



Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission City of Bellingham

October 15, 2025

Hybrid Meeting

Call to Order

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

Attendance

Neighborhood Representatives: Katie Herson-Horvath (Birchwood Rep.); Mary Lou White (Birchwood Alt.); Lindsey Payne Johnstone (City Center Rep.); Deb Valentine (Columbia Rep.); Greg Hope (Columbia Alt.); Jasmine Fast (Cordata Rep.); Nick Kelly (Cornwall Rep.); Barbara Zielstra (Edgemoor Alt.); Jan Dietzgen (Fairhaven Rep.); Caroline Dietzgen (Fairhaven Alt.); Jake Charlton (Happy Valley Rep.); Bri O'Hare (Lettered Streets Rep.); Brian Russell (Lettered Streets Alt.); Lauren Bunke (Roosevelt Rep.); Stephanie Levine (Sehome Alt.); John Kane-Ronning (Silver Beach Rep.); Steve Wilson (South Alt.); Michael Chrzastowski (South Hill Rep.); Annie Sorich (Sunnyland Rep.); Stella Keating (WWU Co-Chair); Colin Beazley (York Rep.)

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

Guests: Dina Dickerson, Samish Neighborhood

MINUTES

Opening Comments and Updates

- Janice reminded everyone that Kate recently sent out an email about Open Government Training and asked everyone to review the options and complete the training prior to the next MNAC meeting on November 19.
- Janice shared that City boards, commissions, and advisory groups will be transitioning to Teams in the upcoming months instead of using Zoom for hybrid meetings, and ample time will be given for the notice and any training needed.
- Janice mentioned that the neighborhood roundtable process at meetings will be changing, and they'll be asking one person from each neighborhood to report in order to allow time for all neighborhoods to provide an update.
- Janice and Mayor Lund provided an update on Small and Simple Grants, which will be moving to the Whatcom Community Foundation via Project Neighborly, where applications/proposals will be reviewed and processed. Applications will be accepted starting later this month through mid-February, and grant awards will provide funds upfront, rather than as reimbursements as required with City processing. Janice will send out more information as soon as it's available.
- Mayor Lund shared that the Mayor's Office suite recently received a refresh (new paint, carpet, technology, and boardroom table and chairs) since the last update was in the 1980s. The refresh was planned for in the 2025 budget but was scaled way back considering the recent budget concerns.

Review of June Meeting Minutes

- A motion was made to approve the June minutes, and the motion was seconded.

City Budget Update

- Mayor Lund presented a slide show and update on the 2026 Proposed Budget, which was also presented to City Council at their September 29, 2025, Committee of the Whole meeting and can be viewed at cob.org/meetings. More information is also available at cob.org/budget.

National Preparedness Month & The Great WA Shakeout

- Greg Hope presented a slide show and information about Emergency Preparedness Outreach in the City of Bellingham. Greg reiterated that the City wants community members to be aware of local hazards and the impacts they can have and how to plan accordingly. His slide show can be viewed on the [Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission Meeting Materials webpage](#).

Neighborhood Roundtable

- Birchwood: Katie Herson-Horvath
 - o Katie reported that their fall elections are next month, and there are nine of eleven seats up for election at the same time. Their association is hoping to plan a couple more community events before the end of the year. Katie asked about budget-friendly meeting locations that other associations use, and Janice reminded everyone to utilize the Neighborhood Reimbursement Program (forms are located [here](#).)
- City Center: Lindsey Payne Johnstone
 - o Lindsey reported they have been working on strategic planning, which includes forming a residential group for downtown and she would like to have a downtown resident also be a representative for MNAC. She also mentioned that they are gearing up for their seasonal holiday campaign. She shared that a Bellingham company, Place, has moved downtown, and they have around 160 employees, (with the expectation of increasing to 300,) which has contributed to downtown businesses. She also reported that dog waste stations are going to be installed downtown soon. The Mayor commented that she recently attended the dedication of Setting Sun Alley, which is a new outdoor art gallery/installation and she and Lindsey both encouraged everyone to go take a look.
- Columbia: Deb Valentine
 - o Deb reported that their July 4th celebration in Elizabeth Park was very successful and a great day. The association sponsors the Share Shack, and they had events each Sunday of the month but it will be closing at the end of October due to weather. She also stated that most board members are leaving soon, so they're trying to engage more neighbors to join.
- Cordata: Jasmine Fast
 - o Jasmine reported they typically have over 70 attendees at each meeting, and they hold their meetings at Cordata Park Pavilion. Last month they had candidates for City Council, County Council, Port, and School Board present to the group. She suggested a possible waiver system for neighborhood associations to be able to hold meetings at City facilities free of charge. She also shared they also have many board members stepping down so they're trying to recruit more members.
- Edgemoor: Barbara Zielstra
 - o Barbara mentioned the biggest issue they've been dealing with is the Mud Bay estuary and proposed development of the cliffs. They're going forward with an appeal to the City for an environmental impact statement. Mayor Lund commented that the Hearing Examiner cases are coming up in January.
- Fairhaven: Jan Dietzgen
 - o Jan reported their treasurer took an emergency course and then presented it to the association members. She also mentioned they had a community yard sale in September, which was a hit.

- Happy Valley: Jake Charlton
 - o Jake reported that their August meeting was a community barbeque, and they raised \$1,750 as a donation to the Bellingham Food Bank. He mentioned there is construction happening at Mill Avenue and Connelly Creek and one person from the neighborhood association attended the Hearing Examiner's meeting about it. The Happy Valley Elementary School PTA created a program to reduce screen time for students, and Jake is trying to help with that. He also reported that their president, Alex McLean, is retiring so they're recruiting for a new president.
- Lettered Streets: Bri O'Hare
 - o Bri said they had an ice cream social in August, and their November meeting will be about emergency preparedness. They're also trying to recruit more participation at meetings and within the association. Bri is part of a group that meets with the Lighthouse Mission and Police Department, and she reported that the Mission has a behavioral health floor, but they have been unable to open it because they need a medical partner to get involved. She reported that Parkview Elementary, whose property borders Cornwall Park, doesn't have any green space for kids, so she's working with the principal on solutions. Bri also introduced Brian Russell, their new president and MNAC alternate representative.
- Roosevelt: Lauren Bunke
 - o Lauren reported they had a joint picnic with Sunnyland, which was a great event, and they've had other community events which has led to a lot of interest in forming a neighborhood association. They're going to be working on updating their website and contact information.
- Sehome: Stephanie Levine
 - o Stephanie commented that their association is fairly small right now but she's trying to find more ways to recruit members. She mentioned they had a yard sale in September, and they've been working on a neighborhood guide.
- Silver Beach: John Kane-Ronning
 - o John said they've also had a hard time with participation in the association. One issue he mentioned is the street crossing to the community beach on Northshore Avenue. The other issue he brought up is mountain bike traffic on Electric Avenue, which doesn't have a safety barrier for bikers or pedestrians, and the speed limit is 35mph. Mayor Lund commented that Public Works recently presented to City Council a proposal to make the default speed limit 20mph on residential roads and 30mph on about two-thirds of arterials, and the presentation will be shown to the MNAC group at their November meeting.
- South: Steve Wilson
 - o Steve reported they got right-of-way clearance from Public Works for people to be able to walk safely. He also reported that they're monitoring the development at 331 Chuckanut Drive North, which has a potential impact on the manufactured home park that's in the floodplain, as well as the residents on Iris Lane. He commented that there is a structure at Woodstock Farm that is about to disappear under the blackberries, so he'd like to start a conversation with Nicole Oliver, Parks Director, to see what can be done about it. He mentioned last weekend they had an apple festival at the Chuckanut Center and about 50 people attended. Chuckanut Center has a work party each month on Saturday mornings which has become a popular event, with about 20-40 attendees.
- South Hill: Michael Chrzastowski
 - o Michael reported that work begins tonight on the shoreline restoration at Boulevard Park, and most work will be done at night.

- Sunnyland: Annie Sorich
 - o Annie reported they had their August picnic as a joint event with Roosevelt neighborhood, as Lauren mentioned, and they had a neighborhood litter cleanup with support from Public Works where they picked up 200 pounds of trash around the neighborhood. She also mentioned they had a Pour It Forward event at Kulshan yesterday. They're also launching a new event called Bham Games which will be the 2nd Sunday of each month at Stemma West, will be open to everyone, and will feature board and tabletop games. She commented that St Sophia church is their new meeting place for neighborhood meetings.
- WWU: Stella Keating
 - o Stella reported that the WWU First Night Out had about 1,500 students in the procession to downtown, and an additional 1,500 students showed up on Railroad Ave, and the event was a huge revenue generator for local businesses. She thanked the Mayor for the City's support of the event. WWU recently had their Indigenous Peoples Day event at the Lummi Nation School, and the House of Healing will be open in May. She reported the current enrollment is about 14,600 students. This weekend is Fall Family Weekend, and they have about 2,300 people registered to attend. Western students have organized a No Kings Student Procession from WWU to the rally downtown. Lastly, she said they'll have a Voter Hub on November 4 which will include a forum for all the City Council candidates to present to students.
- York: Colin Beazley
 - o Colin mentioned over the summer they had the York Yard Crawl, the Dumpster Day with Western, and a joint picnic with Sehome neighborhood. They'll be hosting a "meet your board" event at Aslan, and in December they'll have their Caroling and Caring holiday party. He suggested a tip for other neighborhoods: they take donations of summer reading signs that parents post in their yards and repurpose them to post event signs for the neighborhood. He also thanked the City for the revitalization of planters on Lakeway and the mural under the overpass.

Closing Comments:

Reminder: The next meeting will be Wednesday, November 19.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.