

The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on November 20, 2012

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

October 16, 2012
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Bruels, Commissioners Beighle, Plaskon, Stout, Yantis

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners McEachran, Perelman

STAFF PRESENT: Emily Leslie, Alex O'Reilly, Joseph Adriano, Jeannette Folta, Department of Parks and Community Services

GUEST SPEAKERS: Eileen Rasnack, Network on Aging; Phoebe Anderson, Child Care Resources; Karen Howell-Clark, United Way; Enrica Hampton, King County Early Learning Coalition; Harla Tumbleson, SOAR

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Bruels who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioners McEachran and Perelman, both of whom were excused.

Chair Bruels revised the agenda to begin with item 6-A.

6. DISCUSSION

A. Bellevue Network on Aging Update

Eileen Rasnack said she has been a member of the Bellevue Network on Aging since 2006 when the Network was initiated and currently serves as the Chair. The purpose of the Network is to support the mission of aging services in Bellevue through outreach, regional collaboration and community involvement. The activities undertaken during 2012 are directly aligned with the mission of the Network, which is to promote awareness of the needs and resources that support older adults through

life's transitions. The Network's three committees focus on the areas of advocacy, outreach, and housing and transportation.

Ms. Rasnack said the outreach committee has been very active. They have sponsored tables at events to offer information and draw attention to available resources. The events they have attended include the Overlake Hospital Active Senior Fair, the Strawberry Festival, the Crossroads Farmers Market, the Bellevue Farmers Market, and the Chinese Information and Service Resource Fair; the Home is Where the Heart Is Fair is scheduled for October 20 and the committee will have a table there as well.

Outreach committee members also took part in the Senior Services Aging Away Summit and have followed up on activities that resulted from the event; made a presentation to the Bellevue City Council regarding the Network's legislative forum and agenda; sponsored a World Elder Abuse proclamation; and developed materials regarding senior information and assistance to be included in the October utilities billing. In concert with the Kirkland Senior Council, Network members have worked on the Vial of Life project.

Ms. Rasnack said the advocacy committee monitors issues of interest to seniors, particularly at the legislative level. Committee members visited the state legislators in Olympia as part of Senior Lobby Day in February. They also worked with the AARP, King County Aging and Disability Services, the Kirkland Senior Council and others to produce a candidates forum on aging readiness called The Silver Tsunami which got a lot of publicity and was very well attended. In conjunction with Qualis Health, the committee worked to edit and distribute a Power Point presentation aimed at educating older adults regarding hospital stays and observation status as it relates to Medicare. The committee also coordinated with the Eastside Human Services Forum to develop a legislative agenda on issues affecting seniors. Letters were sent to congressional representatives in support of the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act, and committee members will be attending the upcoming Senior Lobby Day to get ready for the 2013 session in Olympia. Testimony was given to the City Council in July in support of human services funding for older adults in the city.

The housing and transportation committee members took part in the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative Forum in February. The members also assisted the transportation department with outreach to older adults on the Transit Plan, and facilitated two community conversations for input on the Transit Plan. Most recently, members of the committee have been involved with the Bellevue Traffic Center talking about pedestrian access in the city and how older adults are affected. The committee also worked cooperatively with ARCH on the annual update of the senior housing website.

Ms. Rasnack said the members of the Network on Aging are actively involved in community issues outside of the Network as well. Some serve on the Advisory Council for Aging and Disability Services, while others serve on the Eastside Human

Services Forum advocacy committee, the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative, the Eastside Timebank, and on the King County Mobility Coalition.

Ms. Rasnack said there are currently 14 members serving on the Network, and the Network is in the process of filling three vacancies. Recruitment is under way and the new members will take up their responsibilities in January. She invited the Commissioners to attend the Network meetings, which are held on the first Thursday of each month at 8:30 a.m. in City Hall.

3. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

4. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Stout said she has been involved with the American Association of University Women on the topic of early learning and the Early Achievers Program.

Chair Bruels said his presentation to the Council went well. He said there were not a lot of hardball questions. They expressed their heartfelt appreciation for the work done by the Commission in developing funding recommendations.

Human Services Manager Emily Leslie said there was a question raised about what percentage of the general fund the human services funding has been since 2003, the year the funding formula kicked in. Finance is preparing that information. The Council did act to approve the CDBG funding recommendation.

Commissioner Stout said the good job done by Councilmember Wallace in presenting the proposal to the budget should be acknowledged.

Commissioner Beighle reported that she attended the Hopelink Fundraiser Luncheon on October 15. She said the event raised over one million dollars.

5. DISCUSSION

A. Early Learning Update

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly introduced panelists Phoebe Anderson, Chief Program Officer for Child Care Resources; Karen Howell-Clark, Director of Early Learning Programs at Hopelink; Enrica Hampton with Kinderling Center and the Co-Chair of the King County Early Learning Coalition; and Harla Tumbleson, Director of SOAR.

Ms. Anderson said Washington State was successful in its bid for the Race to the Top early learning challenge. That will bring in \$60 million over the next four years, the majority of which will be used to improve the quality of early learning in licensed child care facilities. In every region, there is a resource and referral network; in King County, Child Care Resources plays that role. Washington State has been working

diligently on the notion of a quality rating improvement system for childcare for more than five years, and the federal funding will boost those efforts and help to align systems. The Early Achievers Program invites childcare providers to commit to a higher quality. Child Care Resources will provide the technical assistance and ongoing training aimed at helping providers see themselves as professionals engaging in academic and experiential development. As the process evolves, processes will become aligned with the school districts and there will be better data sharing. What happens in the ages zero through five is directly connected to how well kids do in kindergarten, which in turn contributes to school readiness and ultimately improved graduation rates.

Early Achievers is a voluntary program, though in time as the model plays out it is likely it will morph into a mandatory program. The program launched in July and already has hundreds of providers in King County signing up. As they sign up they are assigned a technical assistance provider who will work with them for a period of twelve months. During that time the providers must commit to receiving some fairly prescriptive training relative to engaging with children, engaging with families, developing stronger curriculums, and cultural competence. At the end of the first year most of the childcare centers and facilities will be ready to rate. Those that are ready will receive a rating from the University of Washington based on an unbiased and objective system they have developed. The rating is a pivotal piece of the Early Achievers program in that it will allow families to finally have an understanding of how to access the quality of childcare. The higher the rating, the more indication of a significant commitment to quality, so the facilities that rank three and higher on the one-to-five scale will be assigned a coach to work with them for three full years during which time the focus will be on the areas in need of improvement. Child Care Resources serves as the statewide call-in for information and referral around childcare, and when parents call asking about childcare options, they will be told what the ratings are for facilities in their area. The goal is to have more than half of all childcare providers engaged in the process by 2015.

Ms. Anderson said there are about 175 licensed providers in Bellevue, many of which are joining the Early Achievers program. Three technical advisor staff are signed to the area, and all of the orientation and training sessions are filled. The American Association of University Women elected to give funding to Child Care Resources to work with providers on the Eastside. The funding is being used in being creative in utilizing the technical advisors. Child Care Resources is a beneficiary of Bellevue funds as well.

Chair Bruels noted that some early education programs are better than others and he praised the effort to bring all programs up to a higher standard. Currently the best programs are generally available to parents who can afford to pay for them, and the Early Achievers program is something that will help to level the playing field.

Ms. Howell-Clark said she has been with United Way for 13 years and she noted that the agency enjoys a number linkages on the Eastside with the human services non-

profit communities, municipal governments, businesses, and with volunteers. United Way organizes its work in terms of impact areas; one of those areas is focused on early learning and it is currently chaired by Ms. O'Reilly. United Way has three priority areas: ending homelessness, ensuring that people can meet their basic needs, and giving all children an equal chance to succeed in school and in life.

Ms. Howell-Clark said early learning falls under the third priority area. It has been elevated to priority status because of the preparation and achievement gaps, that happens later in school, knowledge of how much brain development occurs in the early years, and the savings that can be realized by investing in early learning. United Way is particularly interested in racial equity and racial and income disparities.

There are four areas of early learning investment and involvement: high-quality childcare, early intervention in developmental challenges, keeping kids safe, and supporting parents. United Way works closely with Child Care Resources on issues of childcare quality and is involved in education and support for family, friend and neighborhood caregivers. The organization also provides training to providers who work with special needs children and their parents. In the area of keeping kids safe, the agency seeks to prevent instances of abuse and neglect by working with families in the foster care system and with families that adopt foster kids, and provide intervention services for parents who have abused or neglected their children. The issue of supporting parents is addressed through investing in a range of programs for parents ranging from parenting classes to parent coaching and a number of home visiting programs.

Ms. Howell-Clark highlighted for the Commission a number of agencies and programs United Way funds and works closely with, including the Parent-Child Home Program, a research-based home visiting program; Beyond Grant Making, which promotes volunteerism; the Volunteer Reader Program, in which adults read to kids in preschools; and the Volunteer Impact Program, which works with agencies on volunteer management. United Way is also involved in advocating and lobbying, and partners with a number of other agencies.

Ms. Hampton explained that in 2010, the Department of Early Learning, in partnership with Thrive by Five, funded ten regions in the state to engage in a two-phase process called the Infant/Toddler Interdisciplinary Child Care Consultation Project. In the first phase the department asked the regions to take a look at infants and toddlers in their area and provide a picture of demographic profiles and the service and support systems already in place for infants and toddlers. In the second phase a general plan was sketched out for how each region might wish to support infants and toddlers to improve the quality of care using an interdisciplinary approach. In King County about 50 stakeholders were involved in the process, reflecting all areas of birth to three. SOAR served as the convener and host of the entire process, including the implementation phase.

Ms. Hampton said in 2011 the Department of Early Learning contracted with a single agency within each of the ten regions to serve as the fiscal agent moving forward with the process. In King County, the determination was made that Child Care Resources should be the fiscal agent. In August of that year the department provided the funding to support the process of developing a regional service model to be implemented in the ten regions beginning in September. Funding was allocated based on a variety of factors, including the percentage of children living below the poverty line, needs and risk factors, and transportation costs.

Two of the eleven priority areas identified in 2011 aligned very nicely with the Infant/Toddler Interdisciplinary Child Care Consultation Project, namely building statewide infrastructure in partnership and mobilization, and implementing the quality rating improvement system.

The actual development of the regional service model occurred in September and was done by a smaller group of the stakeholders which made up the steering committee. The model had to comply with specific guidelines dictated by the Department of Early Learning, the most significant of which was that the project must benefit vulnerable infants and toddlers, and the childcare programs had to be licensed. The plan developed by the steering committee is an interdisciplinary consultation service model to provide support services for up to 15 licensed childcare centers in South King County and on the Eastside. In addition to a requirement for providers to be licensed, the intervention services must focus on both infants and toddlers, programs must accept state subsidies, and each center will have a primary relationship with a single consultant. All of the consultants involved in the project are qualified to provide general consultations, but each also comes with an area of specialty. The consultants come from the Kinderling Center, Child Care Resources and Public Health.

Not everything went as planned during the first year. The implementation timeline established by the Department of Early Learning was ambitious. It anticipated having the consultants on site by October 1, but the model was not even developed until September. Additionally, the department did not fully understand the challenges associated with creating and implementing an interdisciplinary consultation model; the interdisciplinary piece did not occur in the first year and will be launched in the second year instead. Notwithstanding the challenges, the first year saw some very positive movements and shifts in the area of quality.

Commissioner Plaskon asked if the assessment tool has been created. Ms. Hampton allowed that it has. She said the self-assessments are predicated on the infant/toddler environmental rating scale.

Ms. Hampton said the King County Early Learning Coalition is a part of SOAR. Previously known as the King County Early Learning Implementation Team, the team was structured in 2009 as a way to oversee the action teams that drive the early childhood and school readiness action agenda. In 2010 the Thrive by Five program

under the Department of Early Learning decided to create a coalition, and the conclusion reached was that the early learning implementation team should be morphed into the Coalition and become a part of the SOAR structure. The Coalition meets monthly and hosts an average of 20 to 25 very diverse people.

Ms. O'Reilly said the Coalition is very interested in providing feedback to the state Department of Early Learning on programs and policies.

Mr. Tumbleson said transition to kindergarten is something folks in the early learning community have been focusing on for a very long time. In 2004 when SOAR first came together and organized the action teams, one of the teams focused specifically on building partnerships to facilitate positive early development and effective transition to kindergarten. A small pilot was initiated in four elementary schools with a grant from Puget Sound EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DISTRICT. The best research of the day was gathered and was melded into a workable model. The research indicated that the best way to facilitate transition to kindergarten was to build strong partnerships between elementary schools, parents of the children, and early care providers in the community. The pilot program was well received by the host principles. In 2006 SOAR sought and obtained from United Way funding to begin the outreach element. The model entailed giving small grants to schools to build teams of parents, primary educators, and early care providers of children who would be attending those schools; the partnerships were intended to facilitate activities that would help parents understand the expectations of kindergarten; assist early learning care providers in aligning their curriculums to help kids better prepare for kindergarten; and help schools get ready for kids. The science associated with working with children and youth is pretty well developed and effective, but the science for working with adults and changing their behaviors is less well developed, so much of the focus is on working with early care providers and schools to take a look at their respective situations and gain understanding.

The mini-grants have been given out to some 30 elementary schools over the course of the last seven or eight years through the generosity of United Way. The programs impact between 1200 to 1800 parents, and between 250 to 300 early care providers, annually. Everyone involved indicated satisfaction with the program.

In time the state finally made the scene with the WAKids program. The program was conceptualized through the work of Dr. Betty Hyde and Governor Gregoire in developing the Early Learning Plan. When the state received the Race to the Top grant, money was finally available to implement the program. The WAKids model talks about partnership building between the same three key parties the SOAR model focuses on. However, the WAKids assessment tool is a link that was missing from the SOAR model. WAKids stands for Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills and the tool is being used widely by schools to measure kindergarten readiness. Implementation of the WAKids program is intended to take place in elementary schools that receive state funding for full-day kindergarten, of

which in King County alone there are 46 in eight different school districts that are currently implementing the model.

Mr. Tumbleson said the model yields the strengths and weaknesses of incoming kindergarten classes across a broad range of domains. The data indicates that early literacy and socio-emotional development are the two biggest gaps in preparation. The information is very helpful for the schools to have and it should help them close the gaps going forward. The data is also valuable to those in the early learning community and should be used to close the gaps upstream by guiding interventions. SOAR is working with three schools in south King County on how to use the WAKids data to create a data-driven intervention strategy.

A small pilot was implemented in 2011 at Cedar Valley Elementary in Kent with funding from Thrive by Five. The program, called the Cheetah Cub Club, focused on early literacy and giving parents resources to promote early literacy in the home with their kids. The cadre of kids who participated in the program are showing marked improvements in early literacy. One of the biggest challenges is that many of the schools SOAR is working with are endorsing high numbers of kids coming in from family, friend and neighbor caregivers. The quality partnerships between the three entities will be key to moving the needle.

Answering a question asked by Ms. O'Reilly, Mr. Tumbleson said the Bellevue School District is not participating in the project currently. Bellevue does not receive much money from the state for full-day kindergarten given that the state funds are targeted to Title I schools. Diversity in Bellevue is certainly growing as is the number of folks who are economically stressed. SOAR was involved for several years at Lake Hills in the Wraparound Program, and some work with the original model was done at Sherwood Forest, and SOAR will be at Stevenson in the coming year. The teaching strategies goal is the assessment tool and there are several renditions of it, one for kindergarten teachers and one that can be implemented at the early learning level. Now that there are early learning centers in each of the Bellevue School District elementary schools, the teaching strategies are being adopted as a way of measuring kids progress in early learning. Bellevue is unlikely to be receiving a bunch of state money any time soon, but the district is working to align the teaching strategies goal in the early learning arena with the existing measurements the district uses.

Commissioner Stout said it is exciting to see how far things have come since she was involved in laying the groundwork starting in about 1999.

Commissioner Plaskon asked if the various funding levels are locked in for a period of time. Mr. Tumbleson said United Way has been steadfast over the years in its commitment to early learning, and the anticipation is they will continue that trend. The Race to the Top funds will flow into the state over a four-year period. State funding has been fairly steady as well, though that is a stream that could change at the whim of the legislature.

7. OLD BUSINESS – None

8. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Leslie proposed cancelling the November 6 meeting given that it is election night. The Commissioners concurred.

Ms. Leslie said staff have been hearing rumblings about healthcare reform and how the State and King County Public Health are preparing to meet the challenges. She said the Commission will be provided with an update soon.

Chair Bruels said he has plans to attend a Redmond Human Services Commission meeting in the near future, both to see how they do things and to promote cooperation.

Commissioner Beighle said she would welcome the opportunity to conduct site visits in conjunction with Redmond Human Service Commission members.

Ms. O'Reilly reported that staff is gearing up for the next Needs Update already. Much of the work will be kicked off in January 2013. A draft survey to go to providers is already in hand and will seek from them information about what they would like to see the update include.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Bruels adjourned the meeting at 8:22 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date