



## **Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission**

### **City of Bellingham**

**April 17, 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), Deborah Valentine (Columbia), John LaSpina (Cordata), Jasmine Fast (Cordata), Carolyn Whipple (Cornwall), William Beer (Edgemoor), Barbara Zielstra (Edgemoor), Jan Dietzgen (Fairhaven), Jake Charlton (Happy Valley), Bri O'Hare (Lettered Streets), Kevin Jenkins (Puget), April Markiewicz (Samish), Jack Wellman (Sehome), Kerri Burnside (Silver Beach), Christopher Grannis (South), Michael Chrastowski (South Hill), Annie Sorich (Sunnyland), Chris Roselli (WWU), and Elan Engel (York).

City Representatives: Mayor Kim Lund and Janice Keller, Interim Deputy Administrator/Communications Director

#### **MINUTES**

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#### **Opening Comments**

- Fun opening exercise to get to know each other.
- The City has been working with Small Cities and Whatcom County to formalize some arrangements around the Public Safety Sales Tax and define the expectations and uses, as well as forming the funding plans for the new incarceration and behavior health facilities. The City will begin receiving money in July. The City's plan for the money is to go towards supporting community health improvements, incarceration prevention and reduction as well as healthy and humane facilities.
- The Urban Forestry Management Plan is available on our website [cob.org/ufmp](http://cob.org/ufmp) and we encourage all to participate in the current open public feedback. The City will be working with partners like Whatcom Million Trees and other organizations to support both planting trees on private and commercial properties. We are happy to have a tree protection ordinance that will increase our tree canopy along with developing community tree programs. The community tree program is being primarily coordinated through the Public Works Department and will be offered as an option for the 2024 Small and Simple Grants.
- The Whatcom Racial Equity Commission (WREC) was established in 2022 as a Whatcom County advisory group and is being co-funded by the City and Whatcom County and facilitated by the Chuckanut Health Foundation. It was created to eliminate racial inequities throughout Whatcom County and a slate of appointments will be going before County Council and City Council for approval.
- We continue to hear positive feedback about the Executive Order focused on fentanyl use in our downtown. There are first responders downtown and they can quickly get an overdose scene and hopefully prevent deaths.
- The City was successful in getting a grant from Whatcom County Tourism and they have committed to making a \$250,000 investment for both place making for art and community building events in our downtown.
- The budget revenue sales tax is below forecast and it's not trending the way the City had hoped and some hard decisions will need to be reviewed this summer. Mayor Lund will be evaluating

opportunities for savings. Voter approved revenue sources will continue, but the General Fund will need to be reviewed.

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## Approval of March 2024 Meeting Minutes

- Kerri Burnside moved to approve the minutes as amended, Bri O'Hare 2<sup>nd</sup> motion, Motion Carried with 3 abstentions.

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## Future Presentations

Mayor asked everyone to write down future MNAC agenda topics, interests for the neighborhoods and if anyone was interested in attending a field trip to Post Point Wastewater Treatment Plant or any other ideas. The Mayor's office will report back on the topics. If participants are remote, please email Janice your topics.

- Birchwood and Sunnyland brought up the challenge of working with the Bellingham School District for neighborhood meetings (access to PA equipment, doors being locked, cost etc.). They would like Mayor Lund to talk with the school district and ask them to work with the neighborhoods.
  - o Mayor Lund will be meeting with Dr. Greg Baker soon and suggested possibly having the scheduling coordinator attend a meeting to clarify neighborhood needs.

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## Neighborhood Round Table

- **Birchwood**

The International Market is going to be on the second Sunday in July and August with entertainment and food. There is a need from the City to help keep Northwest Avenue safe to walk to school. It is very intimidating when people are camped out on the sidewalk, drug overdoses, night fights, etc. and they would like help in keeping the neighborhood safe. The neighborhood would like to see the City Council public comment before City decisions are made as well as including the Zoom option back for attending public comment in order for more people to be able to participate. The neighborhood would like to have notice of when the public comment will be open regarding the tiny home village that is moving into the neighborhood. When will it open and how will they be notified?

- o Janice commented she will look into the process and get the neighborhood the answer of timing.

- **City Center**

They are getting ready to announce the full lineup for Downtown Sounds celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. They will also soon be announcing some of the micro business grants. May 8<sup>th</sup> will be their first neighborhood association meeting.

- **Columbia**

They will be submitting a request for a Small and Simple Grant for neighborhood signs. They will be having a community garage sale on June 8<sup>th</sup> and rejuvenating the share shack with some pop-up events.

- **Cordata**

This is John LaSpina's last meeting and Jasmine Fast is his replacement. Their neighborhood is focusing on social connection and the vitality of the community's health and success. As part of that, they believe having a safe space where neighbors can meet is important. They are excited for the Cordata Pavilion as their neighborhood space. They would like to request that the categories for Small and Simple Grant include facility costs for rental fees so they can use the park more often or ask if the Parks Department could reduce the rental fees for neighborhood organizations. It is difficult for neighborhoods that do not have membership dues and need to pay the fees up front.

- **Cornwall**

They are starting to plan their summer picnic and having ongoing discussions regarding the hospital extensions.

- **Edgemoor**

They used their 2023 Small and Simple Grant for neighborhood signs and communications and they sent 900 post cards out with information about the neighborhood. At their next meeting, they will have Greg Hope from the Office of Emergency Preparedness give a presentation and help create an action plan.

- **Fairhaven**

They had their plant sale the last Saturday in March and it was very successful. 15% goes to the neighborhood association and they then give gifts to organizations (DVSAS, Max Higbee, Whatcom Million Trees, and Whatcom Club House). They are working on their 40/40 Project, which is the tree canopy project.

- **Happy Valley**

They are having an Earth Day party at the Larrabee Right-of-Way on Saturday from 10-1pm and on Sunday they will have their community meal. At their next monthly meeting they will be having a Narcan presentation.

- **Lettered Streets**

At their last meeting there was a focus on Environmental Climate Justice. Bri is offering to be a resource and foster a conversation for being a small landlord and she would make herself available to the City to discuss affordable housing and rental regulations.

- **Samish**

They held their elections, and the board members remained the same. They completed their website with their 2023 Small and Simple Grant and it has been successful. The Samish Neighborhood Greenways Committee organized a cleanup party on April 6<sup>th</sup>. August 18<sup>th</sup> is their late summer picnic that will be held at Lake Padden.

- **Sehome**

They are having a joint York/Sehome picnic in May, and they've invited the Comp Plan staff to connect the neighborhoods and collect feedback. The Block Party Trailer is only available June-August; they would have liked to use it at their May picnic; they are hoping for more availability next year.

- **Silver Beach**

Would like to echo Birchwood's comments on the City Council public comment being at the beginning of the meeting and adding the Zoom option back for more people to be able to participate. The neighborhood is working hard to help the neighbors have awareness and understand the responsibilities of living in the watershed.

- **South**

There are concerns about the Chuckanut Creek Estuary because of the development around Mud Bay Cliffs and expressed concerns about the Planning Department.

- **South Hill**

They are continuing to focus on the education about ABC Recycling.

- **Sunnyland**

They will be having their third Annual Earth Day celebration on Saturday. The next meeting will be in May at St. Sophia Church and Mayor Lund will be in attendance.

- **WWU**

Last weekend WWU hosted about 3,000 prospective students and families. Messaging will be going out soon to students about how to dispose of unwanted furniture responsibly and respectfully and they will begin Furniture Fest (Couchella) in the fall. They recently broke ground on the new Long House.

Gabby, WWU's local liaison for the Associated Students, is hosting the City to talk about the Bellingham Plan.

- **York**

They are having a Sehome/York picnic, and everyone is invited on May 16<sup>th</sup> at Hriet Spanel Park 4-6pm.

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**Closing Comments:**

Mayor offered the idea of an upcoming meeting to include Narcan training from a community paramedic.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

**The next meeting is May 15, 2024**