

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Special Meeting
Legislative Breakfast

January 2, 2007
7:30 a.m.

Council Conference Room
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Degginger, Deputy Mayor Chelminiak, and Councilmembers Balducci, Davidson, Lee, Marshall, and Noble

ABSENT: None.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Mayor Degginger called the meeting to order at 7:47 a.m. and welcomed the following state legislators in attendance:

41st District

Representative Fred Jarrett

48th District

Senator Rodney Tom
Representative Deb Eddy
Representative Ross Hunter

2. 2007 Legislative Priorities

The group discussed the following specific priorities:

Transportation

Councilmember Noble noted Bellevue's top transportation priorities, including I-90 and SR 520, and their relationship to anticipated population and job growth through 2020. He discussed the need to implement projects and to not let discussions slow down project delivery and delay the Sound Transit/RTID joint ballot measure. Mr. Noble stated Bellevue's position that replacement of the SR 520 bridge is a critical need and should be funded primarily by the State.

Several of the legislators agreed with the need to prioritize the SR 520 project, noting that the lead time for replacement of the bridge will be significant. It will be a major focus on this year's legislative session.

Responding to Senator Tom, Mayor Degginger said the City is interested in talking with Seattle Sonics representatives if they would like to discuss the possibility of moving to Bellevue. Mr. Degginger acknowledged the impact this would have on transportation infrastructure needs.

Regional Communications Center Project (NORCOM)

Councilmember Balducci described an initiative to create a regional communications center. Benefits include improved interoperability, efficiency, and communication between agencies. NORCOM is seeking state assistance for capital costs related to consolidating separate dispatch center technologies.

Representative Eddy expressed support for the project and questioned the feasibility of improving interoperability. She is pleased that NORCOM's approach is similar to the existing Valley Communications Center system serving the south end.

Representative Jarrett noted a movement to move public safety technology to a federal level.

Councilmember Chelminiak said the City is ready to move forward with development of the NORCOM center.

Hospital District Boundaries

Councilmember Marshall noted the Council's concern regarding the financial impact on citizens related to Public Hospital District #1 (Valley Medical Hospital) levy. This hospital is outside of Bellevue and rarely are emergency medical patients transported to this hospital. Mrs. Marshall said the levy constitutes a tax without representation, and de-annexation is virtually impossible.

Representatives Eddy and Hunter spoke to the role of nonprofit public hospitals in serving an area. Representative Jarrett feels the question is the role of public hospitals in the overall health care arena.

Economic Development

Councilmember Lee described the importance of adequate infrastructure in supporting economic development, including the development of a vision incorporating plans for regional transportation, downtown projects, and potential redevelopment of the Bel-Red corridor. Mr. Lee said Bellevue is seeking expansion of funding through the Department of Revenue's LIFT (Local Infrastructure Financing Tool) authority.

Representative Hunter said he was not in favor of this legislation last year. He would prefer

a competitive process rather than earmarking funds based on geographic distribution. He said LIFT is extremely expensive for the State and he feels the program should be based on property taxes and not on sales tax. Mr. Hunter will review the issue again, but he noted the current leadership does not support LIFT authority. He feels the legislature must come up with a reasonable mechanism, which could then be used to help fund replacement of the Alaskan Way viaduct.

Water Supply

Mayor Degginger provided background information on the Cascade Water Alliance and noted it does not have eminent domain authority. He asked that the legislature consider providing this authority to enable the construction of pipe lines.

Turning to NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) and similar state permit requirements, Mr. Degginger said the rules are in conflict with the state Growth Management Act. He explained that cities are working on a critical areas ordinance that protects natural resources while providing some flexibility for attaining environmental protection objectives. The Association of Washington Cities and Bellevue have been working on this issue with the Department of Ecology, but the permit is likely to contain requirements that cities have disagreed with.

Representative Jarrett said the NPDES issue is part of the Governor's Puget Sound initiative. He said the legislature intends to address the topic differently with a more strategic WRIA (Water Resource Inventory Area), water basin approach. However, the Puget Sound initiative did not discuss this alternative.

Probation Liability

Councilmember Davidson described the need for legislation regarding probation liability. Bellevue is seeking support for legislation being drafted by the Association of Washington Cities.

Tower Crane Collapse

Mayor Degginger noted the crane failure in Bellevue and subsequent discussions about crane safety. Deputy Mayor Chelminiak feels this should remain a state responsibility. He said City staff are available to describe what happened, and he commented on the need to insure inspections occur and that safety procedures are monitored by the State.

Representative Jarrett stated his understanding that there is no current procedure for monitoring by the Department of Labor and Industries. Mr. Chelminiak said the current practice is that crane operators conduct the inspections. He feels enhanced vigilance is warranted.

Representative Hunter said a workable solution must be developed before legislation can be drafted. He feels it does not appear to be appropriate for the crane operator to also conduct

the inspections.

[Councilmember Davidson left the meeting at 8:50 a.m.]

B&O (Business & Occupation) Tax Apportionment

Councilmember Noble recalled previous work on B&O tax apportionment legislation as well as last-minute changes to provisions of the bill without cities' agreement. Bellevue and other cities stand to lose significant revenue when the law is enacted in 2008. Bellevue anticipates losing \$2 million annually beginning in 2008.

B&O cities are working together to propose a modification to the apportionment provision that would: 1) Give businesses the option to not change their accounting procedures if they do not benefit from apportionment, and 2) Adjust Section 13 of HB 2030 so that the procedures for calculating the B&O tax on firms who conduct business in more than one city are consistent with national best practices.

Representative Hunter suggested the accounting issue should be fully evaluated.

Telecommunications

Deputy Mayor Chelminiak described cities' concerns regarding the telecommunications industry lobbying for statewide cable franchise authority. He feels this should continue to be regulated by local governments to protect the public rights-of-way and to ensure fairness to the public and cable companies.

Representative Jarrett said the issue is consistency between jurisdictions.

At 9:00 a.m., Mayor Degginger thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting adjourned.

Myrna L. Basich
City Clerk

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