



Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission City of Bellingham

October 18, 2023

Hybrid Meeting

Call to Order

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

Attendance

Present: Louise Bjornson (Birchwood), Mary Lou White (Birchwood), Kit Topaz (Columbia), John LaSpina (Cordata), William Beer (Edgemoor), Barbara Zielstra (Edgemoor), William Liddicoet (Fairhaven), Jan Dietzgen (Fairhaven), Jake Charlton (Happy Valley), Tara Stavik (King Mountain), Tara Villalba (Lettered Streets), Kevin Jenkins (Puget), April Markiewicz (Samish), Jack Wellman (Sehome), Robin Thomas (Sehome), Kerri Burnside (Silver Beach), Michael Chrzastowski (South Hill), Christopher Grannis (South), Erica Charbonneau (Sunnyland), Chris Roselli (WWU), and Gabby Laipenieks (WWU)

City Representatives: Mayor Seth Fleetwood, Janice Keller, Interim Deputy Administrator, Eric Johnston, Public Works Director, Joel Pfundt, Assistant Public Works Director and Riley Grant, Public Works Communications and Outreach Program Manager

MINUTES

Public Works Transportation Updates on Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans and Telegraph Road/James Street Corridor Improvements

Eric Johnston and Joel Pfundt presented and discussed the Transportation Comprehensive Planning, Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans (BMP), Phase I and II Engagement, BMP Goals (safety, equity, connectivity and increase ridership), Six-Year TIP and the Telegraph Road/James Street Corridor Improvements.

Discussion included questions/comments re: promotion of commuting to work by bicycle, buffers, trails and safety, educational outreach, students biking safely to Parkview Elementary, question to non-funding of a portion of James Street and the volume of traffic on Orchard Street, thank you for the enhanced pedestrian crossings, not paving trails, and railroad trail bridge over Woburn.

Neighborhood Round Table

- **Birchwood**

Concentrating on the ABC Recycling proposed project and the hearing for the 68-unit development. They had the International Market this past summer and are thinking about adding Sundays for next year. There are concerns about the ABC shredder and that it was approved as a consent agenda item at the Port.

- **Columbia**

They are having a couple of social events on October 22nd & November 5th trying to generate some interest in their board. They are going to discontinue the membership dues hoping to generate some interest. They will be having their general meeting on November 25th and hosting whacky food Tuesday theme as "Stewsdays" serving stew and chili; Blake Lyon and Hannah Stone will be attending to talk about ADUs.

- **Cordata**
City is working on Phase II of Cordata Park and they are planning their Community Meeting there in March of 2024, they are looking forward to using the amphitheater. Their community meeting in November will have Malora Christensen from the Whatcom County Health Department and Claudia Murphy from BPD attending to talk about the LEAD Program. In January they are planning another community meeting to be held at Cordata Elementary School.
- **Edgemoor**
They have their first face-to-face meeting coming up with one new board member. They are working on their Small and Simple Grant for signage and neighborhood communication.
- **Fairhaven**
At their recent meeting, there was discussion about mature trees that are being proposed to be taken down by a developer. They have spoken to the Planning Director and Council and asking if the tree can be saved. They are applying for a Small and Simple Grant on planting trees in the neighborhood.
Mayor commented that he spoke to the Planning Director and asked him to do everything within his legal ability to try and make a case for saving the trees.
- **Happy Valley**
At their neighborhood meeting they had someone from Spokane zoom in and speak on Mobile Home Parks.
- **King Mountain**
The neighborhood is very pleased with the responsiveness from the City and the resources available on SeeClickFix. They are working on their bylaws to remove the dues and discussing mapping trails. At their next meeting Greg Hope is attending to talk about neighborhood preparedness.
- **Lettered Streets**
They held a candidate forum last week and they are co-sponsoring the anti-racism series at First Congregational Church. In November there will be presentations held at First Congregational Church and Mt. Baker Theatre. They are starting a project “Knock My Block” similar to map your neighborhood project to give a venue for neighbors to discuss housing affordability.
- **Puget**
Nothing new to report.
- **Samish**
Working on using their Small and Simple Grant to launch their new website. Membership dues have been at \$15/household for several years and they are trying to regulate when they come in and an easier way to maintain records.
- **Sehome**
They are having a neighborhood meeting on Tuesday, and they are piloting a pre-meeting kids time to add a social element. They are working on their Small and Simple Grant for signage and will present the art at the meeting along with land acknowledgement. They are also working on supporting the Samish Mobile Park.
- **Silver Beach**
At their neighborhood meetings they have discussed areas that need flashing crosswalks, frustration in about City Council and City staff not responding about traffic and needs of the neighborhood. Because ADUs are not allowed in the watershed, please contact Kerri if another neighborhood is interested in hosting a “roommate matching” which is an avenue for people in need of housing. She attended a meeting with Governor Inslee about housing. It included the topic of Base Camp denying people for meals and showers unless they have stayed the night before and there not being enough resources.
Janice suggested that the topic of homeless outreach be a topic at a future meeting and mentioned the recent City Council meeting presentations for those that are interested in watching the discussion.

- **South**

They are having their association meeting next week. Wondering if the City has received any updates from the owners/developers of the old Shell Station on Fairhaven Parkway and the freeway? If not, they ask if the neighborhood could be notified as soon as proposals come in for development?

Mayor responded yes, Planning will be contacted and if it's disclosable information, the City will pass it on.

- **South Hill**

Had their meeting in September and 100 people were in attendance including Mayor Fleetwood and 2 City Council members. Lowell School signage was discussed, and the Bellingham School District made an exception.

- **Sunnyland**

They have started some new social groups (parents of preschoolers and Sunnyland Garden Club). They will be planting daffodil bulbs in Memorial Park as part of their Small and Simple Grant. They will have a trick-or-treat map available on their website. Question - What is the appropriate communication responsive time expected from City departments via email or phone call?

Mayor responded that staff deals with various issues, priorities, and deadlines. The City takes public service seriously. This is a fair question and Mayor will bring it up at the next Department Head Meeting. He feels that people try to do their best to respond within a reasonable timeframe.

- **WWU**

There were 3,200 incoming freshman this year and they are very excited for this 2nd largest enrollment. Thank you to the City for supporting the First Night Out program and Indigenous Peoples Day Event. This coming weekend is Parents Weekend and should be busy. There will be a candidate forum on campus that is open to the public for County Executive on the 26th 7-8pm.

Closing Comments:

Will be extending Small and Simple Grants that need to be extended into 2024.

Upcoming Topics: Update on ABC Recycling and homelessness (emerging homelessness with statistics)

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

The next meeting is November 15, 2023