

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

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION  
MINUTES

April 1, 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: Alex O'Reilly, Joseph Adriano, Terry Smith, Senait Taddese, Cathy VonWald, Department of Parks and Community Services

GUEST SPEAKERS: Matias Valenzuela, Seattle/King County Public Health

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 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. March 4, 2008

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

4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

5. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Chair Yantis said he attended the March 26 Planning Commission meeting and

testified on behalf of affordable housing in the Bel-Red corridor and the city. No questions were asked, though the Commissioners appeared to be very receptive.

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly introduced Grant Coordinator Joseph Adriano and invited him to provide the Commission with information regarding his background.

Mr. Adriano said he previously was employed by Asian Counseling and Referral Service in Seattle. He said he looks forward to getting to work.

Assistant Director Terry Smith said Mr. Adriano has an interest in mapping things like service delivery and where people live relative to certain characteristics.

Mr. Smith thanked the Commissioners for their efforts in crafting the memo to the Planning Commission regarding the need for affordable housing in the Bel-Red corridor and in the city.

Mr. Smith also reported that the Council selected Patsy Bonincontri to fill the vacant Council seat. He also noted that there are two vacancies coming up on the Parks and Community Services Board.

## 6. DISCUSSION

### A. Bellevue Network on Aging 2008 Work Plan

Community Services Supervisor Cathy VonWald introduced the members of the Bellevue Network on Aging who were present in the audience. She explained that the purpose of the Network is to support the mission of aging services in Bellevue through effective and systematic outreach, regional collaboration, and a community involvement with a unified voice. In short, the group is tasked with bringing everyone to the table to talk about older adult issues and to make sure everyone is on the same page. Just recently the Network revised its mission statement to read "The Bellevue Network on Aging is dedicated to help the aging in our community by promoting awareness of needs and resources that support older adults through life's transitions."

Ms. VonWald said the goals of the Network for accomplishing its mission include communicating older adult needs and providing a forum for that communication; strengthening community outreach to inform and connect older adults with the necessary resources; creating an environment in Bellevue that makes it a livable community where older adults can age in place; gaining respect and knowledge of older adults in Bellevue; and creating a regional approach.

In 2004 Parks and Community Services staff set about doing a senior services review project in order to be able to better assess the social, recreational, educational and human services programs provided by the city to the community and to make sure are relevant. The effort was also focused on identifying gaps in service and looking at ways to change the way services are provided to older adults through the Parks and Community Services department. The study resulted in *Vision 2009*, a document that identifies the top priorities and strategies for serving older adults in Bellevue. One of the strategies called out combining advisory boards from the North Bellevue Community Center and the South Bellevue program into a single overarching advisory group having a broader and deeper reach in the community.

The Network on Aging was formed in 2006. A retreat was held in September of that year, and the first regular meeting was in November. The charter membership roll had 15 persons, all of whom either work or live in Bellevue. Half of the group members must be over the age of 50. The groups meets the first Thursday of each month at City Hall.

Ms. VonWald said the Network initially formed three subcommittees around transportation, support services, and housing. Those committees remain in place and will throughout 2008.

In its first fully operational year, 2007, the Network accomplished a great deal. The transportation subcommittee joined with the Easy Rider Collaborative, a partnership between Parks, Transportation and Human Services, King County Metro, Sound Transit, United Way and Hopelink. In addition to conducting written surveys, focus groups, compiling data, and meeting with city boards and commissions and the City Council, the group was able to garner funding for the Bus Buddy, Travel Ambassador and Dial-A-Ride programs. Each of those programs will be implemented during 2008.

The Transportation Subcommittee also gathered information, attended meetings, provided support and testimony for city initiatives, including the Bel-Red corridor, the Downtown Circulator, Light Rail Best Practices, the Ped-Bike Plan Update, and the Great Streets Plan regarding how each will create needs for older adults.

All three of the Network subcommittees participated in the community conversations for the Needs Update.

The Support Services Subcommittee worked with Overlake Hospital to present the Home Sweet Home Fair in November at City Hall. The information fair is geared toward older adults who want to stay in their homes as they age. The subcommittee also hosted some focus groups with 2-1-1 and Senior Information and Assistance to get an idea of what is available in the community in terms of information for older adults and how best to distribute that information to those who are most in need.

They also worked to identify gaps and make the whole system more user friendly. They also started looking at ways to make people more aware of the Gatekeeper Program in the community.

The Housing Subcommittee spent a lot of its time trying to get the lay of the land. They followed closely the Bel-Red corridor process with a focus on examining ways to make low- and moderate-income housing available for all ages. The group participated in a tour of ARCH facilities with members of the Kirkland Senior Council; attended the Housing Homelessness and Elderly Forum workshops; and attended the Eastside Affordable Housing Forum. In addition, the group met with Planning staff and Bill Morton to review the Housing Our Seniors Report done by the Planning Department in 1988; their focus was on looking back to see what recommendations have been implemented and to determine if there are things from the report that still need to be addressed. The subcommittee also worked on a survey of assisted living housing and adult family home providers; the survey enjoyed an 18 percent response rate and will be continued into 2008.

Ms. VonWald said all three of the subcommittees intend to take part in the Eastside Human Services Forum older adult group that was just recently formed. In addition, the Network will be working jointly with the Kirkland Senior Council on a project that is yet to be determined.

The Transportation Subcommittee will continue its work with Hopelink and the Easy Rider Collaborative in 2008 to implement the Bus Buddy, Travel Ambassador and Dial-A-Ride programs. The group will also continue to provide support for the Downtown Circulator.

The Support Services Subcommittee will continue its work with the Gatekeeper Program. The program, which is provided by Senior Services of King County, teaches people how to keep an eye on family members, neighbors and older adults and recognize when they are in need. The committee intends to begin contacting neighborhood associations directly to arrange for training sessions. The group will also be meeting with the local hospitals to talk about sources of information for older adults.

The Housing Subcommittee will continue its work to inventory housing and will be adding independent living options for older adults. The group is planning to coordinate a workshop on universal design at the Home Sweet Home Fair to promote those practices in new and existing housing units. The committee also intends to keep in touch with city initiatives like the Bel-Red corridor study.

Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese suggested it would be good for Bellevue to allow accessory dwelling units for the express purpose of families housing their elder members on their properties. Ms. VonWald explained that Bellevue does allow the

construction of accessory dwelling units and they do not have to be occupied by elderly persons.

Commissioner Stout said she attended a presentation in November regarding a proposed senior complex for the old Angelo's Nursery site on 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. She asked if that project is still moving forward. Ms. VonWald said the private venture is moving forward, though it will not include affordable units.

Ms. VonWald said the Network has adopted the goal of reaching out to non-English speaking older adults.

Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese asked what conclusions were reached by the Network regarding the best way for seniors to get information. Network on Aging Chair Lynn Robinson said no conclusion has yet been reached. The group is currently working on avenues of communications involving the neighborhood liaisons, and is working on exactly what should be communicated.

Commissioner Hoople asked if the Network is advocating for a different route for the Downtown Circulator than the one that has been discussed by the city. Ms. VonWald said the Transportation Subcommittee and the Easy Rider Collaborative testified before the Council in support of covering much more ground, in particular the Overlake/Group Health campus. Metro had another idea and whittled it down to the downtown proper. Now the issue has been put on hold. There is currently no large growth in the senior population downtown, but there may be in the future and a circulator service would be very beneficial to them.

Mr. Smith said the Network on Aging has become a great community asset. He said they will be making a presentation to the Parks and Community Services Board soon, and will be making a presentation for the City Council during May as part of Older Americans Month.

Noting that there is some overlap between the work of the Human Services Commission and the work of the Network on Aging, Commissioner Stout suggested that more communication and dialog between the two groups would be useful.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Hoople, Ms. VonWald noted that Ms. O'Reilly attends the Network meetings regularly. She keeps the group up-to-date with regard to what the Human Services Commission is doing, legislative issues of interest to the senior population, and city programs and initiatives. Commissioner Hoople suggested that as the Network representatives meet with the neighborhood groups, the Home Repair Program should be highlighted as a part of the presentation.

## 7. DISCUSSION

## A. King County Equity and Social Justice Initiative

Ms. O'Reilly introduced Matias Valenzuela from Seattle/King County Public Health. She said staff wanted to be sure the Commission is informed regarding the equity and social justice initiative and all that it involves, some of which may need to be incorporated into the work of the Commission.

Mr. Valenzuela said he works in the director's office as the Public Education Coordinator for Seattle/King County Public Health. He explained that the equity and social justice initiative is applicable countywide and Public Health has been given the lead. The community engagement effort will involve a new four-hour series on PBS Channel 9 called Unnatural Causes. The focus is on the root underlying causes of inequities in housing, education, healthcare and other areas. He shared with the Commission a portion of the PBS program.

Commissioner Stout commented that many of the statistics shown in the clip apply directly to King County. Mr. Valenzuela agreed that there are similar applications in terms of race, neighborhood income and level of education, all of which determine quality of life.

Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese pointed out that people with lower incomes generally have longer commutes because they cannot afford housing in the city. The time they spent sitting on a bus or commuting is time they cannot spend exercising or taking care of their health.

Mr. Valenzuela said the hypothesis used to be that CEOs and those with the most responsibility in big firms are the ones with the highest levels of stress. The fact is, however, that stress is directly related to the degree of control one has over his or her environment and life. The lower income populations have the least amount of control over their lives generally and suffer from the highest levels of stress, which has been shown to be a contributing factor to a number of diseases.

Mr. Valenzuela said the equity and social justice initiative was launched in February 2008. A national study of African-American young men found that their indicators or outcomes were dismal compared to their white counterparts. King County Executive Ron Sims created a local interdepartmental group to conduct a similar study within King County and found that the indicators and outcomes locally mirror what is happening nationally. The group called Place Matters is looking at issues affecting health, but is focusing primarily on changes to policy that could improve health. The equity and social justice initiative grew out of those efforts and from the fact that over 70 percent of local King County tax dollars flow into the justice system.

In King County, 96 of every 100,000 white men between the ages of 10 and 17 are in custody; more than eleven times that number of black men in the same age range are in custody. All other ethnic groups in the age group have higher custody rates than whites. For those between the ages of 18 and 24, the percentages of white incarcerations and black incarcerations are less but still significant. In general, young men from communities of color are much more likely to end up in jail.

Mr. Valenzuela noted that a young adult in South King County is more than twice as likely to not have finished high school, compared to young adults in East King County. Only seven percent of whites do not have a high school diploma; the number of African-Americans that do not have a high school diploma is 18.3 percent. Among American Indians and Alaska natives the figure is 20.5 percent; for Asians the figure is 18 percent; for Pacific Islanders the number is 21 percent; for mixed race the number is 14 percent; and for Hispanic/Latino the number is 33 percent.

Nationally and locally there is an increasing gap between the rich and the poor. In 1980 the median income for an African-American family was about \$25,000; the average for the total population was around \$33,000. By 2000 the median income for an African-American family was about \$43,000, and the average for the total population had grown to \$68,000. Prior to the 1980s policies and programs in place were having a positive impact on closing the gap; since then the dismantling of some systems have helped to exacerbate the inequities.

Chair Yantis asked if the general consensus is that the beginning of the real disparity was the government's thinking that a rising tide floats all boats and that prosperity in one sector will automatically flow to all sectors.

Commissioner Beighle said Heimstra suggested the introduction of tech businesses made a large number of people rich, very few of whom were from communities of color.

Mr. Valenzuela said there are some positions that are getting better compensated while the wage paid for other jobs is stagnant.

Mr. Valenzuela said one of the metaphors the initiative uses is the stream; there are references to up-stream interventions and down-stream interventions. The down-stream interventions focus primarily on service delivery and crisis services, while the up-stream interventions focus on changing broader conditions and policy changes. The initiative does not have as its primary goal putting an end to the down-stream work; the primary push, however, will be on the up-stream work in order to make the down-stream work easier. The work certainly will not be done in a year; it will require a long-term commitment.

There are three areas of action. The first is at the county level where policy making and decisions are made. Among the things being done at that level is the development of an equity impact review tool, a tool that will be used to assess decision making relative to budgets and programs to make sure that decisions will address inequities and promote a more fair and just system. Secondly, each department has been charged with coming up with two or three actions aimed at aligning with the initiative. Finally, the community partnerships aspect will entail community engagement and dialog that will result in actions.

Commissioner Stout said she finds it interesting that the initiative has risen at about the same time presidential candidate Barack Obama has brought out the race issue. The March 31 *New York Times* was full of articles looking at the inequities and how everyone has avoided talking about them. She said she hopes that now some of the issues can be brought to the table for an open dialog. Mr. Valenzuela agreed that there is a tendency to talk about education and opportunity rather than race; that will take some effort.

Commissioner Stout said it is interesting to note that the United States has one of the lowest tax rates of developed countries, but also has some of the poorest outcomes, while the countries with higher tax rates have much better outcomes.

Commissioner Lazetti commented that one of the statistics that jumped out at her in the report had to do with the custody rates per capita. In the report it is stated that children of color are more likely to live in a single-parent household: white 18 percent, African-American 47 percent, American Indian/Native Alaskan 47 percent, Latino 25 percent. She suggested that a direct correlation can be drawn between single-parent households and incarceration. She said she hopes the initiative will look at causes and not just treat symptoms. There will need to be some attention given to prevention and intervention programs to break the cycles of the past. Mr. Valenzuela said understanding the broader determinants and predictors is exactly what the initiative is all about.

Commissioner Hoople observed that one of the issues related to American Indians is that the youth have traditionally been sent off to schools and taught to be white. The loss of their heritage has caused a number of ripples.

Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese said she likes the stream metaphor but noted that one can get bogged down in it. The difficult thing in addressing diversity issues is how to teach a white person to get it. She asked if there is a simple way the issues will be framed to help get to the point. Mr. Valenzuela allowed that different approaches and strategies are needed for the different communities, those that have power and those that do not. It will not, however, be possible to easily simplify it all.

Commissioner Seltzer suggested that it cannot be truly said that the white community has all the power. In each of the minority communities there are large groups of people who have been successful. In most cases those people have chosen not to remain a part of their respective communities and therefore cannot be emulated as role models.

Commissioner Stout commented that if all King County residents had access to jobs that pay a living wage, everyone would be better off because the quality of life for everyone in the region would improve. If every school in King County were as excellent as the schools in the most privileged communities, the economic situation would improve for everyone. The focus should be on the common good rather on "them and us."

8. DISCUSSION

A. Summary of State Legislative Issues

Ms. O'Reilly referred to the summary of selected bills and action items that was included in the Commission packets. Even though it was a short session, the Governor signed a total of 335 bills into law. Several of the bills will provide benefits to populations typically served by the Commission.

Commissioner Seltzer asked for an explanation of the clubhouse model mentioned on page 5 of the memo. Ms. O'Reilly explained that it is a community-based model for people with mental illness. It is a place in the community where those with mental illnesses can go for job placement and employment. In past times, the places have been called halfway houses or community houses. HERO house in Bellevue operates as a clubhouse model.

9. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. O'Reilly reported that an error was found on page 22 of the Needs Update. In the Bellevue profile section, the percentage of the population living in poverty was incorrectly shown; the correction has been made on the website, and a correction notice has been sent to all of the agencies.

10. NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Hoople suggested the Commission does not need to be receiving the agendas for the Arts Commission, but said it would be good to get regular information regarding the Network on Aging.

11. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

12. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Yantis adjourned the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

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Secretary to the Human Services Commission

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Date

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Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

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Date

