



# Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission

## City of Bellingham

**April 15, 2026**  
**Hybrid Meeting**

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Janice Keller.

### **Attendance**

Neighborhood Representatives: Matthew Colston (Barkley Alt.); Katie Herson-Horvath (Birchwood Rep.); Lindsay Payne Johnstone (City Center Rep.); Deb Valentine (Columbia Rep.); Greg Hope (Columbia Alt.); Kate McDonald (Cordata Alt.); Bill Beer (Edgemoor Rep.); Jan Dietzgen (Fairhaven Rep.); Caroline Dietzgen (Fairhaven Alt.); Jake Charlton (Happy Valley Rep.); Blair Marcotte (King Mountain Rep.); Lauren Bunke (Roosevelt Rep.); Virginia MacDonald (Roosevelt Alt.); Barbara June (Samish Rep.); John Kane-Ronning (Silver Beach Rep.); Steve Wilson (South Rep.); Michael Chrzastowski (South Hill Rep.); Annie Sorich (Sunnyland Rep.); Chris Roselli (WWU Rep.); Elan Engel (York Alt.)

City Representatives: Mayor Kim Lund; Janice Keller, Deputy City Administrator; Rebecca Judd, Bellingham Public Library Director; Annette Bagley, Library Head of Community Relations

Guests: Jessica Sankey, Arionda Feeney, and Mike Copland with Bellingham Public Schools; Greg Becker (Cornwall Park)

## **MINUTES**

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### **Opening Comments and Updates**

- Mayor Lund mentioned she attended the State of the City and County meeting this morning, hosted by the Bellingham Whatcom County Chamber of Commerce, along with County Executive Sidhu. They presented updates on budgets and discussed a proposal to create a regional fire authority with Bellingham fire districts and Whatcom County District 8, which includes Marietta, Alderwood, and Lummi Nation. This proposal would go before voters in February and would be the best way to continue to deliver reliable, high-quality services for the community while freeing up around \$20 million annually in the City's general fund.
- Mayor Lund commented that Resources for Sustainable Communities is doing a lot of community outreach regarding the future of waste solid handling at Post Point that dissents with the City's opinion. The City has had a lot of conversations with Resources and believes the City's proposed path forward is the most pragmatic and responsible approach for Bellingham based on the numbers and analysis. Mayor Lund said updated talking points were provided to City Council Members and we would be happy to share these with MNAC members if it's a topic of conversation at neighborhood meetings.

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### **Review of February Meeting Minutes**

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

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## Bellingham Public Schools Presentation

- Jessica Sankey, Arionda Feeney, and Mike Copland presented an update from the Bellingham Public Schools Facilities Taskforce. They discussed recent demographic changes, enrollment updates, how these changes intersect with the City's middle-family housing initiatives, and budget impacts.
  - o [Bellingham Public Schools Facilities Taskforce 2026 Presentation](#)

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## Central Library Remodeling Update

- Rebecca Judd presented an update on phase two of the Central Library renovation. Construction will start in late 2026 or early 2027, at which time the Central Library will be closed to the public. It is expected to reopen in late 2027. Temporary expanded space for programs and meetings will be available at the Bellis Fair branch, and there will be expanded hours at the Fairhaven, Barkley, and Bellis Fair branches.
  - o [Central Library Renovation Phase 2 Presentation](#)
- Mayor Lund commented that the City is receiving state funding for a day shelter, which will be available to unhoused community members, many of whom use the Central Library in this type of capacity. The purchase and sale agreement for the space is in the process of being finalized, so more details will be forthcoming in the next few months. The City is working quickly toward a goal of opening the day center at the same time the Central Library closes.

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## Group Discussion

- Janice informed the group of the MNAC schedule for the rest of the year:
  - o May 20 – Downtown neighborhood event at Structures Brewing
  - o June 17 – Tour (details to be announced)
  - o July – No meeting (summer break)
  - o August 19 – Northside neighborhood event (location to be announced)
  - o September 16 – Tour (details to be announced)
  - o October 21 – Regular MNAC meeting
  - o November 18 – Regular MNAC meeting
  - o December – No meeting (winter break)
- Janice asked for feedback on the March Ask Us Anything event:
  - o Jake Charlton asked if the City would consider having a remote or recorded option for the next events for those unable to attend in person. He also mentioned that the City representatives spoke for about 45 minutes before the Q&A started, which seemed late to start that portion of the event.
  - o Jake Charlton and Lauren Bunke asked about the neighborhood association tables at the March event. Janice explained it was a last-minute request from a couple neighborhood associations to display materials, so a few tables were added to accommodate, which is something we can incorporate at upcoming events.
  - o Michael Chrzastowski suggested that the City provide a handout at the beginning of the event with information and updates, rather than spending time during the meeting announcing these types of things, in order to leave more time for questions from the public.
  - o Steve Wilson expressed appreciation for Chris Roselli's moderation of the event.
- Janice asked for feedback on the application process for the Project Neighborly grant from the neighborhood associations who submitted applications:
  - o Kate McDonald reported that Cordata applied for a Project Neighborly grant for their community garden and little free libraries and the process was simple and straightforward.

- A few members provided general announcements and requests from their neighborhoods:
  - Caroline Dietzgen announced that local Bellingham radio station KMRE is celebrating their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary by hosting an event with storytelling and food on May 7<sup>th</sup>. She asked if members could hang flyers in their neighborhoods. She also encouraged everyone to participate in May Day Strong on May 1<sup>st</sup>, a movement to urge community members to refrain from work and shopping for the day.
  - Katie Herson-Horvath said the Birchwood board floated the idea of helping to host a forum for neighborhood association boards to collaborate, ask questions, and share tips on board recruitment, creating bylaws, 501(c)(3) incorporation, etc. She asked if the Mayor's Office could host the space or help convene a group. Janice said she'll talk through the idea with the team.
  - Blair Marcotte announced that Bellingham Covenant Church is hosting a garage sale on April 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> and all the proceeds are going to five different nonprofits in the city. The King Mountain neighborhood association will be having a plant swap at the event.

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**Closing Comments:**

Mayor Lund ended the meeting with a call to action for everyone to be builders of community and kindness in these tough times.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.