

East Bellevue Community Council
Summary Minutes of Regular Meeting

August 3, 2004
6:30 p.m.

Lake Hills Community Clubhouse
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Chair Bell, Vice Chair Keeffe, and Councilmembers Eder, Seal, and Wiechmann

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Kate Berens, Planning and Community Development
Brian Ward, Utilities
Mark Carey, Region 10 FEMA Office

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. with Chair Bell presiding.

2. **ROLL CALL**

Upon roll call by the Clerk, all Councilmembers were present. Chair Bell led the flag salute.

3. **COMMUNICATIONS - WRITTEN AND ORAL**

Mr. Bell explained the need for a Special Meeting of the Community Council on August 17 to conduct a public hearing on the Kelsey Creek rezone ordinance regarding health club uses of less than 5,000 square feet. Councilmembers concurred with scheduling the Special Meeting.

4. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Keeffe requested the addition of agenda item 10(a), Encroachment of Public Rights-of-Way.

Mr. Seal moved to approve the agenda, as amended, and Mr. Eder seconded the motion. The agenda was approved as amended by a vote of 5-0.

5. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:** None.

6. **RESOLUTIONS:** None.

7. **REPORTS OF CITY COUNCIL, BOARDS, AND COMMISSIONS:** None.

8. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

(a) Wetland/Floodplain Delineation Presentation

Brian Ward, Storm Water Systems Engineer, introduced Mark Carey from the Region 10 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) office in Bothell.

Mr. Ward described a map showing the old floodplain boundary and the revised floodplain boundary. Floodplains in Bellevue were originally established in the late 1970s by FEMA working with aerial photography. The process to identify the floodplain at a parcel level is known as a letter of map revision (LOMR).

Responding to Mr. Keeffe, Mr. Ward said the term floodplain refers to an area of special flood hazard, also called the 100-year floodplain. It refers to an area with a one percent chance of being flooded in any given year. Elevation is an important factor in designating the floodplain.

Mr. Ward explained that the original floodplain model developed in the 1970s did not recognize the culvert under Kelsey Creek Shopping Center. When the stream corridor was re-modeled with the culvert in the model, this resulted in a reduction in the floodplain area. Mr. Ward briefly described the City's participation in a study with Mr. Franklin to study the area around Kelsey Creek Shopping Center.

Mr. Carey supervises the FEMA Region 10 floodplain program. In response to the Council's previous questions about insurance ratings, Mr. Carey explained that FEMA's national flood insurance program began in the late 1960s. FEMA sells flood insurance because the private sector is not interested in providing such insurance. If a person purchases flood insurance through a major insurance carrier, he or she is actually buying a FEMA policy. If a house is in the floodplain, the bank or mortgage company will require the homeowner to purchase national flood insurance. Rates are based on the elevation of the lowest floor above the floodplain. FEMA's incentive program encourages cities and counties to go beyond federal requirements for further reductions in rates.

Mr. Carey said Bellevue is one of the highest rated cities in the state because the risk of flooding is relatively low. Ratings are based on a jurisdiction's public information/education activities, mapping, regulatory components, and additional criteria. Bellevue's rating of 6 entitles residents to a 20 percent discount on FEMA flood insurance rates.

Mr. Carey explained that a letter of map revision indicates the involvement of physical engineering to determine the floodplain boundary in reference to a particular property. A city, county, or private landowner can petition FEMA to prepare a letter of map revision, which requires physical engineering to FEMA standards. A more common process for a private landowner is a letter of map amendment (LOMA), which is prepared without physical engineering. A LOMA uses surveying to establish the elevation of the structure in reference to

the floodplain. If the property is outside the floodplain, the owner is not required to purchase flood insurance.

Mr. Carey noted that each new flood study typically expands the floodplain because of enhancements in the accuracy of technology. However, multiple factors are taken into consideration in such a determination including public drainage improvements and wetland storage capacity.

Councilmembers reviewed the maps, and staff responded to questions of clarification.

Responding to Mr. Seal, staff explained that the mapping of the Kelsey Creek area floodplain was preceded by a hydrology modeling of the Kelsey Creek watershed. The entire basin was modeled in 2002 to predict flow rates and to update the previous model completed in the late 1970s.

Mr. Bell noted a channel to Larsen Lake that was changed 10 to 15 years ago. Mr. Ward said that project was built in approximately 1992, before he worked for the City, as an effort to improve the water quality of Larsen Lake.

Mr. Eder described the Community Council's ongoing interest in adding parking facilities near the Lake Hills library, clubhouse, and ballfield. Parks Department staff have responded that parking cannot be added due to the wetlands.

Mr. Ward clarified that the floodplain maps do not designate wetlands. He explained that wetlands function independently of 100-year flow events. The existence of a wetland is based on a persistent source of water, whether it is groundwater or surface water. Wetlands are defined by soil type, the type of vegetation, and the presence of a persistent water source.

Although she was not familiar with the specific request, Ms. Berens said the development of additional parking facilities might also be constrained by setback requirements associated with riparian corridors.

Mr. Carey said FEMA is currently in the process of remapping the nation's floodplains. He noted that floodplain maps are available online.

Responding to Mr. Eder, Mr. Ward said construction of an elevated causeway would be required in order to get 148th Avenue out of the floodplain. However, this is not considered feasible due to construction costs and aesthetic, environmental, and neighborhood impacts.

Chair Bell thanked Mr. Ward and Mr. Carey for taking the time to share information with the Community Council.

9. **COMMITTEE REPORTS:** None.

10. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

(a) Encroachment of Public Rights-of-Way

Mr. Keeffe discussed his meeting with Ron Kessack, Right-of-Way Manager, regarding public rights-of-way (particularly street ends) throughout the community that have been developed, blocked, or fenced by private property owners. Mr. Keeffe described Seattle's success in recent years to reclaim its street ends, some of which have now been developed into small parks or viewpoints for public use.

11. **NEW BUSINESS:** None.

12. **CONTINUED COMMUNICATIONS**

(a) Planning Commission Responses to Community Council comments on Comprehensive Plan Update

Chair Bell noted packet materials from Kathleen Burgess providing the Planning Commission's responses to the Community Council's comments on the Comprehensive Plan update. There was Council consensus to send a letter thanking staff for the information.

Mr. Bell is pleased with the new sidewalk being installed along 156th Avenue.

Mr. Eder reported on his attendance at the groundbreaking ceremony for the New City Building redevelopment project.

Mr. Keeffe commended the City for completion of the 156th Avenue/Crossroads project.

13. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None.

14. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Keeffe moved to approve the June 1, 2004 Summary Minutes, and Mr. Seal seconded the motion. The motion carried by a vote of 5-0.

Mr. Keeffe moved to approve the July 6, 2004 Summary Minutes, and Mr. Seal seconded the motion. The motion carried by a vote of 5-0.

15. **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Keeffe moved to adjourn the meeting, and Mr. Eder seconded the motion. The motion carried by a vote of 5-0.

At 8:10 p.m., Chair Bell declared the meeting adjourned.

Michelle Murphy, CMC
Deputy City Clerk

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