

CITY OF BELLEVUE
SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

July 13, 2023
8:30 a.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Virtual Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Susan Freeburg – Chair
Chad Charbonneau - Parks
Landon Barnwell – Police
Christopher Rivera – Transportation
Casiano Atienza – Transportation
Ronald King - Fire
Neal Christiansen – Community Representative East
Mike Ogliore – Business Representative Downtown
Laurie Scott – Downtown Resident Representative
Mark Heilman – Neighborhood Outreach
Hazel Phillips – Office of Emergency Management
Meredith Langridge – VisitBellevue

OTHERS PRESENT: Anthony Gill, Economic Development Specialist, Jacob Melaragno, Economic Development Intern, Emily Martella, Madeline Groth, Parks

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:32 a.m. by Chair Freeburg who presided.

Chair Freeburg took a moment to introduce new staff member Madeline Groth.

2. COMMUNICATIONS: Written and Oral – None

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Laurie Scott. The motion was seconded by Meredith Langridge and the motion carried unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A motion to approve the June 8, 2023, meeting minutes as submitted was made by Laurie Scott. The motion was seconded by Mark Heilman and the motion carried unanimously.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

❖ Routing and Location Subcommittee Report

Casiano Atienza reported that the subcommittee met twice recently, once to discuss the

upcoming September 9 Ukrainian festival and have an overall check-in; and once to discuss the August 6 Bellevue Children's Business Fair, which was attended by representatives of parks, fire, and transportation along with the event organizers. Planning for both events are moving forward; both events will be in Downtown Park.

Continuing, Casiano Atienza said the next big event is the Bellevue Art Museum Arts Fair and the Bellevue Downtown Association Arts Market.

6. OLD BUSINESS

- ❖ Tabled Events – None

6. NEW BUSINESS

- ❖ Event Organizer Presentations - The Main Event Wine Walk

Economic Development Specialist Anthony Gill noted that for many years Main Street has hosted a wine walk, usually in the fall. The event has been an opportunity for local wineries to work with local merchants in offering tastings. The event is a fundraiser for the Old Bellevue Merchants Association in that the organization receives a significant portion of the ticket sales. The event has traditionally drawn between 300 and 500 people to the various merchants' shops.

For the past couple of years, the city's economic development folks have been working with the Old Bellevue Merchants Association to increase the capacity for the event. For the current year, two wine walks were planned. The first was in May; it sold out and the program was very well received. The second event is planned for September 14. Economic development has been tasked by the City Manager's Office with figuring out a way to close down the street to vehicles and opening it to pedestrians for the wine walk. To that end an application was submitted.

An aerial view of Main Street in Old Bellevue showing where the street would be closed to vehicles was shared with the Committee. The plan is to set up tables, chairs and umbrellas on the street, and to include a music stage in a parking lot owned by Stu Vanderhoek. The initial thinking about setting up a beer and wine garden in a parking lot space will not be going forward in favor of allowing the merchants to get what they need to get out of the event. The event will run from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., with setup and tear-down occurring on either side. There are two options on the table for live music. One would be to set up a stage outdoors and the other would be to have small unplugged setups in the stores of select merchants. Some lighting or experiential art is being considered as well.

An in-house traffic control plan could be created, or that planning could be left up to National Barricade. At the spring event, about 40 percent of the participants were within walking or biking distance. There were really no transportation issues associated with the May event and it is hoped that will hold constant for the September event. In all promotional materials there will be a parking map that will include the South Bellevue park and ride as an option. The number of parking stalls that potentially could be lost given the proposed street closure area is less than 20. Access to all parking garages and lots would be maintained during the event, most of which are accessed via side routes.

Laurie Scott asked if people will be able to walk around and sit at the tables with their wine. Anthony Gill said the idea behind the tables and chairs is that they would only serve as a place for people to enjoy the music, though some takeout options with the restaurants are being worked

on. Wine would not be allowed outside of the participating merchants' premises. Laurie Scott voiced support for having music, noting that if the music were inside, the participants might linger longer inside the individual merchants' businesses.

Meredith Langridge registered support for expanding the wine walk onto the street. Since transportation is an issue, the on-demand ride program will be launched in August and that might be a big benefit. Anthony Gill said the possibility of creating a full beer garden area was explored, but it was discovered that all of the merchants would have had to agree to it. That might be a possibility in the future.

Casiano Atienza suggested it would be best to allow National Barricade to develop the traffic control plan. Clearly there will be a need to maintain emergency access. Anthony Gill said the early feedback from fire was along the lines of not setting up the tables and chairs in the middle of the street, thus allowing a travel path in the center for emergency access.

Christopher Rivera suggested police, fire and transportation will want to talk over details. The effort to maintain emergency access argues in favor of not setting up much in any signalized intersection.

Christopher Rivera asked if there would be any outdoor cooking. Anthony Gill confirmed that no food would be cooked outside, rather the participating restaurants would put together take-out specials for people to take out to the tables to enjoy.

Christopher Rivera stressed the need to have a detailed site plan for the city right-of-way.

Landon Barnwell said details will be discussed by the routing and location subcommittee. The recent night market event was not staffed with officers, but with Main Street being more heavily traveled by vehicles, the event might warrant having officers on site.

Mark Heilman agreed that the issues will be discussed by the routing and locations subcommittee.

Casiano Atienza stressed the need to have more details about a parking plan.

Neal Christiansen shared that closing Main Street to facilitate an event has been done in the past, notably the Strawberry Festival in 2003 to 2005. The reason that was halted was that approval from every business was required and there were some merchants who would not sign off on it after the event was held there for three or four years.

Anthony Gill pointed out that most of the merchants adjacent to the proposed closure, at least 60 percent, will be participating in the event. Some businesses will actually be closed during the event. The Old Bellevue Merchants Association has expressed strong support for the event.

❖ Application of Intent – City of Bellevue and Old Bellevue Merchants' Association: The Main Event Wine Walk

Chair Freeburg sought from the Committee direction as to whether or not the event should be required to have a full Special Event Permit.

Neal Christiansen noted the application indicates a thousand participants and suggested that a full permit should be required. The other Committee members concurred.

A motion to approve the date, time and location for The Main Event Wine Walk was made by Neal Christiansen. The motion was seconded by Laurie Scott and the motion carried unanimously.

❖ Post-Event Evaluations

Chair Freeburg noted no post-event evaluations had been received regarding the Chime Festival, the Night Market at Crossroads, or the Bellevue Family 4th events. It was noted that for the most part the events went very well, though there were a couple of glitches with the Chime Festival in regard to park cleanup.

Ron King said there were some issues associated with the timing for when the organizer needed to have an inspector on site. Steps have been taken internally to prevent the same from happening in the future. Otherwise the event went very well and there were many attendees. One issue had to do with the amount of vehicular traffic in the parking lot resulting in several close calls between cars and pedestrians, especially kids.

Landon Barnwell noted having received no feedback either positive or negative from the officers that worked the event.

Chair Freeburg said there were issues with cleanup and with cars driving in the park that should not have been there. There will be follow-up with the organizer. There were also some timeline items that were not met, which triggered holding back issuance of the permit for the event. The event organizer was new this year and was less organized than the one in charge the last couple of years. There will need to be conversations around preparation for the event and about the clean-up issues. No sound complaints or indeed any complaints about the event generally were received.

Chair Freeburg also noted having received no feedback regarding the Night Market at Crossroads event.

With regard to the Bellevue Family 4th, Mike Ogliore offered kudos to all the departments involved. There were some hiccups with the 2022 event that were taken into account this year. The food presentation was much better; the water stations were well received; the entertainment plaza was rotated and that worked well; and there were not major safety issues. There is always room for making tweaks to how the participants are exited, but overall it went very well.

Landon Barnwell agreed that the need for only minor tweaks were highlighted. The exiting was most accomplished within an hour of the event ending. There were a lot of pedestrians on NE 4th Street between Bellevue Way and 102nd Avenue NE and consideration will be given to securing that a little better next year. All the different departments worked well together and overall the event went very well.

Chair Freeburg said the Old Bellevue Merchants Association was very happy with the event given how smoothly it went. Their comments were only positive. No complaints generally have been received regarding the event.

Chair Freeburg took a moment to share that a meeting is being set up with a new software vendor, eProval. Any interested Committee members can attend the meeting. The software is aimed at processing permits a little more efficiently for all concerned.

7. NEXT MEETING

❖ August 10, 2023

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Freeburg adjourned the meeting at 9:14 a.m.