**East Bellevue Community Council**
Summary Minutes of Regular Meeting

May 1, 2012
6:30 p.m.

Lake Hills Community Clubhouse
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Chair Kasner and Councilmembers Capron, Gooding, Hughes, and Seal

ABSENT: None.

STAFF: Pam Fehrman, Project Manager, Parks and Community Services

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. with Chair Kasner presiding.

Chair Kasner indicated that oral communications would be deferred until after the presentation scheduled for Agenda Item 8.

2. **ROLL CALL**

The Clerk called the roll, and all Councilmembers were present. Chair Kasner led the flag salute.

*[Interruption in Agenda]*

4. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Councilmember Seal moved to approve the agenda, and Councilmember Capron seconded the motion. The motion to approve the agenda carried by a vote of 5-0.

5. **PUBLIC HEARING**: None.

6. **RESOLUTIONS**: None.

7. **REPORTS OF CITY COUNCIL, BOARDS, AND COMMISSIONS**: None.

8. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

(a) Parks and Community Services Capital Planning and Project Update

Pam Fehrman, Project Manager, provided an overview of Parks capital projects, the Parks and Open Space Plan, Bellevue Airfield Park, and the City's off-leash study related to Robinswood Park.

Ms. Fehrman said the City is currently working on the 2013-2019 Capital Investment Program (CIP) Plan and the 2013-2014 operating budget. Given budget constraints, the Parks Department is preparing a limited set of investments for the 2013-2019 CIP Plan in partial implementation of the 2008 Parks Levy package.

Synthetic sports fields at Newport Hills and Wilburton Hill were completed in 2010. Additional Parks Levy projects are the Lewis Creek Park picnic area and trail connections (Opening June 2012), Botanical Garden Ravine Garden and Bridge (Opening May 13), Botanical Garden Visitor Center, Bellevue Youth Theatre facility at Crossroads Park, Downtown Park completion, Surrey Downs Park, and a number of neighborhood park projects over the next several years.

Ms. Fehrman noted that the Bellevue Botanical Garden Society raises significant private donations for its projects, including the design of the new visitor center which has permits pending. Development of Surrey Downs Park is on hold pending decisions on the East Link light rail project and its 112th Avenue SE alignment. Ms. Fehrman said neighborhood parks are planned for Bridle Trails and Lake Sammamish.

Responding to the Council, Ms. Fehrman said there are two separate sites in Bridle Trails for neighborhood parks. One site has been acquired (NE 24th Street) and negotiations are ongoing regarding the Acheson parcel (Located near 134th).

Responding to Chair Kasner, Ms. Fehrman said the Lake Sammamish future park locations have not been named or planned yet.

Ms. Fehrman said that work to expand parking and to complete the pedestrian promenade/circle at Downtown Park is expected to begin in 2013. Mr. Kasner provided a brief history of the park.

Responding to the Council, Ms. Fehrman said that Parks Levy projects will be implemented over a 20-year period.

Continuing, Ms. Fehrman said that design and permitting for Airfield Park (Eastgate area) could last from three to five years. The site was a landfill at one point and there are issues associated with stormwater ponds, leachate trenches, and groundwater to be resolved. Ms. Fehrman said she anticipates approval of the Master Plan this summer. She recalled that there was a great deal of public input on the project, which will have sports fields, picnic areas, trails, and a play area.

Ms. Fehrman responded to a number of questions about Airfield Park. Responding to Mr. Kasner, Ms. Fehrman said the landfill will be capped, most likely with a soil mixture that will prevent water from penetrating.

Future planning and design projects include Bel-Red corridor parks, the Downtown Park Rotary playground, and Boys and Girls Club/Hidden Valley improvements (Sports field and gym).

Responding to Chair Kasner, Ms. Fehrman said the Shoreline Management Plan, currently under review by the Planning Commission, will have an impact on parks areas in East Bellevue including Larsen Lake and Phantom Lake.

Ms. Fehrman provided an overview of recommended capital projects identified in the Parks & Open Space System Plan 2010. The Plan is the primary tool used to guide the long-term growth and development of Bellevue's parks and open space system. The core of the plan is a set of 20-year capital project recommendations, which are reviewed and updated approximately every six years. Funding to implement the long-term recommendations within the plan is determined through the CIP budgeting process.

Ms. Fehrman displayed and described a map depicting capital project recommendations including Kelsey Creek Park, Robinswood Tennis Center improvements, phased development of Airfield Park, and off-leash dog area improvements and additions.

Ms. Fehrman said that Bellevue Airfield Park was acquired through three purchases in 1983 (2.5 acres), 2003 (14.5 acres) and 2004 (10.5 acres).

Responding to the Council, Ms. Fehrman commented on the history of the landfill formerly on the site which closed approximately 60 years ago. The site was considered good for a park because it is relatively flat, close to I-90, and adjacent to residential areas. The site is next to a business park, which shares limited parking with the City. Planning for the park involved significant public outreach including community workshops, neighborhood meetings, Parks Board discussions, and City Council meetings. Input was also received by the City in the form of a petition, emails, phone calls, and surveys.

Councilmembers discussed the use of the site over the past 15 years as an unofficial off-leash dog park.

Ms. Fehrman said the most frequent requests regarding Airfield Park's future uses are a sports field complex, world-class aquatic facility, and saving the meadow to continue its off-leash use.

Mr. Hughes suggested that the park include courts for pickleball, which is an increasingly popular sport, especially among older adults. He noted that pickleball courts are approximately one-quarter the size of a tennis court.

Mr. Kasner suggested preparing a parks guide for older adults to highlight areas and amenities that might appeal to them.

Ms. Fehrman said an Off-Leash Study was conducted in 2010, which highlights the demand for more off-leash areas in Bellevue. The study also indicated that dogs (i.e., off-leash, threatening, etc.) are the subject of the majority of complaints involving parks.

Responding to the Council, Ms. Fehrman said the City contracts with King County for animal control services.

Continuing, Ms. Fehrman noted the challenge of trying to locate off-leash areas in a mature and developed parks system. The City's only official off-leash area is in Robinswood Park. The Off-Leash Study recommends two to four additional areas, geographically dispersed, in the community, and potentially including the expansion of the Robinswood off-leash area.

Chair Kasner expressed concern about whether adequate parking could be provided to support enhanced off-leash activity and the Tennis Center at Robinswood Park.

Responding to the Council, Ms. Fehrman said that some of the downtown condo developments have off-leash areas.

Responding to Mr. Kasner, Ms. Fehrman said the Off-Leash Study incorporated a variety of data including the number of pets in the community. She noted that the study is available on the City's web site.

Ms. Fehrman briefly reviewed alternative off-leash concepts for Robinswood Park.

Responding to Mr. Capron, Ms. Fehrman said the off-leash area surface is typically bark or sand. Citizens are equally split as to their preference.

Responding to Mr. Kasner, Ms. Fehrman said there is not currently funding for the off-leash improvements.

Responding to the Council, Ms. Fehrman said the Off-Leash Study looked at parking and traffic impacts. While parking does present a challenge, she noted that, typically, peak off-leash and tennis uses do not compete for parking.

Ms. Fehrman reviewed the elements of the preferred off-leash concept for Robinswood Park which include fencing, double-gated entries, wood trails, lighting, water, a buffer from neighbors, and information kiosks.

Ms. Fehrman encouraged the Council and the public to access more detailed information on the parks system, Airfield Park, Off-Leash Study, and Robinswood Park on the City's web site.

*[Agenda Resumed.]*

## 3. COMMUNICATIONS - WRITTEN AND ORAL

Steve Bushkin said he has lived in the area for 45 years. He noted his interest in the park development planned for Lake Sammamish in 2014. He is a kayaker and interested in lake access. He kayaks on Phantom Lake and Lake Washington, and sometimes on Lake Sammamish near Marymoor Park. With regard to dog parks, he does not currently own a dog but has in the past. He believes it makes sense to enlarge an existing area rather than develop something new. However, he observed from the map that South Bellevue does not have an off-leash area. He wondered if the City could partner with King County to create an off-leash park in the Coal Creek area.

Mr. Bushkin said he appreciates the City's commitment to parks and he is pleased for the opportunity to hear this overview. He said he uses Robinswood Park two to three times a week, Downtown Park, and the trails at Weowna Park.

Chair Kasner thanked Mr. Bushkin for attending and commenting.

Marty Zellner said he has lived adjacent to the northeast corner of Robinswood Park for approximately 30 years and has watched the park evolve. He observed that usage by dogs and their owners has increased noticeably over the past 15 years. He walks the park daily and enjoys the variety of uses and activity there. He would like to maintain that mix of activities. He likes dogs, but he wants to see them in a controlled situation. He feels that dog-related usage is currently somewhat out of control. He questioned how often park rangers are called to the park. He said he has not seen any evidence of King County responding to incidents. Mr. Zellner said he calls the park ranger to report dog-related issues when he sees them.

Referring to the Off-Leash Area (OLA) map, Mr. Zellner expressed concern that Robinswood Park is essentially the only OLA in Bellevue. If the area is expanded to six acres, it will be the dominant use at Robinswood Park. He is concerned that such a plan would adversely impact the diversity of uses and overall experience of the park.

Councilmember Capron said he sees a need for more off-leash areas in Bellevue, but does not want to expand the one at Robinswood Park.

Councilmember Hughes observed that people generally do not want a dog park in their backyard, and he questioned whether neighbors would support expanding this use.

Chair Kasner noted the goal to increase the geographic distribution of dog parks, and observed that expanding Robinswood Park's off-leash area is not consistent with that goal.

Councilmember Seal expressed concern about increased parking demands related to expanding the dog park.

Ms. Fehrman noted there is currently no funding for off-leash areas, including Robinswood Park.

Mr. Kasner said that, if geographic distribution is a goal, it would make more sense to establish an off-leash area in another part of Bellevue.

Ms. Fehrman said the rationale for the Robinswood alternatives is to replace off-leash dog activity at Airfield Park once it is developed. This was in response to citizens' concerns about losing the Airfield Park dog meadow.

Mr. Kasner said he understands that this is what dog owners want. But he questioned whether that has been considered within the context of what the broader community wants. Ms. Fehrman acknowledged that more dog owners were involved in the public process than were non-dog owners.

Responding to Mr. Kasner, Ms. Fehrman said the most recent proposals have been shared with the Parks and Community Services Board, but not with the City Council. In further response, she said the Off-Leash Study determined that there is no need to increase parking facilities at Robinswood Park if the off-leash area is expanded.

Chair Kasner thanked Ms. Fehrman for attending. The Council suggested that additional community organizations would be interested in the presentation.

9. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**: None.

10. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Chair Kasner commented on future agendas. Councilmember Hughes is working with interested citizens to arrange for a presentation in September about the Lake Hills Connector and projects that are underway and planned.

Mr. Kasner said he and Councilmember Capron are working on scheduling a discussion of businesses in East Bellevue for the fall.

Mr. Kasner said he would like to have some type of community celebration in July, most likely on a weekend.

11. **NEW BUSINESS**: None.

12. **CONTINUED COMMUNICATIONS**

Councilmember Hughes reported on the Special Meeting tour of East Bellevue. He noted his interest in speaking with an arborist/horticulturist about the City's vegetation management practices. A citizen has expressed concern that some of the trimming is damaging the plants/trees.

Councilmember Capron said he visited with Brian Franklin at Kelsey Creek Center earlier in the day. He noted a land use proposal to subdivide the property in order to separate the new building on Main Street from the rest of the center. There is also a proposal to separate a portion of the site on 148th to build a new Starbucks store that will accommodate a drive-through. Little Caesar's Pizza is open, and the Verizon store is to open later in the month. The yogurt shop is scheduled to open in the next 4-6 weeks. The owners are trying to create a broad mix of services in the center.

Mr. Capron reported that traffic studies of Kelsey Creek Center indicate that Mondays and Tuesdays are the busiest days for LA Fitness, while the Walmart grocery store will be busier toward the weekend. This will help to balance the demand on parking.

Councilmember Seal commented on the East Bellevue tour and his interest in Airfield Park. He met with Brian Franklin and primarily discussed the Kelsey Creek Center Walmart grocery store.

Chair Kasner reported that he and Councilmember Seal attended the Neighborhood Forum, which involved working in small groups to discuss community issues. He attended the East Link open house at City Hall. Mr. Kasner said he is a member of LA Fitness and enjoys using the new location.

13. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**: None.

14. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Councilmember Seal moved to approve the Summary Minutes of the April 3, 2012, meeting. Councilmember Capron seconded the motion, which carried by a vote of 5-0.

15. **ADJOURNMENT**

Councilmember Capron moved to adjourn. Councilmember Gooding seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

At 8:49 p.m., Chair Kasner declared the meeting adjourned.

Michelle Murphy, CMC
Deputy City Clerk

/kaw