East Bellevue Community Council
Summary Minutes of Regular Meeting

DRAFT

August 6, 2013
6:30 p.m.

Lake Hills Boys & Girls Club
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Chair Kasner, Councilmembers Capron, and Seal

ABSENT: Vice Chair Hughes and Councilmember Gooding

STAFF: Antoinette Pratt, Sr. Land Use Planner
Carl Wilson, Sr. Development Review Engineer
Mike Remington, Deputy Fire Chief
Joseph Nault, Police Lieutenant

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

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

2. **ROLL CALL**

The Clerk called the roll with all Councilmembers present with the exception of Mr. Hughes and Mr. Gooding.

Chair Kasner led the flag salute.

3. **COMMUNICATIONS: WRITTEN AND ORAL**: None.

4. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Councilmember Capron moved to approve the agenda. Councilmember Seal seconded the motion, which carried by a vote of 3-0.

5. **COURTESY PUBLIC HEARING**:

(a) Conditional Use and Critical Area Land Use Application for Odle Middle School

Chair Kasner opened the courtesy hearing.

Ms. Pratt provided the staff overview. The Bellevue School District has applied for Conditional Use and Critical Areas Land Use permits to demolish Odle Middle School and build a new two story facility. Modifications will be made to the existing athletic fields. Site improvements will include parking and landscaping. The Aquatic Center will remain with modest changes to the parking area.

The new building is expected to accommodate a student population growth of up to 1,200.

She reviewed the approval process for this application and encouraged audience members to enter their names on the sign-up sheet to ensure their status as 'parties of record'.

Rebecca Baibak, Project Architect with Integrus Architecture, reviewed site and building plans. She stated the curriculum and academic areas are on the north side of the site and that the community resource area is located on the south side of the site. She next pointed out proposed ingress/egress routes to access the school including bus routes and emergency access via NE 4th. She stated building materials include masonry, metal and lots of glazing.

Deputy Chief Remington, Fire Department, provided information about Fire Department operations and how site design impacts those operations during an emergency. A major component of life safety is good access to all facilities. He recalled a fire at the old junior high in the 1970's, stating it consumed several of the classrooms and took most of the fire staff to fight that fire. Main access during evening hours if fairly easy but, during peak travel time, it is vital to have additional access. Much of the firefighting equipment, especially the larger land ladders, need to get as close to the building as possible. Access speed is essential to fire firefighting. He emphasized the importance of quick and safe access in the case of an emergency situation.

Gerald Costigan stated current emergency access is through the north entrance (off NE 8th) and asked if the west entrance had been considered. Deputy Chief responded the length of access was a determining factor in the selection of a proposed access.

Lieutenant Nault, Police Department, stated, given the geography of the school and campus, the main point of access is at the 143rd block of NE 8th. He provided a police emergency scenario and current vehicular access point to school. He qualified that if a large scale emergency should happen, police would be approaching from several different directions, noting difficulties with limited vehicular access. He stated, as a general rule, the more access to a location, the better for the emergency response.

Carl Wilson, Transportation Department, stated the intent is for the school to accommodate approximately 1200 student, an increase to the current population by about 400 students. This increase is expected to occur over time.

Chair Kasner asked if there was data on percentage of students who walk versus bus to school.

Shannon Meyers stated she lives in the neighborhood and carpools six children everyday by Odle and the logistics are a nightmare for cars on that corner. Parents do not use the NE 8th entrance for child drop-off but instead use NE 4th creating safety issues for those children walking to school.

Mr. Wilson continued his presentation. It is anticipated that there ultimately will be an increase of more than 50% from the current student population and undoubtedly an increase in traffic. The intersection on NE 8th and 143rd is already badly congested during the school's morning peak hour. Part of the traffic backup problem at 143rd and NE 8th is due to the existing parking

lot and poor circulation system. The goal of the proposed bigger parking lot and broader circulation pattern is to get cars off NE 8th Street more easily and eliminate spill-back.

Chair Kasner asked Mr. Wilson to trace the parent drop-off route. Mr. Wilson pointed to the entrance off 143rd with school traffic monitors directing drop-off traffic. He provided the example of Cherry Crest Elementary School.

Matt Palmer, Traffic Consultant for the Bellevue School District, stated the new configuration will accommodate approximately 90 vehicles in the queue before hitting NE 8th using the entire drive-up/drop-off area. The old configuration accommodated 8 vehicles on site with an additional 16 vehicles before spilling over onto NE 8th.

Mr. Wilson stated, in addition to doing the much bigger and efficient circulation system, another key component is to separate cars and buses.

Responding to Chair Kasner, Ms. Baibak pointed out surrounding residences and current dead-end on NE 4th.

Mr. Wilson stated the ultimate number of school buses expected to serve an expanded student body is approximately 15. Understandably increased traffic through the neighborhood in not a popular idea, the tradeoff is improved access via NE 8th.

Chair Kasner polled the audience, stating the disruption of moving the meeting to the larger room will take up to 10-15 minutes. He asked if the inconvenience of moving the meeting would be outweighed by the ability for all to hear the proceeding and participate in the discussion. The audience expressed their desire to move to the larger room.

Mr. Wilson completed his presentation, acknowledging current drop-off practices in the neighborhood, stating the difficulties in accessing the school off NE 8th should decrease with the new access configuration.

Chair Kasner recessed the meeting at 7:15 p.m. to change rooms. He reconvened the meeting at 7:26 p.m.

Ms. Pratt reiterated this is a Process III application and explained the implications. She stated this conditional use application is currently at the 65% stage. Critical land use permit application has been submitted. Staff is at the beginning stage of review. She again encouraged the attendees to reserve their status as 'parties of record'. She provided a timeline, stating she anticipates going to the hearing examiner by the end of October, beginning of November.

Rebecca Baibak stated construction is anticipated to begin next June and run for two years.

Chair Kasner reminded Council and audience that this is a quasi-judicial matter and the only time public input can be taken is during the public hearing process.

Ms. Pratt provided a caveat, stating staff will accept public comment up until the time the staff recommendation is made. Once the recommendation is made, the 'parties of record' is set and no more comments will be taken on this project.

John Perkins asked if the Community Council still retained veto power. Chair Kasner responded that the authority to approve/disapprove land use matters is still within the Community Council's purview.

Laura Smith asked if the plan presented was the only alternative being evaluated. Chair Kasner responded that tonight's plan is all that is available for public review at this time, but could change based on public feedback received tonight.

Phil Petra questioned what is meant by 'feedback' and opportunities at future meetings. Toni responded there may be an opportunity for a future meeting if alternative plans should surface.

Sonja Saltzman stated an email exchange with Project Manager Kyle McCloud regarding new plans.

Mr. McCloud responded that the District is still looking at options but this proposal is what has been submitted to the City at this time. Chair Kasner continued the response, stating the School District is the proponent. The City is evaluating the plan that was submitted. He noted that the School District wants to be a good neighbor and, based on the feedback provided tonight, could decide to submit an alternative plan.

Jerry Costigan asked the criteria used to evaluate the application. He asked if the public's desires mean anything. Ms. Pratt explained the criteria listed in the Land Use Code (20.27.40).

Earl Calvin stated they went through this process a number of years ago (1965). He asked if anyone has gone back to review that record. Chair Kasner stated the scope and scale of Bellevue in 2013 is not what it was in 1965. Mr. Calvin stated the process has not changed and, he was sure the people of Imperial East still feel the same now as then.

Roger Zimbelman questioned construction and access for dump trucks. Kyle McCloud stated the only access currently is 143rd and NE 8th. The City of Bellevue allows construction noise between 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday; 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.on Saturdays only.

Dr. Faried stated he would like to see five minute drop-off parking only, so that people can come in rather than walking their kids to the school. If they have drop-off parking and easy access, maybe the 30 parking stalls can be retained next to the school.

Matt Palmer stated there are 133 parking stalls today. The plan calls for up to 150 parking stalls. Based on an occupancy study of how many parked vehicles were there after the bell and again before the bell rang on a typical school day, the parking area was determined to be under-utilized currently. No special event data is available. The design is based on a typical school day for

parking and circulation. He explained the advantages of the pick-up and drop-off proposed plan. There is no parking proposed at the athletic field.

Al Watson, long time resident of Imperial East, stated his concerns with added traffic on NE 4th. He stated residents of Imperial East have only two ways to enter and leave their neighborhood, one being Main Street and the other 148th. He explained what has happened over the last few years to traffic congestion during peak travel times and current difficulties accessing their neighborhood. He questioned how school buses would enter and exit via NE 4th in light of the difficulties that already exist.

Debra Casey stated her opposition to NE 4th as ingress/egress for school buses.

Harlan Saltzman stated his children walk to school. He opined that Odle is a failing school. He asked where 1200 students would come from for a failing school. Chair Kasner responded that due to the economy, parents are fleeing the private school system. The public elementary schools are bursting. He explained the demographic pipeline for student enrollment.

Mr. Saltzman suggested keeping current emergency access and routing the buses around the school. He stated that people that use the fields never park where the parking is now. Since NE 4th is the shortest access point, they do and will continue to park in the Imperial East neighborhood. They don't use school parking or if they try it is always full. He questioned the wisdom of ultimately increasing the student population to 1200 and only increasing parking by 20 stalls.

Matt Palmer responded, explaining how the proposed onsite parking proposal was calculated. He stated that the onsite parking increase is based on current to new student numbers as a factor of 60% based on a normal school day. A 15% factor for safety was also included to acknowledge the issue of on-street parking.

Chair Kasner asked for numbers for special event parking. He noted there are more than 150 cars at Cultural Night and many other nights of the year. He asked if Bellevue High School had zoned parking around the school.

Mr. Palmer responded Bellevue High School has zoned parking surrounding the school in many of the neighborhoods.

Chair Kasner asked if a similar solution would be an option for neighboring area surrounding Odle.

Mr. Saltzman continued his testimony, stating he has been to other schools, taken his children to events at other schools and, with all the remodels, parking is a nightmare. He has no faith in a project that does not provide enough onsite parking.

Roger Zimbelman spoke regarding potential access off of 140th. Chair Kasner explained why access off 140th is not practical.

Audree McEachern has lived in Imperial East for 51 years. During the school year there are oodles of kids walking back and forth from Odle. Over the years, the area also has a number of elderly people who walk with their walkers. It seems unfair to impact these people's lives. She noted that the kids have never had a place to play, there are no sidewalks. This is not the neighborhood to safely run buses through.

Chair Kasner questioned current bus routes. He stated he was intrigued by a proposed alternative circulation plan with everyone accessing the school off 143rd, buses going to the rear of the building while cars go to the front. He noted his school drop-off/parking experience.

Rod Hall noted area wetlands and the District's plans to relocate/build tennis court in that area. He believes the current tennis court should stay where it is. He next spoke to synthetic fields, wetland infill and impacts to the environment. He stated he has ordered a copy of the SEPA. When the school was built 50 years ago the wetlands were tight lined. He opined that the School District should restore the wetlands and not build a tennis court in his backyard. He is also opposed to the installation of plastic fields and cutting trees. Mr. Hall stated he basically supports relocating the entire plan to Highland. He stated the Prism Program buses students in to Odle. He suggested keeping Odle at 500 students as it was originally designed and not blow it out to 1200. He encouraged disapproval of this application.

Wendy Woods stated she is an educator, she likes kids and she likes schools but this is not going to work. She spoke to 145th Place, talking about almost 2 city blocks that buses are going to come down from Main Street. She opposes the plan for safety reasons and impacts to her community. She suggested moving the project to Tillicum.

Chair Kasner asked percentage of students at Odle in the Prism Program. He would like more information on this program's enrollment as the application moves forward. Prism is a wonderful program; there are some tremendous children in it; but, if only 15% live in neighborhood, maybe it's not properly placed at Odle.

Greg Lin spoke to the Prism Program, stating it has been spread out to two schools. He asked if anyone has driven from Main Street or 148th to get to the entrance. It is not a straight thoroughfare, there are blind 90 degree turns on either side. This is just an accident waiting to happen.

Matt Palmer responded he has driven it during school times and during non-peak times, and agrees that congestion is bad during peak hours. He commented on street sight lines and street widths. These streets were built in the 1950's with a capacity to handle 15 extra buses. They were also built at a time when sidewalks were not really a primary concern. Most of us have plantings and other things within the City's right-of-way that would be eliminated if sidewalks were to be built. He stated his kids play in the backyard because he does not want them playing in the street.

Ken Dyer spoke to field conditions and non-school activity use.

Chair Kasner stated public use of the school's fields is part of a policy discussion for a later date.

Mr. Dyer stated increased non-school use will bring more traffic into the neighborhood. He spoke to a secondary access and recounted illegal drug and vandalism activities at the dead-end.

Don Boettiger agreed with comments made by all preceding speakers. He stated the 28 foot street width in Imperial East is reduced by cars parked on both sides of street.

Shannon Myers stated foot traffic from Sammamish High School is not being considered. Her kids walk home from school every day and get out of school at the same time as Odle. She stated she would gladly give up 5 rhododendron bushes if it meant sidewalks her kids could walk on safely.

Dr. Faried spoke to parking issues on Fridays and Sundays on 145th Place due to Mosque and church overflow parking onto the street, making it hard to get out of his driveway. He invited others to drive his neighborhood to see the entire area, front and back, congested with parked cars.

Chair Kasner made a commitment that sometime this fall there will be a meeting to talk about the Imperial East neighborhood and invite representatives from the Mosque, Best Wok, 7-Eleven, and Kelsey Creek Center. It is unfair to the School District to punish them for the other issues that we have. It is time to create a forum to talk about what was, what is and what could be, all of which ties in nicely with the current Comprehensive Plan update efforts.

John Perkins bought his house in 1967. At that time, Odle wanted to open up 4th as an access and the community opposed that effort. He believes there is a written agreement someplace with the stipulation that NE 4th would remain a dead-end with no access to the school.

Chair Kasner asked if the School District was aware of any agreement that was made with the neighborhood in the 1967.

Jack McCloud stated he would research the issue.

Laura Smith stated her objections to bus access at NE 4th. She has no objections to that same access for emergency vehicles. Buses should access school from the front.

Loralie Parker stated the number of bus trips each day is compounded by vehicle drop-off traffic.

Marcie Pfeiffer asked if any there has been an assessment to mitigate of the impact buses will make on neighborhood and infrastructure.

Jim Muir asked if there has been any kind of environmental assessment for this development and if it can be shared with the community.

Toni Pratt explained that the environmental impact study was conducted by the School District as it is the agency of jurisdiction. They have issued a DNS for this project. The determination of non-significance is available as part of the application file and can be viewed at City Hall.

Gerry Costigan stated he would like to hear some comment about access from 140th Avenue. He feels it is being ignored.

Chair Kasner stated access at 140th is not part of the proposed project. He asked the City and School District to bring back information on what it would take to make 140th an access point.

Phil Petra asked if there are any plans to install traffic control measures such as speed bumps, roundabouts, or sidewalks.

Carl Wilson responded that the City has programs for traffic control that is separate from this process. Neighborhoods or individuals can approach the City to request installation.

Chair Kasner asked if the Hearing Examiner as a condition of approval could require some kind of mitigation.

Toni stated the Examiner will look holistically at the site and determine if approval with conditions is appropriate. She provided the Bellevue High School site as an example.

Seal stated that the Hearing Examiner's role is to makes sure the project complies with the City Code and state laws.

Chair Kasner stated School District is here to solicit input from the community as to what will work or not work. The School District is not hostile, they want to build a quality project that we all can be proud of.

Jack McCloud stated we will take suggestions and comments back with us and work with our design team to see if there are other ways to incorporate some of the things we have heard. He can't give a timeline until they meet with the design team and begin going through the process.

Ken Dyer stated there have been two meetings prior where the School District has solicited information. He stated he can't see where that input has been taken into consideration.

Chair Kasner responded that he went to the meeting at Odle about one year ago and the plans presented that night are different from those currently being reviewed.

Harlan Saltzman stated he was not notified of that first meeting. He stated he lives outside the 500' notice area. The majority of the people present tonight did not know about that first meeting. This project will change the whole dynamic of the neighborhood.

Phil Petra stated residents presented a letter for the record opposing the opening of NE 4th Place. He wanted assurance that the signatories were also parties of record.

Ms. Pratt stated the signatories were recorded as parties of record.

Chair Kasner noted that he has asked Ms. Pratt to make that letter a part of the Community Council's record.

John Bok stated he is speaking as a homeowner in Imperial East and as a citizen of Bellevue. He stated the presentation does not show the box that this project lays in, which is NE 8th, 148th, Main and 140th. He provided the physical description of the roads. This began with the assumption to change the school to accommodate 450 more students. We really need to look at the box and no matter how you slice and dice it; you have to access through one of the four edges. The City really needs to think about if that is realistic. He stated his concerns with basing such a major development on nothing more than an assumption.

Wendy Woods reiterated a previous speaker's question, asking if this is the only plan? Alternatives plans would show good faith. We don't have good faith here, only one plan is proposed and it is not acceptable. She opined that property values will go down because of the new traffic (buses, service trucks) to the area. This proposal will create a lower quality of life for Imperial East residents.

Chair Kasner interjected that City can only address the proposal before them. The School District is very aware that this is the current proposal and based on feedback could change. It would be useful to go back chronologically to review what was proposed and the previous feedback precipitating change. The School District is a great neighbor and they will work hard to do what works for everyone. The Chair asked if Imperial East had a registered neighborhood association. He suggested contacting Neighborhood Outreach regarding information about forming one. He explained the Community Council process and noted that they are working towards a win/win outcome.

Mr. Seal stated the Community Council must have valid reasons based on City Code for their decision.

Wes Clarke encouraged all attendees to contact Mike McCormick (Neighborhood Outreach). He stated, with the help of Neighborhood Outreach, the Robinswood Community is in the process of revitalizing/rebuilding their community organization.

Don Boettiger asked if the school bus route from Main Street will come down 145th Avenue or 145th Place?

Matt Palmer responded that he does not know the proposed street route but suspects it will not use 145th Place. Bus routes are constantly changing based on demographic shifts. When you start looking at SEPA, you also have to look at volume impacts. 60 vehicles added to the street over the course of a day has a very small impact when factoring in 142 existing homes that generate approximately 1, 420 daily trips.

There has been concern noted regarding limited entry points into the neighborhood and the addition of 60 bus trips per day. The initial proposal showed a longer bus route that came onto the site from the front entrance and routed parent drop-off traffic to NE 4th. Through the review process, that routing changed to what you see now, moving bus traffic onto the south side of the site and discouraging any additional school traffic off of NE 4th.

Mr. Boettiger explained why he asked the question. When the buses make a right or left hand turn and there are two cars parked on either side of the street, the turn radius is extremely tight. He asked if there will be any parking restrictions.

Councilmember Seal agreed that the area has narrow streets and, when cars park on both sides, traffic is restricted. He expounded on area traffic problems and stated he has always been perplexed as to why Odle was located in mid-block. He opined the unsuitability of the lane coming off 140th for any kind of traffic. It serves primarily as driveway access to the homes off that lane. Mr. Seal noted improvements to 140th and its provision of access around the complex, not to the complex. He continued, pointing out difficulties related to school access. He stated would like a better program site.

Chair Kasner stated Odle needs to be redone so that it works for the next 40 years.

Councilmember Capron stated that we need to keep our eyes on the ball. The goal is to get a new school. He provided his background growing up in Imperial East and attendance at Odle Middle School. He stated parent drop-off traffic is a problem. He would like to see mitigation in the neighborhood for traffic calming and possibly curb cuts on Main Street and 140th for parents dropping off their students. He is glad for tonight's audience participation, stating he hopes to end up with a school they can all be proud of. Good schools mean higher property values.

John Perkins would like the Community Council to get progress reports as this application moves through the system to share with the public. He questioned height restrictions and the school's ability to go higher and lower the building footprint.

Rebecca Babek responded that height restrictions are called out in the Land Use Code. She explained the correlation between building height and program areas. The District did look at a 3 story design but it didn't work for the site.

Chair Kasner stated building height is a different issue.

Mr. Kasner stated the proposed drop-off area is ridiculous. He would like to see the drop-off route the opposite way so that cars can queue up all the way to the area where parents would expect to drop their students off. He supports emergency access around the building and, if a 3rd floor is possible, to shrink the building's footprint.

Separate from this current proposal, Mr. Kasner stated there still needs to be discussion regarding the policy question surrounding community use of school facilities for non-school events. He committed to slating this topic for future discussion.

Mr. Kasner pointed out that Imperial East is the neighborhood closest to the epicenter of our community. It is located at the front door of a revitalized Kelsey Creek Center, a wonderful and long awaited redevelopment. He stated existing traffic pressures created by the Kelsey Creek Center, the Islamic Center, and the Mormon Temple should not be laid at the feet of the School District. Instead, we should be looking for solutions that will work for the community now and in the future. Separate from the Odle Middle School application, he committed to taking up sometime this fall pedestrian safety, ingress/egress into residential areas and road congestion as it impacts quality of life in East Bellevue.

As for a progress report, Mr. Kasner strongly supports staff meeting with the community directly to apprise them of any changes to the proposal prior to sending it to the hearing examiner.

Earl Calvin spoke to current traffic congestion in Imperial East.

Chair Kasner responded, stating we need to talk about neighborhood safety at current traffic levels before we address future traffic conditions.

Gerry Costigan stated sometime in the past the community was asked to vote on sidewalks. And, the only way it was going to happen was to create Public Utility District which meant increased taxes. That proposition was turned down.

Barbara Guyll suggested for the next meeting that arrangements be made to provide microphones so that everyone can hear what the speaker is saying.

Kausmik Narayanan questioned the decision process.

In response, Chair Kasner clarified that comments made tonight are timely for inclusion into the records. He noted, based on the community concerns expressed tonight, there may be ample grounds as the project is currently constituted for modification so that it works for all the parties involved.

Kyle McCloud, Project Manager, thanked the audience participants on behalf of the Bellevue School District for their input. The District is listening. He stated he and the design team will need some time to go back and digest everything they have heard tonight and that they will continue to work through the City's process. We want to be good neighbors and part of your community.

Chair Kasner, seeing no one further wishing to speak, closed the courtesy hearing.

6. **RESOLUTIONS**: None.

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

8. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**: (All reports deferred to a later meeting)

   (a) Sammamish High School Demolition/Rebuild Update

(b) Affordable Housing Presentation

9. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**: None.

10. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS** None.

11. **NEW BUSINESS**: (Discussion deferred to a later meeting)

(a) Capital Investment/Transportation Facilities Plans

12. **CONTINUED COMMUNICATIONS**: None.

13. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**: None.

14. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Councilmember Seal moved to approve the minutes of the July 2, 2013 Regular Meeting. Councilmember Capron seconded the motion.

Motion to approve the July 2, 2013 minutes carried 3-0.

15. **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Capron moved to adjourn. Mr. Seal seconded the motion which carried 3-0.

Chair Kasner declared the meeting adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

Michelle Murphy, CMC
Deputy City Clerk