

**CITY OF BELLEVUE  
PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday  
May 9, 2017  
6:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Room 1E-113  
Bellevue, Washington

**BOARDMEMBERS PRESENT:** Chair Heath, Vice-Chair Kumar, Boardmembers Deng, Grindeland<sup>1</sup>, Nieuwenhuis, Synn, Van Hollebeke<sup>2</sup>

**PARKS STAFF PRESENT:** Patrick Foran, Nancy Harvey, Terry Smith

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Pamela Johnston

**MINUTES TAKER:** Michelle Cash

1. **CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Heath at 6:03 p.m.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

**Motion by Vice-Chair Kumar and second by Boardmember Nieuwenhuis to approve the meeting agenda as presented.**

Chair Heath requested that a meeting agenda item be added to establish the agenda for the next meeting so the process can be transparent.

**Motion by Boardmember Synn and second by Boardmember Deng to amend the meeting agenda and add an action item to establish the June 13, 2017 meeting agenda. Motion carried unanimously (5-0).**

Chair Heath noted that Boardmembers Van Hollebeke and Grindeland both requested to participate in tonight's meeting remotely.

**Motion by Boardmember Synn and second by Boardmember Deng to amend the main motion and recommend approval of remote participation for Boardmembers Van Hollebeke and Grindeland at tonight's meeting. Motion carried unanimously (5-0).**

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<sup>1</sup> Via conference call; departed at 8:00 p.m.

<sup>2</sup> Via conference call; departed at 8:00 p.m.

**At the question, motion carried unanimously (7-0) to approve the meeting agenda as amended.**

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**Motion by Boardmember Nieuwenhuis and second by Boardmember Deng to approve the April 11, 2017 Parks & Community Services Board Meeting Minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously (7-0).**

4. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

*None.*

5. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:**

*None.*

6. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

- Follow-up on Oral Communications/Public Comments from prior meetings

Mr. Foran invited Boardmembers to the Downtown Park Grand Opening on June 28, 2017. He also reported that the contractor has officially begun work at the Meydenbauer Bay Park project. Boardmember Nieuwenhuis suggested that the Board take a tour of the Meydenbauer Bay project.

7. **BOARD COMMUNICATIONS:**

Vice-Chair Kumar enjoyed Lewis Creek Park on Arbor Day. She also walked many Bellevue trails and is looking forward to the Downtown Park Grand Opening.

Boardmember Deng expressed her concern about park designated parking spots being utilized for Kids Quest parking.

Boardmember Grindeland recently provided materials about Bellevue's parks at a community event. She noted that people especially liked the park map and Natural Resource Program Guide. She suggested that Boardmembers should carry extra copies of this guide and distribute it to community members. She encouraged Boardmembers to be aware of what's going on in our parks and talk with citizens about our activities and projects.

Boardmember Van Hollebeke discussed an article that was recently published in the *Bellevue Reporter* that discussed Council revisiting the idea of a regional aquatic center. Boardmember Van Hollebeke requested an update regarding this information.

Boardmember Synn discussed some of the highlights from a Microsoft Ability Conference that he recently attended. He explained that Microsoft is trying to change the culture for diversity inclusion. Boardmember Synn stressed that the marketing materials, particularly for Downtown Park, highlight accessibility. In addition, Boardmember Synn would like “community services” added to a future meeting agenda.

8. **CHAIR COMMUNICATION & DISCUSSION:**

A. Next Quarter’s Agenda Items

*Deferred until later in the meeting agenda.*

9. **BOARDMEMBER COMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS:**

Mr. Foran noted that May 20, 2017 is National Kids to Parks Day, which is a nationwide grassroots movement to connect youth with nature and encourage them to explore outdoors. A Proclamation will be presented at the May 15, 2017 City Council meeting. Boardmembers Grindeland and Nieuwenhuis (and possibly Vice-Chair Kumar and Boardmember Deng) will attend the meeting to accept the Proclamation.

- Wilburton Citizen Advisory Committee – Vice-Chair Kumar

Vice-Chair Kumar distributed the following handouts that were discussed at her recent Wilburton CAC meeting:

- Draft Vision Statement
- Wilburton Commercial Area Study (No Action Alternative: Baseline Summary)
- CAC 4 Dot Exercise
- Dot Exercise Results (Connectivity, Public Space, Neighborhood Core)
- Drawing Exercise Results:
  - CAC Completed Drawings
  - CAC & Property Owner Responses
  - CAC Data Summary Maps
  - Property Owner Data Summary Maps
  - Consultant Data Summary Maps

Boardmember Synn inquired if there is a separate Land Use Code for Wilburton. Mr. Foran confirmed that there is a separate Land Use Code for Wilburton.

Boardmember Deng expressed interest in attending another walking tour of the Grand Connection, similar to the tour that was provided in February, 2017.

10. **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS**

A. **Downtown Livability Initiative: Are plazas open spaces or parks?**

Chair Heath reported that he and Boardmember Synn attended a recent Planning Commission meeting to discuss the items that were identified on page 5 of the April 11, 2017 Parks & Community Services Board meeting minutes. Chair Heath noted that Boardmember Synn presented the information and clarified to the Planning Commission why the Board was responding so late in the process.

Boardmember Synn noted that there was tremendous support from the Planning Commission regarding his comments. The Planning Commission favored the interactive style of the Parks Board. In addition, Boardmember Synn noted that there was a lot of discussion about the impact and vision of parks. He clarified that Bellevue parks constitutes less than 6% of property in the downtown corridor.

Boardmember Synn discussed the Parks' concept of having a certain amount of parks and open spaces in each quadrant of the downtown corridor. Subsequently, Chair Heath and Boardmember Synn were approached after the Planning Commission meeting by a property owner that is selling 11 acres in the downtown corridor. In addition, Boardmember Synn noted that Councilmember Wallace clarified that the Planning Commission meeting is not the best forum to strategize on increasing park land in Bellevue. He submitted an email to staff with a number of suggestions to acquire land including: U.S. Post Office location (Bellevue Way); and providing an incentive system within the land use code.

Chair Heath noted that the Planning Commission appreciated the Parks Board's visit. He also clarified that the property owner in the downtown corridor has met with staff. Vice-Chair Kumar suggested that the contact information of this person be forwarded to staff so it gets to the appropriate person (Mr. Foran). Mr. Foran noted that he has not met with anyone in the downtown corridor selling 11 acres of property. He reiterated the importance of forwarding this type of information to staff to alleviate confusion. Mr. Foran also clarified that staff received and is evaluating the suggestions proposed by Councilmember Wallace.

Boardmember Synn explained that the Planning Commission requested that the Parks Board define/adopt a definition for "open space" and whether or not a plaza qualifies as open space. Mr. Foran noted that the city does not have a concrete definition of "open space." If one were to be adopted it should be adopted by City Council and then included in the Parks & Open Space Plan.

During Boardmember Synn's research, he found New York City Parks Department's definition of open space to be the most suitable for Bellevue. It states: "Open space is defined as publicly accessible, publicly or privately owned land that operates or is available for leisure, play, or sport, or serves to protect or enhance the natural environment."

Boardmember Van Hollebeke noted that plazas are used all over New York City for open spaces and park-like uses. There are over 100 plazas in NYC and the city has a unique program for

plazas. NYC is known for some very famous parks (e.g., 850 acres for Central Park). Boardmember Van Hollebeke suggested that Bellevue evaluate NYC's model for programming plazas to see if this type of use might be beneficial in Bellevue. He noted that NYC has three different plaza types: 1) permanent; 2) interim; and 3) one-day. Boardmember Van Hollebeke explained that there is a creative attitude toward any space within NYC and there is an open space planning process. In NYC, virtually any space can be turned into a park-like experience. Boardmember Van Hollebeke believes that plazas should be considered park-like spaces. He suggested that Bellevue interact with developers in a different way so that plazas and open spaces become more open to the public. Vice-Chair Kumar agreed with Boardmember Van Hollebeke and used the example of Bellevue's farmer's markets that provide a plaza-like experience. She also cited Compass Plaza as another example.

Boardmember Grindeland also favored Boardmember Van Hollebeke's concept. She inquired who would insure and oversee the plazas. Mr. Foran clarified that most plazas in the downtown corridor were created by developers through the incentive program. The property is typically owned by property owners and there is a permanent public easement over the use of the property for public access. The easement typically specifies the areas that can be utilized for public access.

Rather than reject a plaza program, Boardmember Van Hollebeke encouraged Boardmembers to think creatively and determine what is desired, and then identify potential partners to accomplish the goal. He noted that NYC actively reaches out to organizations to solicit various spaces to utilize as plazas.

Boardmember Nieuwenhuis concurred with Boardmember Van Hollebeke and views plazas as potentially having park-like benefits.

In order for a plaza to be considered an open space, Boardmember Deng thinks that free parking and programming should be available for the space.

Boardmember Synn likes the plaza concept that Boardmember Van Hollebeke described. However, he used the Bake's Place property as an example of an open space that is meant to be a plaza. He explained that this area is enclosed by residential apartment buildings and not visible from the street. Boardmember Synn stressed the importance of clear expectations for developers when providing incentives.

Chair Heath suggested that open space be defined by potential uses.

Vice-Chair Kumar agreed with Boardmember Synn that the Bake's Place property is a poor use of open space. She would like an open space/plaza visible, accessible, and available. Boardmember Grindeland and Boardmember Nieuwenhuis agreed with this criterion. Boardmember Deng added that there should be free parking and programming.

Since the Board does not have the authority to adopt an open space or plaza definition, Boardmember Van Hollebeke inquired the intent/purpose of the discussion. Boardmember Synn clarified that this question was raised during his and Chair Heath's presentation to the Planning

Commission. The Planning Commission requested that the Parks Board determine what is acceptable for an open space or plaza.

Boardmember Van Hollebeke suggested that a plaza be defined as an active local destination that is publicly accessible, open to community use (programming), and complements the architecture/history/intent of the surrounding community. Chair Heath added that the space should be publicly accessible and visible.

Mr. Foran cautioned Boardmembers about confining their discussion around the Planning Commission's request. He suggested that Boardmember Van Hollebeke's approach works well with or without the Planning Commission's involvement.

Boardmember Grindeland inquired if there is a definition for open space within Bellevue's municipal code. Mr. Foran is not familiar with such definition.

**Motion by Boardmember Nieuwenhuis and second by Vice-Chair Kumar to forward the following statement to the Planning Commission: *For a plaza to be considered open space, it should be publicly visible, accessible, publicly or privately owned land that operates or is available for leisure, play or sport, or serves to protect or enhance the natural environment and is consistent with the desired uses of the community.* Motion carried unanimously (7-0).**

By general consensus, Boardmembers elected Boardmember Synn as the Planning Commission liaison.

**B. Board Work Plan Items:**

In addition to the two proposed policies and procedures that were included in the Board packet, Chair Heath distributed two handouts: 1) Work Plan Council Reporting Policy-Draft; 2) Work Plan Education Policy-Draft. Boardmember Grindeland requested that these types of materials be distributed to staff in a timely manner so that they can be forwarded to Boardmembers (*Boardmembers Grindeland and Van Hollebeke did not have a copy of the handout for the meeting*).

Chair Heath noted that the Board Retreat included a discussion about educational opportunities. His expectation for the Education Policy is that: "All Parks & Community Service Boardmembers should be educated about Parks & Community Services." He noted that the education will allow for diversity and strengths. The process should be open and flexible.

Boardmember Synn favors a policy that can be voted on versus something that is changing. Mr. Smith noted that Board policies are typically set by Council, while Board procedures are typically set by the Board (i.e., bylaws).

Vice-Chair Kumar expressed confusion with the objective of the proposed policies. She would like individual Boards/Commissions to have flexibility in setting their own procedures and does not think the Parks Board should dictate how others operate. She also wants to be cohesive with policies that have already been adopted.

Mr. Smith showed a matrix of the Parks Board's Work Plan that helps staff prepare the meeting agenda each month. This matrix includes some educational items as well as reoccurring items (e.g., Budget, Human Services Needs Update, etc.). Mr. Foran clarified that some work plan items are educational and do not required Board action. Mr. Smith noted that typically agenda items are discussed at pre-meetings with the Board Chair and Vice-Chair. If an agenda topic is identified at a pre-meeting, it is typically added to the next meeting agenda or to the Parks Board's Work Plan matrix.

- Board Bylaws

*Discussed below.*

- Board Reporting to Council

Chair Heath inquired if a Parks Board representative should be selected on an ad hoc basis or if the Chair/Vice-Chair should be selected to attend the City Council meetings to provide the quarterly Parks Board report. He suggested that the Parks Board approve/vote on what is presented at the Council meetings (including the written report). Mr. Foran suggested that the Chair also communicate the report content to the Parks Board Council Liaison, prior to reporting the information to City Council. Overall, Boardmembers concurred that the Parks Board should vote on the topics that are presented in the report

- Liaison(s) to other Boards/Commissions

Boardmembers requested that staff contact other staff liaisons semi-annually and request that staff liaisons alert the Parks & Community Services Board staff liaison if items on their agenda might be of interest to the Parks & Community Services Board.

**Motion by Boardmember Synn and second by Boardmember Deng to approve the following procedures:**

- **Board and Commission Liaisons**
- **Board Visioning and Planning**
- **Work Plan Council Reporting**
- **Work Plan Education**

**At the question, motion carried unanimously (5-0).**

In regards to the Parks Board Bylaws, Boardmember Synn expressed his frustration that Boardmember Grindeland met with the City Clerk's Office and Assistant City Attorney to review the Bylaws without inviting him and Boardmember Van Hollebeke to attend, particularly since they were part of the subcommittee. Boardmember Synn suggested that review and/or approval of the Bylaws be postponed until the subcommittee has had an opportunity to meet and review the recommended changes. Staff clarified that all Board comments were received and reviewed at the February 14, 2017 Parks Board meeting.

**Motion by Boardmember Nieuwenhuis and second by Boardmember Synn to postpone review and/or approval of the proposed Parks Board Bylaws until the subcommittee has an opportunity to meet and review said Bylaws. Motion carried unanimously (5-0).**

- Board Visioning & Planning

*Discussed above.*

- Education

*Discussed above.*

- Other Work Plan Items

Chair Heath noted that Board elections will be conducted at the June 13, 2017 meeting. He encouraged the future Board Chair to continue the transparent, flexible platform that has been created. He noted that he plans to provide a PowerPoint presentation at the next Board meeting regarding what the Board has done in the past year. Chair Heath would like all Boardmembers to be able to provide input when meeting agendas are being created. Mr. Smith reminded Chair Heath that staff typically coordinates with the Board Chair and Vice-Chair to set the meeting agenda. Mr. Smith requested that Boardmembers be mindful when making decisions because there are often times many other contributing factors to consider (e.g., timing, flexibility, etc.).

**Motion by Boardmember Synn and second by Boardmember Nieuwenhuis to extend the meeting until 8:40 p.m. Motion carried unanimously (5-0).**

Boardmember Van Hollebeke requested a staff update regarding the regional aquatic center. He also requested that an update be provided regarding options available for funding Capital Improvement Projects and land acquisitions.

Boardmember Synn would like the vision and strategy for community services added to a future meeting agenda. He also thinks that Boardmembers should have been kept informed about the Eastgate Homeless Shelter proposal and the multicultural center. Mr. Foran noted that the Diversity Advantage Plan staff is currently managing these items/discussions.

Boardmembers concurred that the following agenda items should be included in the June 13, 2017 Parks Board meeting:

- Community services strategy and vision discussion.
- Discussion about how to handle emergency changes to the meeting agenda.
- Elections.
- Chair Heath's PowerPoint presentation.
- Board liaison discussion.

Mr. Foran suggested that staff provide an educational session about community services, prior to the strategy/vision discussion.

**Motion by Boardmember Synn and second by Boardmember Nieuwenhuis to extend the meeting until 8:45 p.m. Motion carried unanimously (5-0).**

Boardmember Nieuwenhuis inquired when the bylaws will be reviewed. Chair Heath explained that no other Boards/Commissions are working on their bylaws so there is no deadline or sense of urgency to complete them.

**Motion by Boardmember Synn and second by Vice-Chair Kumar to approve the following agenda items for the June 13, 2017 Parks Board meeting:**

- **Community services strategy and vision discussion.**
- **Discussion about how to handle emergency changes to the meeting agenda.**
- **Elections.**
- **Chair Heath's PowerPoint presentation.**
- **Board liaison discussion.**

**At the question, motion carried unanimously (5-0).**

11. **NEW BUSINESS:**

*None.*

12. **OTHER COMMUNICATIONS:**

- A. Memo from Parks staff re TRACKS overnight camping event
- B. Letter regarding James McClain
- C. Email regarding Bellevue Skatepark
- D. Email regarding cricket
- E. Thank you notes re youth sports camps

13. **INFORMATION:**

- A. List of upcoming Parks special events
- B. Next regular Parks Board meeting—June 13, 2017

14. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Pamela Johnson

3741 122<sup>nd</sup> Ave. NE, Bellevue, WA

Ms. Johnson expressed her concern with the deteriorating tree canopy within Bellevue. She also encouraged Boardmembers to consider the Crossroads area for a mixed use cultural center that includes a homeless shelter. She views this as a favorable community service combination. She also encouraged Boardmembers to evaluate the entire plan and impacts of a homeless shelter. She noted that mixed use areas are not necessarily an area that should be discounted.

15. **ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Heath at 8:49 p.m.