

The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on March 1, 2011

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

February 1, 2011
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Huenefeld Gese

STAFF PRESENT: Emily Leslie, Alex O'Reilly, Joseph Adriano, Kimberly Walker, Shelley Brittingham, Kevin Henry, Camron Parker, Department of Parks & Community Services; Councilmember John Chelminiak

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Yantis, who arrived at 6:34 p.m., and Commissioner Huenefeld Gese, who was excused.

3. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

4. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Hoople reported that he had attended several levy committee meetings since the last Commission meeting. The focus has been on seeking input from providers. He said he also met with the Duvall Rotary about the levy issues, and participated in the annual One Night Count. A joint Strategy 2 meeting is scheduled for February 2 where the focus will be on homelessness and housing; it will be at the Mercer Island King County library at 2:00 p.m. Strategy 1, enhancing the existing veterans program, will be the focus of a meeting on February 10 at the Bellevue King County library from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The regional human services group will be meeting at the Renton library on February 16 from 2:00 p.m. to

4:00 p.m. to review the input received to date through the strategy meetings.

Commissioner Stout said she attended the Healthy Start Advisory Committee meeting and heard it reported that they are going through the exercise of cutting services for families with children aged two to three because of the loss of Children and Families Commission funding. The agency intends to keep on the families that are in crisis until they can be stabilized, but overall the exercise is proving to be quite painful. Attempts are being made to link the families with other services, including Head Start.

Commissioner Bruels said planning for the crisis diversion facility is moving along. The oversight committee met recently to talk about reprioritizing strategies in the face of possible extension or further supplantation of the funds to help support the human services network. A forum was held on February 1 to discuss the concerns of the Jackson Place community. The meeting was very well attended and was very lively. A group calling itself the Jackson Place Alliance for Equity is leading the charge against the facility, which they understand to be a corrections facility. No final decisions have been made yet. King County Councilmember Gossett attended, helped keep things under control, and agreed to appoint a neighborhood council to assist in reaching an agreement.

Chair Beighle reported that the Issaquah Food Bank has hired a new director, Corrie Hauck, formerly with Bellingham Parks and Recreation.

Human Services Manager Emily Leslie provided the Commissioners with a printout of the results of the One Night Count. Chair Beighle said the count for the Eastside totaled 146, which was down 11 percent from the previous year. The total count for all of King County was 2442, not counting persons who were in shelters. On the night of the count, there were 54 people in the winter shelter.

Commissioner Bruels noted that neighborhoods change over time and he asked how that is accounted for. Chair Beighle said notes are made about where homeless are encountered outside of the official count areas, though they are not actually included in the count.

Commissioner Yantis asked if the official numbers will be revised to account for the known but uncounted homeless persons. Ms. Leslie said she did not know. She said the issue will be raised at the Committee to End Homelessness Interagency Council meeting on February 7.

Commissioner Stout proposed the Commission should be on record in favor of recording numbers that accurately reflect the conditions in the community. She commented that if those who were in shelters on the night of the count were included, the reduction of 11 percent over the previous year would likely disappear.

Motion to have the Commission draft a letter asking that the One Night Count

numbers include those in shelters, and to indicate the desire of the Commission to see the areas in which the counts are taken expanded. Second was by Commissioner Stout and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Leslie reported that she recently visited Hero House and was very impressed with the program.

Commissioner Stout said she has been asked to meet with a representative of the Methodist church located to the north of the downtown. The church is looking for some projects to take on. She said she would welcome suggestions.

5. DISCUSSION

A. Overview of Cultural Diversity Program and Plan Update

Cultural Diversity Program coordinator Kevin Henry pointed out that Bellevue has changed dramatically over the past 25 years. He said when he first came to work for the city in 1994 there were some people who felt like they were not part of the equation. The point of diversity is that everyone is unique and brings something different to the table. Diversity spans the issues of race, culture, socioeconomics, ability and sexual orientation. The Cultural Diversity Program seeks to promote understanding and to break down some of the barriers that exist, all with an eye on making the city stronger.

Mr. Henry said several Bellevue staffers are working with the Washington Recreation Professionals Association to come up with something that defines cultural competence. Cultural competence is all about giving people the skills, abilities and confidence to embark on the cultural journey and to meet with people who might be different from them.

The Cultural Diversity Task Force Report serves as the foundation for the program. It was written in 1993 by representatives of city government, the school district and the community. The document illustrated the diversity that existed at the time and outlined a series of programs and strategies for how to approach the mission.

Mr. Henry said diversity is all about bringing together people whose lives would not otherwise intersect. To accomplish that, some type of a vehicle is needed. The conversations regarding race and culture were one such vehicle that brought together the Bellevue Police Department, a diverse group of citizens, Commissioners, and representatives from other cities.

A series of business panels and workshops were held around subjects like recruiting diversity. Most organizations want to reflect the diversity of the community in which they operate. The workshops brought together diverse groups of experts to address people from non-profits and small businesses about how to recruit diversity. The workshops were held at City Hall, in community centers, at City University, and in

other venues. A number of partnerships resulted that have proven to be beneficial on a number of fronts. Where possible, citizens are communicated with in their own language, something that gives the city extra credibility.

Mr. Henry said there are a number of annual events that have a diversity component. They include the Martin Luther King tribute, Latino/Hispanic Heritage Month, the Cultural Crossroads Festival, and the Strawberry Festival. The next Quarterly Conversations on Race and Culture will occur on May 3 and will include the Bellevue police and will address the topic of excessive or appropriate police force. The format allows for almost three hours of facilitated discussions with individuals sitting around tables with police officers.

Mr. Henry said when Chief Pillo was first hired she worked with him to form a citizens group with members from various ethnic communities. The group meets monthly and has produced a training video for internal staff that gives input and insight on the issues that affect their specific communities from a law enforcement standpoint.

The Media Relations Panel is a very useful group. Social media has taken off as a way to get the message out, but most non-profit groups do not have big budgets to pay for advertising to showcase the great work they are doing or their need for volunteers. Having articles printed in the *Seattle Times* or a feature on KING-5 can reach thousands of people. The Media Relations Panel is made up of media representatives from both large and small organizations, including ethnic and cultural publications and seeks opportunities to get the word out.

The Voices of Diversity radio program began 12 years ago and has over the years been aired on different stations. The program has found a home on KBCS 91.3 FM at Bellevue College and it continues to focus on issues relating to diversity.

Mr. Henry encouraged the Commissioners to become involved by attending events and possibly even serving as master of ceremonies.

Senior Planner Camron Parker said direction to update the city's Cultural Diversity Plan came from the City Council following a presentation by Mr. Henry on the topic of the Cultural Diversity Program. The Council questioned why the city was still operating on a plan that was written in 1993 and gave direction to update the plan. Though it is eighteen years old, the plan is largely just as relevant and valid as it was when it was drafted. Things have changed in the community, however, and taking a close look at it makes sense. The update process will seek answers to several questions, including what it means that Bellevue is a diverse community; what opportunities and challenges come with being diverse; and is the city maximizing the benefits of being diverse.

Mr. Parker said the planning effort will rely on an asset-based model. Specific attention will be given to focus areas that will include how cultural diversity plays into economic development; public safety; human services; education; civic engagement;

how well the city as an organization is doing at serving Bellevue residents; and of course cultural awareness.

Because there is a great deal of good material in the 1993, it will serve as the foundation and jumping off point for the update. The recommendations included in the original plan will be studied with an eye on how well the city has done in meeting them. Any recommendations in the plan for which the city has not made good progress will be highlighted. The public outreach phase is under way and will continue through the month of April. The data taken in will be reviewed and compiled in May, June and July. The draft report will be subjected to an approval process in August. A finished plan should be in hand by September.

Commissioner Plaskon suggested that the update process should include a focus on what is going on in Bellevue but also in King County generally. All of the patterns occurring in the state and the county will eventually flow to Bellevue. There are a number of benefits to being diverse; diversity makes the community more interesting, but it also serves as an economic factor.

Councilmember Chelminiak agreed. He said there are some Asian-based banks that have chosen to locate in Bellevue. One area of particular focus is on the East Indian population; the city is still waiting to hear from the State Department about whether or not the Indian consulate will be based in Bellevue, something that has already been approved by India.

Answering a question asked by Councilmember Chelminiak, Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly indicated that the city receives regular updates from agencies that serve refugees. The trend is toward new and smaller groups as opposed to the large waves of refugees that have come in in the past. While there are some overlaps, the experiences of refugees are largely different from those of immigrants because of their status and the challenges they face.

Commissioner Stout pointed out that the number of languages spoken in the Bellevue School District is approaching 80. She commented that when the plan was developed in 1993 the number was closer to 40.

Mr. Henry mentioned that in May the Alpha Gamma sorority, an African-American sorority, will conduct its annual convention in Bellevue. About 1000 women are expected to attend. Bellevue was chosen because of its reputation. In addition to their own workshops, the sorority will hold events open to the public.

6. DISCUSSION

A. Census Update

Demographer Gwen Rousseau said the bulk of the 2010 Census data has not yet been released. Data from the American Communities Survey (ACS), however, is

readily available and focuses down to the tract level.

Ms. Rousseau informed the Commission that the apportionment data from the 2010 Census was released in December 2010. The data gives Washington State another seat in the House of Representatives, bringing the total to ten. The redistricting data from the Census will be coming out very soon, and that data is predicated on population counts by race and ethnicity as well as housing unit counts by occupancy status down to the census block level. The information will be used by the state's redistricting commission to redraw district lines; the commission's four members are appointed by the legislature.

The three-year ACS data for 2007-2009 was released in mid-January. The annual data is released in September and is available online. Ms. Rousseau said the biggest difference between the ACS data and the Census long form is the sample size; the smaller sample size of the ACS means there are larger margins of error associated with each estimate. The ACS sample is still quite large, especially where the city as a whole is concerned or where the focus is on characteristics that have few categories, such as gender.

With regard to trends evident in the ACS data, Ms. Rousseau pointed out that Bellevue's population is growing older; the trend is expected to continue as the Baby Boomers age. Across the country, older adults are expected to comprise nearly 20 percent of the total population by 2045.

Bellevue's diversity continues to increase. The minority percentage has grown from 15 percent in 1990 to over 37 percent in the 2007-2009 ACS data. The income numbers have remained flat, though there continues to be a polarization between those with the most and those with the least. Along with increases in the minority population, the trend shows an increase in the number of foreign-born residents in the city; coupled with that is the increase in the number of city residents who speak a language other than English.

The number of adults with a bachelor's degree has increased according to the latest data, along with those that are employed in management or professional occupations; the percentage for both categories is in the 60s.

Ms. Rousseau shared with the Commissioners maps showing the population distribution by age and ethnicity. The maps indicated a higher percentage of children in the southern part of the city and in the Crossroads area. The highest concentrations of residents 65 and older were shown on the maps to be in the northeast and downtown areas. It was noted that the older adult population is much less diverse than the younger populations, a trend that is expected to reverse as the overall population ages. In two tracts, both in Crossroads, minority populations outnumber the White/Non-Hispanic residents; in those tracts, more than half of the households speak a language other than English.

Average household size is highest in Somerset and in the eastern part of the city; they get gradually smaller closer to the downtown and the northwest. The trends closely mirror the age and the housing stock data.

The percentage of older adults living alone is highest in the downtown, in Crossroads, and the northwestern part of the city.

Residents who are veterans live primarily on the edges of the city, though there are some in the Somerset area.

Less than four percent of the city's population has not graduated from high school. The percentage is higher in some areas of the city, with one tract in Crossroads that is close to 90 percent.

Ms. Rousseau said the median household and per capita income data was not surprising. Because a household can contain two wage earners, it is not surprising that single-person households often have a lower median income. The tracts that stand out with regard to the percent of residents in poverty are mainly in West Lake Hills and Crossroads.

Two tracts in Crossroads stand out relative to the number of households without a vehicle. Not surprisingly, the percentage of people who commute by transit is high in Crossroads, but is also high in the northeast and Factoria areas.

The Crossroads, West Lake Hills, downtown and eastern Bridle Trails areas tend to have a higher percentage of renters over home owners, whereas there are very few renters in the Somerset area.

Ms. Leslie said Ms. Rousseau would return later in the spring once the rest of the Census data is released.

7. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. O'Reilly reported that a number of community conversations are planned to occur in the near future. The events are tailored to generate data for the Needs Update. She said Ms. Rousseau will be tasked with drafting the community profile chapter.

The providers survey is being developed. Feedback will be sought from the Alliance for Eastside Agencies and others who are working to track recession-related issues. Admittedly, many of the impacts will not show up until after the current legislative session. The survey will go out in late March and will be portrayed as an East King County providers survey.

8. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Leslie said for the February 15 Commission meeting a panel of experts will address human trafficking and teen prostitution and the programs that are available.

Ms. O'Reilly reported that the Eastside Time Bank being piloted in Kirkland is moving along successfully. The next pilot sites will be in Bellevue and Redmond and could launch in early April. Board members from Bellevue are being sought.

9. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Beighle adjourned the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Service Commission

Date