

The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on May 6, 2008.

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

March 18, 2008
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Yantis, Commissioners Beighle, Hoople, Huenefeld-Gese, Lazetti, Seltzer, Stout

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Emily Leslie, Alex O'Reilly, Senait Taddese, Terry Smith, Department of Parks and Community Services

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by Chair Yantis who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. February 21, 2008

Commissioner Beighle noted that she and her daughters had also attended the Martin Luther King, Jr. festivities.

Commissioner Stout called attention to the third paragraph on the second page of the minutes and asked that "Commissioner Stout said she spent time earlier in the year with Healthy Start staff..." be changed to "Commissioner Stout said she spent time with Healthy Start staff...."

Commissioner Stout also referred to the second paragraph on page 6 and suggested

that "...outlook for home visiting is looked very bad..." should read "...outlook for home visiting looked very bad...."

Motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Commissioner Hoople. Second was by Commissioner Stout and the motion carried unanimously.

4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

5. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Stout reported that she attended the March 12 AtWork! breakfast at the Westin. She said the event was very well done, very well attended, and raised about \$110,000.

Commissioner Stout noted that several Commissioners attended Gumbo Night for Youth Link. She noted that several Commissioners also participated in the Data Workshop on March 12th and complimented staff and the agencies for bringing in some very good people.

Commissioner Hoople said on March 20 he would be appearing before the King County Law, Justice and Human Services Committee to present the much-delayed fourth quarter report on the Veterans and Human Services Levy.

Chair Yantis said he attended the United Way East Community Council meeting on March 14 at which Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly presented findings from the Needs Update. He also noted that earlier in the day he had attended the United Way Community Building Committee meeting.

Human Services Manager Emily Leslie said she attended the King County Alliance of Human Services meeting earlier in the day, and also the meeting of the Prevention Workgroup of the Committee to End Homelessness. She said the latter has just about completed its work and should have a draft report within a month.

Ms. Leslie reported that the county is working to put together a structure for overseeing the revenues from the mental health and substance abuse sales tax that was approved near the end of 2007. It appears that the oversight duties will rest heavily with King County staff from criminal justice. There are slots for agencies and for the cities of Seattle and Bellevue, and for someone from the Suburban Cities Association. The Eastside Human Services Forum and the City of Redmond have weighed in with comments that the structure is not very representative of the full county.

Assistant Director Terry Smith reported that on March 17 Director Patrick Foran presented to the City Council information regarding a park levy and/or bond to go

before the voters in November. The Council nodded agreement to move forward with a mock-up model. The anticipated \$40 million package is split about 25 percent for acquisition and 75 percent for park development. The last park bond in the city was voted on in 1988 and just recently expired.

Mr. Smith informed the Commissioners that a representative from the Wraparound Services Project is slated to provide the Commission with an update on May 20. He said they will share the results of the evaluation that was recently completed. The leadership team has given its stamp of approval to move forward with turning Lake Hills into a Wraparound Program, and to move forward with potential expansions to other sites.

Ms. O'Reilly said she provided the Parks and Community Services Board with an update regarding the Needs Update on March 11.

6. DISCUSSION

A. Final Discussion of 2009-1010 Funding Priorities

Ms. Leslie said she talked with staff about how much new money there will be to allocate. She said the estimate of funding from the human services funding formula is that there will be about a 2.9 percent increase, or about \$63,000 in new dollars. In addition, there will be almost \$44,000 in previously allocated but unspent dollars; those contracts were for mental health services and dental van services, both of which are services needed in the community.

Commissioner Stout pointed out the importance of dental health services in the community and suggested the Commission may want to advertise the need.

Ms. O'Reilly commented that in addition to dental services, the element that is missing is the coordination of making appointments and seeking dentists willing to do pro bono work that was provided through Evergreen.

Ms. O'Reilly noted that in past years there has been a paragraph included in the request for proposals reaffirming the city's policy of supporting the full continuum of services and then highlighting specific focus and emphasis areas. The Commission has avoided using the term "priority" to keep from giving the impression that there might be some weighting done at the review stage. Dental and mental health services could be called out. Homelessness, prevention and wraparound services are other areas the Commission might want to call out in general.

Commissioner Stout said her reading of the Needs Update left her with the impression that the Commission should call out mental health/medical health, homelessness, and early learning in broad statements.

Commissioner Hoople asked if the extra funding put into early learning has had any effect given that the Needs Update indicates there continue to be gaps.

Commissioner Stout explained that early learning is a long-term strategy for the State. Each year there is a whole new batch of kids with needs.

Ms. O'Reilly noted that more money was put into childcare subsidies in the last funding cycle, but costs are going up and more families that do not qualify for State assistance are finding they need subsidies.

Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese suggested one way to give more attention to particular areas of need would be not to give each contract a COLA increase and to use those dollars for focus areas. Commissioner Hoople pointed out that if contracts are not given a COLA there will be new gaps created.

Chair Yantis cautioned against making claims about priorities if there will be no funds available to back them up.

Ms. Leslie pointed out that Bellevue is one of the few cities that actually gives a COLA; most jurisdictions deal in flat funding. The Commission has in the past freed up some additional funds by decreasing or not giving an increase to those contracts that are not performing well.

Commissioner Stout said by listing focus areas agencies may be able to tweak some existing programs or shift their priorities to cover those areas. Ms. Leslie said agencies are reminded that the two-year funding cycle allows them to change their focus at the halfway point; some agencies have elected to take that approach in the past.

Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese commented that legal services is one area that keeps coming up as a priority. She noted that in many cases all that is needed is someone to coordinate the lawyers who are willing to do pro bono work. That same approach can work for dental services. There is also a great need for domestic violence services.

Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese said there are two approaches the Commission could take. One would be to not give COLA increases, which would mean there would be \$107,000 available to allocate. Another approach would be to advertise the top issues and see what kinds of proposals come in, then determine if the \$44,000 in leftover funds would be sufficient to address those needs.

Chair Yantis asked the Commissioners if they would be willing to eliminate the COLA increase if applications were made to fund a program that would address a particular gap? He suggested that if the answer is yes, the Commission should wait and see

what applications are submitted. If the answer is no, agencies should not be encouraged to submit new program applications.

Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese said she would be willing to consider not giving a COLA if there were a compelling application submitted.

Commissioner Seltzer said she is not comfortable playing with “what-ifs”. She said she would be more comfortable playing it by ear but would be willing to consider holding back on the COLA. She said the Commission should not be asked to hold its feet to the fire prior to knowing what applications will be submitted.

Commissioner Beighle said she would be very uncomfortable not offering the COLA.

Commissioner Seltzer pointed out that the ordinance approved by the Council that established the Human Services Commission specifically states that services funded by human services funds are to be targeted to low- and moderate-income individuals and families residing in Bellevue. The Commission slipped from that somewhat in the last funding cycle with regard to agencies being required to provide client income demographics. In making new funding decisions, the Commission should take steps to make sure it is upholding its charge.

Commissioner Stout expressed support for highlighting specific focus areas. She noted that where several cities and/or organizations come forward to work on some of the areas, there is the possibility of making a dent in the overall need from a regional perspective. Ms. Leslie agreed that it would be good to retain some flexibility should a good opportunity arise to join with other cities in leveraging funds to meet a need.

Commissioners Hoople and Huenefeld-Gese highlighted the need for legal services in the community for low- and moderate-income residents, especially to avoid becoming homeless. Ms. O'Reilly suggested calling out the need as an example under homelessness.

There was agreement to make homelessness, early learning/school readiness, and mental/medical/dental health services, with examples of each taken from the gaps, as the focus areas.

7. DISCUSSION

A. Continue Discussion on Bel-Red Housing

Ms. Leslie observed that there are four policies in the proposed Bel-Red subarea plan that relate to housing, and called attention to the memo written to the Planning Commission from the Parks and Community Services Board as an example of what

the Commission's memo to the Planning Commission commenting on the housing policies might look like.

Ms. O'Reilly provided the Commissioners with a memo regarding the available affordable housing stock with data taken from the county's 2006 benchmarks report. She also submitted information from the assistant to the superintendent of the

Bellevue School District regarding how many of the teachers in the school district live in Bellevue, which is about 25 percent.

Ms. O'Reilly noted that the Commission had previously asked about the types of jobs currently available in the Bel-Red corridor. She said there is some King County data available but nothing by subarea.

Commissioner Stout said it would be interesting to know what percentage of the Bellevue School District teachers who do live in Bellevue have salaries that fall at or above 100 percent of median. She pointed out that the data likely is in regard to certificated teachers and does not include support staff, many of whom make \$10 per hour and work less than a 40-hour week.

Commissioner Lazetti commented that the figures say nothing about whether or not the teachers who live in Bellevue own or rent, and whether or not they have a home in Bellevue only because their spouse or families have lived in the area for a long time.

Commissioner Stout said it would be interesting to have similar data from the police and fire departments.

Chair Yantis reminded the Commissioners that at the previous meeting the Commission expressed disappointment in the level of developers incentives being contemplated by the Planning Commission and a general desire to encourage lower income affordability within the Bel-Red corridor.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Seltzer, Mr. Smith said if the Commission decides to craft a memo regarding the housing issue, it should be sent to the Planning Commission and cc'd to the chairs of the other boards and commissions working on the subarea plan.

Ms. Leslie clarified that what the Planning Commission has been calling affordable housing equates to affordability at the 80 percent of median income and above level. She said the memo from the Human Services Commission should state that low-income refers to affordability at 30 to 50 percent of median income, and that moderate-income refers to 80 percent and above.

Mr. Smith pointed out that the vision of the Bel-Red Steering Committee called for a variety of housing types to meet the needs of a diverse population of varied income levels. He said the Human Services Commission could urge the Planning Commission to support the vision of the Steering Committee.

Commissioner Stout said it is appalling that the Human Services Commission, which is charged with advocating for a significant portion of those who have service jobs in

the corridor, was not invited to participate and has not been asked much for an opinion.

It was agreed to include in the memo the fact that three-quarters of the jobs available in manufacturing, retail and health as of 2006 earn less than \$10 per hour.

Ms. Leslie said she was troubled somewhat by policy S-BR-F3 which calls for monitoring the production and affordability of new housing in Bel-Red, and reviewing housing affordability strategies three to five years after the 2008 adoption of the subarea. She suggested the comment from the Commission should be that the Bel-Red corridor will provide the city with an opportunity to provide affordable housing units and that there should be regular monitoring. She added her recommendation for the Commission to support S-BR-F4 which calls for integrating a strategy for promoting housing affordability with a citywide approach. The Commissioners agreed.

Commissioner Hoople suggested making reference in the memo to the fact that the city is below its GMA housing targets.

Commissioner Lazetti commented that the percentages tied to housing affordability relate to area median income and paying no more than 30 percent of income for housing. She noted that families that cannot afford to pay up to 30 percent of their income for housing are in need of being subsidized. To bring low-income affordable housing to the Bel-Red corridor will require broadening the public support of housing subsidies. She said she can see the arguments both for and against affordable housing. Bellevue is a high-demand property area, and if developers are not allowed to come in and develop the land to its full potential, the city will lose revenues that can be used to support human services.

Chair Yantis suggested the issue is one of proper balance. He said if the city could create affordable housing along with other forms of housing and commercial uses, meeting the desires of everyone, there would not be any discussion. Commissioner Lazetti said if the city puts stipulations on developers which forces them to construct lower structures on very desirable properties in the corridor in order to make concessions for low-income needs, the area will not be developed to its full economic potential.

Chair Yantis held that a development could reach its full potential if required to include only a percentage of the units as affordable. Commissioner Lazetti said such units are generally not able to be resold, and that affects everyone else in the complex. Chair Yantis noted that Redmond has a mandatory requirement in its downtown area for including affordable housing units and they seem to be attracting developers to the area.

Commissioner Seltzer said the reason the incentives for affordable housing offered to downtown developers were not used is because developers were not required to use them. Thus they have been able to sell all of their units at a very high market value.

Mr. Smith commented that land use is the area of expertise for the Planning Commission. What they present to the City Council are positions they believe are in balance. The position of the steering committee to develop housing to support a diverse community is an important message to herald, though it must be kept in mind that diversity can mean a variety of things beyond just economics. The machine that will help make the vision work has different parts: Planning has a part, Parks has a part, Transportation has a part, Arts has a part, and Human Services has a part.

Commissioner Lazetti said she appreciating that point being made, and said she realizes that not every decision made from a human services perspective has to be based on dollars. It is confusing, however, that the Planning Commission has chosen to use the term "workforce housing" that is not well defined.

Chair Yantis said the city will need to make some hard choices in striving to meet the housing goals that have been set. It would be better to start with a more prescriptive approach than to start low and have to ratchet up later.

8. DISCUSSION

A. Review Draft of 2009-2010 Funding Application

Ms. Leslie shared with the Commissioners copies of the 2009-2010 funding application. She explained that the joint application process makes it possible for agencies to apply with a single application, all of which are sent to the participating cities. In the last funding cycle, the joint process worked very well.

Ms. Leslie said only a couple of tweaks were made to the joint application. One change is that agencies will be filling out the applications on a common website.

9. OLD BUSINESS – None

10. NEW BUSINESS – None

11. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

12. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Yantis adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date