



Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission City of Bellingham

January 21, 2026

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.); Bill Beer (Edgemoor Rep.); Jan Dietzgen (Fairhaven Rep.); Caroline Dietzgen (Fairhaven Alt.); Jake Charlton (Happy Valley Rep.); Blair Marcotte (King Mountain Rep.); Bri O'Hare (Lettered Streets Rep.); Lauren Bunke (Roosevelt Rep.); Robin Thomas (Sehome Rep.); Stephanie Levine (Sehome Alt.); Steve Wilson (South Rep.); Michael Chrzastowski (South Hill Rep.); Annie Sorich (Sunnyland Rep.); Colin Beazley (York Rep.)

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

Guests: Riley Vickers (Cordata Neighborhood Vice President); Steve Abell (Samish Neighborhood President); Kate Dowling, Doug Langworthy, Del Feild, Sandi Nelson

MINUTES

Review of November Meeting Minutes

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

2026 State Legislative Agenda

- Mayor Lund presented the City's 2026 Legislative Agenda and explained that we are in week two of a 60-day short legislative session, so the City's department leaders are working in conjunction with City Council members and our two lobbyists to advance the City's priorities in Olympia within this short window. The agenda is posted on the City's website:
 - o [State Government Relations – 2026 Legislative Agenda](#)

Updates

- Janice reported that a multi-departmental team worked with City Council staff to make improvements to the City Council agenda documents, timeline and process to increase transparency, understandability and access to the agenda materials.
- Mayor Lund shared that she held an "Ask Me Anything" Zoom call for City staff this morning to talk about the One City initiative and how that impacts our work each day and our service to the community, and to give staff an opportunity to ask questions.
- Janice said the Public Works team asked her to give a quick update about the Community Streets Program, which was also distributed to MNAC members in an email. Public Works is now accepting community submissions for the next round of the program to identify traffic safety concerns on non-arterial residential streets for Birchwood, Columbia, Cornwall Park, Lettered Streets, Sunnyland, City Center and York neighborhoods. Submissions will be accepted through March 31st.
 - o Blair with King Mountain mentioned she submitted a response during the last round and appreciated the communication back from Public Works about her submission.

- Katie with Birchwood asked who a good contact person is if there are questions about submissions and proposals.
- Janice said the best way would be to send an email to communitystreets@cob.org.
- Mayor Lund reported they just finished filming a video version of the State of the City presentation, along with a preview of the exciting work to come this year, which will be shared with the community. She said they wanted to move beyond the traditional ways that the State of the City has been shared in the past and make it easily accessible and shareable with the hopes of getting more engagement and awareness.

MNAC 2026 Schedule

- Janice shared a tentative schedule for MNAC for this year.
 - The City is going to be holding three “Department Head Roadshows” modeled off events we’ve done in the past with the Downtown Bellingham Partnership to give community members a chance to socialize, get an update on City happenings, and ask questions of the leadership team. The Roadshows are tentatively scheduled for February 18, May 20, and September 16.
 - Lindsey with the Downtown Bellingham Partnership shared that the events in the past were held at the Boundary Bay beer garden and were a huge success, with about 150-200 attendees. She said everyone appreciated that the Mayor and her staff didn’t ask for pre-screened questions, which made it a very authentic experience for everyone.
 - Mayor Lund said the plan is to do these events in lieu of City department leaders going to neighborhood-specific meetings in order to make it accessible to more community members. Janice said these events will take place in the evening and will stand in place of the MNAC meeting that month, and information will be distributed to MNAC members and the public when details are set.
 - We’ll also be hosting more walking tours this year at the request of MNAC members.
 - As always, there will be a summer break and a winter break from MNAC meetings.
- Janice also shared that we will be moving from Zoom to Teams for the MNAC meetings, likely starting in March. Details will be shared with the group when this is confirmed.

Neighborhood Roundtable

- York: Colin Beazley
 - Colin said their large annual events get a bit turnout, but their regular neighborhood meetings struggle with engagement. Their caroling event in December was a big success. He also reported that they finally finished their 2024 small and simple grant and installed a new sign at Harriett Spanel Park that outlines the history of the park.
- Sunnyland: Annie Sorich
 - Annie said they have their quarterly meeting coming up in February. She said that, similar to Colin’s comment, they usually only have 20-25 attendees at regular neighborhood meetings, but their bigger annual events usually have a large turnout.
 - Mayor Lund commented that during the Roadshow events this year, we should make a push to ask folks to show up and participate at their neighborhood association meetings to help drive engagement in their communities.
- South Hill: Michael Chrzastowski
 - Michael reported that the shoreline restoration at Boulevard Park is in its final stages and is a wonderful addition to the City’s shoreline amenities. He asked about construction work at Salish Landing. Mayor Lund said the remediation work is beginning to cap and contain the toxins from the landfill and industrial activities that took place there in the past. It will be three times the size of Boulevard Park when it is done.

- South: Steve Wilson
 - o Steve reported that Phase 1 of the Hundred Acre Wood trail improvements is complete, and there will be a work party coming up soon.
- Sehome: Stephanie Levine
 - o Stephanie said they have pressed pause with their small board, which has become unsustainable for them. They need at least eight members to be fully functioning.
- Samish: Steve Abell
 - o Steve is president of the Samish Neighborhood and filled in for the MNAC representatives that were unable to attend. He shared that they're working on their spring newsletter, and they're planning their March meeting where board members will be elected, and officers will be elected at their April meeting.
- Roosevelt: Lauren Bunke
 - o Lauren reported they are having a community potluck on Sunday at the Roosevelt Community Resource Center. They're also planning a February potluck and general meeting, and they have received keys to a community bulletin board in the neighborhood so they can post information. They're also working on getting their nonprofit status updated.
- Lettered Streets: Bri O'Hare
 - o Bri said their new neighborhood signs have been installed, and they have closed out their 2024 small and simple grant. She said they have their association elections on February 11th. She also commented that the train quiet zones feel like an equity issue since part of the city has quiet zones, but downtown and Lettered Streets do not, so if anyone from other neighborhoods has information on how to achieve this, she would like to hear. She mentioned that Liminal Coffee, which is in the Lighthouse Mission, is opening February 14th. She also thanked Mayor Lund for prioritizing the day use shelter initiative for the time that the library will be closed for renovations.
 - o Mayor Lund commented that the City is putting funds aside every year to advance the quiet crossings, and we're steadily marching our way north through the city at the pace to which we can capitalize it.
- King Mountain: Blair Marcotte
 - o Blair said their neighborhood is excited about the completion of the new Sunset Pond trail. She mentioned that there has been a lot of activity at the encampment behind Walmart, and their neighborhood president wanted her to ask what is being done to address the issue.
 - o Janice shared that the City has a multi-department team that meets twice a month to discuss encampments, and they are actively talking about the next phases of East Steward Road and the Sunset Pond area. Last week they met with a group of property owners in the East Stewart Road area who have encampments on their properties or their properties are being accessed to get to the encampment, and the City expressed the need for them to work with us to take steps to secure and clean up their properties. She explained that it's a very complex issue which requires a lot of legal work, cleanup work, environmental permits, and cooperation with landowners.
 - o Mayor Lund commented that the City is working to establish a day center and expand tiny home options in the area.
- Happy Valley: Jake Charlton
 - o Jake said they had their monthly meeting last week where Police Chief Rebecca Mertzig presented. He said they planted 45 trees in their last planting season, and their monthly community meals are back in full swing.
- Fairhaven: Jan Dietzgen
 - o Jan commented they had a lovely Christmas party, and they're working on recruiting new members. They have their annual meeting in March and they're looking for a new president.

She also mentioned they'll be having their annual plant sale at the end of March in the Hillcrest parking lot.

- Edgemoor: Bill Beer
 - o Bill said they are working on recruiting more members. He also mentioned there were hearings last week about the Woods at Viewcrest and the decision will be coming in March.
- Cordata: Riley Vickers
 - o Riley filled in for the MNAC representatives who were unable to attend. He reported their November meeting celebrated their community by handing out certificates of appreciation and having a pie contest. He said Sheriff Tanksley presented at their meeting last week. He thanked the Whatcom Community Foundation for offering the Project Neighborly grants. They've booked two bands for their Cordata Concert Series which will take place on Saturday, May 16th and Saturday, June 20th. They'll have an ice cream social on Saturday, July 11th and another event to be determined on Saturday August 15th.
- Columbia: Deb Valentine
 - o Deb said the board wanted to thank the Mayor and the City for the neighborhood reimbursements, which they took full advantage of in 2025. They're looking for more board members. She asked if the City has any plans for a celebration for Independence Day since it will be the 250th anniversary. The Mayor mentioned that the Port and the Chamber of Commerce are the traditional sponsors of the celebrations and fireworks. She said that the City is focused on Pride festivities and World Cup events around that time.
- City Center: Lindsey Payne Johnstone
 - o Lindsey said the Downtown Bellingham Partnership is forming a downtown resident group which is in the preliminary stages. They're also planning some social events which will be spearheaded by some of the residents. She said they've had five city block meetings in the past two weeks to get feedback from business owners and managers.
- Birchwood: Katie Herson-Horvath
 - o Katie said they typically take November and December off for neighborhood meetings, but they had some active meetings and elected a new board in October. They have their first community meeting of the year coming up on Tuesday. They're going to be doing some brainstorming around the Project Neighborly grant.

Closing Comments:

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.