

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Study Session

February 5, 2007
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room
Bellevue, Washington

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

ABSENT: Councilmember Marshall

1. Executive Session

Deputy Mayor Chelminiak called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and announced recess to Executive Session for approximately 10 minutes to discuss one matter of potential litigation.

The Study Session resumed at 6:17 p.m. with Mayor Degginger presiding.

2. Study Session

(a) Planning Process for Meydenbauer Bay Park and Connection to Downtown

City Manager Steve Sarkozy opened discussion regarding the planning process for Meydenbauer Bay Park and a connection to Downtown Park. Funds for the project are included in both the Parks and Community Services budget and the Planning and Community Development budget.

Parks and Community Services Director Patrick Foran introduced Robin Cole, Project Manager (Parks), and Michael Bergstrom, Senior Planner (PCD). Mr. Foran briefly reviewed the history of Meydenbauer Bay. He noted that waterways have always been focal points for communities, and Meydenbauer Bay was once populated by Native Americans. There has been a national trend to reclaim and redevelop waterfronts, which in many cities have been the focus of industrial activity.

Mr. Foran displayed photographs depicting early scenes of Meydenbauer Bay including a 1914 ferry landing and the Wildwood Park dance pavilion. Additional photographs depict the whaling industry of the 1930s in Meydenbauer Bay and the Lagen family's whaling company. Whaling boats were kept in the bay during the winter.

Mr. Foran described the rapid change in the community in less than 100 years. Bellevue's two waterfronts, Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish, have largely been in private ownership. The community's first park, developed in 1953, was a street end that is now Clyde Beach Park. This represents Bellevue's first attempt to locate public lands along the water. However, 13 of the community's 14 miles of waterfront property remain in private ownership. Bellevue has long been interested in reestablishing a waterfront presence for public access. Mr. Foran noted the objective of the Lake to Lake Greenway and trail to link the two lakes and to preserve natural environments along the way.

Planning Director Dan Stroh explained that the Department of Planning and Community Development is involved in the project as well, based on the goal for connectivity from the downtown to neighborhoods and the waterfront to the west.

Mr. Stroh presented drawings of how new development upland of the bay might look. The conceptual drawing depicts a pedestrian corridor lined with shops and restaurants, landscaping, and a view of the water. Mr. Foran reviewed an aerial view of Meydenbauer Bay showing waterfront properties acquired by the City over the years as well as Downtown Park. The City now owns 800 feet of waterfront property purchased at a cost of approximately \$30 million over the past 20 years. More than \$13 million of this amount came from outside, non-City sources.

Mr. Stroh reviewed photographs taken within a couple blocks of the bay, which give no indication of the nearby waterfront. Bellevue's plan will provide the opportunity for redevelopment that will emphasize the waterfront presence. Mr. Stroh summarized the objectives to:

- Enhance public access to Meydenbauer Bay.
- Distinguish Bellevue as a waterfront community.
- Identify activities and design elements that recognize and reinforce the unique waterfront location.
- Improve physical and visual connections between Downtown Park and Meydenbauer Bay.
- Provide for redevelopment in the upland area to reflect the area's waterfront proximity and to complement the new park.
- Integrate master planning for Meydenbauer Bay Park and planning for the adjacent neighborhood.

The proposed study time line is as follows:

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| January-April | Preliminary technical work and selection of consultants |
| February | Appoint Steering Committee |
| Spring | Steering Committee begins meeting. Development of alternatives. |
| Summer | Preliminary preferred alternative identified. |
| Fall | Final preferred alternative selected. |
| Winter 07-08 | Adoption of Plan and Code Amendments |

Winter 07-08 Adoption of Park Master Plan

Councilmember Lee commented on the City's long-term vision to provide public access to the waterfront and to invoke the community's history in the development. He questioned the need for appointing a steering committee, given budget and time limitations.

Mr. Foran said staff feels this is an opportunity for the community to realize a dream, and a variety of stakeholders, both businesses and residents, are interested in the outcome. Typically citizen committees are helpful as another group to provide input into the planning process. Mr. Foran noted that Council can choose to not have a steering committee if that is their choice. In further response, he said resources have been shifted to the project, and Mr. Bergstrom was recently hired to fill a vacancy within PCD. Ms. Cole is a limited-term employee (LTE), which is funded by the project budget.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Chelminiak, Mr. Foran's opinion is that the committee should represent the overall community and be compact enough to expedite the process.

Councilmember Balducci supports the recommendation for a steering committee and a formal public involvement process. Acknowledging that the project will be of interest primarily to residents and businesses in the study area, she recommends at least one representative from outside of the study area on the committee.

Responding to Dr. Davidson, Mr. Foran said staff is seeking input from the Council regarding the guiding principles and role of the committee. Mr. Stroh noted that more background work is needed before convening the committee in order to have sufficient information to initiate the review process. He anticipates the committee could be appointed within four weeks, with the first meeting to occur in approximately six weeks.

Mayor Degginger expressed support for the project and noted Council's interest to proceed.

(b) Arts Funding Approval Procedure

Mr. Sarkozy opened discussion regarding the annual Arts Commission's program, funding procedures, and criteria. The Commission is seeking whether the Council would like to approve the guidelines and funding recommendations for the Eastside Arts Partnerships and Special Projects programs.

Mary Pat Byrne, Arts Specialist, described the objective to standardize the Arts Commission's procedures in making funding recommendations to be consistent with the process used by the Human Services Commission. The General Fund provides \$110,000 annually for two funding programs. The Eastside Arts Partnership utilizes typically 80 percent of this amount to provide operating support to organizations with established track records within the community. The Special Projects program supports one-time or once-yearly projects.

Roxanne Shepherd, Arts Commission Chair, explained that arts and cultural groups submit comprehensive applications, and representatives of the organizations are interviewed as well. The interviews are a joint effort, known as the Eastside Arts Partnerships, of Bellevue Arts Commission and Standing Ovation, a nonprofit fundraising group. While the City-provided funds are unrestricted, the organizations' use of the money is reviewed before funds are disbursed.

Ms. Byrne said in 2004 approximately 17 groups applied for both the City's Special Projects and Eastside Arts Partnership funding. In 2006, 21 groups applied for funding, and Eastside Arts Partnerships applications are currently under review. The Arts Commission has not yet released its guidelines for Special Projects. The dollar amount of funding requests has increased from \$136,000 in 2004 to \$190,000 in 2006. The Arts Commission's funding level remains at \$110,000.

Mayor Degginger expressed an interest in seeing who is benefiting from arts and cultural groups that receive funding from Bellevue. Ms. Byrne said some organizations would be able to provide this information based on zip codes of people taking classes, purchasing tickets, etc. She said staff and the Arts Commission would be willing to ask organizations to provide this information. However, many groups do not have the staff to track data in this way. Ms. Byrne noted that venues such as the Theatre at Meydenbauer Center provide economic impact for the community beyond ticket sales. In further response, Ms. Shepherd said the deliverables or outcomes from the funding contributions are the performances provided within Bellevue.

Using Music Works Northwest as an example, Deputy Mayor Chelminiak said he feels it would be important to track that money provided for tuition assistance supports Bellevue residents. Ms. Byrne said this information can be tracked and provided.

Referring to the criteria for Special Projects Funding listed in the handout, Mr. Chelminiak suggested that Item 9, Provides a clear public benefit, be placed higher on the list.

Responding to Mayor Degginger, Ms. Byrne said the guidelines indicate that special projects must meet most, but not all, of the criteria in order to allow flexibility for unanticipated applications and projects. Mayor Degginger suggested the guidelines require that the project must occur in Bellevue (Criteria 7) and provide a clear public benefit (Criteria 9), with the remaining criteria listed as optional and encouraged. Ms. Shepherd concurred with changing the wording for this year and seeing how it works with funding applications.

Councilmember Balducci would like to see criteria developed to rate projects using the Cultural Compass goals and strategies.

Responding to Ms. Balducci, Ms. Byrne said Standing Ovation distributed \$25,000-30,000 in funding assistance last year.

Responding to Dr. Davidson, Ms. Shepherd said the funding application requests information about financial support from other public entities. This information is considered along with the balance of private funding, ticket sales, and other revenue sources.

Mr. Noble expressed concern about the amount of work that goes into reviewing requests for relatively small funding amounts ranging from \$500 to \$2,000.

Mr. Lee expressed appreciation for this discussion as well as support for the Arts Commission to conduct its review process as it determines to be most appropriate. He looks forward to continued updates on how the program is working.

Mr. Chelminiak said he feels the Human Services Commission's funding process is very effective and he favors a similar approach for arts funding.

Mayor Degginger thanked staff for the presentation.

(c) Privately Initiated 2006 Comprehensive Plan Amendments (CPAs)

Planning Director Dan Stroh said staff and the Planning Commission are wrapping up work on the 2006 Comprehensive Plan Amendments. Council identified CPAs in July for inclusion in the 2006 work plan. Tonight is the first of two sessions representing the final review of 2006 CPAs. Privately initiated CPA proposals will be discussed tonight, and publicly initiated proposals will undergo final review on February 26. The entire package will be presented for Council action on March 6.

Doug Mathews, Planning Commission Chair, said the Commission recommends by a vote of 6-0 approval of the Wilburton Gateway CPA, with an R-15 (15 units per acre) density cap. The CPA amends the NE 8th Street Subarea Plan map from single family-medium (SF-M) and multifamily low (MF-L) to multifamily-medium (MF-M), and to place a note on the map setting the maximum rezoning density at 15 dwelling units per acre for 1.9 acres located at the southwest corner of NE 8th Street and 124th Avenue NE.

The declining availability of land in Bellevue encourages infill on sites such as the Wilburton Gateway when neighborhood compatibility can be assured. The narrow depth of the site makes it difficult to design an optimal living environment on this busy arterial as well as a transition to single family development to the south. Expansion of the map designation will create a site design better suited to the site. Mr. Mathews said the Commission received a fair amount of public comment on this proposal and was impressed with the thoroughness of the applicant's outreach to the community.

The second proposal is the Hancock-Muren CPA, for which the Commission recommends approval by a vote of 6-0. This CPA amends the Southeast Bellevue Subarea Plan map from single family-low (SF-L) to single family-medium (SF-M) on four acres located on the west side of the 1800 block of 156th Avenue SE. The neighborhood has mid-range single-family densities

and the Lake Hills Greenbelt. The proposal provides compact urban development to better utilize low-density land.

The Planning Commission recommends by a vote of 6-0 approval of the Bellewood Apartments CPA. This amends the Southwest Bellevue Subarea Plan map from Office (O) to multifamily-high (MF-H) for a .27-acre portion of a 1.44-acre property located at 148 102nd Avenue SE. Redevelopment of the site, which is split by two Comprehensive Plan designations (O and MF-H), is proposed. Amending the plan is consistent with the City's current practice to not allow split designations on a parcel and the goal of facilitating more housing.

The Planning Commission recommends by a vote of 6-0 denial of the Public Storage CPA. This would have amended the Richards Valley Subarea Plan map from Office Limited Business (OLB) to LI (Light Industrial) on 2.89 acres located on 118th Avenue SE. Mr. Mathews explained that the Richards Valley Subarea Plan in 1981 designated the industrial uses in this area as OLB in anticipation of redevelopment that is more environmentally sensitive given the proximity to the Mercer Slough. A LI designation would be consistent with the City's objective to support commercial development. However, the LI designation would allow a broad range of industrial development that conflicts with the Comprehensive Plan and preservation of the Mercer Slough natural environment. Mr. Mathews said no compelling case was presented for why the City should approve the proposal.

Councilmember Balducci commended the developer's high level of community outreach as well as the submittal on the Wilburton Gateway CPA proposal. Regarding the Hancock-Muren CPA, she questioned the compatibility of the proposed increased density with the greenbelt across the street.

Comprehensive Planning Manager Paul Inghram said the site currently has four rectangular lots. It is anticipated that the site will be re-platted and access to the site will be reconfigured to receive the full benefit of the density increase. The proposed density is consistent with adjacent land. Staff and the Planning Commission concluded that the amendment does not represent a significant change in neighborhood character.

Responding to Ms. Balducci, Mr. Inghram said the area to the west is single family-high (SF-H), and the Hancock-Muren CPA proposes SF-M (Medium). Senior Planner Nicholas Matz noted adjacent density of R-5, and the Hancock-Muren site would be 2.5 to 3.5-R.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Chelminiak, Mr. Matz said adjacent land is already zoned for a higher density. The Hancock-Muren site is the only one zoned R-1.

Responding to Councilmember Lee regarding the Public Storage CPA proposal, Mr. Inghram said the business is currently a non-conforming use in the OLB zone. A LI designation would have allowed the company to redevelop the storage use on the site, according to the intent expressed when the company was known as Shurgard Storage.

Responding to Dr. Davidson, Mr. Matz said the City offered the administrative conditional use permit (CUP) process as an alternative for Public Storage to allow the company to redevelop the site. The City and Planning Commission were concerned how a change to LI might affect the future use of the site by another entity.

3. Council Business [Regular Session Agenda Item 6]

Councilmember Balducci attended the performance of *Fiddler on the Roof* held as a benefit for Bellevue Youth Theatre. She commended Mayor Degginger's role as the rabbi.

Councilmember Noble attended a meeting of the PSRC (Puget Sound Regional Council) Executive Board.

Councilmember Lee attended the Bellevue Youth Theatre fundraising event and a meeting of the Regional Transit Committee.

Deputy Mayor Chelminiak attended a subcommittee meeting of the PSRC Growth Management Planning Board and visited the state legislature.

Mayor Degginger visited the state legislature and spoke to the Bellevue Rotary Club about the Cascade Water Alliance. He noted that the Council Retreat was held the previous weekend.

At 7:58 p.m., Mayor Degginger declared recess to the Regular Session.

Myrna L. Basich
City Clerk

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