

CITY OF BELLEVUE
SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

September 14, 2023
8:30 a.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Virtual Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Susan Freeburg – Parks
Chad Charbonneau - Parks
Mark Anderson – Fire
Kyle Nelson – Fire
Landon Barnwell – Police
Christopher Rivera – Transportation
Casiano Atienza – Transportation
Claude Iosso – City Manager’s Office
Erin Hislop – Utilities
Neal Christiansen – Community Representative East
Meredith Langridge – Special Event Promoter
Mike Ogliore – Business Representative Downtown
Laurie Scott – Downtown Resident Representative

OTHERS PRESENT: Brad Bennett, Madeline Groth, Parks; Maggie Whittemore, Fire; Heija Nunn, Jerry Brooks; Event Organizers

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. COMMUNICATIONS: Written and Oral – None

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A motion to approve the August 10, 2023, meeting minutes as submitted was made by Laurie Scott. The motion was seconded by Mark Anderson and the motion carried unanimously.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

❖ Routing and Location Subcommittee Report

Casiano Atienza reported having held a subcommittee meeting regarding the East Link centerline exercise. It was noted the Main Street event was slated to start later in the day and running through 10:00 p.m. A meeting will be scheduled soon to discuss the Kelsey Creek Farm Fair.

6. OLD BUSINESS

- ❖ Tabled Events – None

6. NEW BUSINESS

- ❖ Application of Intent

A. AHG Cares + Amazon New Year's Eve Night Market

Chair Freeburg said the event is tagged onto the already approved ice rink the Bellevue Downtown Association puts on during the winter months. The application is just for New Year's Eve only. AHG Cares is partnering with the BDA to add a night market component for New Year's Eve.

Event coordinator Mike Ogliore noted that Heija Nunn and Jerry Brooks were working to develop a feasible plan for the event that follows all the rules and regulations for Downtown Park. It continues to be a work in progress.

Heija Nunn said the pilot program in 2022 involved a small pop-up event in Old Bellevue in the Vander Hoek parking lot behind glassybaby. The event was well received by the residents in the area because it gave them something that was walkable, easy to get to, and a nice safe event. Most of the guests were within walking distance so parking was not an issue. There were both adults and kids.

The proposal for 2023 is to expand the footprint by joining the BDA in Downtown Park. The application asks for the use of the west parking lot. Site plans for the use of the area have been drawn up. To mitigate parking concerns, the use of the Bellevue Boys & Girls Club parking lot has been secured from 3:00 p.m. on. A request has also been submitted to the Bellevue Collection for use of their parking lot.

Chair Freeburg reported that Parks has declined the use of the west parking lot. Every event wants to close the parking lot and the department is not looking to go down that path. The event will need to take place inside the park itself.

Heija Nunn noted that in the past some events have received permission to close the parking lot. Chair Freeburg explained that the lot has been closed in support of city events and for very large events like the Rock 'n Roll Marathon where the impact was very large. Closing the parking lot for smaller events impacts park users. An alternate plan for the New Year's Eve Night Market event will need to be identified.

Heija Nunn commented that the layout for the ice rink covers a portion of the plaza, and part of the south parking lot. For various reasons, the interior of the park itself is not a location that will work for the event. The idea behind using the parking lot was to go with the city goal of activating the Downtown area in ways that are welcoming and repeatable, as well as highly visible. Two possible alternative locations have been identified. The primary alternate location would be to utilize Main Street, closing the street from approximately 102nd Avenue NE through 104th Avenue NE.

Heija Nunn introduced Jerry Brooks with Northwest Marketplaces as the logistics expert charged with developing the traffic and site plans. It was noted the closed area of Main Street could

support locating the booths while retaining a 12-foot corridor for emergency access. The Old Main Merchants Association are both supportive and enthusiastic about the event.

Heija Nunn clarified for Christopher Rivera that the proposed alternative location on Main Street is not the same location that was used for the pop-up in 2022. That event, which was well received, was very small and a larger location is needed, one that will allow for including food trucks and also one that is more visible. Christopher Rivera pointed out that approval will be needed from 80 percent of the adjacent business owners.

Heija Nunn said the event is anticipated to run from 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., with setup occurring prior to 4:00 p.m. and take down occurring after the event wraps up. Jerry Brooks said how long take down will take depends on the number of vendors. The Fremont Sunday market with 100 vendors clears out in about two hours. For the proposed event on Main Street, it should take no longer than an hour, possible an hour and a half, given the anticipated 50 or so vendors.

Heija Nunn said a layout map will be submitted once a location is confirmed. For the Main Street alternative location, the beer and wine garden would be the same as for The Main Event. A request for use of the parking lot has been submitted and approval is pending from Vander Hoek and the surrounding tenants. The location is enclosed and therefore easy to control. The necessary permissions from the state can be obtained and all city of Bellevue restrictions can be met within the given timeline.

Chair Freeburg asked if moving the event to the Main Street location will make it an independent event. Heija Nunn said it could go either way. It would be great to have the support of the BDA in either case given that the community event is intended to activate the Downtown core.

Answering a question asked by Christopher Rivera, Heija Nunn said the event is open to the public, but the attendees are likely to be those within walking distance of Downtown Bellevue. That was the case in 2022, and it was fun to see the enthusiasm of the residents to get out and meeting each other. There were also a lot of families with children, and families with dogs. The wine and beer garden had less than ideal visibility, but it also was a success. Music was used to engage people and the same is planned for the planned event. The merchants will also be worked with to develop some cross marketing to make it a great night for everyone.

Jerry Brooks shared with the committee members a rudimentary draft site layout for the Main Street location. It was stressed that it did not include the required fire lanes, and did not have labels for the intersections.

Heija Nunn said a second possible location for the event would be in the FedEx parking lot at 44 Bellevue Way. Contact has not been made with that property owner. The Main Street location is preferred.

Kyle Nelson said Fire can support the Main Street location so long as the proper permits are secured and a 12-foot fire lane access is maintained. Jerry Brooks said the layout would be designed with a 20-foot fire lane just to be safe.

Heija Nunn added that the Main Street roadway itself has good versatility and great access. It is very pedestrian friendly and should be an ideal location for a replicable event.

Mark Anderson noted the need to include removable barriers at each end of the closed roadway. Given that the intersection at 102nd Avenue NE will be blocked, there should be some police

officers posted there. Landon Barnwell said the idea is to stage patrol cars on the east and west ends of Main Street, and at 102nd Avenue NE, using the cars as barriers.

Jerry Brooks said the proposed site plan stops the closure at the intersection with 103rd Avenue NE. Traffic should be able to come down 103rd Avenue NE and turn eastbound onto Main Street, but not westbound on Main Street.

Chair Freeburg asked about the availability of offers to work the event on New Year's Eve. Landon Barnwell allowed that because of the holiday there may be some challenges. The officers assigned to the event will need to be paid overtime. At a minimum there should be two officers if meridian barriers are used, otherwise at least four officers would be needed.

Heija Nunn said traffic was very light during the event in 2022, possibly because of the holiday. Parking was less of an issue than usual as well. Landon Barnwell said the 2022 event was not held on a main thoroughfare and there was less concern about vehicles that could inadvertently drive through the area. With the event on Main Street, there is more to keep in mind.

Chair Freeburg said the Committee would discuss the proposed new location for the event and determine if an independent Special Event Permit would be needed.

Christopher Rivera stressed the need to have buyoff from the adjacent property owners, including residents and business owners. It was also pointed out that on the furthest west side there is a private driveway that would be blocked by the booths if set up as shown in the draft site layout. The one-way driveway is for the residents for the building just to the south and it is their only entrance. Jerry Brooks said the way to accommodate that would be to pull back the first four or five booths on the south.

Heija Nunn agreed with the need to determine the number of portable toilets and trash containers that will be needed and where to site them. Chair Freeburg said once it is determined where the event will occur, a routing and location subcommittee meeting will be scheduled with all key players, including transportation, fire and police, to work out all the logistics. In addition to gaining agreement from adjacent businesses, the event will need to be brought to the attention of local condominiums and apartments in the area so no one is caught off guard.

Heija Nunn and Jerry Brooks were thanked for their presentations.

Mike Ogliore suggested that if the event is moved to Main Street, it would not make sense for it to be partnered with the BDA. The BDA would promote the event and support it, but a separate permit would make sense.

Kyle Nelson said Fire was okay with the event as outlined.

Casiano Atienza noted a preference to wait to approve the event until after there is proof that the local businesses are okay with it. Chair Freeburg said there likely was not enough time on the calendar to do it that way. Any approval of date, time and location by the Committee could be given contingent on providing the additional documentation. Casiano Atienza agreed to move forward.

Landon Barnwell asked if consideration had been given to NE 1st Street as a location, starting the closure east of the parking lot but still allowing access into the parking lot, and going down to about 103rd Avenue NE. Chair Freeburg said that option had not been raised by the organizer,

whose primary desire has been to use the south parking lot. Nothing else was previously discussed.

Landon Barnwell voiced support for moving forward with the event on Main Street. Police will make it work in terms of assigning officers.

A motion to approve date, time and location, pending additional documentation, was made by Neal Christiansen. The motion was seconded by Laurie Scott and the motion carried unanimously.

Neal Christiansen asked for clarification for why Parks elected not to allow the use of the parking lot, especially given that permission had been obtained from the Bellevue Boys & Girls Club for additional parking. Chair Freeburg said every event wants to close the parking lot. Parks has shied away from that. There is a partial parking lot closure due to the ice rink setup. There have been ADA issues, as well, that included some litigation. Parks had to show proof of having had ample ADA parking over the past several years. Especially for smaller events, Parks has chosen not to allow vendor booths to locate in the parking lot. Closing the parking lot every time there was an event would cause a large impact on the Downtown area, and not just for those going to the event but also for those just wanting to use Downtown Park.

❖ Post-Event Evaluations

A. Bellevue Downtown Arts Market

Mike Ogliore said the event was as good as one could hope. Support from police, fire and transportation was excellent, and the weather was perfect. There were some construction impacts during load-in, but police and transportation made it work. The event went smoothly and without issues. The same three-day weekend is under consideration for next year, with load-in occurring on Thursday. There is an agreement with Paccar for use of their parking lot for artist parking.

Landon Barnwell noted that nothing negative had been heard from the officers who worked the event. Kyle Nelson and Christopher Rivera added that their respective departments encountered no issues.

B. Downtown Movies in the Park

Chair Freeburg noted that over the course of the weeks, there were an estimated 15,000 attendees. The annual event has taken place for the last ten years and the process that is in place needs little more than fine-tuning and small changes annually. There remain to be challenges in terms of a lack of restroom facilities, which could be addressed by adding portable toilets. There were no real security concerns and there were no sound complaints received.

C. Pakistan Independence Day Celebration

Chair Freeburg said the event organizer reported that the weather was good. There were food vendors, live music, clothing, canopies, tables and chairs. Fire was very cooperative and the load-in, load-out and pedestrian flow was all very good. There was good collaboration with the city. Buckets were provided to serve as canopy weights. There was sufficient power for the event. The challenges included a lack of space in the parking lot to complete all load-in activities in a seamless manner. The small organization does not have the resources to manage all the activities in the parking lot and ensure that no other traffic goes into the area designated for

loading and unloading. Any help from the city would be appreciated. During inspection there were requirements creep, including requirements for distance between food and other stalls. There were no major security concerns so the requirement for a police presence all day long should be relaxed. The program plan and layout is expected to be the same next year.

Kyle Nelson said the event organizer is very good at customer service, but forwarded to Fire a somewhat extensive list of challenges encountered. A general sense of frustration was expressed along with a bit of a reluctance to help in coordinating the inspections. Fire had specific concerns about the location of cooking tents versus vendor and seating tents, the location of propane tanks, tripping hazards due to electrical cables, and the need to secure tents given that many of the vendors did not provide their own weights. Even the buckets eventually supplied did not have lids so once filled with water any tipping caused them to lose their weight and effectiveness. One of the tents was not secured and the breezy conditions actually blew over the tent, narrowly missing someone. The food trucks that came did not have permit letters.

Chair Freeburg reported having received similar responses from the organizer and a general reluctance to complying.

Chad Charbonneau noted that once again there were vehicles in the park before and after the event. It appeared the organizer was actively trying to be deceitful by making it seem like take-down was completed, but as soon as staff started to leave the park they pulled the bollards and brought their own vehicles back into the park. Many of the same issues were encountered at the 2022 event.

Chair Freeburg said the notes would be compiled and when application is made next year the issues will be addressed. Chair Freeburg said a meeting was scheduled to discuss possible changes relative to consequences when organizers do not follow directions. The Committee will be kept updated.

Neal Christiansen asked why they were bringing cars into the park after staff left. Chad Charbonneau said there were some personal supplies that had not been carried out. For the most part vendors were given carts to push their supplies back and forth, but a few vendors were also caught trying to drive into the park and told not to. Their response was that they had driven in earlier during set up and that they should also be allowed to drive in during tear down. They were told more than once, including at the on-site meeting, that they were not allowed to bring private vehicles into the park.

Chair Freeburg said there is a huge liability involved with driving private vehicles into the park while it is open. Chad Charbonneau added that Saturday nights Downtown Park is extremely full of people, making the risk to pedestrians quite high.

❖ Comments / Follow-Up – None

7. NEXT MEETING

❖ October 12, 2023

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Freeburg adjourned the meeting at 9:41 a.m.