Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission
City of Bellingham

September 15, 2021
Remote Meeting [video timestamps noted in brackets]

Call to Order
Meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Mayor Seth Fleetwood

Attendance
Present: Tom Dohman (Samish), Steven James (Puget), Jake Charlton (Happy Valley), Jennifer Moon (Columbia), Brooks Anderson (Fairhaven), Molly Foote (Samish), Kathyrn Rismondo (Lettered Streets), Dean Haskins (Alabama Hill), Louise Bjornson (Birchwood), Alexarc Mastema (Sunnyland), Barbara Ryan (Edgemoor), Sheryl Russell (City Center), William Beer (Edgemoor Alternate), Bobbie Vollendorff (Happy Valley), Christopher Grannis (South), Irena Lambrou (South), Nick Kelly (Cornwall Park), Robin Thomas (Sehome), Sarah Birch (Lettered Streets), Michael Chrzastowski (South Hill Alternate), Julia Burns (WWU)

Guests: Shu-Ling Zhao, Chuckanut Health Foundation; Kristina Michelle Martens, Chuckanut Health Foundation; Heather Flaherty, Chuckanut Health Foundation

City Representatives: Mayor Seth Fleetwood; Janice Keller, Communications Director; Don Almer, Bellingham Police Department Deputy Police Chief

MINUTES

Presentation on Law Enforcement Legislation [00:08:12]
Don Almer, Deputy Police Chief, Bellingham Police Department

Don Almer presented on the new legislation regarding law enforcement that came out of the Washington State 2021 Legislative session.

- Nearly 100 bills that were passed touched law enforcement in some way, but most people are focusing on 13 of them. Because it is open to interpretation, different agencies are handling it differently.
- Bellingham Police Department is already in compliance with many of these. Use of force is low for BPD compared to other agencies of similar size in the state.
- House Bill 1054 and House Bill 1310 has changed what responses look like. There is more of a focus on de-escalation, which has caused some delay in response. The Bellingham Fire Department is taking on more calls due to this.
- 2022 legislative session should clarify some of the bills that are more open to interpretation.
- MNAC Members had questions and comments on a variety of topics including: what it means to be an accredited agency, how many open positions there are at the BPD, who can own a 50 caliber weapon, safety training for Bellingham Fire Department, changes in the biennial budget for the police department, and the nationwide difficulties with hiring officers

Presentation on Whatcom Racial Equity Commission development process [00:38:00]
Heather Flaherty, Chuckanut Health Foundation; Shu-Ling Zhao, Chuckanut Health Foundation; Kristina Michelle Martens, Chuckanut Health Foundation

- Shu-Ling Zhao presented on the importance of the formation of a Whatcom Racial Equity Commission beginning with the history of racism in Whatcom County. This commission would convene multiple groups in the community to work on tackling institutional racism. She described the diversity of the members of the working group and what they are working towards.
- The vision for the work group is "People of all races in Whatcom County live, thrive, and belong for who they are, as they are. Without fear. Every day."
- MNAC Members had questions and comments about the following topics: reaching out/partnering with Whatcom Community College, how homeless folks factor into the mission statement, and the hope that this will be shared with the Bellingham school district
- This group hopes to have recommendations to bring forward to the County and the City for review in the next two months.

Future Topics Brainstorming [01:11:16]

The following topics were brought up for discussion at future MNAC meetings:

- Mediation sources or training for conflicts between neighbors
- Winter Shelter Plans
- Making the City website more usable for citizens
- Neighborhood listening session

Neighborhood Round Table [01:24:45]

- **Fairhaven**
  Last meeting was full of people. Lots of distrust between the neighborhood and the City. A collaboration between Fairhaven neighbors and the Fairhaven Historic Society began.
- **Alabama Hill**
  Time Yielded
- **Sunnyland**
  Board elections will be held in November and February
- **Puget**
  Meeting scheduled for the 21st. The Lakeway-Lincoln traffic study will be presented. Anxiously awaiting the results of City View.
- **Birchwood**
  Birchwood International Market will be this Friday from 6-9
- **City Center**
  Don Almer presented at the last meeting. Downtown Sounds just finished up. Starting to gear up for the holiday celebrations.

- **Columbia**
  New people attended the meeting in August, mainly due to the traffic accident at Eldridge. Chalk Festival was held over the Independence Day weekend and was successful.
- **Edgemoor**
  William Beer is the new alternate for the Edgemoor neighborhood. Neighborhood is interested in more traffic calming.
- **Happy Valley**
  Big meeting last night with lots of new ideas. There will be a fundraiser for street trees on October 9th
- **South**
  Had a great meeting last month.
- **King Mountain**
  Time yielded
- **Cornwall Park**
  Learning about the hospital's new expansion plans, they will be presenting at the October 12th meeting.
- **Sehome**
  Successful revitalization of the Liberty Street garage sale. Some of the worst move-out dumping occurred. Interested in exploring ways the city can enforce it. Next meeting will be on October 5th.
- **Lettered Streets**
  Neighbors have concerns about crossing Girard Street and how to request a crosswalk.
- **South Hill**
  Main issue is the container ships in Bellingham Bay and the noise they cause.
    - Mayor Fleetwood will follow up with the DNR about this
- **WWU**
  WWU recognizes that the street furniture during move-out was worse this year. Coast Salish Longhouse will be in the Sehome Arboretum. 2/3 of courses at WWU will be held in person. Taste of Bellingham is a new event for students to be introduced to Bellingham.
- **Samish**
  Picnic cancelled due to covid numbers. Also concerned about the City View project. Northwest Youth Services is working on a home for homeless youth.

Meeting adjourned by Mayor Seth Fleetwood at 8:42 p.m.