the city.

Commissioner Oxrieder said the conversation at the library included the fact that the library has had to go well beyond its mission. Even the police call the library a homeless day center. A police officer and/or security person is on site at all times, but recently while the officer was dealing with a situation it became necessary for library staff to call for additional officers as things got out of hand.

Commissioner Bruels added that the library also serves as a day center for youth, many of whom need a safe and quiet place to do their studying.

Commissioner Oxrieder said library staff noted during the conversation that many who choose to spend the day at the library are those who are not allowed in other centers, or at least choose not to use other resources. The library staff indicated that they are not prepared to deal with drug and mental health problems. Some libraries around the country employ trained social workers to conduct interventions.

Ms. O'Reilly said the Redmond police department has hired an individual to hold regular office hours at their library. The Bellevue library staff pointed out that drug use is pervasive at the library, even to the point of meeting posting on social media to meet at the library to get the drugs they want. Used needles have been found in the windowsills in the children's section. Library staff always try to be welcoming but they said they clearly need more help.

Commissioner Bruels said drug use at the libraries in Seattle is partly behind the call in that the city has safe injection sites. Ms. Leslie pointed out that the Bellevue Council has on its agenda voting to prohibit safe injection sites in Eastgate as well as in all of Bellevue. Commissioner Bruels commented that not having safe injection sites will simply mean the problem will continue at places like the library.

Ms. Leslie called attention to the fact that an email had been received regarding the Backpacks for Kids program and a desire to clarify the record in the Commission's meeting minutes.

- 9. NEW BUSINESS – None
- 10. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None
- 11. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Villar adjourned the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date