

**CITY OF BELLEVUE
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday
December 19, 2013
6:30 p.m.

Conference Room 1E-113
Bellevue City Hall
Bellevue, Washington

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Vice Chair Swenson; Commissioners Cowan, Howe, Mach, and Morin¹

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Chair Helland, Commissioner Wang

OTHERS PRESENT: Paul Bucich, Assistant Director, Engineering; Nav Otal, Director, Utilities; Emil King, Strategic Planning Manager

MINUTES TAKER: Laurie Hugdahl

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Swenson at 6:30 p.m. Celebratory end-of-the-year refreshments courtesy of Paul Bucich were shared.

Commissioner Mach introduced his daughter who was in attendance as part of a school project.

Utilities Director Nav Otal explained that the Engineering Assistant Director position has been empty since Wes Jorgenson left in April. She announced that following an extensive recruitment process Paul Bucich had been selected as the new Assistant Director for Engineering. The Commission congratulated Paul Bucich on his new position. Mr. Bucich has agreed to staff the ESC meetings and be the main staff contact person until the Deputy Director position is filled.

2. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made by Commissioner Mach, seconded by Commissioner Cowan, to approve the agenda. Motion passed unanimously (4-0).

¹ Aaron Morin arrived at 6:39 p.m.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

November 21, 2013 Regular Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Cowan stated that he was not present at the November 21 meeting.

Motion made by Commissioner Mach, seconded by Commissioner Howe, to approve the minutes as amended. Motion passed unanimously (4-0).

5. REPORTS AND SUMMARIES

- ESC Calendar/Council Calendar

Asst. Director Paul Bucich reviewed the ESC calendar. He pointed out that in January there will be an update regarding the Phantom/Larsen Lake Drainage issue. There will also be a public meeting regarding the 2014 NPDES Stormwater Management Program Plan. This document is being transmitted to the Commission for review. Additionally, Pam Maloney and Doug Lane will be coming to talk about the Wastewater System Plan in January. The only thing on the agenda for February is the final discussion and recommendations from the ESC on the 2014 Stormwater Management Program Plan.

Vice Chair Swenson welcomed Commissioner Morin to the meeting.

Referring to the Council Calendar, Mr. Bucich commented that Council would be awarding the AutoCAD to GIS Migration Contract and considering approval of a couple professional service agreements in January.

- Downtown Livability Project Briefing

Emil King, Strategic Planning Manager from the City's Department of Planning and Community Development, gave an update on the Downtown Livability Project. He explained that he would be giving an overview of the project, discussing the forecast and the demographics relating to Downtown, commenting on stakeholder and public engagement to date, and reviewing specific code elements that are under review.

In general, the Downtown Livability Initiative is an effort to update the Land Use Code in order to set the stage for future development. This is the most extensive update since the original 1981 Land Use Code. It incorporates elements from Downtown Transportation Plan Update and East Link planning. Much of the impetus for this project is that things have been changing dramatically in the Downtown area. It is becoming more of a place for people not only to work, but to recreate and to live. The notion of the "Live First, Work Second" philosophy is becoming more common. Cultural elements are incorporated into the plan as these continue to evolve in the

Downtown area. Mobility choices are also very important. There is a companion Downtown Transportation Plan Update that is happening which looks at all the different modes of transportation including how people come into and get around Downtown. The notion of “Green and Sustainable” reflects one of the Council principles. Another focus is how to make the Downtown area more memorable to people.

Commissioner Mach asked what triggered this movement. Mr. King stated that there has been interest in doing taller buildings in different parts of Downtown where they’re not currently allowed. The Downtown OLB zone along the freeway is an old suburban zoning that was put in place as a placeholder because planners didn’t really know what was going to happen there. Now that there is light rail coming it needs to be rethought because of its proximity to transit service and development opportunities. The number of residents in Downtown went from the hundreds in 1981 to over 10,500 residents currently. As there are more people living in Downtown there are different expectations regarding amenities and living environments. People are also living in different parts of Downtown such as the core area. He summarized that there is a lot of new thinking that has come around, and gradually the City has gotten to the point where there is enough to warrant a work program to look at all of this.

Mr. King referred to and reviewed some of the Council Principles in the packet on pages 18 and 19. These are a series of 12 principles approved by the City Council and which help guide the process. The principles are built upon the concept of “What’s Changed” and what the related guiding principle might be.

There are three general categories of topical areas that staff has direction from Council to study. These include:

- Design Modules: building height and form, amenity incentive system, design guidelines, pedestrian corridor and open spaces, vision for DT-OLB District
- Connectivity Modules: Light Rail interface, Downtown parking
- Other Modules: Mechanical equipment screening, vacant sites and buildings, recycling and solid waste, vendor carts/mobile food trucks, permitted uses

Mr. King reviewed the study area. He compared a photo from the late 1970s with a current photo of Downtown. In the late 1970s there were 1,000 residents, 10,600 workers, 2,000,000 square feet retail, 1,100,000 square feet office space, 1 high rise, 0 acres park land, and two school properties. Today there are over 10,000 residents, 43,300 workers, 4,500,000 square feet retail, 41 high rises and 25 acres of park land.

The Comprehensive Plan sets the general framework for Downtown. It contains the goals, vision, and policies that guide Downtown Bellevue. What the Livability Project is focusing on is the implementing policies through the Land Use Code and the associated Design Guidelines. The Transportation Plan Update is a companion effort that is nearing its completion. It will plan for multiple modes of travel including transit, vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians looking out to 2030 to make sure that the forecasted growth can be accommodated with the transportation system.

The existing Land Use Map shows a diverse mix of office, retail, residential, hotel, cultural and institutional uses. Almost all of Downtown is walkable from the Transit Center/108th Avenue area in 10 minutes or less. There are primarily redevelopment opportunities within Downtown with a very small number of vacant sites. As the City plans for Downtown we need to keep in mind that all these categories and uses will continue to mix in the 410-acre Downtown area.

Growth forecasts and demographics drive a lot of the planning being done. The forecast growth for the 410-acre area is going from 43,300 current jobs to about 70,300 jobs by 2030. The population is expected to increase from 10,000 current residents to 19,000 or greater by 2030 in the Downtown area. Commissioner Cowan asked about the source of the population forecast. Mr. King stated that the forecasts are market-based forecasts. Vice Chair Swenson asked about estimated job forecasts at build-out capacity. Mr. King replied that rough estimates are that under existing zoning, the jobs would be about 86,000-88,000. On the residential side, the build-out estimate is 24,000-25,000.

Current Downtown projects under construction include Bellevue Square Southeast Corner, Park Metro/Evergreen, Marriot Hotel, SOMA Towers Phase I, Bellevue at Main, and Alley 111. These projects are already vested and are underway under their current permitting.

On a citywide basis, Bellevue is projected to grow from 57,700 housing units in 2010 to 74,200 in 2035. This represents an increase of 16,500 units over 25 years with 51% of that expected to be in the Downtown area. From a job growth standpoint, almost 50% of expected job growth is expected to be Downtown.

Demographic shifts were then reviewed. The median age of Downtown residents has gone down from 57 to 34 which is under the citywide median age. The percent of people who are 65% or older has shifted dramatically as a result of all the younger people moving in. The education level of people living Downtown has gone from 45% of people with a bachelor's degree or higher to 66%. This exceeds the citywide number. Minority residents have increased from 20% to 43%. In a nutshell, Downtown is becoming more like

the rest of the City. Stakeholders and public engagement included outreach efforts to residents in and near Downtown, tenants/employers, employees, visitors, developers and landowners, city-wide residents, business organizations, and regional interests.

Commissioner Mach asked if there are other statistics that are collected by the City. Mr. King indicated that the City has a presentation booklet called the *Changing Face of Downtown Bellevue* which tracks statistics related to Downtown. The City also does a project called the *Neighborhood Indicators Work* which includes 15 to 20 metrics such as crime, education level, housing affordability, foreclosure rates, etc. Mr. King offered to provide this to the ESC.

Mr. King reviewed the composition of the Advisory Committee which was appointed by Council earlier this year. There are 14 people; seven are from City boards and commissions, and the others are from the Bellevue Downtown Association, Chamber of Commerce, business, architecture, and residential interests. Meeting number 7 was held on December 18. At the next monthly meeting in January the Advisory Committee will be identifying some alternative approaches and strategies to the different topical areas. Staff will be encouraging people to either come to the meeting or write in comments ahead of time.

Mr. King explained that the overall process for a project like this starts with project scoping, review of Land Use Code audits, identification of the range of alternatives, analysis of alternatives, identification of preferred alternatives, development of final recommendations, Planning Commission review, and Council adoption process. Currently this project is at the identification of the range of alternatives step. Once those are identified, the alternatives will be evaluated in order for the Committee to make an informed set of recommendations.

Staff has done a quite a bit of public engagement for this project with a kick-off open house, focus groups in the spring, walking tours, and comment cards. The Land Use Code “Audits” was an important piece to set the foundation to help diagnose what was working, not working and where the opportunities for improvement are.

Topics for consideration:

Building Height and Form: Should the building heights and their urban form be modified to better achieve the Downtown vision? Some modest increases in the center of Downtown are likely to be considered.

Amenity Incentive System: How should the current System be updated to integrate new thinking about desired Downtown amenities? There is a system

to work through that has a defined set of amenities that gets a developer from doing a small, shorter building to being able to do a much larger, taller building. These include amenities and ratios such as pedestrian-oriented frontage, landscape features, sculptures, underground parking, and major public open space. There are new amenities that are being proposed to include on the bonus list.

Design Guidelines: How can our design guidelines be refined to improve the character of Downtown? And also provide a balance between predictability and flexibility? One of the ideas that has come up through the 2004 Update to the Downtown Plan is the idea that there are distinct neighborhoods such as Old Bellevue, Ashwood, Bellevue Square, Northwest Village, City Center, City Center South, City Center North, East Main, and Convention/Civic.

Pedestrian Corridor: What can we do about the missing pieces in the corridor? Have the pieces that have been built resulted in a space that is memorable for visitors to Downtown? The Pedestrian Corridor stretches from the front door of Bel-Square all the way to City Hall and Meydenbauer Center. Parts of the corridor are constructed and working to varying degrees, but there are a lot of sections that have yet to redevelop as the pedestrian corridor gets built as the adjacent development gets built. People have brought up the idea of having more weather protection, having more flexibility for doing events such as seating, and having more uses that enter right onto the pedestrian corridor.

Public Open Spaces: The Comprehensive Plan calls for a couple new neighborhood parks. In addition to those formal park properties, what else can we do through new development to create plaza and open spaces that help add to the urban environment?

Light Rail Interface: The City Hall block is the location of the primary Downtown station. Do we want to have any zoning increases around the station? Are there uses we really want to encourage to happen right around the station? How can pedestrian connectivity be enhanced?

Vision for DT-OLB District: This is the area right along the freeway, on the other side of 112th Avenue up until I-405. The Committee will be looking at the land use character, heights, densities, and the permeability of this area.

Parking Resources: Downtown parking is a huge issue. The Committee will be looking at a number of elements including the public and private supply.

Mechanical equipment: As more people are living in high rises and looking down on buildings, there are more comments about what the tops of buildings look like. How can we screen things and consolidate it more so it is more attractive?

Vacant sites and buildings: How can we screen or otherwise treat vacant sites or buildings during interim periods?

Recycling and solid waste: The focus groups had a lot of comments about the frequency and noise of dumpsters for the residents. Are there innovative approaches to storing and emptying dumpsters?

Range of permitted uses: Are there new uses that we want to be thinking about Downtown that aren't currently mentioned in the Land Use Code?

Vendor carts/food carts: Is there a middle ground where vendor carts/food carts are allowed, but have the set of regulations that respond to issues raised during the focus groups?

Commissioner Comments and Questions:

Commissioner Morin asked if there is more of a focus on private parking as opposed to public parking. Mr. King replied that the Land Use Code dictates minimum and maximum parking ratios. Looking at the volume of new parking that the Downtown will get over the next 20 years, the vast majority of that is going to be privately built parking in private developments. There has been interest by the Committee to study public parking garages that would be primarily for short-term parking. While public parking is important, from a volume standpoint, the biggest influence will be from the private supply.

Vice Chair Swenson asked if the Advisory Committee is looking at requiring or incentivizing non-physical elements such as outdoor eating areas, water features, sitting areas, etc. Mr. King replied that this has come up the most in discussions about the Pedestrian Corridor, open space, and the incentive system. He agreed that it is more about the activities that are being encouraged than the actual design. With the incentive system, there was discussion about trying to encourage "third places" which are places that are not work or home, but are the third place you want to go.

Vice Chair Swenson referred to the string of parks along NE 12th Street and asked if that concept is being looked at anywhere else around the edges of the Downtown area. Mr. King replied that just south of Main Street the City is hoping to incorporate more of that idea. He reviewed the proposed path of Sound Transit in that area. Vice Chair Swenson then asked about providing other pedestrian-oriented trails coming into Downtown such as 108th Avenue NE. Mr. King noted that when the Advisory Committee gets into the Design Guidelines they will be thinking about how Downtown can have more graceful transitions between it and the surrounding neighborhoods in order to draw in people who live in this area.

Commissioner Cowan asked about the location of the proposed height increases. Mr. King responded that staff is expecting direction on January 15 from the Advisory Committee. He noted that the Committee has shown interest in looking at the areas where 450-foot buildings are already allowed, which is in the center of the Downtown area.

Commissioner Cowan asked about the timeframe on light rail. Mr. King replied that it is at about 60% design right now. Construction activity is expected to begin in 2015. Sound Transit is currently in the process of acquiring the properties needed for the project. The City has not received the phasing plan yet, but the opening date is planned to be 2023. Finally, Commissioner Cowan asked about the schedule of Meydenbauer Bay Park. Mr. King explained that the Meydenbauer Bay Park Master Plan has gone through its process. Staff is looking at the qualifications to do the design for funded Phase 1 of construction.

Commissioner Morin referred to people's concerns about the rooftops. He asked if the Advisory Committee is considering purely aesthetic changes to rooftops or also environmental considerations such as gardens. Mr. King replied the Committee is definitely thinking about the aesthetics, but developers are also thinking about incorporating different uses and more green space. Staff has toured buildings in Seattle that have interesting rooftops.

Vice Chair Swenson asked when the Northtowne neighborhood group meeting would be. Mr. King replied that it would be on January 23.

- Transmittal of the Draft 2014 NPDES Annual Report

Mr. Bucich referred to page 20 which is a cover memo that talks about the Draft 2014 NPDES Annual Report and the Public Review Schedule. It was noted that the actual Report was not in the packet, but it would be transmitted to the ESC prior to the next meeting. Mr. Bucich stated that the Council Study Session Item notes were included in the ESC packet.

Mr. Bucich pointed out that a memo from him and Brian Ward regarding the 2012 Draft Storm and Surface Water System Plan was in the packet. He explained that recently the Council approved a new policy that directs staff to update the Storm System Plan every ten years or two NPDES permit cycles. This allows staff to make sure that the documents they are working with are relatively current and up-to-date with all the codes and policies across the Utility for Storm Water across the City. Staff also plans to look strategically at what issues the Storm System Plan should be addressing and to get approval through the Council of those items of focus.

In the packet there was also a briefing memo from Kit Paulsen about the Shoreline Master Program Update. A week ago the Planning Commission

recommended some changes to Land Use Codes. One of those was a recommendation to change the allowed uses in the flood plain which means individuals and developers could now build in the flood plain. This does not currently affect the flood plain regulations in the City of Bellevue because those are embedded in the Critical Areas Ordinances and come from FEMA. Staff is monitoring the action taken by the Planning Commission and will brief the ESC as more is known.

6. NEW BUSINESS

None

7. DIRECTOR'S OFFICE REPORT

None

8. CONTINUED ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.