

CITY OF BELLEVUE
SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

September 14, 2017
8:30 a.m.

Bellevue Boys & Girls Club
209 100th Avenue NE

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jon Wilson – Parks
Heather Wolfe – Parks
Derek Landis - Fire
Dave Sanabria – Police
Mazen Wallaia – Transportation
Jeanne Grote – Community Representative South
Joann Warren – Community Representative Downtown
Chris Dunham – Business Representative Downtown
Mike Ogliore – Business Representative Downtown
Meredith Langridge – Special Event Promoter, Position 1

MEMBERS ABSENT: Reilly Pittman – Development Services
Glenn Bartolome – Metro Transit
Neal Christiansen – Community Representative East
Andy Heider – Parks
Roz Liming – Business Representative, Crossroads
My Tran – Bellevue College

OTHERS PRESENT: Sharon Franzen, Parks
Cynthia Van, Parks
Ann Sutherland, Bellevue Festival of the Arts
Hannah Brownlee, Bellevue Festival of the Arts

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:36 a.m. by Chair Wilson who presided.

2. COMMUNICATIONS: Written and Oral - None

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Ms. Grote. The motion was seconded by Ms. Warren and the motion carried unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A motion to approve the August 10, 2017, meeting minutes as submitted was made by Ms. Langridge. The motion was seconded by Ms. Grote and it carried unanimously.

5. OLD BUSINESS

❖ Routing and Location Subcommittee Report

Sgt. Sanabria said he met earlier in the day with the Kemper Development Company team to look at the Bellevue Way closure between NE 4th Street and NE 8th Street. He said all is going very smoothly.

❖ Applications of Intent - None

6. NEW BUSINESS

❖ Introduce Cynthia Van

Chair Wilson introduced Cynthia Van who will be taking over for Sharon Franzen as special events staff support. He also took a moment to thank Ms. Franzen for her work with the Committee over the past ten years.

❖ Post-Event Evaluation – BAM Arts Fair

Ms. Langridge said the arts fairs all went very well. Problems were minimal and the weather was good. Attendance was down over the previous year but the programming was good and the artists were in good moods. The load-out process could be tightened up a bit but overall it went well. There were a couple of artists who were not in full compliance with some of the fire department requirements; they were worked with one-on-one. There were two medical emergencies, both of which received a very quick response.

Ms. Langridge said art shows everywhere are seeing a trend in which people are spending their money in different ways, yet the crowds have remained strong. A number of really good artists travel to the state in order to be a part of the fair. Artists want sales and going forward it will be important to find ways to make that happen by looking at the kinds of things people want, be it art, music or more family oriented events. The event is a fundraiser for the museum and as such it remains very important. It would be great to see the event moved to Downtown Park, but that would require working closely with the main sponsor Kemper Development Company and it is certainly not something that will occur next year. Any changes to the format for 2018 will be small.

❖ Post-Event Evaluation – 6th Street Fair

Mr. Ogliore said attendance at the 6th Street Fair was also down across the board. There were about 100 booths, which is fewer than in past years, but the artists were generally satisfied and are likely to return. The attendance downturn will be considered in light of what should be done relative to marketing the event.

Mr. Ogliore said the fair is very dependent on its partners in terms of the overall footprint. He said he works with the city to shut down 106th Avenue NE and also with SRS Sterling Realty for the parking lot where the Doxa church is and around which there are rumors about what will happen with the site going forward. No big changes are planned for the 2018 fair.

Dealing with the barricade on the north and south ends. The safety element in providing access has been a big deal. Load-in and load-out went very well, and in fact load-out went quicker than

ever before.

❖ Post-Event Evaluation – Bellevue Festival of the Arts

Ann Sutherland reported that logistically the fair was much the same as it has been in past years. She said there were almost 170 artists participating and the weather was perfect. A lot was put into marketing and PR so it was disappointing to see the attendance numbers fall. Business was good and a lot of the artists did really well, so that was good. The load-in system works well even though the lots are not made available until 6:00 p.m. and goes late Thursday night. Load-out went very quickly.

Ms. Sutherland said marking the lots was one of the biggest challenges given how busy they are during the week. She said the process was aided by having a film crew in the lot doing a car commercial coming down NE 8th Street, and they had worked with the police department to section off a portion of the lot.

Hannah Brownlee said the security company used was awesome and they were clearly on top of things. There was an issue with religious protestors walking through the site handing out pamphlets. They were asked to confine themselves to the sidewalk but they did not want to do that. The police department responded and adeptly deescalated the situation.

The new kids area was very well received. The space was dedicated to an artist who had passed away. The intent is to keep that tradition going and growing in the future.

Ms. Sutherland praised the police for their involvement with the protestors. Their training was evident. She added that no changes are planned for 2018 unless the lease on the Cost Plus section is lost due to the recent sale of the property and the planned redevelopment of the site.

In regard to the demonstrations issue, Sgt. Sanabria commented that because the BAM Arts Fair takes place on Kemper Development Company property, the rules are different from those applying to public property. A large portion of the 6th Street Fair occurs on public rights-of-way which limits the ability of the police to stop people from having their say. The Festival of the Arts is also on private property. Going forward, steps should be taken to clearly post the rules and regulations at all entrances.

Sgt. Sanabria said it is unfortunate that things have reached the point of needing to be concerned about people trying to take action against local events and large public gatherings. Kemper Development Company does a very good job when it comes to security, and security at the 6th Street Fair is also quite good. The Bellevue Festival of the Arts Fair, however, is a much more open target, which is something that will need to be discussed for the 2018 event.

Ms. Brownlee allowed that there were artists who approached some of the demonstrators. She said the matter will be addressed with all of the artists prior to the next fair. Sgt. Sanabria said the intent of the demonstrators is in fact to get people to engage with them. Clearly posting the rules and regulations makes them applicable to all who are at the event.

Sgt. Sanabria said his officers noted that the volume of pedestrian traffic was significantly reduced from what it has been in the past. While nice from the perspective of managing fewer people, it certainly did not aid in generating revenues. The beer garden generated no issues, in fact it did not appear to be very well attended. Adding something like a beer garden triggers the need for additional security, and the responsibility for managing them and all liability is entirely

on the event organizers.

Ms. Langridge said having to adhere to the flame retardant requirements of the fire department is always a big thing. Many of the artists come from areas where the requirements are different, so not all of them have canopies that comply in Bellevue. Each artist is directed to be in full compliance. Chair Wilson pointed out that Bellevue's codes are in line with international codes. Ms. Langridge said it could be that other jurisdictions simply do not enforce their regulations. Ms. Brownlee said adherence with local fire codes is made a very large part of the application process. For many of the artists, their materials do in fact meet the code but they do not necessarily know that. Derek Landis with Fire reported receiving a lot of calls from artists who wanted to make sure they were compliant.

Chair Wilson commented that there are always calls for Bellevue to have signature events. The fact is that the arts festival weekend and Snowflake Lane are in fact signature events and the city fully supports them. He said he was not aware that the Cost Plus site might be redeveloped and said he would check to see what if anything is in the works. Additionally, the Grand Connection project will have an impact, especially during construction. He said it would be very interesting to compare hotel and restaurant receipts for the weekends before and after the fair weekend to help judge the economic impact. There is some anecdotal evidence to suggest that sales at the mall fall slightly the weekend of the fairs, though others say some businesses do better.

- ❖ Post-Event Evaluations – Summer Movies in the Park, Crossroads Movies in the Park, Chow Downtown Food Truck, BAM Arts Fair, Festival of the Arts, 6th Street Fair, Family 4th, Four on the 4th Dog Jog/Walk, Ukrainian Festival

Chair Wilson said the Chow Downtown Food Truck event went well but the numbers were down overall. It could be that the event in August was impacted by the smoke in the air or the fact that the temperature was in the 90s. People were noticed coming out, eating food, and then going back in; others purchased food and took it away with them instead of sitting to listen to the music. The food sales were not bad, but there were also not as good as they have been in the past. It is possible the event has run its course and is no longer as popular, or it could be that moving the event to a Saturday rather than a weeknight would help.

Chair Wilson said another issue the event faced was while dumpsters were ordered, the wrong ones were delivered and they overflowed requiring seven truckloads to haul away. The festival organizer has been talked to about the issue and it will be stressed next year to make sure the correct dumpsters are on site. He said he also received one complaint regarding sound. Sound staff were on site monitoring levels and all of the readings were within the limits.

Chair Wilson said he did not hear any complaints from Crossroads Mall about transportation or parking issues resulting from the event beyond the typical issues.

Flavors of India and the parade was at Crossroads park. Chair Wilson said he had received no complaints.

Sgt. Sanabria said the event triggered a lot of impact to the folks who live and commute in the area, but it really all comes down to what the city wants to embrace. The numbers at the festival were not all that high, in fact they were down significantly, but participation in the parade was huge. The organizers did an excellent job of controlling everyone involved in the parade, but the impact was huge given the large numbers of people the parade drew. Chair Wilson said a

meeting is scheduled with Mark Manuel, the city's cultural diversity manager, to make sure everyone is on board and understands that there are concerns that will need to be balanced.

Chair Wilson said the numbers for Spirit of Bellevue were also down from years past. Sgt. Sanabria said the traffic control setup was much improved. Set-up and take-down went smoothly. The roads were all cleared right on time. The loudspeakers at the start line were set up pointing toward the condominiums, but the sound level never exceeded 75 decibels. He said it was a good event. Chair Wilson said he did not receive any complaints.

Chair Wilson noted that the Komen 3-Day Walk was set to begin on September 15. He said the participants would come through Bellevue with a stop at Enatai and lunch at Downtown Park before heading out to Highland Park for snacks and water and then on to Marymoor Park. The number of participants appears to be down to about 600. The event has a very low impact.

Chair Wilson said the event organizers have working to get the word out that supporters, friends and family members who want to meet up with participants for lunch at Downtown Park not to park at the mall and walk off. The parking lot at the park will not be used for the event so there should not be an issue with parking there.

Chair Wilson announced that Game On has been postponed. It will happen in 2018 but a date has not been determined.

Chair Wilson reminded the Committee that Cycle the Wave was scheduled for September 17 at Bellevue College. The riders will all follow the rules of the road.

- ❖ Comments/Follow-up – None
- ❖ Tour of Downtown Park

The Committee members were offered a tour of Downtown Park.

7. NEXT MEETING

- ❖ October 12, 2017

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Wilson adjourned the meeting at 9:40 a.m.