

The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on May 7, 2019

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

March 19, 2019
6:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Mercer, Commissioners Jain, Kline, Ma, McEachran, Oxrieder

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Piper

STAFF PRESENT: Alex O'Reilly, Dee Dee Catalano, Christy Stangland, Department of Parks and Community Services; Gwen Rousseau, Planning and Community Development

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Mercer who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Piper.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. February 20, 2019

It was noted that the minutes needed to reflect under Roll Call that all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Jain.

A motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Commissioner Ma. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Oxrieder and the motion carried unanimously.

4. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – None

5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL,

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None

6. STAFF AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Oxrieder stated that she had previously asked staff what the outcome had been of the Ride2 Eastgate test shuttle program. She said while no information had yet been received from King County Metro, Hopelink, which had helped Metro assemble user focus groups, shared the results of those groups. Some people loved the service and found that it really met their needs, while others said they would never pay for it as it was not helpful at all. Some thought the app was wonderful, others said they had trouble with it. The group that found the service most helpful were those who went to Factoria and had bags to carry home. The bus itself was not easy to access by those with disabilities. The one thing everyone agreed on was how kind and helpful the drivers were.

Commissioner McEachran said a recent article in *Seattle Magazine* touted the Wilburton and Spring District as being very desirable with median prices of \$1.3 million in the Spring District. He said that kind of press makes people think that no one in Bellevue is in need of housing.

Commissioner McEachran reported that he attended the March 18 City Council study session on the issue of affordable housing. He said the meeting made him realize that human services folk should queue up quickly for the unfolding in three years in regard to the funding process, which will involve the public and the private sectors. The one word heard over and over during the presentation was “gap.” When there is a gap, the Commission is always involved. A church in the downtown recently sold at market rate for somewhere between \$7 million and \$8 million. Three agencies the Commission funds will get 12.5 percent of the proceeds. Human Services Manager Alex O’Reilly said the three agencies that will benefit are Imagine Housing, Sophia Way and Congregations for the Homeless. Each will receive about \$1 million.

Chair Mercer suggested representatives from the three agencies should be asked to come share with the Commission their plans for how to use the funds and address how their needs might change in regard to what they will request from the city.

Commissioner Ma said he attended the recent Youth Link board meeting. He said the \$25,000 allocated to Friends of Youth was to see a mobile service started at Crossroads, and Friends of Youth attended the meeting to report that the program has been very successful in terms of gaining face time with a lot of different youth. The program will not, however, be sustainable without additional funding. The program is also offered at the Bellevue library but fewer homeless youth show up there.

Commissioner Ma said the McKinney-Vento representative was present at the Youth Link board meeting and talked about the gaps in students and youth facing homelessness. It was noted that there are big gaps in terms of family shelters.

Families in need of shelter must travel to Redmond, Kirkland or further out. Under McKinney-Vento, students who become homeless have the right to continue attending their school, but the resources required to transport students to and from Bellevue from outlying areas are significant, and it is disruptive to the families. Having a family shelter in Bellevue would fill that need gap.

Prevention was also highlighted as a big need at the Youth Link board meeting in terms of the financial services needed that help to prevent homelessness. One issue is that those in need usually must wait until an emergency arises before they can be given any help. While that is a good way to be accountable in allocating funds, it is also difficult for families to deal with once they are in crises. The McKinney-Vento representative said she wished each school had a social worker who could connect with the families.

Human Services Planner Christy Stangland informed the Commissioners that her research revealed that the cities of Redmond, Kirkland and Issaquah have youth participation on their human services commissions. In some instances the youth are able to vote while in other instances they serve only as advisors. She added that along with Ms. O'Reilly and Assistant Director of the Department of Parks and Community Services Toni Esparza, work is under way to develop a youth survey to be part of the Needs Update in conjunction with the staff who oversee Youth Link. For legal reasons, the youth can only be asked about what they perceive in the community; nothing can be asked about their personal experiences.

7. INFORMATION FOR THE COMMISSION

A. 2020 Census

Assistant Planner/Demographer Gwen Rousseau said the national census is done every ten years to make sure the population data is of the highest quality possible. The 2020 census is scheduled for April 1 and the main goal is to count everyone once but only once and in the right place. The driver behind the census is the enumeration of people to assure fair representation in the Congress. As a result of the 2010 census, Washington state gained a seat in the House of Representatives.

Ms. Rousseau said the census data also drives federal funding to local communities. According to the most recent update from George Washington University, about \$16 million flows annually to Washington state, which is also \$2300 per capita. The funds go to a number of key programs, including transportation, parks and CDBG. Since 2010, Bellevue has received about \$76 million in federal funds for transportation projects, \$7.1 million for parks projects, and \$5.8 million for CDBG grants. The census data allows for answering such questions as how many people will benefit from the utility rate and relief program, various transportation programs and after-school language programs, as well as how many households are at risk of being displaced.

There are challenges that lie ahead in the coming decade. The citizenship question that has been added to the census will be problematic for Bellevue given non-U.S. citizens make up nearly a quarter of Bellevue's population. Those who are concerned about their citizenship status and what the data will be used for may be afraid of participating in the census. About 17 percent of Bellevue's population actually moved to the United States after 2010 and as such have never experienced participating in the census. About 43 percent of Bellevue's residents in 2017 spoke a language other than English at home, and about 15 percent reported speaking English less than very well.

Highly mobile populations are difficult to count. Renters who move around, particularly those who are young, may not realize the importance of being counted in Bellevue. Young children under five are for some reason difficult to count accurately. Low-income households without access to the internet are hard to count, as are those in households in which several people live.

Ms. Rousseau said the Response Outreach Area Mapper (ROAM) is a map of hard-to-count populations. It is primarily a map of the areas of the country that has the populations that are the most difficult to count. It is used to target outreach resources to those locations.

In addition to having hard-to-count populations, the census bureau will have less funding available in 2020 to do outreach. One reason for that is that in 2010 with the recession money was pumped into the census for specific outreach; that will not be repeated in 2020. The current job market is tight and wages are high locally, and that will make it difficult to find people willing to take on census outreach jobs. The main challenge facing the 2020 census is that it will be done via the internet. While it will also be available in paper form, the preferred response will be online. Every mailing address will be sent postcards directing them to go online. Assistance centers will be set up to allow people without online access to be able to be counted online. There will be a lot of other things going on in 2020 so it will be important to make sure people get the message about the census and understand what they need to do.

Ms. Jain asked if there will be any follow-up actions. Ms. Rousseau said the census bureau has several ways to follow up. They will send out an initial announcement ahead of time, then an announcement that the census is ready to be taken, then a reminder, and if needed they will also send out a paper questionnaire. If someone even after all that has not filled out the census, the bureau will start a non-response follow up that will involve knocking on doors.

On April 4, 2019, there will be a kick-off around the 2020 census that will take the form of a community conversation. It will be sponsored by Bellevue, Redmond and Kirkland and hosted at Redmond City Hall in the afternoon from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. There will be a keynote speaker from the elections board, and a representative from the U.S. Census Bureau.

The city is interested in getting a complete count. While citizens by law are required to fill out the census, people will need to be given adequate information on which to base their decision to participate.

Chair Mercer asked if the citizenship status question information will be kept out of the hands of Immigration and Customs Enforcement through any real legal protections. Ms. Rousseau said that is a question many people have. She said the Washington Complete Count committee has a legal arm that is looking into what actual laws are in place to protect the data. The law clearly states that census data cannot be used for any harmful purposes. There are also regulations addressing confidentiality that does not allow for the sharing of the data from government agencies.

Answering a question asked by Ms. Jain, Ms. Rousseau said the citizenship question has been asked on past census forms, but only on the long forms which have gone to a sample of the population. The question is asked on the American Community Survey, which is the new long form. The data that is provided for the census is very granular down the census block. The concern with the citizenship question being asked of everyone is that people will be able to narrow down into the census blocks that contain a large portion of persons who are not citizens. The question has been challenged, including by Washington state, and it is currently before the Supreme Court. If the question keeps some from reporting, communities will not have an accurate count.

Commissioner McEachran said if he receives something in the mail that appears to be from the federal government, he is as likely as not to simply throw it away. He said he pays more attention to things received from the city through the newspaper or other announcement venue. He suggested the city should get out ahead of the curve by putting something out explaining how filling out the census is something residents can do on behalf of the common good. Additionally, information should be shared with a personal touch at the city's community centers. The census will be consequential for the city for the next decade.

Ms. Rousseau said the purpose of the April 4 meeting is to build a coalition of people on the Eastside who can form trusted networks of communication to facilitate getting information out and in. It will also be about crafting messages in terms of publications, people and places. She said she has been working with the city's financial analysts and public information officers with the goal of determining which projects in Bellevue received federal dollars. The information will be used to provide hard evidence of the importance of having an accurate count.

Commissioner Ma asked if the city has funding earmarked to do outreach. Ms. Rousseau said outreach is something the city is currently exploring. To date no money has been set aside by the city to do outreach, though some staff time has been dedicated to it. King County has allocated \$250,000 for staff and support, and the Census Bureau also has funding for outreach and advertising. California has

chosen to put \$90 million into its outreach campaign, and Washington has set aside \$4.5 million. Individual jurisdictions are stepping up to bolster the larger efforts. King County is also exploring the idea of having a countywide outreach grant fund for local jurisdictions to tap into with money contributed by the county, Seattle and the Seattle Foundation.

Ms. Rousseau said elected officials will be invited to the April 4 meeting along with representatives of community organizations, cultural organizations, faith-based communities, social service organizations and health organizations. The focus will be on identifying the best ways of getting the message out about the 2020 census. Ms. O'Reilly said one of the breakout sessions will be for the people who run the homeless programs.

Ms. Stangland urged the Commissioners to attend and to invite others to attend, particularly those representing groups whose voices may not be heard. She stressed that the event will only be as successful as the people who participate, and the ongoing outreach will only be as successful as those who get involved.

Ms. Rousseau informed the Commissioners that Vision 2050 is the regional plan for the central Puget Sound region. It is in fact the regional growth strategy. The draft supplemental environmental impact statement was recently released and comments will be taken on it through April 29. The document focuses on three options for how the region should grow: stay the course the way growth has been occurring; focus growth around transit; and a reset that would allow for rethinking growth generally. She encouraged the Commissioners to look at the document. One question being asked is around the criteria that should be used to analyze the preferred alternatives. Options have included equity, the risks of displacement and housing affordability.

8. INFORMATION FOR THE COMMISSION

A. Review of HUD CAPER Report

Grant Coordinator Dee Dee Catalano said the city receives an annual allocation of CDBG dollars and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) tells HUD how the funds were spent and how the city performed against its strategic plan goals listed in the Consolidated Plan, which broadly outlines how CDBG funds will be spent in the next five years, and the Annual Action Plan, which is specific to the current year. The current Consolidated Plan covers the years 2015-2019 and a new updated plan will be drafted later in the year.

Ms. Catalano reviewed with the Commissioners the matrix showing the goals and outcomes. She explained that the projected figures are intentionally broad given that no one can know for sure what will happen in the coming five years. The final CAPER for 2019, the last year of the current Consolidated Plan, will include the actual numbers that will show whether or not the individual goals were met.

The Community Development goal in the Consolidated Plan projected serving 400 individuals. The projects that fell into the category over the years included the Boys & Girls Club downtown clubhouse which to date has served 5122 individuals. A project of that sort did not come about for 2018 so the Annual Action Plan includes a zero number.

The Owner Housing goal involves the Major Home Repair and the Minor Home Repair programs. The overarching five-year goal was to serve 300 households. Through 2018, a total of 284 households had been served, or 95 percent of the goal.

The Public Services goal projected serving 2000. By the end of 2018, 1752 had been served, or 88 percent. The annual goal came up short because one of the projects was the Boys & Girls Club computer labs project which received its money in June; more accomplishments due to that project will be added to the total for 2019.

The 30 Bellevue project falls under the Rental Housing goal. It is scheduled to open April 30 and when people move in those accomplishments will be counted in the total.

The Economic Development goal was determined back in 2014, but there have been very few such projects. Federal Way has a program called Micro Enterprise that helps low- and moderate-income persons who want to start a business. The help can take the form of seminars, classes and helping with the development of business plans. There is nothing similar currently offered in Bellevue. Staff is exploring the possibility of introducing such a program in Bellevue, but HUD will not ding the city for not meeting the economic development goals.

Mr. Jain suggested all the big companies coming to Bellevue should be approached to offer some kind of business development training and workshops. Ms. Catalano said programs that can be funded with HUD dollars have specific criteria. The funds cannot flow to for-profit organizations, only to non-profit entities.

Ms. Catalano stated that the city was still waiting to hear what the 2019 CDBG allocation will be. HUD has until April 15 to make the announcement. The President's budget zeros out CDBG, but Congress is unlikely to do the same.

The Commissioners were reminded that the annual public hearing on housing, human services and community development needs will occur at the Commission's April 2 meeting.

9. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. O'Reilly said she put together a draft of the Commission's discussion regarding Deputy Mayor Robinson's request and sent it off to her. The document included the notion of intersectionality, the idea that nothing is simple and how all elements of human services relate to one another.

Ms. O'Reilly reported that she had received confirmation from the acting director of the economic development division that he will attend the April 2 meeting and give a short presentation.

Chair Mercer suggested he should be asked to give his perspective on the micro-enterprise issue. She said she would also like a quick update regarding development in the downtown in terms of economic impact on the city.

Commissioner Ma said he would like to know if there are any plans in place to prepare for service jobs and plans to fill them should Bellevue continue to become an unaffordable place to live.

Commissioner McEachran said he would like to hear about projects that have been permitted but are not yet constructed, and projects that are in for permitting.

Ms. Stangland said it would be helpful to know about any plans for child care and the needs of youth of the parents who will be working at the new businesses that come into the area.

Ms. Stangland said she was working to schedule tours of Renewal Food Bank and Friends of Youth.

10. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. O'Reilly reminded the Commissioners that the Department of Parks and Community Services Director Patrick Foran would be retiring at the end of April. She suggested asking him to attend the April 2 meeting to be wished well.

Ms. Stangland reported that along with Mr. Foran and Ms. O'Reilly she would be going to the Council on April 1 to remind them about the Needs Update and to ask the Councilmembers for feedback on community conversations and anything they would like to see included in the document. She said she also would attend the April 9 meeting of the Parks and Community Services Board to provide feedback on the findings of the last Needs Update and to seek from them feedback on community conversations.

A motion to appoint Commissioner McEachran to represent the Commission at the April 9 Parks and Community Services Board meeting was made by Commissioner Ma. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kline and the motion carried unanimously.

A motion to allow Commissioner Kline to remotely participate in the April 2 Commission meeting was made by Commissioner McEachran. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Oxrieder and the motion carried unanimously.

Following up on the universal design flyer previously mentioned by Commissioner McEachran, Ms. Stangland said human services staff is working with Blayne Amson, the ADA coordinator, and will be hosting a training session on April 26 that will be open to the agencies funded by the city. The focus will be on ableism, allyship and disability justice. A total of 60 will be able to attend and each agency is being asked to provide two staffers, one in leadership and one doing frontline work.

Ms. Stangland reported that the joint commission meeting on April 16 will include a debrief on the funding cycle. The individual chairs will each give a five-minute presentation on their review processes and how decisions were made; what they found to work; and lessons learned and things to change. The session will be used to clarify how the different commissions go about their individual funding processes.

Chair Mercer asked the Commissioners if they wanted anything in particular highlighted in her report.

Commissioner Ma said he would like to see spelled out for the other commissions the process Bellevue uses of essentially going through each application three times, first with a yes/no focus, second to look more specifically at funding amounts, and third to make sure the allocations fit within the budget.

Commissioner Oxrieder said the Commission's team approach to reviewing applications should be highlighted.

Commissioner McEachran said the cross experience of those who have been on the Commission for some time is something that is a positive. Commissioner Oxrieder agreed and said the Commission's respectful arguments is also a positive. Chair Mercer pointed out the Commission's drive toward consensus as a hallmark of the Commission's funding process. Commissioner Oxrieder added that agency visits and guest speakers throughout the year are helpful components.

Ms. Stangland noted that the Commission spends more meeting time than any other group on working through the applications. She suggested highlighting that fact.

In terms of lessons learned or changes to be made, Commissioner Ma said he would like to have had the staff reviews after the first pass through the applications. Ms. O'Reilly allowed that streamlining the staff reviews and shortening them to eliminate repetitive items will help in getting them to the Commissioners sooner.

Commissioner McEachran commented that the Commission's awareness of the Council's priorities and the fact that the Commission enjoys the confidence and trust of the Council is a strong plus for the process.

Chair Mercer suggested calling out the fact that the Commission has prep sessions beforehand to think through what it wants to focus on in the application process.

Commissioner Oxrieder said the issue of how to treat requests from agencies that have multiple programs has not yet been resolved.

Chair Mercer said she would like to call out diversity and the feasibility of funding small organizations.

11. CONTINUED ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

12. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner McEachran. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ma and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Mercer adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date