

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Council Retreat

March 31 – April 1, 2005

Semiahmoo Resort  
Blaine, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Marshall, Deputy Mayor Noble, and Councilmembers Balducci, Chelminiak, Davidson, Degginger, and Lee

ABSENT: None.

**Thursday, March 31, 2005**

Mayor Marshall opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Teambuilding/Council Communications

Councilmembers discussed accomplishments over the past year, obstacles that were overcome, what is working well, and areas for improvement. City Manager noted that by the end of the year, the City will have concluded or be close to concluding the three largest projects in its history: the Access Downtown project, implementation of the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, and the New City Hall. Councilmembers rated 2004 a good year as much was accomplished.

Council discussed several ideas for refining the roles of Boards and Commissions and communicating with these Council-appointed groups, including the need to regularly highlight work of Boards and Commissions in *It's Your City*. Council also discussed several alternative strategies for outreach to residents and businesses, including more extensive distribution of *It's Your City*.

Council discussed the idea of developing a speakers bureau through which Councilmembers and key staff would provide greater information about City activities to neighborhood and business groups.

Mayor Marshall declared recess for the day at 11:00 p.m.

## **Friday, April 1, 2005**

Council reconvened at 8:15 a.m. and discussed a variety of topics and ideas, including:

Circulator/Transit – Council discussed that if a circulator were to be implemented it should be memorable and should extend to major neighborhood centers as well as serving Downtown. Councilmembers suggested investigating possible extension of a circulator to downtown Redmond and/or Kirkland, or explore other synergies like joint purchasing and/or maintenance agreements. Councilmember Degginger suggested looking at the redevelopment that occurred in Clarendon, Virginia, as a result of the siting of a rail line serving Washington, DC. City Manager Sarkozy noted the opportunity to develop interconnected projects.

Greater Eastside Study Trip – Council discussed the idea of establishing a greater Eastside study trip to learn more about transit and other regional systems that are working effectively.

Sub-regional Approach to Major Issues – Council discussed the benefit and the opportunity, since many communities on the Eastside share common viewpoints on a number of issues, for these cities to complement one another's efforts by supporting one another on common goals and an Eastside-centric vision. Dr. Davidson noted the perceived benefit of Eastside cities also coordinating land use policies together.

Goal setting – Councilmembers offered ideas for group discussion, including:

- Addressing the interchange at I-405 with I-90 to provide better connections to nearby neighborhoods;
- Utilizing a lid built over I-405 in Downtown to provide space for bus layovers;
- Creating a more attractive access to the waterfront development on Meydenbauer Bay;
- Acquiring additional waterfront park property;
- Developing the park on the Boeing property acquired by the City in 2002;
- Finishing sidewalk segments to complete logical connections;
- Expanding the Convention Center, including acquisition of the expansion parcel;
- Acquiring the Metro site adjacent to the New City Hall;
- Pursuing development of a municipal conduit network; and
- Seeking to establish a four-year university or a graduate-level program of a major university in Bellevue.

City Financial Resources – Council discussed a variety of alternative funding sources for City operating and capital budgets:

- Re-initiate a voted property tax component in the CIP. This used to be the City's practice with parks bonds;
- Capture a portion of the revenues generated from Downtown redevelopment during the current economic upturn, sale of development rights, or other mechanisms to fund endowments for parks or cultural facilities such as the Bellevue Art Museum or a performing arts center;

- Consider use of the Local Improvement District (LID) financing mechanism to implement the Downtown Implementation Plan;
- Host another Economic Summit;
- Seek regional or state funding commitment to a reliable funding source to meet growing Human Services needs; and
- Initiate discussion of a parks and open space ballot measure.

Council requested they be provided more information about utility costs, how rates are determined, and current maintenance and repair levels.

Neighborhood Strategy – Council discussed a variety of ideas including:

- Continuing to foster neighborhoods’ ability to create the capacity to organize themselves and achieve neighborhood improvements;
- Developing a City-wide redevelopment strategy, including neighborhood centers;
- Putting measures in place to limit lot assemblage in order to keep properties affordable for families;
- Planning for housing needs of “1<sup>st</sup> home” purchasers (which may be condominiums) and “2<sup>nd</sup> time” purchasers (which may be single family homes) – What are the implications for the types of services needed and/or the kinds of public services they will want?
- Holding a panel discussion on what neighborhoods in Bellevue will look like 10 to 20 years from now and developing plan for addressing change;
- Maintaining neighborhood character and facilitating neighborhoods’ distinguishing themselves as unique through community centers, pedestrian activities, etc.;
- Providing a “kid friendly” element within the neighborhood strategy—people are attracted to Bellevue because of the high quality schools;
- Developing a livability strategy for neighborhoods which might be accomplished by refreshing the subarea plans and defining goals by neighborhood;
- Developing a specific strategy for commercial areas;
- Discussing funding for the Neighborhood Investment Strategy (NIS) program with the community (i.e., “This is what the current resource buys. This is what can be achieved with enhanced funding.”); and
- Work with Habitat for Humanity or similar groups to “refresh” old housing.

Arts/Culture – Council discussed a variety of ideas including:

- Developing a series of tactical strategies to promote Bellevue as a hub for arts/culture on the Eastside;
- Encouraging the establishment of a cultural foundation that can direct subsidies to the Performing Arts Center Eastside (PACE), Bellevue Art Museum (BAM), Eastside Heritage Center, and other arts and cultural groups. Any City contributions to the arts could be channeled through the foundation rather than groups approaching the City directly with funding requests;
- Scheduling a briefing on and tour of the Bellevue Art Museum; and

- Potentially expanding the role of the Arts Commission, much like that of the Parks Board and Human Services Commission, to include analyzing and making recommendations on competing requests for programming and funding.

Community Events – Council discussed a number of ideas, including:

- Hosting an annual summer festival in addition to the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration which might incorporate a neighborhood barbeque competition, “kits” to develop neighborhood celebrations (similar to “birthday party in a box” kits developed for 50Fest), and/or using the six neighborhood shopping centers as focal points for neighborhood get-togethers;
- Encouraging more multicultural activities throughout the year; and
- Sponsoring an event to recognize the top 10% of all graduating seniors.

Economic Development – Council requested information be provided regarding the City’s current budget for economic development activities and processes and its involvement in regional groups like enterpriseSeattle to achieve regional economic development.

Council discussed a number of ideas relating to providing additional focus to economic development, including:

- Importance of developing a sustainable economy to help to moderate/allow the City to avoid the economic troughs;
- Focusing the direction of the City’s economic development activities on some specific outcomes such as providing funding to drive an advertising campaign for tourism and promotion;
- Showcasing the City as economic hub, cultural hub, medical hub, etc.;
- Highlighting Bellevue’s assets, such as the extensive parks and trail system, as a key selling point for Bellevue;
- Moving responsibility for the Economic Development program to the City Manager’s Office;
- Looking into combining marketing activities with other cities;
- Developing the look/branding and identity for Bellevue;
- Coordinating with Bellevue Community College, which is emerging as a possible key partner;
- Looking into the possibility of utilizing a similar approach to eGov to develop an eCommunity or eEconomic Development site that might include information about Bellevue restaurants, hotels, stores, etc.;
- Establishing an Economic Development board or commission with an identified Council liaison; and
- Evaluating staffing models including consultant, LTE, and FTE approaches for the Economic Development function during various phases of its development.

Council directed that the City Manager develop and initiate a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a marketing/branding expert; move the Economic Development function to the City Manager’s Office; develop a budget and short- and long-term implementation plans for the program; begin

the search for the Economic Development Director (once the marketing/branding consultant is at work); and to coordinate with the City's partners in the economic development effort.

High Capacity Transit (HCT) – Mayor Marshall noted the need for Council discussion and feedback on upcoming decision points relating to Sound Transit planning. Sound Transit will be entertaining amendments as early as next week. One proposed amendment will likely be a change to the mode for the SR 520 corridor from bus rapid transit (BRT) to high-capacity transit (HCT).

During Council discussion, there was consensus on the following:

- I-90 first to Downtown Bellevue and then as far to Kirkland and Redmond as can be achieved within the available funding;
- Divert freed up resources from Route 550 to the “outer areas” outside the HCT-served area;
- The Eastside should be provided similar technology and alignments to those provided in the western corridor; and
- Alignments should be driven by the chosen technology.

Council discussed the proposed gas tax and the regional advocacy needed to deliver any of the projects/funding:

- Need to get Seattle to deliver Sound Transit project components to Eastside if we support Sound Transit overall;
- Need to consider other regional implications of discussions with Seattle (i.e., Cascade Water Alliance); and
- Seeing convergence of several regional issues:
  - Transportation
  - Water
  - Subarea funding from federal government, and
  - The need to maintain same taxing level.

Council provided the following direction to the Mayor as the City's representative on the Sound Transit Board:

- Need to take the broad view, cognizant of other regional discussions like Cascade Water Alliance;
- Preference expressed for tunneling as approach in Downtown Bellevue to reduce impacts to neighborhoods;
- Hybrid approach is acceptable, with some areas elevated where practical;
- Service should run beyond the Downtown to Ashwood, Overlake Hospital, and other areas;
- A park and ride lot should be located close by;
- Alignment should run into downtown Redmond as well as to Microsoft; and
- Alternative technologies including light rail and BRT on dedicated ROW should be among those considered. Council is interested in the appearance (photos) of various

alignments including elevated, at grade, and below grade approaches before making a recommendation as to the best alignment for Bellevue. Bellevue is interested in how noise issues will be addressed.

Organizational health – Council discussed a number of issues relating to health of the organization including:

- The City Manager's efforts to improve staff diversity have been very good;
- Council wishes to be alerted to any unusual issues being raised by staff;
- Council supports the continued usage of the City's Core Values in decision making; and
- Council would like additional information on total compensation including merit increases.

At 4:12 p.m., Mayor Marshall declared the meeting adjourned.

Myrna L. Basich  
City Clerk

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