



# City of Bellingham Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission

December 16, 2009

The Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission meeting was called to order by Linda Stewart at 6:30 p.m.

## DRAFT MINUTES

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**Attendance: Unless noted below, all were in attendance**

**Absent: Roosevelt, South, Alabama Hill, Mt. Baker**

**Guests:** Ashley Fullenwider, former BPAC member; Carol Berry, former BPAC and current Transportation Commission member; Therese Kelliher, former BPAC and current Transportation Commission member; Kim Brown, Public Works staff; Kym Fedale, Public Works staff; Heather Higgins Aanes, Public Works staff; Louise Bjornson, City Councilmember; Laverne Lamoureux and Bob Putich, US Census Bureau

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### November Minutes

Approved as amended:

York – Requested and submitted language for adjustment to record of statement.

Samish – Suggested alternate language stating that permits are public info so therefore it is MNAC's right to receive that information.

South Hill – requested and submitted language for adjustment to record of statement.

Staff will follow up on question from Silver Beach about filing taxes/forms.

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### Follow Ups:

- **Permit Info** – Sign-up sheet was distributed, for those wanting to receive permitting information on behalf of their neighborhood associations. Email addresses will be added to the larger distribution list of those already receiving this information on a regular basis. The list will be in the form of electronic updates, not sorted by neighborhood.
- **Utility Bill Inserts** – The question was whether information could be included in utility bill inserts, encouraging people to become active in neighborhood associations. Internal research indicates that inserts create additional waste, and are not a cost-effective communication tool. The city can investigate other ways to help neighborhoods communicate. Let staff know if you have ideas.
- **Neighborhood Association Info** – Still collecting information, in response to South Hill's question about attendance at general meetings and positions on boards. Still waiting to hear back from some neighborhoods. Information HAS BEEN received from: Edgemoor, South Hill, York, Guide Meridian/ Cordata, Puget, Birchwood, Silver Beach, Lettered Streets, Samish, South. If your neighborhood is not listed, please forward your information ASAP to staff at [tlewis@cob.org](mailto:tlewis@cob.org).
- Michael Lilliquist's last meeting, group thanked him for service to MNAC.

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**BPAC Advisory Committee Presentation** – Therese Kelliher, former member of BPAC, newly appointed to Transportation Commission (*Additional information attached to meeting notes.*) BPAC existed for 17 years; providing report to MNAC to see projects for each neighborhood; identified barriers to mobility; BPAC observed how people used space; BPAC provided input to last comp plan and submitting project list again to Public Works for inclusion in next comp plan update. BPAC has terminated and Transportation Commission will take over that work in some way.

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**Public Works Communication** - Heather Higgins Aanes, Public Works Communications & Education Coordinator

Two primary ways to communicate between city and neighborhoods on public works topics are through formal notifications to neighborhoods and the community and via education and dialogue. Contact Heather for questions or information, [hhiggins-aanes@cob.org](mailto:hhiggins-aanes@cob.org)

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**Stormwater Program Overview** - Kym Fedale, Environmental Educator

Project DX is a web-based program for residents who want to access information about stormwater and lists of projects that homeowners can do to help with stormwater management; will provide cost information, benefits, etc.; all property information is public. (*Additional information in attachments to meeting notes.*)

Benefit to City – 1) environmental benefits, 2) TMDL study – need to reduce phosphorus & fecal coliform in the lake, 3) will provide city with information, 4) education of public

Asking MNAC reps to help recruit neighborhood participants for focus group/ information sessions, to be held **1/26/10, 4-5:30 pm AND 6-7:30 pm**, City's Computer IT Training Room in lower level of the Municipal Court Building; these will be "hands on use of program" focus groups; Bellingham would be the first smaller city to do program; Seattle & Portland just launched; previewed some of the Portland website pages; Portland has some incentive programs built in and Bellingham will look at possibilities for incentives; asking that MNAC members or someone from their neighborhood attend focus group session, to help city build an approach that fits local needs.

Q about cost – launch and first year approx \$50K.

Incentive suggestion - reduce stormwater fees on bills.

Q about translate to mixed use neighborhood - changes would be up to property manager.

Q about Silver Beach - specific issues w/ stormwater and requested that the website needs to be user friendly, especially for people who don't use computers frequently.

Q - probably want average user to attend focus group and level of expertise needed; staff will work with program developers and send out more info, can also send questions and feedback to Kym at [kfedale@cob.org](mailto:kfedale@cob.org)

Neighborhood presentations can be arranged; contact staff.

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**Census Bureau 2010 Census** – Laverne Lamoureux, Bob Putich, U.S. Census Bureau

Asking for participation and help in getting neighborhoods' participation in 2010 Census; counting everyone that lives in your area has direct impact on federal dollars that come back to community; also affects representation and number of elected offices; in 2000, Whatcom County's participation rate was only 64%; census information is not made available to any other government agency; data collected stays with Census Bureau; census staff went around to neighborhoods w/ GPS in spring to verify addresses.

Forms will be mailed in March, with one mailed follow-up form, a letter, then a follow up visit.

Census workers all have identification; will never enter a residence or ask for social security number. Census bureau kiosks going up around town.

March 19 - April 19 – staffing Q&A site.

Q – homeless count? A - working w/ local nonprofits and shelters on three dates – March 29, 30, 31 – Census workers will work with homeless coalitions to count the homeless; work with volunteers more familiar w/ homeless populations to conduct counts.

April 1<sup>st</sup> is census day.

Q – what about citizenship? A – undocumented workers are residents; census is not to determine whether someone is a citizen.

Laverne & Bob can attend neighborhood meetings to present information – contact:

[laverne.m.lamoureux@census.gov](mailto:laverne.m.lamoureux@census.gov)

[robert.putich.2010@gmail.com](mailto:robert.putich.2010@gmail.com)

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**Member requests for time** – none

Staff - any interest in having retreat for 2010? (no response)

South Hill – wants to brainstorm for what people would like MNAC to do?

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**Neighborhood Roundtable –**

**Columbia** – hosted “Friends of the Homeless” group at neighborhood association meeting; Friends of the Homeless want to talk to neighborhood groups, to educate people about homeless issues. *(Additional information attached to meeting notes.)*

Brief discussion about homelessness.

**Edgemoor** – nothing to report.

**Birchwood** – Plan update approved; participation in meetings is increasing; board members doubled; attributed to development in the neighborhood.

**York** – successful sleigh ride; Chris Koch from planning will attend January meeting to present on plan.

**Sehome** – nothing to report.

**Lettered Streets** – Potluck in January; asked who gets block watch newsletter from police department and who would like to receive it.

*(Staff working with Officer Kat Dearborn to send the newsletters to neighborhood reps when distributed.)*

**Cornwall Park** – fundraiser concert for Broadway Youth Center was successful; Katie Franks attended last meeting to discuss Fountain Urban Village next steps; most students in neighborhood attend Whatcom Middle School students and some parents have formed group to discuss where students will go in the future, during rebuild they plan to also invite other neighborhoods into the discussion.

**Happy Valley** – annual tree planting in November was not as good this year because of lack of money from City; will do big planting at Connelly Creek park in spring; good relationship with church continues, holding monthly community meals at church. (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, 5-7)

**Silver Beach** – held elections but still missing secretary; in January they will reintroduce their plan; weekly email announcements compiling info from City are getting positive response.

**WWU/ AS Board** - approved resolution of gender-inclusive housing option in dorms; gender-neutral dorms; will accommodate transgender students or those who feel more comfortable living w/ opposite sex; students gone for holidays.

**Samish** – nothing to report.

**Guide Meridian/ Cordata** – working w/a couple developers.

**Puget** – no negative issues; started newsletter; looking for ways to distribute.

**Fairhaven** – annual holiday party had good turnout; problem w/ good turnout at parties but not at regular meetings.

Q- how to turn members into paying members? A – Fairhaven doesn't collect dues.

Columbia gets businesses to join, and offer neighborhood residents discount.

**Downtown** – free parking downtown during lunch hour.

**South Hill** – Louise Bjornson was guest speaker at November general meeting and talked about value of neighborhood associations; kicking off a year-long discussion; want to create neighborhood sign, working on Lowell Playground, home tour, building height & bulk, creating blockwatch program and board development; need to change bylaws.

**Staff Update –**

Staff reiterated that neighborhood associations are independent nonprofits, with relationship with the city but can establish own priorities and use their own resources as they see fit (with neighborhood association board approval).

City budget was approved on 12/14/09; turned back 50% of support services allocation for last two years; due to combination of that and severe financial challenges with the city budget funding has been reduced to approximately \$500 per neighborhood in 2010; will continue to pay insurance premium, at least through August, 2011.

Small and Simple Grant program went away for 2010; \$10,000 from that fund will go to support community garden efforts, with details still in development; more information will be provided when available, likely after first of the year.

**2009 Successes & 2010 Brainstorming for MNAC –**

People want help in how to make vibrant neighborhood association, share ideas for increased participation, funding, outreach.

Need workshops to how to recruit for better participation in neighborhood association meetings.

Need help filling out paperwork for IRS; can someone present to MNAC?

2009 success is process for reviewing items for Planning Commission, like to see that continue.

Don't send out neighborhood newsletters by mail; compile into electronic format; it's hard to get people to attend neighborhood meetings unless there is a good speaker on community issues.

Can there be a clearing house on neighborhood speakers? Share info w/ other neighborhoods.

Discussed MNAC's charge; process of reviewing plans to planning commission; not sure how effective that is.

South Hill noted that MNAC support was good to have for their plan amendment update.

Planning Commission has said info from MNAC is not timely and MNAC doesn't have planning committee for 2010.

Committee spent a lot of energy on docketing issue and final docketing decision moved out of Planning Commission to City Council.

BMC should probably be changed; it is one of MNAC's mandates, but are they doing any good?

Sehome placed authority into hands of committee to be able to respond quickly to PC & Council.

Issue of notification timelines; neighborhoods need time to meet and discuss issues; is there a way for MNAC to address issue.

Guide Meridian/Cordata noted that material given to Planning Commission and Council from sub-committee didn't come before the neighborhood association.

Staff - Continue review of comp plan amendment proposals?

***Motion to continue reviewing comp plan amendments via a subcommittee and use same screening criteria as 2009.***

**Second**

**Motion passed.**

Discussed process that subcommittee put together in 2009 (same approach in 2010)

MNAC members select and prioritize amendments to review based upon the following criterion:

§ Impact to region surrounding the neighborhood or impact city-wide.

§ Believed to set a precedent.

§ Amendment is "interesting" for some special reason.

Nominations and their supporting reasons are heard in brief. MNAC members cast first vote on nominations for review, with simple majority accepted on a nomination by nomination basis.

Remaining nominations are prioritized by simple voting process to be determined.

MNAC should determine the number of proposals that the commission has time to review, based upon the size and complexity of the amendment applications.

Subcommittee:

Howard Steiner, Greg McCracken, John Erickson, Kate Grinde, potential alt from South Hill

Time will be placed on January MNAC meeting agenda. Committee can send info to staff (Linda) and she will forward to MNAC.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.