

**CITY OF BELLEVUE  
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

Thursday, February 1, 2007  
6:30 P.M. Regular Meeting

Bellevue City Hall  
450 110<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE  
Conference Room 1E-112

**PRESENT:** Commissioners Kovoov, Larrivee, Pottinger, Roberts, and Rogers

**ABSENT:** Commissioners Helland, Ruiz

**STAFF:** Alan King, Laurie Devereaux, Mike Jackman, Susan Fife-Ferris

**OTHERS:** Nels Johnson, Allied Waste and Virginia Garcia, transcriber.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Rogers called the meeting to order at 6:37 PM. He said that Alan King would staff the meeting for Nav Ota who is absent.

**2. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None**

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Commissioner Larrivee moved approval of the agenda as presented, except for the date reflected for the minutes. The agenda should say 12/7/06 minutes. Commissioner Roberts seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**4. APPROVAL OF 12/7/06 MINUTES**

Commissioner Larrivee moved and Commissioner Pottinger seconded to approve the 12/7/06 ESC meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

a. Follow-up Questions/Answers – There were no questions.

**5. REPORTS & SUMMARIES**

a. ESC Calendar/Council Calendar -

Chair Rogers said that he received a call from Commissioner Helland stating that he would not be able to attend the meeting.

Commissioner Pottinger noted that at the December meeting staff usually gives a status report on surplus property and requested that this topic be added to the December 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Chair Rogers stated that he thought the Bel-Red corridor Update was going to be a joint meeting with the Planning Commission. Commissioner Pottinger clarified the presentation would probably be from the Planning and Community Development (PCD) staff because Kevin McDonald is PCD staff who used to work in Transportation. Mr. King said he would confirm this.

b. Desk Packet

Chair Rogers reviewed the desk packet materials.

Commissioner Larrivee indicated that he couldn't make the February 14<sup>th</sup> tour. Nels Johnson said they could set up a separate time for him to take an individual tour.

c. Stream Team Update

Laurie Devereaux, Stream Team Program Administrator gave a powerpoint presentation of some of the main volunteer activities, Stream Team projects, and highlights of 2006. The Stream Team mission is to provide information through community involvement and awareness and initiate changes that will protect the quality of our water system, fish and wildlife.

One of the major activities of the Steam Team throughout the year is education programs. In 2006, there were 48 presentations and activities, to groups including BCC, schools, families, and the Bellevue Noon Rotary. The Stream Team reached about 1200 individuals. A main message during all presentations has been that our storm drains are connected to our streams.

Ms. Devereaux reviewed several monitoring projects. The Peamouth Patrol is a popular program. Peamouth are not an indicator species like salmon. They come to the streams to spawn once a year for one or two days. She showed a video of Peamouth that was taken from underneath the Wilburton trestle.

She said volunteers do a great job in collecting bugs. All that is required is for the volunteers to participate in a short training class. The training occurs in August. Each collection takes three to four hours. She said staff is currently discussing where to place the information they get from monitoring so that people can access it.

In the fall, the monitoring project is Salmon Watchers. It is a regional project. It includes education, community involvement and data collection. The City is partnering with several neighboring jurisdictions including King Co., Kirkland, Redmond, Issaquah, and Seattle. Ms. Devereaux showed a video of chinook and sockeye salmon. She said that volunteers are equipped with a Salmon ID card and polarized glasses. It is a four month program; September through December.

Volunteers adopt a site to watch twice a week for 15 minutes. The volunteer report is made available online on the King County web site.

Restoration is another program that volunteers participate in. The major event is in April called Earth Day/Arbor Day. They partner with the Parks Department. Restoration is done by a school group or the Rotary. They do weeding, planting or picking up litter depending on the time of year. There were 239 volunteers on various restoration projects in 2006.

Commissioner Larrivee asked about how the regional partnership for the Salmon Watchers works. Ms. Devereaux replied that there are regular planning meetings. They have a database and each jurisdiction has a staff person like her. King County and Bellevue has the largest group of volunteers. She said she does the educational workshops and does them for some of the smaller jurisdictions. They are partially funded through the King County Conservation District in addition to the funding each jurisdiction provides.

Ms. Devereaux reviewed the value of the Steam Team Volunteers. There were over 1500 volunteer hours in 2006. At \$15 an hour, the total value was \$22,500. Some of what the volunteers do is far more technical than someone just walking off the street. Macrovertebrates and Salmon Watcher volunteers receive two-hour training. For the more technical jobs, the value of the volunteers is very high. There is additional value locally and regionally of work that volunteers do such as maintenance and monitoring of City restoration projects at the new fish ladder and salmon watching at the new culvert at the bridge on Kamber Road. It is hard to measure the value of knowledge and experience the volunteers gain.

Ms. Devereaux reviewed what's new for the Steam Team:

--The Incubator Project: She said the Incubator Project is a program where the Steam Team partners with a private property owner and Puget Sound Anglers.

--The Critical Areas Handbook for streamside property owners is almost complete. The first edition will get published in a few months. There are landscape templates, directions on how to maintain critical areas and other useful information.

--BTV It's Your City. There was a segment on the Coal Creek Program and another on Salmon Watcher.

Looking ahead, Ms. Devereaux reported that she is planning the programs for 2007. She is planning volunteer programs and school programs, including science fairs. She is working on the curriculum for some of the schools. She'll also be working with streamside property owners.

Commissioner Larrivee said that he used to be a participant and is very impressed by this program.

Commissioner Kovoor asked how to get a copy of the Critical Areas Handbook. Ms. Devereaux said when it is done it will be available at the Land Use Desk. She agreed to provide commissioners a copy of the book.

Commissioner Pottinger requested that the ESC get notified of when the Peamouth come in. Ms. Devereaux agreed to email them.

Commissioner Larrivee said the new salmon ladder is very nice and was done well. He asked if there were any plans to make the site under the Wilburton Trestle more accessible? Ms. Devereaux said she didn't think there were any plans for that. Mr. King said he would look into this.

d. Weather Events Report

Mr. King described what occurred during the various weather events, how the City reacted, and what the affects have been. The worst of the events started on November 4, 2006 with significant flooding. On November 14<sup>th</sup> there was more flooding followed by snow on November 26<sup>th</sup>. On December 14<sup>th</sup> there was more flooding and then soon after that the wind storm caused power loss for several days. On December 26<sup>th</sup> there was snow followed by more snow on January 4<sup>th</sup>. On January 10<sup>th</sup> there was snow and prolonged freezing with ice accumulation. The Utilities Department, which was responsible for response, has been taxed and staff wanted to share the impact the events have had on the Department. Mr. King introduced Mike Jackman and Susan Fife-Ferris.

Commissioner Roberts asked why the ice caused a week delay in garbage pick up when Holidays only delay pick up for a day. Susan Fife-Ferris showed a calendar that she had prepared showing the weather events, missed garbage pick up days and school closures. Ms. Fife-Ferris said that standard procedure, which is regional, calls for delays to occur for a week because they don't have the staff or resources to do pick up for both days. Holidays are planned far ahead of time and everything slides a day, so if the Holiday is on a Monday, pick up will occur Tuesday through Saturday for residential. If there was no service on Tuesday due to weather they wouldn't pick your garbage up on Wednesday; it would be picked up the following week because they would have to staff the regular routes. The contract is set up this way and it is included in all the literature. If your garbage is missed because of a weather event, you are to bring it back in and are allowed to put out double the amount of garbage the following week. You can use bags or any container that will work and mark it as garbage or recycle. The City does not want people leaving garbage out all week. Commissioner Roberts said that is what people did because the communication was not very good about what happens in these situations. Ms. Fife-Ferris said they would be working on communication. She said this was a very unusual event because there was flooding, wind, followed by holidays then snow and ice. One of the goals is to communicate better about what to do. Instructions are included in the literature sent to households with bills and in It's Your City, especially before the holidays.

The literature states that if schools are closed you can assume that your garbage will not be picked up and describes how materials should be brought back in with a double load placed out the following week.

Commissioner Larrivee said that he called Allied Waste and the message was very clear that garbage was not going to be picked up.

Commissioner Roberts said he had mixed experiences when he called. The first call was good the second was not.

Commissioner Pottinger said they lost a big tree during the wind event and sometimes they don't remember to put stuff out on Sunday night. On one Monday, it was 7:15 AM and the garbage truck had already gone by. She was hauling the garbage out anyway and the truck driver returned and picked it up. She was very pleased about this and thanked Mr. Johnson of Allied.

Commissioner Pottinger said she communicated with her neighbors what she learned about the garbage. As representatives of the Commission, she reminded them to pass on information they may have learned during the emergency as news travels fast.

Mr. King said that Mike Jackman heads up the Utilities Emergency Management Program. As part of preparedness procedures, staff assess what they can do in advance of an event, such as seismic retrofitting on reservoirs and purchasing emergency generators. With regard to response, there is someone on call 24 hours, 365 days a year to take emergency calls and respond. They have the flexibility to put people on 12 hour shifts around the clock. Recovery plans were also in place. They always learn from these events and seek to improve mitigation and response for next time.

Mr. Jackman discussed the December 14, 2006 wind storm. He provided details on weather forecast monitoring, staff and equipment preparations for the storm, how the storm impacted Utilities, and Utilities response to the wind storm.

Staff monitors weather forecasts daily via a contract with Weathernet which provides accurate forecasting at the local level. The forecast was for rain and wind in the 40 mph range. Utilities knew the storm was coming so they set up the command center and assigned field crews to 12 hour shifts in anticipation of flooding and power outages. They also fueled and prepared vehicles and equipment. The drainage and street crews recon'd and street swept areas of the city prone to flooding and made sure the storm drains were clear. They notified the Emergency Preparedness Division of the Fire Department of all the preparations and told them they were geared up and ready to go.

Early in the evening of the storm there were heavy rains; in just over an hour beginning at 6:30 p.m. there was almost over 0.6" and up to 1.0" of rain. There

were reports of localized flooding and a mud slide on Coal Creek Parkway near Forest Drive. There was some loss of power which impacted traffic signals and a small number of Water and Wastewater stations. The forecasted high winds started around 9:00 p.m. Sustained winds were around 50 mph with gusts reaching 70 mph. Eighty percent or more of the City lost power. The City lost 151 out of 179 signals at lighted intersections. It lost over 100 traffic control and street signs. There was storm debris and downed power lines blocking streets across town. All 27 water reservoirs and pump stations were without power. All 45 wastewater stations were without power. Traffic was at a standstill. Minor damage was reported at water and wastewater sites, downed trees and limbs. Over the course of the following days some generators broke down and required emergency repairs as a result of power surges and extended use.

Mr. Jackman discussed the impact of the event. Street Maintenance and Drainage crews responded to over 700 reports of downed trees, street blockages, and localized flooding.

Commissioner Roberts expressed concern over the City not having fixed the flood damage along Coal Creek and Forest Drive. He said the area is open with pipes sticking out and has not been touched. Mr. King agreed to look into it.

Commissioner Kovoov asked how the Utility prioritized removing downed trees. Mr. Jackman replied that they address areas that are blocking the right of way first, then they go to primary arterials, secondary arterials, and areas where there is immediate threat to life or property. If trees were near a downed power line, the City could not work on them. They are the responsibility of Puget Sound Energy. The City could not work on many trees. So, the protocol was to communicate those locations to PSE.

Commissioner Larrivee suggested that Commissioners review the presentation on the response that was presented to the Council.

Mr. Jackman said that some trees were so large that they were beyond the capacity for the City to remove and hired a contractor to remove them. In the meantime they brought in barricades for closed streets. All streets that were blocked were opened within 8 hours or less, except streets with downed power lines. Crews worked 12-hour shifts, 24/7 for 8 days.

The Water and Wastewater crews were able to maintain 100% uninterrupted service. He explained what they had to do to maintain service including fueling emergency generators at water sites and wastewater stations. They had to transport and rotate mobile generators to 24 of the 35 wastewater sites. This was difficult because of the traffic and required a police motorcycle escort to get through town quickly to avoid generators running out of fuel.

Commissioner Pottinger asked if there was adequate fuel on site? Mr. Jackman replied yes. Commissioner Roberts said that many gas stations could not operate without power. He said that in some states gas stations are required to have a generator and hopes this is something this state could look at as well.

The City had to provide emergency water interties to smaller communities. Staff made sure City's radio communication system was operating as there was heavy traffic. Communication shop not only takes care of Bellevue, they also take care of Redmond, Kirkland, Renton, Woodinville, and Bothell. Communications staff was also on 12 hour shifts, 24/7 for 8 days.

Commissioner Larrivee asked if they were all City employees or were contracted employees from other utilities or agencies utilized like PSE did. Mr. Jackman replied that there are mutual aid agreements in place to bring in employees from other jurisdictions, but all the immediate neighboring jurisdictions were dealing with the same emergency and the event did not exceed departments staffing abilities.

Mr. Jackman stated in summary that the wind storm was the worst event the city had endured to date. It had resulted in a loss of power to all water and sewer stations for 7 – 8 days, downed trees and non functioning traffic lights. With planning, preparations and well trained staff there was no loss of water system in the 8 days and only one sewer station that had a minor overflow. Commissioner Pottinger asked if the sewer overflow occurred at the Medina station. Mr. King said they would find out and let her know.

Commissioner Roberts asked if someone has put a price tag on the extra overtime. Mr. Jackman responded that the City Manager is preparing a report for the City Council on the costs. It is not a small price tag. Citywide it will be six figures or more. Information will be out in the next few weeks. However, a lot is FEMA reimbursable. That is why the rigorous accounting is important.

Commissioner Pottinger asked how much water was provided to the small jurisdictions and if that would be accounted for. Mr. Jackman said that eventually that will be done.

Commissioner Roberts asked how the storm water system held up? Mr. Jackman replied that there was localized damage, such as Coal Creek slide, but nothing catastrophic. There is not a count on flooded houses. The flooding was not caused by the design or capacity of the system, but because of blocked storm grates. It is the responsibility of the residents to keep those grates clear.

Commissioner Larrivee asked about the next steps in terms of preparing citizens on how to behave in these types of situations. A lot of the problems occurred because of peoples reaction to the situation, such as the fighting at the gas stations and people not abiding by traffic rules.

Mr. Jackman said there is information going out because people are in an education mode now. People will be reminded of weather planning for weather related emergencies and people should be prepared to be self sustained for at least 3 if not 7 days.

Mr. Jackman said staff has identified a wish list for system improvements. However, all told the City survived very well in terms of maintaining water and sewer service and clearing streets. In terms of system improvements there is no need for quick decisions or fixes Utilities will rank items on the list with other CIP projects. But if the City was able to survive this, overall the City is pretty well equipped.

Commissioner Larrivee asked what the plan would be if the sewage system had failed or there was waste contamination problem. Mr. Jackman said if there was a water contamination there would be a public notice sent to TV news, radio news, and press releases to newspapers. If there was no electricity, it would be problematic to get the message out and staff would have to become very creative. There are door to door contact trees and phone trees in place through the Neighborhood Program in Planning and Community Development.

Mr. Jackman said the key lessons included traffic impacts. They will now plan for police escorts when traffic is gridlocked. The teaming of water and wastewater personnel in zones for generator fueling and battery exchanges works well and is efficient. There is potential for more cross training between water and wastewater personnel and system operators, and for standardizing generator standards throughout the city.

In closing, Mr. Jackman said the City has a good plan, and is well prepared. On February 15 there will be a staff recognition luncheon. The wind storm was a big event, the biggest one of all, but overall the City was well prepared.

Mr. King said following the response is recovery. The wind storm left a significant amount of trees on rights of way, bike paths and sidewalks. Recovery efforts included collecting and disposing of debris. This recovery overwhelmed city resources so the City established an emergency contract with Davey Tree Service. The contract was for \$250,000, but another \$300,000 was added to it, which may be FEMA reimbursable. Some trees were so big that the City didn't have the equipment and also they needed help because of the volume. Staff did a citywide inspection to get locations, quantity and type of work required using sweeper route maps. Staff followed the contractors to make sure they were doing the work.

Mr. King said that it was not only City property that was damaged, private property owners were also impacted by huge amounts of debris. Ms. Fife-Ferris discussed what the City did to help Citizens. She referred to a chart comparing

the storm event with the 1993 Inaugural Day Storm. She said many people remember what happened then and had expectations based on what happened in 1993. In 1993, people were allowed to push debris to the right of ways. The City cancelled yard waste service, which was occurring on a monthly basis at the time, and contracted with Rabanco at the time who drove around with a couple of people on the back of their trucks jumping off and loading the debris into the back of the truck for a cost of about \$300,000. The trucks are now automated trucks so the City could not do that. The trucks do not allow for additional staff to ride on the back or for loose debris that is not properly prepared to be collected.

The policy change to provide weekly yard waste service which allows residents to put out storm debris with some preparation, such as bundling. However, over 1000 trees came down within the City. The City entered into an emergency contract with Pacific Topsoils to allow residents to take yard debris with proof of residency and drop debris off for free. When customers without access to a pick-up truck called, the City suggested that they rent a truck with neighbors or contract directly with Allied Waste for a container to be located in their neighborhood. The final cost for Pacific Topsoils was \$32,000. They collected 2400 cubic yards from 900 households.

Ms. Fife-Ferris provided a comparison of what other jurisdictions offered and said Bellevue was among the most generous. Newcastle sent City crews to collect debris from the curbside and Seattle allowed free extras, but it still had to be prepared and bundled.

Commissioner Larrivee asked why the City didn't use its own resources as drop off sites. Ms. Fife-Ferris replied because there would be great costs incurred hauling debris from those locations to a facility, and since Pacific Topsoils is conveniently located in Bellevue it was determined to be the best option. Other sites were considered, such as schools, but there were logistical issues.

Ms. Fife-Ferris distributed to Commissioners a packet containing the dissemination of information for both snow storm and windstorm. There were many news releases. The Utilities Department worked through the City's Communications Office, who took the news releases and incorporated Citywide information before they were distributed. The Utilities Department also developed a fact sheet that was posted on the website, which was updated and evolved and translated into six different languages. They conducted interviews with KIRO, and the website information was updated regularly.

Commissioner Larrivee asked about the restoration of the grid and noted that Bellevue Square came up pretty quickly and the suspicion that there was a preferred system. He noted that the Council presentation discussed how the grid was restored and that would be a good message to get out. Ms. Fife-Ferris replied that the restoration was PSE, but the City could get out better information on how

the City streets get cleared and what the priority is. She said there is a link to this information, but there has not been a need to publicize it widely prior to this.

Customer Service staff and billing staff were highly appraised of programs and what to do. There was a recycling hot line and that got a lot of calls. They got about 600 calls through all the events, which were double what they normally get.

City staff has begun to identify ways to get information out more widely, such as reader boards. Bellevue Square became the community center that Saturday and getting information out there would have worked. Utilities also did a targeted mailing as certain neighborhoods had more debris than others. A neighborhood in Bridle Trails was targeted first as the damage was severe. Then the City issued a 1700 targeted mailing that was done in house to neighborhoods identified as still having significant volumes of storm debris.

Commissioner Larrivee commented on how useless the radio was in getting out information as it was Seattle centric and asked if the City had considered partnering with neighboring jurisdictions to get the messages out.

Ms. Fife-Ferris said they hope to work with other jurisdictions to standardize programs or messages so that they can have one large message that will be more likely to be picked up by the media.

Commissioner Larrivee said that his sense was that the City of Bellevue responded better than the other communities and that in fact the City experienced an influx of people into the City to enjoy services. He asked about the City's efforts to partner with other jurisdictions to provide better response.

Mr. Jackman replied that Fire Chief Trevino represented the City in a regional meeting that included PSE and hospitals. He does not know the extent of the partnership but they are having discussions.

Commissioners thanked staff for all their work during the events.

Mr. King said the City collected debris at Banner Wood Park, before the contract with Pacific Topsoils was arranged. Pacific Topsoils will grind the debris and haul it to their Bellevue site. With regard to snow response, the trucks and sanders were ready so when the snow hit with 4 to 6 inches, the City was ready. This was followed by freezing. Plows could not get momentum on some streets. The City laid 1.2 million pounds of sand. Now crews are going out to sweep it up as it is bad for the environment and safety.

Mr. King said staff learned some lessons and believes they are better prepared for next time.

Chair Rogers encouraged staff to take advantage of the opportunity that people are receptive and urged individuals to get informed and be better prepared.

e. 2007 ESC Workplan

Chair Rogers said that he spoke with Commissioner Helland who expressed concern that the Commission may formally adopt the work plan in final form. Commissioner Roberts noted that the work plan changes throughout the year but it is a good summary for the next year. Commissioner Rogers said that the work plan could change and that items could be added. Commissioners discussed the need to add an update on the Emergency Communication Plan in September or October, which should include messaging to the public.

**6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Commissioner Roberts inquired about the name tags on trucks. Nels Johnson said they were available and could be expected to be seen on the driver's side of the door. Commissioner Roberts said that one truck driver he spoke to, as of two weeks ago, had no idea they were coming another truck driver knew about them but did not know when they would be placed on the trucks.

**7. NEW BUSINESS – NONE**

**8. DIRECTOR'S OFFICE REPORT**

- **Bel-Red Corridor Update** – Mr. King said he would verify that PCD would be making the presentation. The EIS came out on January 25, 2007 with a 45 day comment period. Commissioner Pottinger suggested looking at it online.
- **ESC Meeting Date July 5<sup>th</sup> or July 12<sup>th</sup>** – Commissioners agreed to have the meeting on July 12<sup>th</sup>.
- **Allied Waste Recyclables Processing Facility Tour** – The Tour is on February 14<sup>th</sup>. Commissioners were asked to fill out forms regarding lunch.

**9. CONTINUED ORAL COMMUNICATIONS - NONE**

**10. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Pottinger moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 PM. Commissioner Roberts seconded. Motion passed unanimously.