



Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission

City of Bellingham

February 21, 2024

Hybrid Meeting

Call to Order

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

Attendance

Representatives for Neighborhoods: **Louise Bjornson (Birchwood), Mary Lou White (Birchwood), Lindsey Payne Johnstone (City Center), Sheryl Russell (City Center), Kit Topaz (Columbia), Deborah Valentine (Columbia), John LaSpina (Cordata), Dianne Tudor (Cordata), Nick Kelly (Cornwall), William Beer (Edgemoor), Barbara Zielstra (Edgemoor), William Liddicoet (Fairhaven), Jan Dietzgen (Fairhaven), Jake Charlton (Happy Valley), Tara Stavik (King Mountain), Bri O'Hare (Lettered Streets), Kevin Jenkins (Puget), April Markiewicz (Samish), Jack Wellman (Sehome), Kerri Burnside (Silver Beach), Jocelyn Lindsay (Silver Beach), Christopher Grannis (South), Michael Chrzastowski (South Hill), Annie Sorich (Sunnyland), Gabrielle Laipenieks (WWU), and Chris Roselli (WWU). **Attendance was not taken due to the length of presentations.

City Representatives: Mayor Kim Lund, Janice Keller, Interim Deputy Administrator/Communications Director, Nicole Oliver, Director of Parks & Recreation, Chris Behee and Elizabeth Erickson, Planning and Community Development

MINUTES

Opening Comments

- Mayor Lund announced that the City of Bellingham and the Bellingham School District are exploring the relocation of Carl Cozier Elementary School within the Civic complex. This is a unique agreement between two public entities that own real estate in the same complex and do business within the complex. City parks are not for sale and this type of agreement would never be possible with any outside developers. The City is excited for the possibilities of this agreement and overall recreational opportunities for our community.
- Mayor Lund also announced that yesterday she initiated an Executive Order to tackle some of the challenges downtown. The Executive Order opens a Public Safety Office for first responders to have a quicker response, invites other partners to co-locate their operations to the downtown core, increases police, emergency medical services and cleaning efforts downtown, supports increased community education and initiates other actions. There is so much work to be done and collaboration with many partners, this Executive Order is a first step of many to come.

Approval of January 2024 Meeting Minutes

- Barbara Zielstra moved to approve the minutes, Christopher Grannis 2nd motion, Motion Carried.
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Parks & Recreation Facilities Update – Nicole Oliver, Director of Parks & Recreation

Nicole Oliver gave a presentation on the City-sponsored events criteria, clarification of fees for Neighborhood Associations in reference to the use of a park, and a review of park facilities (Cordata, Fairhaven Library Auditorium, Lodge at Van Wyck Park, Neighborhood park field areas, and Hundred Acre Wood Outdoor Classroom).

- Neighborhood Associations get one free 3-hour reservation per calendar year for a neighborhood meeting and one free use of the Block Party Trailer. If it's an all-day request for a park, the neighborhood association needs to go through the City-sponsored event process and pay for the reservation.
- Work parties in a park, need to go through the volunteer work parties program.
- Block Party Trailers are full of tables, chairs, sandwich boards and games for neighborhoods to have a party. Go to the City's website Parks page to reserve the trailer.
- The Park Steward Program has been revamped and should be launched this spring, but the community-led work parties' program is being revised with a focus on core functions of the volunteer program and environmental education.

Update on the Bellingham Plan and Neighborhood Plans – Chris Behee and Elizabeth Erickson, Planning & Community Development

Elizabeth Erickson and Chris Behee gave a presentation on an update to The Bellingham Plan. They are heading into Phase 2 of the project and focusing on the growth approach and community engagement. There will be upcoming public open houses, board and commission feedback, and public comment. More information can be found at <https://engagebellingham.org/bellinghamplan>.

- Outreach to marginalized groups has begun with a focus on building relationships through various surveys and meetings. They have been working with community-based groups to get the word out in Spanish translation as well as working with Language Line for translation into 6 other languages.
- A community workgroup was formed of local community residents to get a representation of the whole community. They have had 2 meetings and it's been a great way to hear from more voices, discuss challenges and make sure it's clear communication before going to the Open House stage.
- Phase 1 brought some priorities forward as housing types, rental projections, affordability, and safety.
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, Climate Action Plans, and Urban Forest Plans are all considered in the Comprehensive Plan updates.

Closing Comments:

Mayor Lund acknowledged that there was not time for the roundtable portion of the agenda. She will build in time at the March meeting for this to happen.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

The next meeting is March 20, 2024