



Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission City of Bellingham

June 18, 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 Rep.); Louise Bjornson (Birchwood Rep.); Mary Lou White (Birchwood Alt.); Greg Hope (Columbia Alt.); Jasmine Fast (Cordata Rep.); Nick Kelly (Cornwall Rep.); William Beer (Edgemoor Rep.); Jan Dietzgen (Fairhaven Rep.); Jake Charlton (Happy Valley Rep.); Alex McLean (Happy Valley Alt.); Jane Campbell (King Mountain Alt.); Kevin Jenkins (Puget Rep.); Lauren Bunke (Roosevelt Rep.); Barbara June (Samish Alt.); Robin Thomas (Sehome Rep.); Kerri Burnside (Silver Beach Rep.); Jessica Orr (South Rep.); Michael Chrzastowski (South Hill Rep.); Elan Engel (York Alt.)

City Representatives: Mayor Kim Lund; Janice Keller, Deputy Administrator; Kate Bemis, Executive Administrative Assistant

Guest Speaker: Mia Gover, Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center

Guests: Chris Caldwell (Fairhaven Association); Chelsea Campbell (King Mountain); Selene Etheredge; Brian Gass; Amanda Smith

MINUTES

Review of January, February, April, and May Meeting Minutes

- A motion was made to approve the January, February, April, and May minutes and the motion was seconded.

Opening Comments

- Mayor Lund shared that there will be another presentation by City staff at the next City Council meeting (June 23rd) which will be continuing the dialogue about changes regarding neighborhood plans and the comprehensive plan. The presentation will be during the committee meetings, which are during the day, so the recordings can usually be accessed the following day.
- Mayor Lund explained that there are two new chapters in the comprehensive plan: Climate Action and Wellbeing & Civic Practices, which can be viewed on the [Engage Bellingham website](#) where community members can also leave feedback.
- Mayor Lund mentioned that the Parks & Recreation Open Space plan (PROS plan) is currently being updated and is available for review and public comment. It's a 20-year document that is updated every six years.
- Mayor Lund spoke about the budget cuts that the city is undergoing, which is also happening at the state, county and local level as well. She has been holding quarterly 'Ask Me Anything' sessions with all City staff to ensure transparency about where we're at as a city. Every department in the City, including Police and Fire, have been asked to through two different reduction scenarios for 2026: 5% and 10% reductions. The 2025 budget was a 6% reduction (Police and Fire were exempted) and all vacant positions are being reviewed before filling, with some positions being frozen.

- The Keep Washington Working Act work group just had their third meeting, where they had a great presentation from Justin Rasmussen, acting director of the What-Comm 911 center. The work group has been invited to spend time at the call center to see what kind of calls come in, how they are dispatched, and ask questions about the process.
- The packet for City Council's meeting on June 23rd has been published and can be viewed online. Mayor Lund introduced Selene Etheredge, a trans activist and member of the community. Council is moving forward on an anti-discrimination ordinance in support of the trans community, which is a continuation of the resolution that Council passed earlier this month and will create a new chapter in the Bellingham Municipal Code. Jake Charlton (Happy Valley Rep.) commented that he feels there are some changes needed on the draft ordinance, and Mayor Lund encouraged him to send it in writing to Council for consideration during the review and revision process.
- Mayor Lund commented that she and Janice were at the incident room at the police station during the No Kings protest helping coordinate City resources and ensure safety for all participants. Because so many things feel heavy right now, she emphasized the need for levity and connection, which is why a summer social is being planned for the group.

Mia Gover, Housing Stability Program Coordinator, Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center

- Mia provided some background information on the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center and their services. They offer conflict resolution services at no cost to clients for any kind of conflict related to housing, neighbors, roommates, or situations that could result in someone becoming unhoused. They are a neutral third party and don't make any decisions, but they help facilitate respectful and productive conversations. They give clients the opportunity to have the discussion recorded on a settlement agreement form, which, once signed, is considered evidence of a personal contract between the parties, but anything else that was discussed verbally is confidential and cannot be shared in court or otherwise, and clients may choose to leave the conversation at any time.
- They also offer presentations (both in person or virtual) to groups or community members – they recently presented to the Sehome Neighborhood Association, the Silver Beach Neighborhood Association, and the Birch Bay Chamber of Commerce. They also offer conflict skills training to community groups.
- Email: housing@whatcomdrc.org
- Kerri Burnside (Silver Beach Rep.) said Silver Beach neighborhood recently hosted WDRC, and highly recommended other neighborhoods take advantage of their services. She also asked about how the WDRC interacts with HOAs.
- Mia explained that one or two residents who wish to have a mediated conversation with an HOA would be covered by their services; however, if an HOA group is looking for a facilitated discussion, it would most likely fall under their facilitation program, which does have a fee schedule, but they offer a sliding scale.

Other Updates

- Mayor Lund said that after the last MNAC meeting, she and Janice received feedback from a few members regarding the opportunity to speak during these meetings. She wanted to remind everyone that she and Janice do their best to serve as facilitators so that there's an opportunity for every member's voice to be heard.
 - Mayor Lund announced the July MNAC meeting will be cancelled due to technology and furniture updates in the Mayor's Office suite.
 - Janice announced that there will be an MNAC field trip in August and a social event in September. Mayor Lund said she welcomes any suggestions for field trip ideas.
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Neighborhood Roundtable

- Louise Bjornson, Birchwood Rep.
 - o The next international market will be on Sunday, August 10th.
 - o Regarding the topic of changes to neighborhood plans, Louise wants to make sure there will still be room for kids to play and room for produce gardens to help feed our communities.
 - o Mayor Lund commented that the planning director offered to do a tour in the Lettered Streets so MNAC members can see how multi-family zoning looks in single family neighborhoods.
- Barbara June, Samish Alt.
 - o The annual Samish neighborhood picnic will be on Sunday, August 24th from 12-2pm at Lake Padden.
- Robin Thomas, Sehome Rep.
 - o Public Works has posted a map and description of pedestrian and bike improvement projects for 2025, and she and her neighbors are excited about the flashing beacon upgrades in their neighborhood.
 - o Next to WECU on Holly, a historic building is slated to be demolished for WECU's drive through. She is concerned about losing many historic homes and how the new comprehensive plan will affect that.
- Jake Charlton, Happy Valley Rep.
 - o Happy Valley is continuing to host community meals every third Sunday, and periodically they host the 21st & Larrabee right-of-way cleanup parties.
- Alex McLean, Happy Valley Alt.
 - o David Stalheim, a former county planning director and current member of the Whatcom Environmental Council, was invited to their neighborhood meeting last week to share his story map depicting the Samish Crest corridor between Whatcom Falls Park and Lake Padden Park.
- Jessica Orr, South Rep.
 - o No updates.
- Kevin Jenkins, Puget Rep.
 - o No updates.
- Kerri Burnside, Silver Beach Rep.
 - o It was a hot weekend the weekend before last, and with two busy parks on Lake Whatcom, it brought a lot of traffic. She's hoping to encourage people to use the bus, which has a stop right at Bloedel Donovan Park.
 - o Regarding Chapter 9 for the Silver Beach neighborhood plan, she would like some direction on those items and some assistance from the City for maintaining the goals for restoring Lake Whatcom.
 - o She said historically the City's monthly finance reports have been listed on the website, however there are none for 2025, so she asked about the availability of those. Mayor Lund said she will check with the Finance Director.
 - o Kerri wanted to echo the ask that we look at how changes in our housing policies are impacting rentals and track the results. Mayor Lund commented that Troy Muljat tracks that for business and commerce, and his recent presentation actually showed some rent stabilization.
- Michael Chrzastowski, South Hill Rep.
 - o Michael commended the City for the improvements on 12th St & Finnegan Way, along with the contractors for managing traffic so well.
 - o Michael mentioned he recently had a long-lost friend contact him, and he found out his contact information was on the MNAC website. He requested to have personal information removed from the City's website. Kate Bemis explained that she recently made modifications to the roster posted on the website, and all member contact information has been removed for

privacy reasons. Neighborhood association websites are listed on the roster, and a contact list can be provided to MNAC members whenever requested so they can connect with each other.

- Michael also mentioned that he is pleased about the Wharf St land purchase by City, which will be a wonderful connector on the South Bay Trail to the future Salish Landing Park. Mayor Lund reported the state was only able to fund a fraction of the environmental remediation work, but the City is permitted and ready to go, and the Port has been a very creative partner in the process, so we have found a pathway to begin the cleanup and move forward.

- Jane Campbell, King Mountain Alt.

- Jane wanted to pass on a huge thank you to the City and Public Works for the recent improvements to James Street. She mentioned that there are a few more things the neighbors are hoping to have installed: a school bus stop sign, a crosswalk with a beacon at James Street Estates, and speed limit signage on the northern portion of James Street.
- The large parcel of land near My Garden that the City bought in 2020 is in the beginning stages of planning for a park, and the Parks Department has reached out to the neighborhood association to set up a meeting about the planning process.
- She mentioned that fire prevention is on her mind as we head into summer and is a concern for the King Mountain neighborhood due to the wooded areas and the lack of water pressure in the neighborhood. Mayor Lund commented that Whatcom Million Trees has good resources on fire preparedness.

- Jasmine Fast, Cordata Rep.

- Cordata had their first concert which had over one hundred people in attendance. Their next event is July 12 where Wild Hearts will be playing at the Cordata Park Pavilion. July 19 will be their ice cream social, and The Walrus will be playing on August 9.
- Jasmine had a few suggestions for the upcoming MNAC field trip: the library, Woodstock Farm, the dispatch center, WTA, the jail, or a Good Time Girls tour.
- Mayor Lund commented that the library is receiving funding for refurbishment of the basement floor where the children's library is, and Janice mentioned that the Lee Memorial Lawn is also going to be receiving some upgrades.

- Lauren Bunke, Roosevelt Rep.

- Lauren reported that they still don't have an active neighborhood association, but a few interested people met with PSE on May 29, and they hosted an outreach program informing people about solar credits.
- Lauren is working with Annie from the Sunnyland neighborhood association to provide some outreach at their August picnic in order to see who might be interested in being on the Roosevelt board.

- Jan Dietzgen, Fairhaven Rep.

- Her neighbors have been working on communication and networking with each other, and they had a very successful work party to clean up some of the greenways.
- There will be a neighborhood picnic on August 24.

- William Beer, Edgemoor Rep.

- The neighborhood is awaiting a long overdue decision on the permitting process for the Jones development (38 acres) and they're anxious to know if they can get an environmental impact statement.
- The neighborhood association website has been rejuvenated, and there are volunteers maintaining the website and social media.
- They're planning for their annual meeting in September, and they're engaging with the local schools as well to plan some community work.

- They're looking into doing a neighborhood event for the south-side communities.
- Mary Lou White, Birchwood Alt.
 - The neighborhood garage sale is in the planning stages and will be this summer (date TBD.)
 - She wanted to introduce idea of possibly receiving a grant for CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) funding. She just went through the process, and for \$5,000 they were able to get 62 people CERT trained.
 - She brought up some concerns about affordable housing and the impacts on the neighborhoods.
 - Mayor Lund commented that staff worked with a consultant and presented some changes to the multifamily tax exemption to City Council and explained some of the complexity of the history of previous iterations of that exemption.
- Nick Kelly, Cornwall Park Rep.
 - Nick said that many members in his neighborhood are concerned about the tree trimming ("hacking") being done in several neighborhoods by Puget Sound Energy and is wondering if there's a possibility of the public to be able to have any say in how they are trimmed.
 - Jane Campbell (King Mountain Alt.) said most of these trees have been selected because they can withstand aggressive pruning, and in the majority of cases, trimming is not detrimental to the health of the tree.
- Greg Hope, Columbia Alt.
 - The Share Shack is back in business: July 6 will be a produce swap and there will be several more events throughout summer which are posted on the neighborhood website.
 - The July 4th celebration will be taking place at Elizabeth Park, which will include a bike parade, live music, field games, and a dessert contest.
- Chelsea Bodamer, Barkley Rep.
 - Malloreoy Roe is serving as the acting president of the neighborhood association as they try to get it up and running.
 - Chelsea attended the Safety Fair and handed out neighborhood flyers. She also spoke with the Talbot Group who manage Barkley Village, and they're eager to get involved, and mentioned sharing space for neighborhood meetings.
- Brian Gass, Real Estate Agent (guest)
 - He attended a Planning Commission meeting in February and saw a slide that bothered him about "exclusionary housing policy." He's concerned about middle housing only becoming rentals and believes some of the press releases from the City are disingenuous.
- Chris Caldwell, Fairhaven Association (guest)
 - Chris appreciates how responsive the city has been while they figure out the next few months in transition to a new director, and she wanted to give kudos to the Parks Dept for cleaning up Fairhaven Village Green in preparation for Fairhaven Outdoor Cinema.
- Elan Engel, York Alt.
 - York neighborhood is hosting their next Dumpster Day on June 28, which is where they bring a large dumpster into the neighborhood primarily for college kids who are moving out, rather than leaving couches and furniture on the sidewalks. The dumpster is paid for donations, and they usually have a Food Bank drive as well. July 26th will be the yard and garden crawl with a picnic and events in Harriet Spanel Park.
- Janice reminded everyone that the neighborhood reimbursement has been increased to \$1,000 per year for eligible expenses.
- Mayor Lund shared that the City will be participating in a table talk and drill at the Emergency Operations Center this fall regarding a wildfire scenario at Lake Padden Park.

Closing Comments:

Reminder: The July MNAC meeting has been cancelled, and there is a plan in the works for a field trip for the August meeting, and a social event for the September meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.