

**CITY OF BELLEVUE
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES**

Thursday, September 6, 2007
6:30 P.M. Regular Meeting

Bellevue City Hall
450 110th Ave. NE
Conference Room 1E-112

PRESENT: Commissioners Carter, Kovoor, Larrivee, Roberts, and Rogers

ABSENT: Mahon and Helland

STAFF: Nav Otal, Anne Weigle, Susan Fife-Ferris, Tony Marcum, Wendy Skony,
Wes Jorgenson, Elaine Borjeson, Rick Watson

OTHERS: Councilmember Davidson, Virginia Garcia, transcriber.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Rogers called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM.

2. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Roberts moved approval of the agenda. Commissioner Carter seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF 7/12/07 MINUTES

Commissioner Carter moved and Commissioner Roberts seconded the approval of the 7/12/07 meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

5. REPORTS & SUMMARIES

a. ESC Calendar/Council Calendar

Nav Otal, Utilities Department Director, noted that the desk packet contained a replacement of the ESC calendar. Commissioner Rogers reviewed the ESC calendar and indicated that he may not attend the October 4, 2007 ESC meeting.

Ms. Otal reminded the ESC that the Joint Commission briefing on the Bel-Red Project is Wednesday, October 10, 2007.

b. Desk Packet Materials

Ms. Ota reviewed the desk packet materials:

Conservation & Outreach Events & Volunteer Opportunities
Revised Environmental Services Commission Calendar
Pamphlets: Steam Team & Recycling

c. Proposed Mid-bi budget Update

Ms. Ota reported that the Utilities Department does not anticipate changes to the 2008 budget. The only possible change may be the result of lower Cascade Water Alliance expenses by approximately \$500,000. The savings will be incorporated into the next budget cycle. She said the Mid-biennium budget is an abbreviated budget. The City adopted the rates last year that support the 2008 budget.

d. Emergency Preparedness Update – Tony Marcum

Tony Marcum, Operations and Maintenance Division, gave a PowerPoint presentation titled, “Preparing for the Storm Season.” Mr. Marcum provided an overview of the Utilities Department Storm Response Planning efforts, which includes:

Emergency Management Program
Operational Preparedness
Communications Strategy

Mr. Marcum reviewed the Department’s Emergency Management Program (EMP). He said the program is one of six Current Strategic Initiatives. Utilities Department staff participates in Department and City EMP Teams. Mr. Marcum said the EMP Work Plan and Training Plan were attached to presentation handout materials and are work in progress. He said they are currently focusing on Winter Storm Preparation training. While the Utilities Department is not considered first responders to emergencies, such as Police and Fire, it provides response 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

The EMP Plan has two volumes 1 & 2. Volume 1 focuses on major disasters and includes muster procedures, command procedures and the position of specific responsibilities. Volume 2 contains specific plans for snow and ice events, rain events and others. Two other specific plans under development are for Wind & Power Outages and Debris Management.

Mr. Marcum reviewed Operational Preparations including pre-season preparation, which includes training and Bellevue weather forecast monitoring. Usually there is some warning about storms. When there is warning, staff activate command

and dispatch centers, check and test equipment and supplies, and establish crew shifts.

For snow and ice events, staff fit trucks with plows and chains, check sand supplies, and monitor/de-ice historic icy areas. If there is advance warning of a snow or ice event, staff will preposition trucks, barricades, and road closure signs. They will pre-deploy crews and will update the snow and ice route map and post it on the City's website. Mr. Marcum also reviewed preparations for rain, wind, and power outage events.

Commissioner Rogers asked how many areas do we monitor for flooding problems. Mr. Marcum said the City is divided into five districts and each has 15-20 locations that the City monitors for flooding. Most of these are low areas in the roadway that have a history of roadway flooding due to debris plugging catchbasin grates.

Mr. Marcum reviewed post event procedures. He said that after each event there is a post event debriefing where staff discusses areas that went well and identify areas that need improvement. He reviewed the lessons learned from the 2006 Windstorm.

Commissioner Larrivee asked why certain training was occurring in 2008, which appears late given the possibility of storms in early 2008. Mr. Marcum replied that there is a lot of training and staff is developing new training. Some of the training that is occurring in September is priority. 2008 training is just a more formal presentation of procedures the City has already developed and put in place.

Commissioner Larrivee asked about outreach and the coordination of response with the rest of the community and churches. Ms. Fife-Ferris replied that the City's EOC is working with community groups. Mr. Marcum indicated that he has been in meetings where City staff has discussed ways to increase outreach. Ms. Otal stated that there is recognition from the City that there should be more outreach, but this is not under the purview of the Utilities Department.

Susan Fife-Ferris reviewed the Utilities Communications Strategy. The strategy is a three-prong approach. Staff provides communications prior to, right before and during, and after the event. Prior to events, the Utilities Department publishes articles in "It's Your City" regarding Storm Preparation and Response. They post storm preparation information for citizens on the City's website. Staff print holiday and missed collection information on garbage bills.

Commissioner Rogers indicated that last year's events were extraordinary, and reminding people that it was extraordinary and what problems occurred would be helpful.

Ms. Fife-Farris reviewed Utilities Department procedures for what it does just prior to and during a storm. Communications staff provide regular updated information on the City's website. Staff also issue news releases about what crews are doing in response.

Communications staff also keeps frontline staff informed: including City customer service staff, customer service staff at Allied, and people who deal with walk-in customers. Staff put information packets together for them.

After a storm, staff evaluates the situation, determine if there is anything staff could have done better, such as assessing whether additional information could have been provided or could still be given, even though the storm passed. It also determines the target neighbors and distributes information to locations that were more impacted than others. Finally, it evaluates its communications response and makes adjustments.

Commissioner Larrivee asked if there is an effort to distribute information to ethnic papers that provide broader outreach. Ms. Fife-Farris said that they haven't gone to those newspapers, but is something she is willing to look into.

e. Food Waste Recycling Program - Elaine Borjeson & Wendy

Wendy Skony and Elaine Borjeson presented information about the residential and commercial recycling food waste programs. Ms. Skony stated that food waste recycling began in June of 2004 to residential customers. A few months before that, yard waste pick up changed from every two weeks to every week. The Utilities Department sent out information to residents about the new service and to encourage food recycling. A year later, in 2005, the Utility conducted a phone survey of 400 customers. Survey results indicated that 58 percent were aware that they could recycle food waste and food-soiled paper. Of that amount, 12 percent were recycling food waste with their yard debris and another 10 percent were putting food waste in their backyard composting system. The main reasons given for recycling food waste focused on the environment.

Based on these findings the goal was to increase awareness and participation. Therefore, during the next year, staff mailed out a postcard, and created a food waste recycling brochure, had a pre-movie ad running at a local theater, and ran ads in the Bellevue Reporter and King County Journal. In 2006, staff conducted a follow up survey, and found the numbers had increased. 63 percent were aware that they could recycle food waste, 20 percent were recycling food waste with yard debris and 12 percent were composting.

Commissioner Larrivee asked what was the 63 percent of. Ms. Skony replied that the survey was a sample of 400 households. The 32 percent that are recycling and backyard composting food waste is in line with other cities.

Commissioner Larrivee asked if there were any follow up questions on why people were not aware of the program. She said that there was so much information going out with the new contract when the program started, the message may have gotten lost. However, awareness has gone up since last year.

Commissioner Kovoor asked of the 63 percent that were aware of the program, were only 20 percent recycling. Ms. Skony replied yes. She inquired if surveyors asked those who were aware of the program why they were not recycling food waste. Ms. Skony said she did not know but could find out. She said the Utility has received calls concerning rats and animals.

Ms. Skony indicated that Allied Waste reported that yard debris increased from 17,797 tons in 2005 to 19,241 tons in 2006. However, because food waste and food soiled paper are mixed in with yard debris, it is hard to know the exact percentage of food waste that is being recycled. A consultant did a ride-along with one of Allied trucks and as the yard containers were being emptied he estimated how much food waste and paper was included and found that it was approximately 10 percent. A consultant also did a waste sort of garbage in various neighborhoods and found that about 30 percent was food waste and food-soiled paper, which is consistent with Seattle at 33 percent and King County at 25 percent.

Commissioner Roberts asked if garbage went down because of the program. Ms. Skony said she was not sure because there could have been more debris because of the storms, but agreed to follow-up.

Ms. Skony said that the City does not offer food recycling to multi-family housing units. However, Cedar Grove Composting is considering doing a composting pilot with an apartment complex.

Commissioner Larrivee asked if this program has been incorporated into other school outreach programs the City provides. She said they have not done it in the schools.

Ms. Fife-Ferris replied that the International School was recruited to be a part of the commercial pilot. City staff is talking with the school district and they have hired someone to deal with conservation programs. She said the focus is on High Schools and in the discussion stage. Ms. Fife-Ferris stated that information on food waste recycling is also part of the middle school science curriculum.

Ms. Skony reported that other cities including Seattle, Redmond, Kirkland, and Issaquah have all started food waste recycling in the last few years. She described their programs including how much they charge, how frequent they pick up and the participation levels.

Commissioner Carter asked if the other cities calculated participation percentages similar to Bellevue. Ms. Skony said she was unsure and would follow-up.

Ms. Skony demonstrated the food waste bags that customers can purchase. She said they are sold at stores like Whole Foods.

Elaine Borjeson discussed the commercial food waste recycling program. She said in 2004 the City participated in a two year pilot commercial food waste recycling program with Allied Waste and the King County Solid Waste Division. She indicated that 36 businesses participated. They were mostly smaller businesses including florists, fast-food outlets and restaurants and smaller markets. 300 tons of organic material was recycled. The diversion of food waste was successful, but the cost of the program made it unsustainable for the long term. Part of the high cost was due to the cost of biodegradable bags. These bags were required by the Seattle-King County Public Health Department. The total program cost per customer was about \$75.00.

Commissioner Larrivee asked what the price point was to make recycling commercial food waste feasible for the businesses. Ms. Borjeson said she did not know. She indicated that Cedar Grove Composting needs a particular bag that will break down under certain conditions. Their process has to break it down in eight weeks. In the pilot businesses did not have to pay for the program. King Co. Solid Waste Division and the City paid the cost of the program. Allied paid incidental cost.

At end of the two years pilot, the businesses were thanked for participating and were asked to fill out a survey. They were asked if their garbage decreased. 58 percent strongly agreed that their garbage decreased and 21 percent somewhat agreed that their garbage had decreased. They were asked why they participated. 83 percent said they participated for environmental reasons and 45 percent indicated they participated because the program was free. 42 percent said the biggest difficulty of the program was getting their employees to participate and 17 percent stated that training employees was difficult. 50 percent said they would participate in a permanent program if they had to pay for it and if the rate was lower than garbage collection. 33 percent they would not participate and 17 percent they did not know.

There are currently 16 businesses that recycle food waste today. They are large generators of food waste including a restaurant and a grocery store, but a hotel and Overlake Hospital also participates. Half of the businesses are in the Bellevue /Lincoln square area. None of the businesses participated in the pilot.

Cedar Grove Composting is the only hauler in the region that is actively pursuing food waste recycling in Bellevue at this time. The City helps by providing technical assistance and offer kitchen containers and signage to help offset the

initial program costs. In exchange, the City obtains a year long commitment from the businesses so that they participate long enough to realize the benefits. There are issues with expanding the program Citywide. Bellevue has competitive garbage rates now. Businesses need to be able to downsize their garbage to make up the added cost of the program. Space constraints are a real problem in many areas. The Health Department is studying programs in neighboring cities and will have a report out next year.

Cities with expanded program must file a report with the Health Department. There are four other cities that have commercial food waste recycling: Kirkland, Redmond, Issaquah and Seattle. She reviewed how each runs their programs. Kirkland embeds the cost into the solid waste rates. They charge all commercial accounts and allocate some costs to residential customers. Redmond provides a basic level of service and also embeds costs in rates. In 2007, they are paying program costs with their Solid Waste Reserve Fund. In Issaquah only participants pay for the program. A few schools and two non-profits participate. Seattle has a fee for service program. Over 400 businesses are participating from 3500 accounts. Seattle provides free six months worth of biodegradable bags.

Commissioner Larrivee asked if the Health Department was planning to change requirements associated with the food waste program. Ms. Borjeson said they may loosen the bag requirement in order to make the program work.

f. Stormwater Utility Review - Nav Otal and Rick Watson

Nav Otal introduced the topic and indicated that the Stormwater Utility Review presentation would review four items: Community Vision, History of the Utility, Mission, and Overview of the System. She said that in subsequent meetings, staff would review Stormwater Utility policies, roles and responsibilities, regional perspective, standards, planning and asset management, operations and maintenance, public outreach, rates and finance, and future challenges.

The Community Vision is, "To be dedicated stewards of environmental quality." This includes a quality, sustainable environment, key natural features, and recovering salmon and urban forests.

The Utilities Mission is, "To provide a surface water system designed to achieve fishable and swimmable waters, and eliminate damage from storms."

Ms. Otal reviewed a chart outlining the history of Stormwater Utility beginning in 1970. The chart explains how the Utility came to be where it is now. This overview included the drivers and significant events that provided the establishment of the Utility and how the Utility's mission evolved. She said citizens concern with flood control led the development of the Stormwater Utility. In addition, there was a desire to maintain open streams resulting in the City adopting an open streams concept. In the 1980s the Utility expanded its mission

by adding water quality and habitat protection. Since stormwater issues and flooding are not only local issues but could be better addressed on a regional basis regional coordination was added to the Utilities mission in the 1990's. At that time, a regional needs assessment was undertaken to investigate how the region should work together. In the late 1990's the ESA listing of the Chinook was added to the City's focus. The City's approach was to use a regional approach to address the Chinook listing. In the 2000s, the Utility expanded its mission to use the Adaptive Management Process. She stated that the Utility's mission has increased in complexity over time and the Utilities responsibilities have expanded.

Commissioner Larrivee asked if flooding is still a driver and a community concern. However, Ms. Otal said flooding is not a significant issue because of the City's flood control programs that minimize flooding. Mr. Jorgenson stated that in the last budget the Utility added a new flood control program in the CIP to address small local flooding.

Mr. Watson explained Adaptive Management. He said it is a scientific process where you design an experiment to answer a management question, implement the management program, measure and monitor the program, then evaluate the program and adjust the program as appropriate.

Mr. Watson provided an overview of how the Stormwater System works. He explained the Hydrologic Cycle comparing an undeveloped area, which was Bellevue in 1956, to an urban area, which is Bellevue today. He said that you lose evaporation and transpiration in an urban environment and drastically increase surface runoff to lakes and streams. As a result, the City developed a storm system over time and then created the Stormwater Utility to manage the overall system.

Mr. Watson also reviewed stormwater system statistics. He said the City has two large lakes, 3 small lakes, 13 miles of shorelines, 64 miles of streams and 387 miles of pipe. The system has been improved by putting more pipes in for flood control.

Mr. Watson discussed how the system evolved and its components. The stormwater system evolved in a patchwork fashion through annexations and developer extensions. When this occurs the City has to figure out how to mitigate stormwater runoff. Mr. Watson explained the major differences between the stormwater open system versus a closed system (piped).

Mr. Watson described the City's Open Streams and Wetlands, provided information about the City's piped systems, and described public/private and regional detention systems. He also provided an example of how public and private systems work together in a Bellevue neighborhood to convey stormwater.

Ms. Otal explained that three more meetings are planned to discuss the Stormwater Utility scheduled for October 4, 2007, November 1, 2007 and December 6, 2007. She said next time staff will review policies, roles and responsibilities and will provide a regional perspective including regulatory requirements.

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Commissioner Roberts asked for an update of the Light Rail project from the two Commissioners representing the ESC. Commissioner Larrivee agreed to provide an update at the October 4, 2007 ESC meeting.

7. NEW BUSINESS - None

8. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Otal reminded the ESC that the October 4, 2007 meeting was crucial because of the public hearing. She noted that the meeting on October 10, 2007 was a Planning Commission meeting.

9. CONTINUED ORAL COMMUNICAITONS - NONE

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION - NONE

11. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Larrivee moved to adjourn the meeting 8:55 PM. Commissioner Carter seconded. Motion passed unanimously.