



Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission City of Bellingham

April 16, 2025
Hybrid Meeting

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mayor Lund.

Attendance

Neighborhood Representatives: Chelsea Bodamer (Barkley); Louise Bjornson (Birchwood Rep.); Mary Lou White (Birchwood Alt.); Lindsey Payne Johnstone (City Center Rep.); Greg Hope (Columbia Alt.); Jasmine Fast (Cordata Rep.); Carolyn Whipple (Cornwall Alt.); Bill Beer (Edgemoor Rep.); Jan Dietzgen (Fairhaven Rep.); Alex McLean (Happy Valley Alt.); Bri O'Hare (Lettered Streets Rep.); Lauren Bunke (Roosevelt Rep.); Barbara June (Samish Alt.); Robin Thomas (Sehome Rep.); Kerri Burnside (Silver Beach Rep.); Steve Wilson (South Bellingham Alt.); Michael Chrzastowski (South Hill Rep.); Annie Sorich (Sunnyland Rep.); Chris Roselli (WWU Co-Chair); Stella Keating (WWU Co-Chair); Elan Engel (York Alt.)

City Representatives: Mayor Kim Lund; Janice Keller, Deputy Administrator

MINUTES

Review of February 2025 Meeting Minutes

- February's minutes were not ready for review at this time.

Opening Comments

- Mayor Lund reported that the City has been awarded \$1.7 million from the Northwest Clean Air Agency. The City proposed a community solar array project, and the grant was chosen by the panel to receive the funds. The project is estimated to offset the power needs of 100 homes and by putting energy back into the grid, would generate about \$70,000 annually, which would be put forward to other climate projects in the future. The site analysis is currently underway.
- Mayor Lund shared that the City kicked off the first meeting for the World Cup Fan Zone planning in conjunction with the Downtown Bellingham Partnership, Whatcom County Tourism, and the Court.
- Mayor Lund informed the group that there are upcoming Earth Day volunteer opportunities that are all listed on the website at cob.org/news.
- Mayor Lund invited everyone to attend the grand opening of the Little Squalicum Pier on Saturday, April 26 at 3:00 p.m.
- Mayor Lund said that the legislative session is wrapping up, and one of the City's top priorities is making sure that there will be funding to continue with the cleanup of the Cornwall landfill and the RJ Haley sites, and right now, that might not be the case. A letter has been sent to the representatives imploring them to find a way to fund the project since the City is under contract with Ecology with a 120-day window, so the City is digging deep to try to get that across the finish line.
- Mayor Lund said the inaugural meeting occurred for the Keep Washington Working Act group, and the group discussed what information is and isn't being shared with Border and Immigration Enforcement while making sure they're in compliance with Washington state law.
- Mayor Lund gave an update on the current department director recruitments.
- Mayor Lund said there are three different ordinances that are impacting the City's budget right now, and the first quarterly adjustment to the budget shows a \$1.8 million net reduction in the general fund reserves, which

will require a mandatory plan to reduce spending and increase reserves, and all departments have been tasked with finding what can be cut within their department.

- Mayor Lund said she's been approached by community members asking about Post Point emission standards, and the City is moving forward with a new emissions reduction system that will make sure that we're coming into compliance with our incinerators.
- Mayor Lund encouraged everyone to look through the new Playbook for Spring/Summer – it's the largest one yet with lots of recreation and educational opportunities for everyone.

Neighborhood Roundtable

- Alex McLean (Happy Valley) reported they recently had a couple of neighborhood work parties and students from Western are going to install bat boxes to help with their pollinator garden. The neighborhood is completing their trees grant, totaling 62 trees. He said yesterday he walked with Mayor Lund around a development site that some of the neighbors are concerned about, and they got to see the new 27th Street right-of-way trail.
- Michael Chrzastowski (South Hill) said they've been communicating with their colleagues from the Fairhaven neighborhood to discuss the future soil remediation effort at the Fairhaven Shipyard.
- Lindsey Payne Johnstone (City Center) informed the group that the Downtown Bellingham Partnership just kicked off their strategic planning and they have a resident survey that is circulating right now, and if anyone is interested in taking the survey or seeing the results, please let her know. They are hosting a neighborhood meeting at Boundary Bay on May 7 from 5:30-7:00 p.m. in conjunction with the Mayor. Upcoming events: Spring Wine Walk, Spring Fest at Maritime Heritage Park, Procession of the Species, and Downtown Sounds, among other things. The beautification and activation projects that Paper Whale is leading are about to be installed as well.
- Jasmine Fast (Cordata) said their next game day will be this Saturday at the Cordata Park Pavilion from 3-5 p.m. Their Summer Bash is planned for July 19 at the Cordata Park Pavilion.
- Jan Dietzgen (Fairhaven) said at their last neighborhood meeting they talked about their plant and tree sale, which did very well. Their vice president talked about the City's tree ordinance and reported that Whatcom Million Trees dispersed 300-400 trees to residents. She reported that the neighborhood will be planning a party for Unity Village, the tiny home village, since they'll be moving locations soon.
- Robin Thomas (Sehome) reported the association is working on a Sehome Guide and will provide a copy to the group for their input. There is a new building proposal which is the neighborhood's first with the new elimination of parking requirements. York and Sehome are doing a joint potluck/fair to celebrate the new Harriet Spanel sign that York has created for Harriet Spanel Park. There was an application for a variance for a detached unit that the owners want to use for a short-term rental, but the City has an ordinance against that and the owner has contested it. The neighborhood will be having an Easter egg hunt. Robin also commented that she would be happy to bring "Red Cards" to the next meeting, which are "know your rights" cards to share with others.
- Louise Bjornson (Birchwood) said the neighborhood is going to have their international market again this year on July 13 and August 10. Storybrook Park is moving forward and will have a food forest in the park. She said it's important to remember as we plan our city to save room for gardens that will provide food for families.
- Steve Wilson (South Bellingham) reported that the Chuckanut Center donated over 1,000 pounds of food to the Food Bank last year. He said the neighborhood association is following the development at 331 Chuckanut Drive North. He mentioned that he had talked with other neighborhood associations about the Comprehensive Plan and how the neighborhood plans are incorporated into it. Janice said there was a presentation planned for this meeting on that topic, but it had to be postponed, likely to the May meeting. Steve also reported that there are quarterly work parties organized by the Parks Department happening in the Hundred Acre Wood that are well attended, and the results have been

amazing. Mayor Lund commented the last Greenways levy has allowed the Parks Department to put funding towards volunteer coordination staff and programs, and the turnout has been remarkable.

- Bill Beer (Edgemoor) reported that the association has been working on last year's website. He also asked about the status of the grant money, which Janice said will be extended for 2025.
- Chelsea Bodamer (Barkley) said Mallorei Roe is leading the neighborhood association and so far, it's a small group. She's looking into their 501(c)(3) and code of ethics and asked the group if anyone has any recommendations for how to recruit members.
- Greg Hope (Columbia) said that on May 4 they'll have a grand opening of the "Share Shack" and a committee has taken on the operation of it. Each month during the summer they have events planned for it. On June 14 will be the neighborhood garage sale, which will be publicized on a Google map. They are tentatively planning an event for July 4 in Elizabeth Park. He wanted to remind everyone that the Elizabeth Park concert series will be starting on June 19, and will be on Thursdays from 6:00-8:00 p.m. He also said the new Columbia neighborhood signs have been installed.
- Barbara June (Samish) said the association presented their neighborhood vision for the corridor between Lake Whatcom and Lake Padden to the Parks Department and Greenways Advisory Committee but have not received any feedback yet.
- Elan Engel (York) said they have their "Dumpster Day" in front of Nelson's Market on June 28, and the York Yard Crawl in July.
- Annie Sorich (Sunnyland) said their annual Earth Day event is coming up on Saturday in Sunnyland Park which includes a plant and seed swap, kids' activities, a raffle with gifts and native plants as giveaways. Their neighborhood yard sale will be on June 21. She also wanted to mention Memorial Park, which sometimes may be overlooked if people don't live in the neighborhood, but they used Small & Simple Grant funds a couple years ago to plant daffodil bulbs, so it looks really pretty right now.
- Carolyn Whipple (Cornwall) said that the Whatcom County Historical Society moved into the Roeder Home, so they'll be collaborating with them on a few events. The association is starting to plan their annual picnic which will happen in September. They are strongly advocating for a blinking crosswalk across Cornwall at Broadway, and they're in communication with Public Works.
- Stella Keating (WWU) said that student elections are happening right now, and she is organizing Local Action Week, which includes three big events.
- Chris Roselli (WWU) shared that the last two weekends were their admitted student days, where they invited everyone who was recently accepted to WWU to come to Bellingham where they roll out the red carpet and show them around. He also mentioned that May 14 at 6:00 p.m. is Asian Pacific Islander Desi American Heritage Day, which will be celebrated at Whatcom Community College and is in collaboration with the City, all the higher-ed partners, Bellingham Public Schools, Peace Health, Whatcom Health Department. On May 14 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on campus will be the 25th annual Scholar's Week, where hundreds of posters will be on display about students' work. He is creating the "Community Current" newsletter, which will be distributed quarterly and will be sharing with community leaders, including the MNAC group. The House of Healing Longhouse is still under construction but will be open at the beginning of the coming school year. He also encouraged everyone to come watch the Vikings softball games which are free, and the team is currently ranked 11th in the nation.
- Bri O'Hare (Lettered Streets) mentioned that the neighborhood association had several guests join their last meeting to talk about the Lighthouse Mission, which was very informative, and she encouraged all neighborhood associations to reach out if they'd like to receive the information or invite the guests to speak at their meetings. She said they still have a lot of board position vacancies. The neighborhood sign is in progress, and they've been working with the Arts Commission.
- Lauren Bunke (Roosevelt) reported that they're trying to reboot their neighborhood association and work on collaborating with other associations on outreach.

- Mary Lou White (Birchwood) said she talked to some of the business managers in the neighborhood, and they're very happy about the reduction in people camping out on their property, but they said there are groups that pass out food and clothing, which concerns them that it will draw in more people, so they're wondering if it can be done at the Food Bank instead. She said everyone is very happy about the new pier at Little Squalicum and commented that it would be nice if it was off leash since the park is. She asked if the Mayor could help provide a guide for land use appeals for the Superior Court when representing yourself. She heard that Fairhaven recently had train whistles eliminated and asked about the process for getting that for the Birchwood neighborhood as well. She mentioned that she won't be at the MNAC meeting in May, but she has some concerns about the Comprehensive Plan and would appreciate it if the City would let the neighborhoods know what changes are being made to the plan. Janice mentioned that these meetings are recorded, and she would be happy to share the recording with her. Mayor Lund commented that the City has plans to keep rolling out quiet crossings all along the waterfront.
- Kerri Burnside (Silver Beach) said the neighborhood is working on a project to track deer that have been hit by vehicles, and they're planning to put signs up in the most common areas, so if any neighborhoods also want to order signs, please let her know, and she'll also send out an email with additional information. They had a guest at their last neighborhood meeting from Scouts of America, and the Dispute Resolution Center also presented and are open to presenting to other neighborhood associations.

Closing Comments:

The meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

The next meeting is May 21, 2025.