

The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on February 3, 2015

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

January 6, 2015
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Perelman, Commissioners Bruels, Kline, McEachran, Plaskon, Villar

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Beighle

STAFF PRESENT: Emily Leslie, Alex O'Reilly, Joseph Adriano, Department of Parks and Community Services

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Perelman who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. November 4, 2014
- B. November 18, 2014
- C. December 2, 2014

A motion to approve all three sets of minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Kline. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bruels and it carried unanimously.

4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS - None

5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A motion to open nominations for Commission Chair was made by Commissioner Kline. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bruels and it carried unanimously.

A motion to nominate Commissioner McEachran to serve as Commission Chair was made by Commissioner Kline. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bruels.

No other nominations were made.

A motion to close the nominations was made by Commissioner Kline. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bruels and it carried unanimously.

The nomination of Commissioner McEachran to serve as Commission Chair carried unanimously.

A motion to open nominations for Commission Vice-Chair was made by Commissioner Kline. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bruels and it carried unanimously.

A motion to nominate Commissioner Villar to serve as Commission Vice-Chair was made by Commissioner Kline. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bruels and it carried unanimously.

No other nominations were made.

A motion to close the nominations was made by Commissioner Kline. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bruels and it carried unanimously.

The nomination of Commissioner Villar to serve as Commission Vice-Chair carried unanimously.

The gavel was handed to new Chair McEachran. He thanked Commissioner Perelman for her faithful and humble leadership over the past year.

6. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Perelman reported that she participated in visiting the men's winter shelter. She noted that on some nights there have been as many as 80 in the shelter, which can accommodate up to 100. Congregations for the Homeless has a good handle on the operation. The meals are all provided by volunteer groups.

Commissioner Kline said she visited the shelter as well and was struck by how orderly it is run. The residents are clear on what they can and cannot do and the spaces they can occupy. They settle in very quickly once they enter the facility.

Commissioner Villar, who said she also participated in the visit, noted that the men are given chores to give them a sense of purpose. For their help they are given bus tickets, clothing, or other items.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Plaskon, Human Services Manager Emily Leslie said lighting has been installed outside the building to address community concerns, but there are no streetlights in the neighborhood. She added that she was struck by the fact that many in the shelter appear to be quite young.

Chair McEachran noted that Ann Levine has taken over as Director of Philanthropy for Lifewire. Ms. Levine previously was with Imagine Housing where Gary Helling is the new interim director.

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly reported that she and Ms. Leslie would on January 7 be attending a symposium on early learning sponsored by the King County executive and the mayor of Seattle.

Ms. Leslie said prior to the symposium staff would be attending the Committee to End Homelessness legislative breakfast on Mercer Island. The event is usually very well attended.

7. DISCUSSION

A. Overview of Upcoming State Legislative Session

Ms. O'Reilly called attention to the packet materials that included the legislative agendas for various groups. She noted that the legislative agenda for the Eastside Human Services Forum is still in draft form waiting for the board to weigh in. The group is small and does not have its own lobbyist thus it makes sense to work hand-in-hand with other groups.

Ms. O'Reilly said the legislative session will begin on January 12 and the long session will end toward the middle of April. Some are predicting the session will be extended because of all the issues to be addressed. The budget is expected to be particularly difficult given the education issues associated with the McCleary decision and the passage of Initiative 1351.

The governor's Book 1 budget that was released in early December included a 15 percent cut to all state departments. There was angst about how that might play out. On December 18 the governor issued his Book 2 budget which had fewer cuts and included proposed new revenue sources, including a capital gains tax, a carbon pollution accountability tax, increasing the cigarette tax and imposing a new tax on e-cigarettes, and the closing of some tax loopholes. In all, the proposal would bring in \$1.2 billion over two years.

The Housing Trust Fund is critical for producing funding for affordable housing projects. The need to fund the Housing Trust Fund is on the legislative agendas of several organizations. During the last legislative session no funding was provided for the Housing Trust Fund, but the governor's Book 2 budget includes \$100 million.

Housing and essential needs is another area in need of funding. It covers money for single adults who are either waiting for approval to receive Social Security benefits, or who have been deemed to be not disabled enough to receive benefits. The item was on the chopping block in the governor's first budget. Many who work with homeless folks are concerned that there will be major cuts.

Funding for the Homeless Youth Act, which would establish a statewide office of homeless youth program and a fund for services, is in the Book 2 budget. The Book 2 budget also includes a couple of million dollars for expansion of the home visiting services program.

The early start bill, an omnibus bill with a number of services that are related to early learning, is highlighted for funding to expand the Early Achievers program and the Working Connections childcare program. Policy changes are also under consideration that would allow participants to be eligible for a full year instead of half a year, a change that would bring about administration savings while giving families more security.

Cuts in the budget are not included for long-term care, including the Senior Citizens Services Act and adult day health and caregiver support. There is no guarantee, however, going forward.

Ms. O'Reilly said once the Eastside Human Services Forum's legislative agenda is approved by the board, opportunity will be taken to contact legislators regarding specific issues. The Forum is also working on a supplemental document which will take each of the legislative agenda items and discuss the specific Eastside impacts.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Plaskon, Ms. O'Reilly said the governor's budget does include mental health funding. Included is funding for single bed certification, services for high-needs youth, forensic psychologists at Western State Hospital, and additional case manager coverage at DSHS.

8. DISCUSSION

A. 2015 Work Plan

Ms. Leslie called attention to the list of potential agenda topics that had been provided to the Commissioners prior to the meeting, and the draft calendar of meeting dates. She said the major work item for 2015 will be the development of the Needs Update. Throughout the year the Commission will be updated as data comes in. Another work item is the annual action plan required by HUD on the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) allocation. New to the mix is a joint consolidated plan being developed with King County and all of the other cities at the direction of HUD. Two public hearings are held annually with regard to CDBG funding. The one in the spring is geared toward getting feedback from the agencies with regard to the needs; the information is always helpful and is used in the Needs Update. The

annual round of CDBG allocation discussions will occur during the spring months, and in the fall the public hearing will be held.

The Comprehensive Plan update process is nearing its conclusion. The work has to be completed by June. A joint meeting of the city's boards and commissions will be slated for February.

There have been no talks yet about scheduling a meeting with the commissions from other cities. Ms. Leslie said it might be helpful when there are agenda items that reach beyond Bellevue's borders to invite the members of area commissions to attend, and to ask them to do the same when they have agenda items of interest to Bellevue.

Commissioner Plaskon asked how the dialog to develop the joint consolidated plan is working. Grant Coordinator Joseph Adriano said it is all done online. Each city is assigned a portion to draft and the County will take on the task of writing much of what the city used to write.

Ms. Leslie informed the Commissioners that as data comes out of the American Community Survey the city's demographer Gwen Rousseau will provide updates, and timely updates regarding legislative issues will be provided to the Commission.

At least one potentially significant ballot measure will likely be addressed during 2015. Called Best Starts for Kids, the proposal is being floated by King County executive Dow Constantine. The measure reportedly will include other human services as well. The Commission will be updated regularly as things progress.

The Veterans and Human Services levy is up for renewal in 2016. It would be good to provide the Commission with a briefing ahead of time. The Mental Illness and Drug Dependency sales tax will be taken up by the King County Council in the next year or so as well.

Ms. Leslie noted that regionally there are a large number of initiatives having to do with homelessness. The Committee to End Homelessness has come out with a strategic plan draft that will replace the Ten-Year plan which ends in 2015. That is a topic around which other commissions may want to schedule a joint meeting.

The Commissioners were informed that Redmond's police chief has held one meeting and has another one scheduled between police and human services staff from the cities of Redmond, Bellevue, Issaquah, Kirkland and Sammamish to talk about homeless issues in general. One focus has been on developing a regional approach for how to handle panhandling and the like.

Transportation continues to be a major issue. Sound Transit has been making presentations about the East Link project that might be of interest to the Commission.

Commissioner Perelman suggested the Commission could benefit from having an update from Eastside Pathways. Ms. Leslie said it would be good to also receive an update from the Network on Aging. Staff will throughout the year report back on the implementation of the Diversity Initiative.

Ms. Leslie observed that agency tours are always helpful. She suggested touring the International Community Health Services dental clinic, the funded bar association program, and others.

It would also be good to receive an update from ARCH, and to pull together panels to focus on specific issues, such as mental health. Chair McEachran agreed and proposed hearing from prime players within each of the Commission's goal areas. It would also be good to hear from or about emerging diverse groups in Bellevue.

Commissioner Perelman noted that healthcare continues to be an evolving topic and one the Commission should stay on top of.

Commissioner Bruels noted that it has been a while since the Commission has heard from private philanthropic organizations operating on the Eastside, including United Way and The Seattle Foundation. Chair McEachran agreed and said it would be enlightening to put together a panel of directors of philanthropy from Friends of Youth, Lifewire and others to talk about what they are doing to increase their buy-in from the community.

Commissioner Villar said she would like to hear from the 2-1-1 program an outline of what happens from the time a call comes in.

Commissioner Plaskon stressed the need to work collaboratively with the other cities in unified ways. Ms. Leslie said there is constant collaboration at the staff level, mostly dealing with homelessness issues. The homeless outreach program operated by Congregations for the Homeless came about as a direct result of those collaborative efforts.

Commissioner Perelman said it would be good to know what programs the other cities have chosen to fund, and if their funding for those programs has increased or decreased.

Commissioner Plaskon suggested the Commission should share with the other cities the list of items to be visited during the year and seek from them their list of discussion and study items.

Commissioner Kline observed that the Commission does not spend a lot of time focused on agency efficiencies associated with providing services. It might even be good to have input from firms that audit agencies about common problems or where operational efficiencies could be put in place. Ms. O'Reilly agreed and said it would be good to hear about specific trends seen by auditors.

9. DISCUSSION

A. Application Process for Additional 2014 CDBG Funds

Mr. Adriano reminded the Commissioners that HUD conducts a compliance test every year in the fall. It is a test of the ability of jurisdictions to spend funds in a timely manner and they apply a certain equation to the amount of funds in each jurisdiction's line of credit. Bellevue was over the line due to \$160,000 allocated to ARCH that has been building up, and \$90,000 in program funds conservatively held back to keep from running out of money. Accordingly, the city failed the compliance test. Over the next three weeks the city will be receiving from agencies in the community ideas for how to expending CDBG funds before October. To date there has been interest indicated by Bellevue Boys & Girls Club, ARCH, Salvation Army, Senior Services Minor Home Repair, and Imagine Housing. All who respond to the application process will need to fill out the long application form. The aim will be to spend down the reserves that will come in during 2015 from program income. The built-up program funds for ARCH were anticipated to be fully spent by mid-year 2014 but there were some issues between ARCH and the King County Housing Authority that have since been cleared up.

Mr. Adriano said clearing up the ARCH funds and addressing the upcoming mini-funding process is the short-term answer to taking care of the problems identified by HUD in 2014. For the long term, the idea is to build a roster of projects that will be seen by the Commission annually, and a more open process.

Ms. Leslie added that the corrective agreement with HUD includes a requirement to develop an internal plan for working with ARCH to get the funds spent in a timely manner.

The supplemental review process will kick off at the Commission's first meeting in February.

10. OLD BUSINESS - None

11. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Leslie reviewed the agenda of upcoming meetings. She recommended canceling the January 22 meeting because it falls on the night of the One Night Count. She also recommended canceling the February 19 meeting because a joint board and commission meeting regarding the Comprehensive Plan update is slated for that week.

Commissioner Bruels asked if the possible zoning changes for the Newport Hills Shopping Center area will result in opportunities for affordable or low-income housing

opportunities. Ms. Leslie said she would investigate the issue and report back to the Commission.

Answering a question asked by Chair McEachran, Ms. Leslie explained that the city is currently operating under a consent decree relative to homeless encampments. That decree expires in 2015 so steps will need to be taken to make some changes. The issue primarily involves land use, though some advocacy groups may choose to attend a Commission meeting to voice their opinions.

12. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS - None

13. ADJOURNMENT

Chair McEachran adjourned the meeting at 8:07 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date