

CITY OF BELLEVUE
SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

April 8, 2021
8:30 a.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Virtual Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Russell Adelson – Parks
Dane Waisanan – Fire
Jonathan Rose -
Mike Shovlin – Police
Ben Wright – Transportation
Rick Logwood – Transportation
Zhu Weijun – Transportation
Chris Dunham – Business Representative West
Laurie Scott – Downtown Resident Representative

OTHERS PRESENT: Imane Elmesbahi, Parks; Councilmember Barksdale

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:34 a.m. by Mr. Wright who presided.

2. COMMUNICATIONS: Written and Oral – None

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Mr. Waisanan. The motion was seconded by Ms. Dunham and the motion carried unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A motion to approve the February 11, 2021, meeting minutes as submitted was made by Mr. Waisanan. The motion was seconded by Ms. Dunham and the motion carried unanimously.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

❖ Routing and Location Subcommittee Report – None

6. OLD BUSINESS

❖ Tabled Events: Northwest Ukrainian International

Mr. Wright said he had no updates regarding the tabled event.

Councilmember Barksdale asked if there is a pre-event site inspection with an event sponsor prior to such events, particularly in light of the issues involving the issues with the Ukrainian Festival in 2019. Russell Adelson with Parks confirmed that there is a pre-event site inspection and walk-through with the event organizers. He said there are a number of items covered on the checklist. Additionally Parks intends to have a staff member on site during the festival.

Councilmember Barksdale asked if that was the policy in place prior to the 2019 event. Mr. Adelson allowed that it was. Councilmember Barksdale asked how the situation occurred in 2019 if that policy was in place at the time. Mr. Adelson said there was effectively a he said/she said situation following the event.

Ms. Elmesbahi said Sgt. Shovlin reported there were no videos or pictures to back up the pre-event conditions at the park. She said Sgt. Shovlin added that for the next iteration of the Festival there will indeed be videos and pictures.

Mr. Adelson reiterated that there is a long checklist that is run through with event organizers. He said that has changed since the 2019 episode to include video and pictures. Councilmember Barksdale suggested it would be good to have organizers actually sign off on conditions going into the event. Mr. Adelson said the organizer is required to sign off on the checklist after the pre-event site walk-through.

Mr. Wright said the intent was to have a broader discussion at the Committee's next meeting regarding what mitigation measures will be in place for the next Ukrainian Festival.

6. NEW BUSINESS

❖ Application of Intent: Lake to Lake Bike Ride

Mr. Wright noted that the annual event is slated for September and is anticipated to have 400 participants. The event is sponsored by Parks.

A motion to approve the date, time and location of the Lake to Lake Bike Ride was made by Ms. Scott. The motion was seconded by Mr. Waisanan and the motion carried unanimously.

❖ Application of Intent: Pakistan Independence Day Celebration

Mr. Wright said the event is planned for August 14 at Downtown Park. The event held in past years were handled by the Parks scheduling office because the attendance numbers were small, but for 2020 the projected attendance numbers were much larger and the Committee directed the organizer to apply for a special event permit. The event, however, did not happen that year due to the pandemic. For 2021 the expectation is that attendance will be 1000-plus.

Mr. Adelson said he serves as crew leader for the Downtown Park site. He asked how the Covid regulations would impact the event given the projected number of attendees. Mr. Wright said no clear protocol has yet been developed for how to look at events that are still several months out. There is a lot of uncertainty as to what restrictions may be in place as vaccinations continue to increase. The event will have to comply with all restrictions in place at the time.

Mr. Adelson said the 4th of July celebration organizers are concerned about having even as many

as 400 people attending. Police, Fire and Transportation all balked at having to prevent more than a maximum number of people from attending. He agreed that no one can say for sure what restrictions will be in place by August.

Mr. Waisanan said Fire is focused on the fire code and on what the CDC and the state and county health departments decide to do. Mr. Anderson concurred and stressed the need to follow all CDC requirements. He added that neither Police nor Fire are in the business of enforcing the mask mandate.

Mr. Wright said the question is whether or not the Committee would be comfortable approving an event knowing that the regulations may be different by August.

Mr. Waisanan said he was comfortable doing so, and Mr. Anderson agreed, though he added that the city would need to be willing to shut down the event if tighter Phase II restrictions are in place. There will need to be verbiage in the documents saying the event may be canceled depending on restrictions in place at the time of the event.

Ms. Scott said there should be standard language to that effect written up for all events. She suggested working with the city attorney's office on specific language. There was concurrence to seek input from the city attorney's office.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for the Pakistan Independence Day Celebration event was made by Ms. Scott. The motion was seconded by Mr. Waisanan and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Wright invited the event organizer Mohammad Khalid Hafeez to make a brief presentation.

Mr. Hafeez said he represented the Pakistan Association of Greater Seattle (PAGS). He said PAGS was created in 1990 and it is a non-profit 501(C)(3) organization. There are some 15,000 Pakistanis in the Puget Sound area and PAGS serves as a representative for that community. The Pakistani community is very diverse and represents all walks of life. The organization was formed to provide a platform in which the local Pakistani Americans can connect with each other and collectively do things, to enhance Pakistan's image, and to build bridges between the Pakistani community and other Washingtonians.

Continuing, Mr. Hafeez said PAGS offers a lot of educational and cultural programming, including concerts at Bellevue College in support of UNICEF. PAGS collaborated and partnered with the U.S. Census Bureau to create awareness about participating in the census. During 2020 PAGS conducted a lot of fundraisers to benefit various causes, including businesses suffering from the impacts of the pandemic.

The Pakistan Independence Day Celebration event was not held in 2020 due to the pandemic, but in previous years the event has been held in Downtown Park. The expectation is that the upcoming event will draw more than a thousand participants depending on Covid restrictions in place at the time. The plan is to include a live band at the event along with other live cultural performances. There will be food stalls sponsored by food vendors and restaurants, as well as stalls offering crafts. There will be other activities as well of interest to men, women and children. The event has in past years garnered some television coverage and it is hoped that the same will be the case in 2021.

Mr. Hafeez said a contingency plan will be in place to accommodate any restrictions or concerns. The backup plan for 2020 was a drive-through event in Wilburton. If the actual festival cannot be held in Downtown Park, something like that will be done again.

He said PAGS looks forward to having a good long-term relationship with the city, particularly given that many of the organization's members live in Bellevue and on the Eastside. The organization's monthly meetings have for a long time been held at Bellevue City Hall.

Mr. Wright said going forward the Committee will determine what conditions will be imposed on the event before issuing a permit. He stressed that there was no certainty as to the type of Covid restrictions that will be in place at the time of the event.

❖ Code Update

A code update discussion did not occur.

❖ Post-Event Evaluation: Snowflake Lane

Mr. Wright noted that event was modified for 2021 in light of all the Covid restrictions. The estimated attendance was 5250 per day. He said he was not aware of any complaints associated with the event, though there were some issues with vendors not associated with the event trying to sell things. The organizers are hoping to return to the standard event in 2021.

❖ Comments/Follow-up – None

7. NEXT MEETING

❖ May 13, 2021

8. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Scott. The motion was seconded by Mr. Anderson and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Wright adjourned the meeting at 9:20 a.m.