CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

April 9, 2014 Bellevue City Hall
6:30 p.m. City Council Conference Room 1E-108

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Tebelius, Commissioners Carlson, Ferris, Hamlin, Hilhorst, Laing, deVadoss

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Paul Inghram, Janet Lewine, Nicholas Matz, Department of Planning and Community Development; Arthur Sullivan, ARCH

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:36 p.m. by Chair Tebelius who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioners Carlson and deVadoss, both of whom were excused.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Liz Mills, 5604 Brooklyn Avenue NE, Seattle, said for more than 10 years she worked at the Family Village in Redmond, a social service venture with housing, employment and childcare. On behalf of the YWCA Seattle/King County/Snohomish County, she said the organization works to eliminate racism and empower women by providing services to some 50,000 women annually in King and Snohomish counties. YWCA also owns and operates 813 units of permanent housing, of which 256 on the Eastside and 64 are in Bellevue. The agency also owns and operates 72 units of time-limited housing, also called shelter and transitional housing, 20 of which are at Family Village in Redmond serving Eastside families. The YWCA supports measures that make housing accessible to homeless and low-income women and families, prevents homelessness, and promotes the creation of affordable housing. According to HUD, those paying 30 percent or more of their income for housing are considered cost burdened and at risk of homelessness. The city of Bellevue's 2013-2014 Human Services Needs Update states that affordable housing remains an issue for 51 percent of residents, and that nearly 37 percent of Bellevue renters and 38 percent of homeowners pay more than 30 percent of their incomes for housing. The 2014 January One Night Count found 178 individuals unsheltered on the Eastside, not counting those in transitional housing or shelters, or those who did not want to be counted. One of the best ways to address homelessness is to have quality permanent affordable housing for Bellevue's low and moderate neighborhoods. There are many good things in the proposed Comprehensive Plan update, but some things need encouragement, including support for non-

profits in siting and when applying for county, state and federal funding; support for legislation at the local, state and federal levels that address housing needs; continued collaboration with other jurisdictions to increase capacity and cost efficiencies, of which ARCH is an excellent example; a continued focus on a range of development incentives to produce a variety of housing options; and the need to site housing near transit, light rail stations, and job opportunities.

Ms. Irene Fernands, 1705 146th Avenue SE, addressed the permanent ordinance to be written to regulate single-room rentals. She said the investor in her neighborhood recently placed four ads on Craigslist for single rooms to be rented on separate leases in single family homes. In the postings the rooms are called Bellevue College housing and the readers are reminded that there are no dorms on campus. The ads state that there are 18 rooms to choose from, that many rooms are currently available, and that more are coming soon. The ad also states that all of the rooms are in the same neighborhood. Students are encouraged to pre-lease for the next school year, and the ad states that international students are preferred. The investor is nearly finished building a nine-plus-bedroom, ten-bath megahouse in her neighborhood. The driveway for the six-car garage is being framed. The neighborhood is zoned single family and the investor is clearly running a business with plans for expansion. An ordinance is needed that will protect single family neighborhoods and keep Bellevue a family friendly city.

Ms. Stephanie Walter, 14418 SE 19th Place, called attention to a 1300-square-foot house that has been subdivided into eight rooms. She said multiple cars are parked there and people are always moving in or out. When the emergency ordinance was approved limiting the number of unrelated residents to four, the property owner did not adhere to it. Recently the property manager stored some equipment at the site that went missing; the residents called the police and accusations were made, and within a couple of days all the renters were gone and the property manager moved into the home. There need to be standards established that will protect both the renters and the neighborhoods. The standards need to be both verifiable and enforceable.

Ms. Stephanie Valasco, 1823 Terry Avenue, Seattle, spoke on behalf of the Housing Development Consortium of King County (HDC). She said HDC represents more than 100 private businesses, non-profit organizations, and public partners who work to develop affordable housing throughout King County. Many of the members serve Bellevue and other Eastside cities. HDC is dedicated to the vision that all people should be able to live in safe, healthy and affordable homes. The housing strategy plan, new policy 2-A, is encouraging, particularly as it relates to addressing the needs of very low, low- and moderate-income households. The plan for implementation and monitoring of affordability will play a crucial role in achieving the shared vision of Bellevue as a city that meets the housing needs of all citizens. One of the best ways to prevent and address homelessness is to assure that quality, permanent affordable housing is available for low- and moderate-income households in high-opportunity neighborhoods. If implemented, the revisions to policy HO-12 regarding the provision of incentives for residential development in multifamily and mixed use zones can help ensure modest-wage workers will have the opportunity to live near their jobs. As the city continues to refine its affordable housing incentives as noted in policy HO-23, it must be emphasized that while removing regulatory barriers may help to increase the overall housing supply, without real and meaningful affordable housing incentives such as those listed for exploration in policy HO-33 the housing needs of modest-wage workers may continue to go unmet. The private sector cannot be expected to meet the needs of the Eastside's lowest income residents, particularly those earning less than 30 percent of the area median average income. Strong public subsidies are critical to meeting the needs in that economic segment of the population. Unfortunately, funding for ARCH has flatlined while the needs persist. If implemented, the provisions of policy HO-27, which call on

the city to provide funding to support housing needs, especially for low- and very low-income households, will help support non-profit organizations like the YWCA, Imagine Housing and Hopelink as they continue to serve Eastside families and individuals. The revisions to policies HO-38 and HO-39 support regional partnerships and planning to address homelessness, and if implemented the policies will help homeless housing service providers better address the special housing needs of the population.

Mr. Kim Herman, 4545 119th Avenue SE, suggested that if Bellevue really wants to have some affordable multifamily housing, it should implement the multifamily property tax exemption. The exemption should include in it a requirement for affordable housing. There are two parts to the property tax exemption, an eight-year and a 12-year exemption. The only housing being built under the 12-year exemption is housing that is already receiving some kind of a subsidy. The eight-year exemption does nothing to encourage private sector developers to do any kind of affordable housing. Seattle is the only one of the 13 cities that have enacted the multifamily property tax exemption to require some level of affordability. He suggested that in Bellevue 20 percent of the housing should be affordable to those earning 50 percent of the area median income, and 30 percent should be affordable to those earning 60 percent of the area median income, which is very close to the market. As mentioned in the plan, there are other things the city can do to encourage housing affordability, including density bonuses, parking reductions, fee waivers, and expedited permitting. Parking is particularly expensive to develop, costing as much as $40,000 per underground stall. Where there are other transportation options, eliminating the parking can greatly reduce the cost of developing housing units, particularly for seniors and other special groups that do not necessarily need parking. There should be a significant increase in the contribution to ARCH. The city should consider developing a site acquisition fund that would assist non-profit developers acquire sites when they become available, even if it is ahead of the time they need them; land is a key issue given that housing cannot be built without a place to build it. Acquisition of land by the city to be held for future development is a nice way to be able to control future housing development; control of the land can make it possible for the city to advertise for the type of housing and amenities wanted.

Ms. Karen Stutters, 410 Mt. Jupiter SW, Issaquah, said she is a volunteer advocate for the homeless community on the Eastside. With regard to the Land Use Element, she said the goals of natural systems, neighborhoods, a downtown urban center and mobility says nothing about human beings, which at its heart is what land use is all about. She encouraged the Commission to broaden the goals to address humans. She said as an attorney she has dealt a lot with homeowners in the state fighting foreclosures. Foreclosures are on the rise in the state along with homelessness. In Bellevue's school system along there are 191 homeless schoolchildren. There are only two shelters in Bellevue, one for women that can accommodate 45 and one for men that can accommodate up to 100, and the city's current plans will serve to keep people on the streets in places such as Tent City. Policy LU-1 talks about quality of life. Policy LU-33 talks about monitoring job centers. The needs to track foreclosure rates and unemployment and the objective should be modified so the data can better inform the Comprehensive Plan. The American Planning Association has published a document that talks about how municipalities could use data to address homelessness in their Comprehensive Plans. The organization encourages local planners to include the specific subject of homelessness in their Comprehensive Plans as part of the housing elements but also tied to and coordinated with land use plans. Planners should also ensure that local Comprehensive Plans address the need for an array of emergency, transition and permanent housing options, and they should work to ensure that every community has reasonable facilities to accommodate the needs of the homeless both on an emergency basis and for the short-term.

Ms. Elizabeth Maupin, 410 Mt. Jupiter Drive, Issaquah, spoke as coordinator for the Issaquah/Sammamish Interfaith Coalition. She said many who live in Issaquah worship in Bellevue and vise versa and many attempts have been made to address housing in a regional manner, particularly through ARCH. What Bellevue is doing is being watched by all surrounding communities. There are two homeless encampments on the Eastside. The pattern of allowing homeless camps to exist for only 90 days at a time creates the need for five sites per year and ten municipalities to accommodate the two camps on the Eastside. Bellevue's consent decree is a big step in the right direction. She said she was happy to see the plan talk about diverse and innovative housing. ARCH does a great job. There is a need for family daycenters in each school district. Issaquah has started one, and Renton has one as well, and the daycenters are vital to keeping the kids in their school district where they have a social safety net. When looking at affordable housing, particular attention needs to be paid to those who earn 50 percent or less of the area median income. Baby Boomers are starting to age out of the workforce, and as they become on fixed incomes staying in their communities will require affordable housing options.

Ms. Quiana Ross, 118 107th Avenue NE, spoke as a board member of Imagine Housing and a veteran of the armed services. She voiced concern regarding the lack of affordable housing. She said she found herself homeless after being discharged from the army and for a time lived in a storage unit. She said she eventually found Imagine Housing and moved into a unit at Andrews Glen. She said she now feels safe and comfortable in the community and has completed her college degree. ARCH had a big role to play in getting the units at Andrews Glen constructed.

Chair Tebelius noted that the Department of Veterans Affairs has statutory requirements to assist veterans with housing and asked Ms. Ross if she was able to access help through them. Ms. Ross said she found an extensive waiting list and few resources available. In many ways working through them felt hopeless.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Laing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hilhorst and it carried unanimously.

5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCILS, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Councilmember Stokes said he would be working with Commissioners Carlson and deVadoss and staff on drafting the land use vision statement. The Council's vision statement was developed at the Council retreat but has yet to be finalized. In the end the two should mirror each other.

Councilmember Stokes reported that the Council has elected to select acting city manager Brad Miyake to serve as the city's new city manager. Including Mr. Miyake, the final list of four candidates were all well qualified. The final interview process was intense and thorough. In the end the Council concluded Mr. Miyake was the best choice.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS - None

7. STAFF REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Manager Paul Inghram explained that the Commission would not be meeting in the Council Conference Room for the next month and a half in order to accommodate the work of rewiring the audio and media systems.

Mr. Inghram informed the Commissioners that a public hearing on the city's Transportation Improvement Program would be held on April 10 before the Transportation Commission.

8. STUDY SESSION

A. Comprehensive Plan Update - Land Use and Housing Policy Reviews

Mr. Inghram noted that over the past year the Commission has been involved in high-level overviews of the various issues and background data. The process has come around to the point of looking specifically at the different policies in the current plan. Other city boards and commissions are reviewing some of the other policies, including human services and transportation.

On September 25 the Commission reviewed the land use growth targets, and in November there was an abbreviated discussion about the Land Use Element and the general strategy for making changes to it. The growth targets were previously adopted by the Council and no attempt to establish new ones will be made. However, the adopted growth targets will need to be brought into the Comprehensive Plan along with a recognition of how they will continue out to 2035. About half of the city's future growth in both jobs and housing is planned to occur in the downtown. Outside of the downtown, the majority of the growth will occur in Bel-Red, Factoria, Eastgate and Crossroads, with the balance to be spread out around the city.

The downtown is different from the other centers in the city. It is the central focus for the city and as a designated center for the region serves as a major hub for the Eastside. From a physical standpoint, the downtown has the tallest buildings and the most dense development. The city's mixed use centers have transitioned more or less to include a range of transportation options and a mix of different types of buildings. The neighborhood commercial centers are smaller and have shops and services that are intended to be specific to the areas surrounding them. There are other commercial areas in the city that are not part of specific centers; they include Bellfield and along SR-520 and are critically important to the city in that they provide economic and other services. The city's residential areas, both single family and multifamily, make up the city's neighborhoods and as such are also vitally important.

The policies to be discussed run the gamut of updates to the growth patterns and strategies to the hierarchy of the downtown and other types of centers, protecting and supporting the character of the residential neighborhood areas, addressing art and culture uses, uses related to the support of families and religious uses, and support for the city's subareas. The proposal is to do away with the Annexation Element given that the city essentially has no land left to annex aside from a few small parcels on Cougar Mountain.

Turning to a review of the Land Use Element policies, the Commissioners bypassed items 1 and 2, the land use vision statement and goal, given that Councilmember Stokes along with Commissioners Carlson and deVadoss and staff have been tasked with addressing the vision.

With regard to item 3, the proposed change to policy LU-1, Chair Tebelius questioned the appropriateness of including in an aspirational document the directing of growth into the downtown. Mr. Inghram said it is appropriate for the document to guide future growth as is done through zoning. Chair Tebelius said her concern had to do with use of the word "direct."

Commissioner Laing commented that if future growth is not directed to occur in the downtown and the areas zoned for it, it would follow that increases in density will need to be accommodated outside of those areas, namely in the existing residential areas, including the single family areas.

Commissioner Ferris agreed. There is a lot of development capacity in the downtown and in Eastgate, Bel-Red and Factoria. If growth does not occur in those areas, it will filter into the single family neighborhoods, or else a lot of multifamily will have to be added on the fringes. He said he liked the word "direct" as being very decisive about where the growth should go.

There was consensus in favor of the proposed policy language change to policy LU-1.

With regard to item 4, new policy language regarding the city's park-like character, Commissioner Laing noted that language is aimed at all property throughout the city, not just park properties. He voiced concern with the reference to landscaping, suggested that someone in a single family residential area could file a complaint with the city about a neighbor taking out their lawn and thus violating the Comprehensive Plan. There was agreement to drop from the proposed policy language "and landscaping."

Chair Tebelius noted that item 5, also new policy language, was focused on integrating land use and transportation planning. She said her concern was that the language appears to prioritize walking and biking above any other mode of transportation. She suggested that at the very least the phrase the last part of the policy that refers to the negative impacts of vehicle travel should be eliminated.

Commissioner Hamlin said he could see that the language seeks a balanced approach, but he agreed the language could be reworded. Commissioner Ferris concurred and suggested the phrase "balanced approach" should be incorporated into the policy.

Commissioner Laing proposed "Promote a land use pattern that is integrated with a multimodal transportation system." He suggested an aspirational and forward-looking document should not focus on the fact that cars have negative impacts given that down the road they may not.

Mr. Inghram commented that the intent of the draft policy language was not to say that cars are bad but rather to highlight the need for doing land use and transportation planning together to reduce the negative impacts associated with vehicles, which in addition to greenhouse gas emissions includes parking and congestion.

Commissioner Laing said the fact is people want to move to the Northwest because they want to get out into mountains and to the ocean, and they need cars in order to achieve those goals. There should not be policy language that speaks pejoratively of vehicle ownership and links vehicles to greenhouse gas emissions. All that is needed is language that calls for an efficient land use plan that integrates with a multimodal transportation system.

There was consensus to use the language proposed by Commissioner Laing.

With regard to item 6, policy LU-2, Commissioner Laing said he would prefer to use the word "support" rather than "implement." No objections were made to making that change.

There were no revisions offered to the proposed wording of policy LU-3, item 7 on the matrix. There was agreement that policy LU-4, item 8, did not need to be revised.

Mr. Inghram noted that the proposed change to policy LU-5, item 9, involved an attempt to merge the existing policies LU-5 and LU-6. With regard to the word "periodically," he said all jurisdictions are required to update their buildable lands inventory every seven years. He agreed that the seven-year period could be spelled out explicitly in a sidebar.

Mr. Inghram pointed out that item 11, the current policy TR-5, resides elsewhere in the Comprehensive Plan. The proposal is to move it to the Land Use Element and to revise the language to make it more realistic relative to the jobs/housing mix. Bellevue at one time had more households than jobs, but things have swung in the other direction and it would, be unrealistic to expect a straight one-to-one housing/jobs balance. The Commissioners offered no revisions to the proposed language.

Item 12, a proposed new policy regarding schools, Commissioner Hilhorst suggested the language should include a reference to higher education. Mr. Inghram said that policy language has been proposed for the Economic Element that is specific to higher education. He said the intent of the proposed land use policy was to address residential growth in the downtown and how the school system should address the needs that will come with it. Other schools, private schools and job training facilities all have a fair amount of flexibility to locate where they can best meet the demand, but the school district has an obligation to serve the public where needed. The policy language seeks to make sure the city should be engaged in the process of public school siting. .

Commissioner Ferris said the transition of Bellevue College from a two-year college to a four-year college has created a demand that has resulted in impacts to the local neighborhoods, something that was missed by the city and the college. If there had been policy language encouraging the city and institutions of higher education to work together to make sure all impacts would be addressed, some of the impacts now being seen would have been addressed. Mr. Inghram noted that item 37, policy LU-11, addresses master planning and also refers to large institutions. He suggested that would be one way to get at the issue.

Councilmember Stokes agreed it would be good to include policy language addressing higher education, particularly since in the future Bellevue College may not be the only higher education institution in the city.

Chair Tebelius said the problem being experienced by the neighborhoods around Bellevue College stem from either the college intentionally ignoring the potential for problems or from their not thinking far enough ahead. Either way there was a miss. There should be policy language, separate from policy LU-11, to prevent the same issue recurring going forward.

With regard to item 12 and the proposed policy language relative to schools, Chair Tebelius asked how much control the city has over the school district. Mr. Inghram said the school district is charged with deciding where schools need to be located in order to serve the city's school-aged students. That is why the proposed policy language calls for working with the

school district in siting school facilities. The city often provides the school district with growth and demographic information, and always shares land use plans so they can prepare and plan accordingly. The city can also work with the district in identifying parcels that might be right for a school location. The city has some control through the permitting process.

Chair Tebelius said she could accept policy language indicating the school district plays the lead role and the city plays a supporting role in siting schools.

Commissioner Ferris proposed "Support the school districts efforts identify and plan for future school facility siting that meets community needs."

Senior Planner Nicholas Matz pointed out that the Bellevue, Lake Washington, Issaquah and Renton school districts all have facilities inside the city limits of Bellevue. He also suggested that in looking at the impacts of schools on communities private schools should not be overlooked. He added that the capital facilities section specifically address other units of government that are providing services.

Mr. Inghram said the policy language seeks to recognize that with growth planned for certain places, the city should have an active role in planning for public schools. There are other aspects of neighborhood compatibility with private schools and other institutions. He allowed that one element of the Comprehensive Plan that will be improved with the update is referencing to other parts, and the schools policy would be a good one to have linked.

With regard to the residential areas policies, items 13 through 18, Commissioner Hamlin said he saw nothing about affordability.

Commissioner Ferris questioned how the proposed language for policy LU-21, item 15, is intended to be interpreted and what it is supposed to achieve. On its face it clearly is aimed at keeping the city's housing stock maintained and updated, but it could be interpreted as the heavy hand of Big Brother.

Mr. Inghram said policy LU-21 was added to the Comprehensive Plan following which the city developed a neighborhood program aimed at property maintenance and updating with an eye on neighborhood quality. He allowed that the policy could be in the Housing Element, but it seems to also fit in the residential areas segment of the Land Use Element.

There was agreement to place the item in the parking lot for additional discussion.

Commissioner Laing proposed revising the last part of policy LU-19 to read "...the city's codes."

Turning to the neighborhood commercial centers policies, items 19 to 22, it was noted that policy LU-35 would be removed given that is content was fully covered by policy LU-26. Commissioner Hamlin suggested that policy LU-26 should be condensed. Commissioner Hilhorst agreed and pointed out the overlap between policies LU-25 and LU-26 and suggested the two could be combined.

Commissioner Ferris commented that during the Commission's review of the zoning for retail centers with large grocery and drug stores it was pointed out that the rules and regulations for those locations had been written at a different time in the city's development; they are very specific with regard to how big a particular tenant can be and how big a second tenant can be.

The worry was that neighborhood centers would come in with just anchors and no small shops. In the current economic climate, however, it is the large anchors that are not making it and the leftover code language is severely limiting and does not reflect the transition that is under way in some neighborhoods. Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 under policy LU-26 should be rewritten with language that encourages neighborhood activity and outlines the importance of community centers in the way they create community activation.

Chair Tebelius asked Commissioners Ferris and Hilhorst to work together on drafting new language for the neighborhood commercial centers policies.

Referring to the downtown and mixed use centers policies, items 23 to 27, Chair Tebelius noted the recommendation of staff to move policies LU-29 and LU-30 to the downtown subarea plan.

Commissioner Laing said he would prefer to see "promote" or "maintain" used as the verb in policy LU-29 rather than "strengthen." He also questioned use of the phrase "over the next decade" as used in policy LU-30, but said his real concern was with whether or not Comprehensive Plan policy language is even needed to encourage the creation of housing in the downtown.

Commissioner Laing called attention to the new policy language in item 26 and suggested that "where served by a full range of transportation options" was not necessary to include. The areas have already been identified as mixed use centers and if they are not served by a range of transportation options they should not have been identified in the first place. Mr. Inghram said Wilburton is a big area of which the mixed use center is only one relatively discreet part. Similarly, not all of Bel-Red is a mixed use center. That is the reason the "served by a full range of transportation options" tag was added to the proposed policy.

Chair Tebelius questioned the need to spell out specifically in policy language where the mixed use centers are. Commissioner Ferris said by calling out Bel-Red, Eastgate, Factoria, Wilburton and Crossroads specifically gives some certainty to both the mixed use centers and the areas outside the mixed use centers. Commissioner Hamlin agreed and added that the specific subareas make clear the boundaries of the mixed use centers located within them.

Attention was given next to items 28 to 33, the policies regarding the commercial and light industrial areas outside of centers. Chair Tebelius called attention to policy LU-34 and voiced concern about the lack of light industrial land in the city and the fact that it is slowly disappearing. She questioned calling out the Richards Valley light industrial area specifically. Mr. Inghram listed the city's five light industrial locations and noted that while most contain only one or two parcels, the Richards Valley area is the only collection of light industrial lands. Chair Tebelius pointed out that the traditional light industrial uses in the Bel-Red corridor will be phased out over time, but in the meantime there are restrictions in place under the Bel-Red plan that keeps them from being rented out for light industrial purposes. Something should be done in the interim to allow the properties to be used for light industrial uses. Mr. Inghram said that is one reason for the proposed language of policy LU-32; the policy aims to maintain the critical supply of light industrial in the Richards Valley area. Other options would be to call for more light industrial land, and to call for maintaining all existing light industrial land.

Commissioner Hamlin said he was bothered by the use of the word "critical" and would word the policy to read "Maintain a supply of light industrial land in the Richards Valley and other appropriate areas to serve local needs."

Commissioner Hilhorst agreed the focus should not be limited to just Richards Valley and said each light industrial parcel should be considered on a case-by-case basis. As worded, the policy seems to indicate that action will not be taken to preserve light industrial land anywhere except in Richards Valley. Mr. Inghram commented that a policy simply calling for the retention of light industrial land in the city would obviate the case-by-case approach.

Commissioner Ferris said the language proposed by Commissioner Hamlin would focus on retaining the Richards Valley light industrial lands but would not be so stringent as to direct the retention of all light industrial lands in the city. There has been a nibbling away of light industrial lands throughout the region over time and there continues to be a pressure to do so.

Commissioner Hilhorst said if the city wants to encourage higher education and more technology, the users drawn in may have some really big equipment to be housed. If the light industrial lands are given away, the ability to woo those uses will be greatly diminished. Mr. Inghram said that some of the existing light industrial areas are so small they do not offer opportunity to house large equipment.

Councilmember Stokes commented that Bellevue really does not have light industrial any more. What it has is cheap land that is attracting certain types of uses. What is needed is protection of the critical mass of light industrial land in Richards Valley in order to allow for R&D and small manufacturing uses. Bellevue will not get the more traditional light industrial uses, but the city needs to ensure the ability to address the next generation of light industrial uses that will be attracted to the city.

Commissioner Laing pointed out that light industrial is just a name, as is general commercial. The names are not important and what really matters is what the specific uses are. The questions before the Commission are what uses are not wanted, what uses are wanted, and how to get what is wanted.

There was agreement to put the issue in the parking lot for additional discussion.

BREAK

With regard to items 34 to 38, land use compatibility, Commissioners Hamlin and Laing questioned using the word "address" in the proposed language for policy LU-8. They suggested the word "assess" would be better.

Chair Tebelius suggested the language of policy LU-9 is too vague given that compatibility can be broadly interpreted. Mr. Matz said the policy language, to which no change from the existing language is proposed, allows the city use design review to manage compatibility.

Commissioner Ferris suggested that the policy language contradicts the nine-bedroom 8000-square foot home being constructed in the Spiritwood neighborhood that so many say is out of character with the neighborhood.

Commissioner Hamlin pointed out that the policy is in fact aimed at land use compatibility. Mr. Inghram agreed but allowed that to some degree the policy points to the Spiritwood issue. In Spiritwood the issue in part is what constitutes a single family use, and if the nine-bedroom home is deemed to be a single family use, then it is a compatible use with other single family

uses. The home may not, however, be compatible in terms of design.

Mr. Matz reiterated that the existing policy language allows the city to use design review as a transition area tool. The city has already determined where those apply and where they do not. There have been conversations in the past about taking the concepts of things like design review and applying them to single family homes, but that is a level of fine-grain detail the city has chosen not to pursue.

There was agreement not to make any other changes to the policies in the land use compatibility section.

The citywide policies, issues 39 to 49, were addressed next. Commissioner Laing suggested the first line of the new policy that is the subject of item 40 should read "Help communities to maintain...." Chair Tebelius agreed and suggested the latter part of the policy as proposed should be eliminated. There was agreement to do so.

Commissioner Ferris observed that most of Bellevue's single family neighborhoods developed at a time when the city was growing and the neighborhoods were home to families. Many of the human service have aged and they are home to far different family groupings, including seniors and empty nesters, many of whom may need to modify their neighborhood or the character of their homes in some way to recognize the transition.

With regard to the new policy under item 41 having to do with arts and culture, Chair Tebelius said she would prefer to see funds spent to construct playgrounds than on art installations.

Commissioner Hamlin said the policy identifies art as a placemaking element and as an element of community. Commissioner Laing agreed and said the policy recognizes that the city is maturing. Commissioner Hilhorst said the artwork recently sited in Newport Hills involves signage that heralds arrival in the neighborhood. The installations along 119th Avenue SE is functional and includes large boulders people can sit on. All of it is providing a great deal of value to the neighborhood.

Commissioner Laing proposed striking "including those with children" from the proposed new policy language under item 42. The other Commissioners concurred.

Commissioner Laing also said he did not like the reference to "transferring density" as used in policy LU-17. He said he gets the idea from a conservation perspective where the transfers are from rural areas of the county. However, as worded the policy would allow someone in a community such as Newport Hills to upzone a parcel and then transfer much of the development potential to other sites in the city. Such an act would create density out of nothing and allow it to be moved around at will. Mr. Inghram said a number of people have come to the city to talk about the issue. Some own parcels that are highly encumbered by critical areas such as wetlands and have sought to transfer some of the density in exchange for preserving the open space. Commissioner Laing said he could accept the policy if the concept were made more clear in the language.

Commissioner Ferris said there are several instances in which transferring density works well. One example is the Rainier Club in downtown Seattle which sits on land that is zoned to allow much higher density. The Club sold their development rights in order to retain the historic structure. The density was transferred to a developer with a site that was able to take advantage

of the higher height. The transferring properties cannot be developed at some later date for something else. Bellevue has few historic structures, but it does have open space that could be preserved using the practice.

Mr. Matz said the concern voiced by Commissioner Laing was focused on private property owners transferring density within a zoning structure, but said it appeared the conversation was more focused on government keeping its hand on the mechanism that allows for that. There are a lot of existing tools at the county and state levels to manage the impacts, some of which involve the transfer of density rights. He suggested the concerns of the Commission were centered on government having a role in the decisions regarding density transfers rather than just allowing them to happen.

Commissioner Laing said he likes the county's transfer of development rights program, the purpose of which is to preserve open space. He said his worry was about the creation of false markets for density. Mr. Matz pointed out that the proposed policy language is focused on the preservation of open space and only mentions transferring density to effect that goal.

There was agreement to put policy LU-18 in the parking lot until such time as the Commission conducts its review of community health.

Chair Tebelius asked why the proposed policy under item 48 is needed. She said she was not comfortable including policy language regarding religious uses. Commissioner Laing agreed.

Mr. Inghram said there has been a lot of discussion about the topic and interest expressed from various corners about including policy language recognizing the traditional and evolving role religious uses play in the community. He allowed, however, that state and federal law does not allow much opportunity to carve out a special niche. A number of roles are being played by religious organizations, including tent city, housing projects by St. Margaret's and others, the temporary winter homeless shelter at St. Peter's, the women's shelter at St. Luke's, and thrift shops.

Ms. Lewine observed that when Holy Cross came in wanting to do a housing project, they sought a Comprehensive Plan amendment because there was no policy language recognizing that church property might be used for other purposes.

There was agreement not to include the proposed policy.

With regard to the neighborhood areas policies, items 50 to 52, Commissioner Laing proposed using the word "preserve" rather than "recognize" in the new policy addressed in item 50.

Commissioner Laing also said he could see no need for the new policy proposed in item 51. Mr. Inghram said the policy language is proposed because the city has not periodically assessed and updated the neighborhood plans. Commissioner Laing said he could accept having the policy read "Periodically assess and update neighborhood area plans." The Commissioners agreed to that change.

Mr. Inghram explained that the Neighborhood Enhancement Program, which is the topic of policy HO-4, item 52, was canceled due to budget constraints. Efforts are under way to see the program refunded and restarted. The Council will make the budget decision before the policies are ultimately adopted.

With regard to the annexation policies, items 53 to 57, Mr. Matz said there are about 45 acres left in the city's potential annexation areas that have yet to be annexed. The city is managing the intent of policy AN-7 in the way it interacts with the owners of those properties. While there is no interlocal agreement in place, the city enjoy a strengthened relationship with King County in terms of being able to address their regulating and permitting requirements. He allowed that the last sentence of the policy addresses something the city does not current do and he agreed it could be eliminated. There was agreement not to make that change and to retain the rest of the policy language.

Ms. Lewine kicked off the conversation about housing policies with a brief review of the work done to date, including the Commission's review of the recommendations from the Human Services Commission and the Bellevue Network on Aging. She noted that five key housing areas were identified from the list of potential opportunities and gaps and said many of the changes to the Housing Element will focus on those five areas.

Ms. Lewine said the Commission's response to the key area of shelters and homelessness was one of support for policy that uses clearly defined housing responses and refocuses on responses that work to move people from homelessness to independence. With regard to the key area of mixed use neighborhoods, the response from the Commission was to include in the Comprehensive Plan the notion that both Lake Heights and Newport Hills could benefit from mixed-use redevelopment. The response to the affordable housing key area was to implement programs enabled by the state to increase the supply of affordable housing. Universal design and aging in place were identified as key areas and the response from the Commission was that no requirements should be added that would increase the cost of housing. The response of the Commission to the student housing key area was threefold: 1) policy should not be specific to Bellevue College; 2) policy should address the housing needs of young adults in general; and 3) there is a need to address other issues that could result from small units, such as traffic, parking and density.

Chair Tebelius said it was her understanding that the One Night Count tally for 2014 was lower than for 2013. Arthur Sullivan, director of A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH), said there are two elements involved in estimating the number of homeless. The One Night Count numbers that are released immediately includes only those who are in locations not meant for habitation; it includes the number of persons in homeless encampments as well, but it does not include those who are in shelters. For the winter of 2013-2014 a much larger shelter for homeless men was in operation, so while the 2014 street count was less than in 2013, there were more in shelters.

Chair Tebelius asked what the difference is between affordable housing and low-income housing. Ms. Lewine said housing is considered to be affordable if it takes no more than 30 percent of one's income. Generally, when talking about affordable housing, governments are referring to housing that is affordable to persons earning less than 80 percent of area median income. Mr. Sullivan said currently the median income is just over $88,000 for a family of four. Ms. Lewine said many of the tools will target the 80 percent of median income category, especially the tools the market might provide. To get to those in the 50 to 60 percent category, subsidies are generally required.

Commissioner Ferris observed that Bellevue's inventory of housing affordable to incomes below 60 percent of the area median is disproportionately smaller than Kirkland, Redmond and Issaquah. Mr. Sullivan commented that for rental housing, countywide between 35 and 40

percent of all housing is affordable at 50 percent of median, whereas in East King County that number is below ten percent. Similar percentages apply to home prices.

Mr. Sullivan pointed out that city policy regarding affordable housing is not all about land use; it goes beyond that to include all of the tools available to cities to help support housing needs. The Comprehensive Plan is the place to house policies for the Council to consider in making decisions about affordable housing.

The Commissioners reviewed the Housing Element policies and the proposed actions as outlined in the matrix in the Commission packet.

There was agreement that no change was needed to item 1, policy HO-1, and that the proposed revision to item 2, policy HO-2, was good.

With regard to item 3, policy HO-3, Commissioner Laing suggested the last part of the language should read "...through adoption and enforcement of appropriate regulations." The Commissioners concurred.

Commissioner Laing pointed out that items 4, 14 and 33, new policies regarding student housing, do not actually reference student housing. He suggested that in order to keep the policies from being interpreted inappropriately, the policies should specifically use the phrase "student housing." Mr. Inghram pointed out that the testimony received to date has been clear that the single-room rental issue being faced in Spiritwood and other neighborhoods is not tied to students only.

Commissioner Ferris said in his private life he works a lot with student housing. He pointed out that there is a fair housing law that prevents discriminating against people based on their profession. Accordingly, the law would argue against saying a non-student can live in a group facility but a student cannot. The only place where the issue of being a student or not can be applied to housing is on the college campus itself. There is also the issue of how to handle someone who moves into a facility as a non-student who subsequently enrolls as a student; they cannot simply be kicked out for having become a student while a resident. The single-room rental issue does involve students but not exclusively, thus the policy language should address the single-room rental issue not the status of the renters in those rooms. Having agreed with the argument made by Commissioner Ferris, Commissioner Laing proposed wording the item 4 policy to read "Monitor and appropriately regulate room rentals in single family areas." The Commissioners concurred.

There was agreement to move policy HO-4, item 5, to the Land Use Element, and to address policy HO-5, item 6, in the Urban Design Element. There also was consensus not to change policies HO-6 and HO-7, items 7 and 8, to delete policies HO-8 and HO-9, items 9 and 10, and to move policy LU-23 from the Land Use Element to the Housing Element as proposed as item 11.

Commissioner Laing voiced concern regarding the language for the proposed new policy on fair housing, item 12. As drafted, the policy directs doing more than just complying with the Fair Housing Act law. Ms. Lewine said the jurisdictions that are required to affirm further fair housing are required to submit regular reports and to include in those reports the strategies they employ. Mr. Inghram added that part of the city's fair housing assessment includes making sure there is policy support. To be consistent with the federal guidelines, a policy needs to be

included in the Housing Element. Commissioner Laing stressed the need to avoid drafting policy language that sets forth an obligation for which there is no meaningful way of knowing whether or not it has been met.

There was agreement to put the policy in the parking lot for additional discussion.

With regard to item 13, policy HO-10, Commissioner Laing proposed wording the policy to read "Encourage development of appropriate amenities for families with children throughout the city through city investments, development regulations and incentives."

Chair Tebelius questioned the need for the policy but Commissioner Ferris supported it. He noted that a lot of new housing will be built in the downtown and in dense neighborhoods but absent policy support amenities for families with children may otherwise not be built. Bellevue is family friendly and it makes sense to have policies that are supportive of families. As drafted, the policy does not require developers to do anything, it simply encourages appropriate amenities, which could be brought about through incentives tied to additional zoning capacity.

Commissioner Laing suggested the introductory clause for the new policy language outlined in item 14 should be eliminated, leaving the policy to read "Support housing for students on-campus and in adjacent transit-served mixed use/commercial areas." Ms. Lewine said that language does not reflect the idea of collaboration between the city and the college.

Commissioner Hilhorst agreed Bellevue College should not be called out specifically in the policy. She proposed the policy should read "Work with colleges and private developers to support housing for students...." Commissioner Ferris said he would prefer to see the language include Bellevue College and suggested that as drafted the policy is both specific and all-inclusive.

There was consensus to retain the policy has drafted.

The Commissioners agreed no changes were needed to policy HO-11, item 15, and to revise policy HO-12 as suggested in item 16.

With regard to item 16, policy HO-12, Ms. Lewine explained that proposed revision to the language was intended to clarify that residential development for a range of household types and income levels applies to all areas where housing is permitted, not just single family and multifamily areas.

There was agreement not to change policy HO-13, item 17 and to revisit item 18, policy HO-14 as part of the discussion of policy HO-29.

Commissioner Hamlin said he did not understand the edited language for policy HO-15, item 19. Ms. Lewine said demonstration projects have been used by other cities as a tool for housing choice. In most cases development codes are relaxed or the jurisdictions ask for proposals that might demonstrate the effectiveness of various approaches. The city could use the tool for development areas like the Newport Hills Shopping Center where it would not be wise to simply open the code to allow anything that walks in the door. Mr. Sullivan said Kirkland used the process to get cottage housing on the books; they began with a demonstration project which proved successful, after which they went in and changed the code.

Commissioner Ferris voiced his support for the proposed revision to policy HO-16, item 20. Adding the last phrase will in particular give a little more control to the neighborhood plans. The Commissioners concurred.

Commissioner Hamlin asked why policy HO-17, item 21, was no longer needed. Ms. Lewine said the existing policy was the launch pad for the city's examination of neighborhood infill. In two rounds of review, new codes were adopted that now obviate the need for the policy.

Mr. Inghram allowed that there continue to be some vacant or underutilized large single family parcels scattered throughout the city. The question is whether or not the Commission wants to include a policy encouraging infill development. He said it is unlikely that the city going forward will want to take an active role in looking at infill development. There was agreement to delete the policy.

There was agreement not to change policy HO-18, item 22, to delete policy HO-19, item 23, as proposed, and not to change policy HO-20, item 24.

Chair Tebelius asked if a change to policy HO-21, item 25, was really necessary. Ms. Lewine said there is a difference between creating opportunities for housing and the creation of a diversity of housing types. Mr. Sullivan said the proposed language says if the city is going to promote working partnerships, the outcome should be a diversity of housing types rather than simply more housing. The market currently is creating a lot of studio and one-bedroom units that can hardly be called family housing and which does not fulfill the need for a diversity of housing types.

Commissioner Laing proposed putting the issue in the parking lot and voiced the concern that while the intent of the policy is good, the language is so nebulous it will not accomplish the goal.

A motion to extend the meeting to 10:00 p.m. was made by Commissioner Hilhorst. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Laing and it carried unanimously.

There was agreement in favor of the proposed new policy regarding universal design and aging in place, item 26.

There was agreement to make no changes to policies HO-34 and HO-22, items 27 and 28.

Chair Tebelius asked what the language of the proposed housing strategy plan policy, item 29, mean in reality. Ms. Lewine said the policy is key to taking the affordable housing policies from strategies for creating affordable housing to achieving the creation of affordable housing and how to monitor those units that are realized. She noted that the language mirrors that of the Countywide Planning Policies.

Mr. Sullivan said at a previous meeting staff showed the Commission a slide showing all the steps in the process, and Commissioner Ferris pointed out that while there are policies in place the city has not taken the next step. The housing strategy plan called out by the policy directs the listing of a wide range of strategies prioritized by effectiveness and need. Once such a matrix is completed, the city will have different strategies aimed at addressing different needs. The outcome will not dictate what the city's decisions will be, rather it will simply outline the order in which issues will be studied based on the policies. Nearly every jurisdiction is employing the approach, which is suggested in the new Countywide Planning Policies. The approach outlines a

process; it does not direct the city to undertake any specific program to increase the affordable housing inventory.

Councilmember Stokes said the Council has for a long time had as a policy addressing the issue of affordable housing. The proposed policy will result in the development of a range of strategies to be used. Clearly, in the final analysis it will be up to the Council to determine which strategies should be incorporated and how much funding should be allocated.

Commissioner Laing proposed streamlining the draft policy to read "Promote a strategy to provide a diverse supply of affordable housing. Monitor amount, types and affordability of housing achieved."

There was agreement to continue the policy review at the next Commission meeting.

9. OTHER BUSINESS - None

10. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

11. DRAFT MINUTES REVIEW

    A. February 26, 2014

Action on the draft minutes was deferred to the next meeting.

12. NEXT PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

    A. April 23, 2014

13. ADJOURN

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Hamlin. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hilhorst and it carried unanimously.

Chair Tebelius adjourned the meeting at 10:07 p.m.

Paul Inghram
Staff to the Planning Commission

5/28/14
Date

Diane Tebelius
Chair of the Planning Commission

5/28/14
Date

* Approved May 14, 2014