



## Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission City of Bellingham

January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Remote Meeting [video timestamps noted in brackets]

### Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Mayor Seth Fleetwood

### Attendance

Present: Kathryn Rismondo (Lettered Streets), Barbara Ryan (Edgemoor), Sheryl Russell (City Center), Jill MacIntyre Witt (Columbia), Christopher Grannis (South Alternate), Jake Charlton (Happy Valley Alternate), Louise Bjornson (Birchwood), Bill Liddicoet (Fairhaven), Annie Sorich (Sunnyland), Brooks Anderson (Fairhaven), Gordon Durham (Cornwall), Nick Kelley (Cornwall Alternate), John LaSpina (Cordata), Dean Haskins (Alabama), Dima Hart (King Mountain), David Frankel (South Hill), Chris Roselli (WWU), Molly Foote (Samish), Tom Scott and Anne Mackie (York).

City Representatives: Mayor Seth Fleetwood; Janice Keller, Communications Director; Lt. Claudia Murphy, Bellingham Police Department; Don Almer, Deputy Police Chief, Bellingham Police Department

## MINUTES

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### Updates from Bellingham Police Department [00:02:00]

*Lt. Claudia Murphy and Deputy Chief Don Almer*

- Claudia Murphy provided an update on RV parking in the City of Bellingham. This issue has grown due to COVID restrictions on evictions. A plan has been developed to move motorhomes that are illegally parked.
- Claudia explained the process for towing abandoned vehicles. There has been a strong compliance among people moving within 72 hours now.
  - MNAC Representatives had questions and comments on the following topics: where COVID positive guests go, Safe Parking programs, the strategy of moving from one location to another, if RVs are contributing to rodent issues, how many people are living in motorhomes in the city, distance RVs are required to move, and partnering with tiny home villages
- Don Almer gave an update on the current staffing issues within the Bellingham Police Department. There are a few reasons for lower staffing at BPD: less people are interested in being a police officer in Washington state, many police officers are currently eligible for retirement, and it takes a year from hire to start working as a police officer in Bellingham.
- Many special units have been cut to help with staffing challenges. The BPD is not lowering their internal training standards.
  - MNAC Representatives had questions and comments about why police officers might be turning down offers to work for Bellingham, how lower staffing is affecting response to behavioral health calls, if neighborhood police officers still exist, and what it would take to create an alternative response model team.

## Neighborhood Round Table [01:09:00]

- **Fairhaven**

A small development on Donovan has created some issues. It has been a learning experience about communication and outreach. Plant Sale will be held on March 26<sup>th</sup> at Hillcrest Chapel.
- **Cornwall**

April meeting will include someone to speak about the Governor's proclamation about single-family zoning. Questions about the city Planning Director hiring process.

  - Mayor Fleetwood commented that Blake Lyon will be starting in March as the new Planning Director
- **Cordata**

Looking to get a webpage started for the neighborhood. Looking to get some new board members. Have built two little libraries with small and simple grants. Second phase of Cordata Park will start in the summer.
- **Birchwood**

Looking into doing the International Festival this summer. The food share boxes are being utilized a lot. Looking forward to having a bathroom at the park on Cedarwood.
- **Alabama**

There has been an increase in mailboxes being stolen/broken, catalytic converter theft, and going through cars.
- **Columbia**

People are using the Share Shed quite a bit.
- **Happy Valley**

The 27<sup>th</sup> street right of way has been a hot topic in the neighborhood. Ridwell came to a recent meeting to discuss being an alternative to SSC.
- **King Mountain**

Not many updates as they come back from the holidays, but the next meeting will be in February.
- **Edgemoor**

Going to get an invitation to a meeting to everyone in the neighborhood in February. Barbara commented that there are rats everywhere, regardless of parked RVs or trash.
- **South Hill**

Neighborhood president since 2017 has stepped down and was replaced by Scott Jones. David asked for an update from Mayor Fleetwood about open carry laws.

  - Mayor Fleetwood will look into this to bring forward as a possible update for MNAC
- **WWU**

Had a great Martin Luther King Day event. WWU started winter quarter virtually but will return to in-person. Offering booster shots on campus. There will be an off-campus housing fair in March.
- **City Center**

The new State Side apartments have a bike lane that is frequently blocked by service vehicles. Encouraging people to go to the local restaurants and to become a Downtown Insider which earns you discounts to some businesses and restaurants.

  - Lt. Claudia Murphy commented to call the non-emergency number for the bike lane issue.
- **Samish**

Discussion in the neighborhood about the snowy conditions and snowplows. Thanks to the snowplow workers. Lots of success with SeeClickFix. Wanting to spread the word about shoveling sidewalks in front of houses.

- **York**

A new “Welcome to York Neighborhood” sign has been added. The small and simple grants funding was used for signage at the pollinator garden. Interested in learning more about the new regulations on single-family zoning. Annual meeting will be held in April. A request to include the publication date of the notice on planning notices that come in the mail as well as the address clearly at the top of the notice. Wondering when the accurate 2021 crime statistics data will be on the website.

    - Lt. Claudia Murphy responded that there is an error on the website currently and some IT people are trying to fix it.
  - **Lettered Streets**

Planning the annual meeting for February. Working with a professor on a discussion surrounding the Pickett House.
  - **South**

Quarterly meeting will be held in a week, and the master plan for the Chuckanut Community Forest will be discussed there. Questions about a proposed rezone on a property on Chuckanut Drive.
  - **Sunnyland**

Putting together plans to use the small and simple grant funding to make signs for the entrances to the neighborhood. Interested in learning about rising crime rates, may invite Claudia Murphy to a meeting in the future.
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#### **Future Topics for Discussion [02:00:45]**

The following topics were brought up for future discussion:

- Updates on the implications of the state legislation regarding single-family zoning
  - Perceived miscommunication between neighborhoods and the City staff and elected officials
  - Run-through of updates on the big topics that keep coming up like parking and street trees
  - How to continue to have areas for gardens
  - Neighborhood police group updates
  - Open carry update
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Meeting Adjourned by Mayor Seth Fleetwood at 8:47 p.m.