

The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on April 5, 2011

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

March 1, 2011
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Alex O'Reilly, Joseph Adriano, Kimberly Walker, Cathy Von Wald, Department of Parks and Community Services

GUEST SPEAKERS: Michelle Zeidman, Hopelink; Alina Aaron, Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative, Berta Seltzer, Network on Aging and Aging and Disability Advisory Council

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.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. February 1, 2011

Commissioner Stout called attention to the second sentence of the first paragraph at the top of page 2 and asked that "...the agency intends to keep on the families..." be revised to read "...the agency intends to retain the families"

Chair Beighle referred to the first sentence of the fourth paragraph on page 3 and noted that the last word should read "intersect" rather than "intersection."

Motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Commissioner Stout. Second was by Commissioner Bruels and the motion carried unanimously.

4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

5. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Hoople said he is continuing to attend the Levy Oversight Committee meetings, including the Human Services Levy Oversight Committee as part of his duties as chair of the Veterans Levy Oversight Committee. He noted that the levy renewal efforts are under way, especially with regard to county staff and the executive process involved in putting together a levy renewal plan.

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly mentioned that the Eastside Human Services Forum had made a formal comment about the levy recommendations. The Network on Aging is considering doing something similar.

6. DISCUSSION

A. Coordinated Mobility – King County Mobility Coalition and Eastside Easy Rider Coalition

Ms. O'Reilly said for as long as she has been a social worker, when people talk about barriers to human services, the issue of transportation invariably comes up. The King County Mobility Coalition grew out of a group called Key Partners in Transportation. They began meeting in 2004 under the leadership of the King County Area Agency on Aging to talk about mobility coordination, but deciding how to move forward was complicated by the number of systems involved. Passage in 2006 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) required that every jurisdiction that intends to receive federal dollars to develop formalized mobility plans. That served as the impetus for the development of the King County plan. Through a grant from United Way of King County and funding from the Puget Sound Regional Council, consultants were hired to spearhead the process of developing a coordinated plan for mobility. The list of partners involved in the process included King County Metro, Sound Transit, the King County Alliance for Human Services, the Puget Sound Regional Council, the City of Bellevue, Hopelink, and Aging and Disability Services. United Way, which was at the table when the process began, is no longer a partner.

Ms. O'Reilly said the Coalition currently has 28 members; they include both urban and rural transportation providers, non-profit agencies serving special needs clients as well as the low-income, and systems users. She said she came on board originally representing east and north King County, though George Smith from the City of Shoreline now represents the north part of the county. Dinah Wilson, a planner with the City of Kent, represents south King County. Ms. O'Reilly said she serves as co-chair of the Coalition.

The Coalition has some very active subcommittees. The Joint Outreach Immigrant and Refugee Subcommittee is focused on how those with limited or no English

language skills access and use transportation systems. The Livable Communities Subcommittee is looking at the elements of transportation mobility that make communities easier to get around and therefore more livable. The technology subcommittee is geared toward the gadgets and new devices that could eventually make it easier for people to get around. The Government Affairs Subcommittee is tasked with interfacing with various governmental entities and keeping up with legislative issues. The Membership Subcommittee has as its job making sure all 28 positions on the Coalition are filled.

Michelle Zeidman, Hopelink Mobility Manager, said the vision of the King County Mobility Coalition is to have a world-class transportation network that makes it possible for all people to move freely around King County and the Puget Sound region. The notion of special needs transportation comes from the state and refers to people who are not able to transport themselves because of age or disability. The Coalition, however, has a broader view and recognizes that improving the transportation system for the benefit of special needs populations also benefits the population at large.

The Coalition focuses primarily on planning and project implementation. People are put first by making sure they know what their options are and are able to safely get where they need to go. Every attempt is made to move more people using existing resources, and effort is put into bringing in more dollars to the region to make it possible to accommodate even more people with transportation options.

Much has been done in the last couple of years relative to strategic planning and coalition building. A two-day Transportation Action Planning Workshop was conducted in June 2010. Easter Seals hosted the workshop and provided technical support. An action plan was developed and work is under way to see it implemented.

The Coalition has been doing quite a lot of community outreach. There are quite a few transportation options open to residents of King County, but people do not always know what they are nor how to access them. A number of transportation forums have been hosted around the county. At the forums, speakers from various transportation providers speak directly with human service agencies and others about the services that are available and what the eligibility requirements are. Opportunities are provided for people to ask questions and gain answers. Forums have already been held in Shoreline, southeast Seattle and in Kent, and the next one will be held in Bothell in March.

The Coalition has worked closely with the Transportation Resource Center at Harborview to create brochures outlining the available transportation options beyond fixed-route transit in north, southwest and south-central King County. It is hoped that a brochure will also be developed for east King County in the near future.

Ms. Zeidman said the organization is also very involved in local, regional and statewide planning. The Coordinated Plan for King County was updated in 2010, and

the Coalition was involved in the update to Transportation 2040 and the coordinated Transportation Human Services Plan that came out in the spring of 2010. A Transportation Opportunities Assessment is currently being conducted using some advanced GIS mapping with an eye on comparing where services are offered and the latest Census demographics. The Coalition was involved with the federal opportunities workgroup of the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation, a state level group, on figuring out how to coordinate trips between Medicaid and transit.

Ms. Zeidman said the Coalition has been awarded a grant from the National Center for Senior Transportation to do outreach to immigrant and refugee communities. The focus will be on the seven most newly arrived populations. About ten community conversations will be hosted, each in a different language, to find out what services the populations are using, which services they do not know about, what barriers they are facing to getting information about existing services, and any unique cultural or linguistic challenges they face. A report will be drafted, following which a transportation summit will be conducted which will bring together representatives from each of the communities, planners, funders, and providers. The grant dollars will be used in part to develop outreach materials. The project is set to wrap up by the end of 2011.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Plaskon, Ms. Zeidman said the Coalition is partnering with some community agencies that work specifically with the target populations. Those agencies will work to get people to attend the community conversations and will also host them.

Commissioner Hoople stressed the need to identify where the various populations need to go. He said it is one thing to understand the transportation system, but if it does not go where they need to go, it is of no value. Ms. Zeidman agreed and commented that the focus will not just be on the King County Metro transit system; the participants will be asked if they use vanpooling to get to work, or if that is even an option for them; if they carpool; if zip cars would be of any value to them; and what other transportation services would benefit them.

Commissioner Plaskon suggested that the project to reach out through brochures that include transportation information and maps of bus routes should overlap to some degree with the outreach to the seven most newly arrived populations.

Commissioner Stout stressed the need to go into the community conversations listening carefully to what the populations have to say about what they really need and the barriers they are experiencing.

Ms. Zeidman said she is also working with north King County where the North King County Mobility Coalition was recently formed. A transportation asset map is being developed. A survey will be used to get direct feedback from clients about transportation needs and priorities. The Livable Communities Subcommittee is

looking at putting together options for people with temporary transportation needs. The Technology Subcommittee is working with a program called rideshareonline.com in an effort to demonstrate its use for social service communities and other populations.

Commissioner Bruels asked if the Coalition is focused only on public transit or on all kinds of different transportation options. Ms. Zeidman said the gamut of transportation options is included. Commissioner Bruels asked if the focus extends to the use of private vehicles with assistance provided for fuel, parking expenses, and the SR-520 bridge tolls. Ms. Zeidman said the organization is actively advocating for the populations that will be impacted by the SR-520 tolling, as well as the providers who will be directly impacted as well, such as Medicaid transportation and taxis. Commissioner Bruels commented that for many populations taking the bus is simply not an option because there is no easy way to get from one neighborhood to another on the Eastside without a private vehicle.

Commissioner Plaskon observed that for the most part those providing transportation options for special needs populations are the non-profits and community organizations. The for-profit providers like taxis, however, should not be overlooked; as fuel prices and tolls stack up, they will find it difficult to stay in business. While the for-profits should not be subsidized with public dollars, every effort should be made to make sure they are not eliminated because they are a very important element of the overall transportation system.

Community Services Supervisor Cathy Von Wald with the Department of Parks and Community Services said the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative was formed in 2005 based on national models of transportation coordination. United Way was an early partner, but currently the list of partners includes Bellevue, Kirkland, Hopelink, Sound Transit, King County Metro, Aging and Disability Services, the Bellevue Network on Aging, and many citizen advocates. The mission is to identify and initiate coordinated, creative and sustainable ways to assist folks with their transportation options. The coordination aspect entails broadening the active participants to include other cities, human service organizations, business entities, and the medical sector. Creative solutions and projects are constantly being sought and prioritized that can utilize local, state and federal grants. The notion of sustainability includes monitoring the performance of projects and assessing the long-term viability of the programs, as well as identifying continuing revenue streams and ongoing support for the projects.

Ms. VonWald said the Dial-A-Ride service, the Travel Ambassador Program, and the Bus Buddy Program have all come out of the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative. One of the most important things to come out of the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative, however, has been securing the funding for a mobility manager for the Eastside communities.

Bellevue Network on Aging member Berta Seltzer said since its inception in 2006 the organization has identified transportation as a key issue facing older adults. The

Network has each year had a standing committee focused on transportation, and Network members have been involved with the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative from the start, beginning with the first community survey. Members assisted in the process of compiling survey data and conducting community focus groups. The information was used to form the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative Action Plan and was referenced in the 2007-2008 Human Services Needs Update. The Network has provided advocacy efforts for key city initiatives, including the downtown circulator, and has been active in the effort to identify the location for the East Link light rail station near Overlake Hospital.

Ms. Aaron said outreach to other Eastside cities and organizations will continue, as will efforts to increase private/public facilitation. Additional transportation forums will be hosted to increase awareness of available transportation options and identify any existing barriers.

Ms. O'Reilly noted that the group partnered with the Washington State Department of Transportation to conduct a training for the providers of human services regarding the SR-520 tolling. Every opportunity will be taken to continue the dialog with the state around what some of the impacts of the tolling will be at all levels.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Stout, Ms. Zeidman said more creative ways to fund programs are being considered at the federal level which will make it easier to be more creative at the local level where the services are actually provided. A lot of advocacy is being brought to bear showing how important it is to fund transportation in all its facets in order to make communities more livable.

Ms. Aaron said the Easy Rider Connector Service is a dial-a-ride shuttle service for older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income workers at 150 percent of the poverty level. The stops are strategically located throughout the east Bellevue area to help commuters get to shopping facilities, medical centers, community centers, and connect with existing King County Metro and Sound Transit systems. The service is available on weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The service is provided at no cost to the riders. Reservations can be made online or by calling a phone number.

Ms. O'Reilly pointed out that the program began as a pilot and was nurtured through the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative. The funding was provided through a grant from the Puget Sound Regional Council. Unfortunately, the funding is set to continue only through the end of June; opportunities for additional funding are being sought. Hopelink is interested in seeing the project continue.

Commissioner Plaskon asked if the shuttle drivers are trained to spot health or other dangerous situations and if they know who to contact. Ms. Aaron said the drivers do receive some training in those areas, especially in regard to passenger assistance. Commissioner Plaskon pointed out that the drivers often have the most day-to-day contact with the vulnerable and should have some awareness of when someone is in

trouble.

Ms. Aaron said Getting Around the Puget Sound is another program offered by Hopelink. The program is an accomplishment of the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative and is designed to connect King County residents with information about different travel options for folks with unique needs. Clients are assisted by certified travel ambassadors who have been trained under the program and who are then asked to pass their knowledge on to others. The program provides an in-depth overview of options in the Puget Sound region and has proven to be very valuable to social service agencies, workforce agencies, medical and educational systems. Both single-agency and multi-agency training is offered. Clients can meet and talk with travel ambassadors at the North Bellevue Community Center on the second Monday of each month from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., and at the Hopelink Bellevue center during the food bank hours.

7. DISCUSSION

A. Minor Amendment to Consolidated Housing & Community Development Plan 2008-2011

Grant Coordinator Joseph Adriano said the Consolidated Housing & Community Development Plan is produced every four years and tells the Department of Housing and Urban Development what the city plans to do relative to Community Development Block Grant funds. According to the federal rules, engaging in any activity that is not mentioned in the plan triggers a requirement to amend the plan to indicate what the activity will be. Additionally, every CDBG entitlement jurisdiction is required to produce an analysis of impediments to fair housing, but for the past 20 years the city has understood it could piggyback onto the King County study. In its most recent HUD audit of the city, however, the determination was made that Bellevue should conduct its own analysis of impediments to fair housing. The current Consolidated Housing & Community Development Plan does not indicate the city will conduct its own analysis of impediments to fair housing, thus an amendment is needed.

Mr. Adriano shared with the Commissioners the RFP that was put out to a handful of potential consultants to conduct the analysis of impediments to fair housing. Only one, the Fair Housing Center of Washington, expressed an interest. The group has conducted similar analyses of impediments for several jurisdictions in the state. The process will cost money the city was not expecting to have to spend. On a positive note, the Home Repair Program had a large number of unexpected loan paybacks.

Ms. O'Reilly pointed out that HUD also requires construction projects, including the Major and Minor Home Repair Programs, and all ARCH projects, be subjected to an extensive environmental review prior to awarding any funds. The recent HUD audit found the city deficient in that regard as well. No home repairs can be carried out until the environmental process has been approved. Additionally, every project

involving a home 45 or more years old will have to be submitted to, reviewed and approved by the state's historic preservation office.

8. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Adriano said the last activation night for the severe weather shelter was February 19. The workgroup headed by the Interfaith Social Concerns Council (ISCC) and involving homeless advocates and area jurisdictions is continuing to meet to plan for what will happen during the 2011-2012 winter season. Between January 1 and February 19, there were 17 nights that fulfilled the criteria. When the weather turned cold again after February 19, clients were referred primarily to the Seattle shelters; a few were accommodated by ISCC, the YWCA and Hopelink Avondale.

Ms. O'Reilly reported that staff is still in the process of scheduling community conversations. She said on March 29 she would be attending the cultural navigators staff meeting and would be able to bring one Commissioner along. The Redmond Human Services Commission has asked to be allowed to have one of their members attend some of the community conversations and may attend the March 29 meeting; that group is interested in producing its own needs assessment but does not have the budget to do it.

Ms. O'Reilly indicated that on March 30 the Healthy Start staff will be conducting their monthly meeting at Youth Eastside Services. She said a community conversation will be made a part of the meeting. Also on March 30, the city's Diversity Task Force will be meeting, and they have agreed to participate in a community conversation.

9. NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Bruels reported that he has moved on from his job with King County. He said he would continue, however, to be involved with the King County Alliance of Human Services.

Ms. O'Reilly said the public will be invited to participate in the CDBG public hearing before the Commission on March 15 by sharing their observations about needs and issues. She said the invitation will include a few questions around which to shape comments.

10. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

11. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Beighle adjourned the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date