

The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on November 17, 2015

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

April 21, 2015
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson McEachran, Commissioners, Bruels, Kline, Perelman, 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 McEachran who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Beighle, who was excused, and Commissioner Perelman who arrived at 6:45 p.m.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 17, 2015

Commissioner Kline called attention to the second paragraph on page 2 and clarified that rather than emailing information to the folks at Sammamish she had emailed information about the folks at Sammamish to ICHS.

A motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Commissioner Villar. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bruels and the motion carried unanimously.

B. April 7, 2015

Commissioner Bruels referred to the fourth paragraph on page 2 and asked that it be revised to read "Commissioner Bruels said he had gone to Olympia with his faith

community for an advocacy day. He said he spoke with legislators about working in support of HB-1875....”

A motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Commissioner Kline. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Villar and the motion carried unanimously.

4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

5. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Kline reported that she along with Chair McEachran and Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly visited Bellevue College on April 20 and participated in a community conversation regarding the Needs Update. The 11 participants were all Bellevue College staff and their input was valuable.

Chair McEachran said the engagement was remarkable. Every person voiced an area of need, with homelessness on top followed by seniors, transportation, mental health, translation services, the needs of veterans, the changing federal and state requirements around education, and the sense of the need to remove barriers. It would be good to have in the room those who have oversight of various grants. He said the Commission would benefit from having a panel discussion with Bellevue College staff focused on the needs they are seeing.

Commissioner Bruels said he continued to be impressed with how ICHS has integrated behavioral health services into their primary care services. Their specialists have been pulled in to provide a global care approach. Swedish Hospital will be incorporating the same model in its primary care clinics, including in Factoria.

Ms. O'Reilly called attention to a networking meeting to be hosted by Aging and Disability Services Seattle/King County. She said the Community Living Connections approach is a new model that was mandated by the state in the last legislative session for the use of funds from the Elder Americans act that come from the federal government to the state. Under the model, three hubs will be developed, one in East King County, one in South King County, and one for North King County and Seattle. An RFP has been released seeking agencies in each of the hub areas to serve as the lead.

6. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Housing and Human Services Needs

A motion to open the public hearing was made by Commissioner Bruels. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Villar and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Klaas Nijhuis with ARCH said health and education studies prove that better outcomes start with stable housing. Finding affordable housing in the Puget Sound

region, however, is difficult. Starter homes are no longer developed. The market does not develop affordable housing; it comes about through regulations, incentives or direct subsidies. Less expensive housing options can be found by traveling east, north or south, but they only contribute to traffic congestion, longer commutes, and less time spent with family and in the local community. Bellevue was the leader in founding ARCH and since its founding more than 3000 housing units have been developed through direct subsidy. Bellevue's funding for ARCH, however, has remained level at \$412,000 annually since 1995. Adjusted for inflation, that amount is equivalent to \$253,500. The economic vitality of the area is both a benefit and a barrier. The good economy attracts people to the area with good-paying jobs, but it puts demands on the housing stock which increases housing prices. In East King County there are 2250 adults with developmental disabilities living with their parents, but as their parents age they will no longer be able to care for them. ARCH has been active in funding developmental disabled homes. Baby Boomers are aging out of the workforce and by 2025 over a quarter of them will be over the age of 60 and will be living longer. Investments made through the Housing Trust Fund have preserved and created 550 senior housing units to date, and more units are needed given that the 2013 American Community Survey found that 60 percent of the seniors in East King County are cost burdened where housing is concerned, defined as paying more than 30 percent of their incomes for housing costs. Overall, 34 percent of Eastsiders are cost burdened, and about 14 percent are severely cost burdened. In the Bellevue School District, 191 children are homeless; there are 259 homeless children in the Lake Washington School District.

Lt. Sierra Dwelle from the Bellevue Salvation Army said the need for more doctors and dentists serving those in need on the Eastside has increased since the Affordable Care Act went into effect. Those who do accept the insurance coverage are seeing a huge overflow and do not have time to see all of the patients. By partnering with Medical Teams International, Salvation Army has been able to double the capacity. The agency is seeing barriers to accessing existing services. Rent assistance funding from the agency is able to help local residents, but often it is not enough and the clients must be referred to other agencies. Salvation Army is seeing reductions in government funding, which puts more of a burden on local non-profits to use their funds in ways they were not anticipating. The funding received from the city are appreciated and is put to work helping the community. The Commissioners were informed that Salvation Army plans to apply for CDBG funds in 2016 to expand the services being offered.

Ms. Dorothy Wong with Chinese Information and Service Center noted that her organization operates the Cultural Navigator program for the Eastside. The program's purpose is to help refugees and immigrants access the services they need. In 2014 the program served 922 Bellevue residents, of which 80 percent were categorized as low- or very low-income. Besides the basic needs of housing, food and transportation, there is an increased need for personal and family support services, including assisting victims of domestic violence and those with legal issues having to do with their residency status. Sixty-seven percent of all clients served are either

working part-time or are unemployed, so employment training and assistance is a big need. The cultural navigators speak Russian, Spanish and the languages of India, making it possible to serve members of those communities. There are, however, other populations that are increasingly presenting with needs, most recently the Somalia and East European communities. The list of barriers to service includes language and culture as well as trust. Because the cultural navigators come from their communities, a certain level of trust is automatically raised. The integrated holistic approach to offering services from the cradle to the grave is clearly the best; more integrated services are needed. Collaboration will be key to meeting with success in the future to avoid having agencies competing for the same dollars. CISC recently received some funding from Eastside Pathways to develop an early learning program for the Latino community that will mirror the highly regarded early learning program in place for the Chinese community.

Ms. Judy Faast with Hopelink said she has been a resident of Bellevue for 35 years and graduated from the inaugural class of Bellevue Essentials. On behalf of Hopelink, she thanked the city for its generous support. She said the most pressing health and human service needs Hopelink is seeing includes a lack of mental health resources. Many low-income clients are grappling with depression or PTSD; the immigrant and refugee populations often have trauma from having left their home countries. Housing is a pressing need as well, especially for single adults, though there are also youth in need of housing given that the shelters are full. There is a clear need for day centers for those who are sleeping in shelters but who have nowhere to go during the day. Transportation is a need in terms of cost and coverage. Health insurance, particular in the immigrant and refugee populations, is a pressing need. The list of barriers preventing clients from accessing existing services includes lack of childcare, transportation and limited English skills. English language learners often do not know how to go about finding the services they need; they need to be able to turn to a person rather than a system. The 2-1-1 system for English language learners is very challenging; it is also frustrating for those with mental health issues. After English, the primary languages spoken by Hopelink clients are Spanish, Russian, Farsi, Chinese and Vietnamese, though a fair number of clients are from East Africa and the Pacific Islands. With regard to funding issues, she said funders are looking for service providers who will collaborate with other service providers to better leverage dollars.

Ms. Stacey Witte, director of case management and housing programs for Congregations for the Homeless, said the organization has been around for 21 years yet many still do not know anything about it. There are some amazing services offered on the Eastside and more is being done each month to partner with the agencies that offer them. There is a clear need for the various agencies to communicate and have a relationship with one another. Congregations for the Homeless has six different programs. The year-round men's shelter program is rotated among participating churches. The men are driven in the shelter to move forward because that is the mission. There is also a day center serving homeless men on the Eastside which offers showers and laundry facilities. Outreach coordinators for the agency go out into the community to work with the police and

those on the street to build relationships that will get them the services and the hope that they need. Two low-barrier harm-reduction emergency shelters are operated to serve persons who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol; the program provides the clients with the dignity of having a place to sleep and eat, and gives the clients the opportunity to build relationships with case management and other volunteers. Many who are on the streets do not know what services are available or how to access them, and the success Congregations for the Homeless has had has largely been because of its case managers. There is currently no program in place that provides case management for people that are homeless and who need medical care and help getting into a detox center. There is no Eastside facility offering detox services, and accessing mental health services can be a challenge for many. Congregations for the Homeless staff build relationships and actually take clients to doctors appointments and the like. Transportation is a huge barrier for the homeless. The homeless can also have issues with remembering appointments they have, and Congregations for the Homeless staff provide that reminder service. Accessing services online can be challenging, especially for the homeless who are older. Men are being seen from East Africa and from Russia, and there has been an increase in the number of LGBTQ men.

Ms. Osha Morningstar said she lives in downtown Bellevue on a King County Housing Authority Section 8 voucher. In order to afford housing in Bellevue, it was necessary to seek a \$300 increase in the voucher amount. She commented that 2-1-1 is confusing for many, not just for English language learners. It is very difficult to navigate the system, and those who know best how to do so are those who are having to do it. She said one of her goals is to empower people to become part of the decision-making process. She said she is also a student at Bellevue College and formerly served as the sustainable foods coordinator. That task involved bringing forward foods that are local, healthy, and which meet people's dietary needs. There are many hungry students on that campus and there is no way to feed them. Bellevue College could use a push to figure out how many students are in need.

Ms. Helen Banks Routon with Eastside Baby Corner thanked the Commission and the city for continued support of the organization. Funding from the city improves the ability to serve the providers and programs supported by the agency. Currently Eastside Baby Corner supports 51 agencies and 169 programs. Over the last three to five years the agency has been able to increase its output to almost 69,000 items across the service area, but even so providers continue to need more in order to meet the need. Sixty-six percent of the programs served have indicated they would order more if they had a higher ordering limit. Of those, 47 percent indicated they need at least ten more slots, and eight percent said they need 20 plus slots. Currently clothing up to size 14, or age 12, but there is an increased need for larger size clothing up to 16 and 18, largely because children are larger than they used to be. In addition to clothing, furniture is becoming an issue. The number of orders for beds is way up, as is the number of orders for dressers, book cases and other large items. The agency is struggling to find a partner in the community to operate a furniture bank. There is also a high need for school supplies and backpacks for older children,

and for lotions and skin care needs for children of color. In 2014, the agency gave out goods valued at \$978,816 to residents in Bellevue.

Chair McEachran noted the written correspondence that had been received from the Crisis Clinic, Kindering Center, King County Sexual Assault Resources Center, and International Community Health Services.

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

7. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Leslie provided the Commissioners with copies of what could be the final draft of the Strategic Plan from the Committee to End Homelessness. She commented that the draft has undergone several revisions since it was first released in December. Mark Putnam with the Committee to End Homelessness and Meghan Altimore of Hopelink will be providing the Council with an update on April 27. The Strategic Plan will be before the governing board for approval at the end of June, following which the cities of Bellevue and Seattle, the Sound Cities Association, and King County will be asked to endorse it.

Ms. Leslie reminded the Commissioners that in a previous draft there was something about not criminalizing homelessness. While the attempt was to help get people connected to services rather than simply arrest them, the way the strategy was worded it was not city friendly in that it called for repealing local ordinances that prohibit camping in parks and public properties. That language has since been revised.

Commissioner Plaskon asked if the Commission has been asked to recommend the plan. Ms. Leslie said the approach taken ten years ago by the Commission was to recommend the vision, goals and principles of the plan without endorsing specific strategies within the plan. She said that is the approach that will be taken with the Council. She said she was not looking for the Commission to take any specific recommendation to the Council.

Chair McEachran asked who funds the Committee to End Homelessness organization. Ms. Leslie said the staff are all housed at King County government. The operation is funded by King County, Seattle, United Way and to some degree the Gates Foundation. Some of the specific initiatives are funded by private donations.

Commissioner Perelman noted that the document talks about ending homelessness by 2020, but the vision is focused on making homelessness rare, brief, and a one-time occurrence, which is not the same as ending homelessness.

Commissioner Kline shared that she was recently in Denver and the talk on the radio was about the Denver Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness. She said that helped to

solidify in her mind that the issue is not unique to the Puget Sound area. Ms. Leslie said the work is being driven nationwide by the federal government, and ten-year plans are required in order to receive federal funding. The way the homeless are served and the rapid re-housing movement are national movements. King County has one of the largest stocks of housing in the nation, but it is not being used as efficiently as it could be.

8. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Leslie said King County Executive Dow Constantine will give his state of the county address on April 27. As part of the address, he will launch the Best Starts for Kids measure that will be on the ballot in November. The City Council likely will be asked to endorse the ballot measure along with the Sound Cities Association.

Ms. O'Reilly reported that the school district stands to lose about \$200,000 in federal Title I funds they have been using for the family connection centers. The word was put out by folks associated with Eastside Pathways asking them to attend the school board meeting to advocate for finding the funds that will be lost. She said she will keep the Commission posted as things move ahead.

Ms. Leslie handed out thank-you notes to the Commissioners in recognition of National Volunteer Week. She acknowledged their hard work and said the staff all appreciate working with them.

Ms. Leslie informed the Commissioners that the Alliance of Eastside Agencies will be conducting its annual awards luncheon on June 3 in Bellevue. She said any Commissioner wanting to attend should let her know.

Chair McEachran asked for feedback regarding the testimony provided during the public hearing.

Commissioner Villar said she was surprised that so few agencies chose to participate, either in person or in writing. Ms. Leslie said that likely is because it is not a funding year.

Ms. O'Reilly pointed out that the providers survey was released on April 15 and stated that there had already been 30 responses. The contractor also completed the phone survey and a presentation will be made to the Commission once the data is in hand. She added that assistance is being sought from the Bellevue Downtown Association to do a short employer survey about employee needs. Commissioner Kline suggested asking the Chamber of Commerce to be involved as well.

Chair McEachran said if he were serving as the executive director of an agency, he would stress the importance of taking the time to meet personally with the Commission to talk about the issues. Where agencies fail to take the time to make connections, credibility is lost.

Commissioner Villar said she would be interested in hearing how the police interact with the English language learners community in Bellevue. Ms. Leslie commented that the city has a new police chief. She agreed to invite him to come and introduce himself, and address that question at the same time.

9. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

10. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Bruels. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Villar and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair McEachran adjourned the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

Secretary of the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date