

City of Bellingham
MAYOR'S NEIGHBORHOOD ADVISORY COMMISSION
"JUST SO YOU ARE AWARE"—Information of Interest
February 14, 2007

Located on the Web at:

http://www.cob.org/mayor/boards_commissions/neighborhood/just-so-you-are-aware.htm

- ***Neighborhoods work on traffic issues***
- ***Bellingham applauded for pollution reduction through Green Power***
- ***You can help! -- Green Power Neighborhood Challenge***
- ***Planning and Community Development updates***
 - ***2007 Neighborhood Plan Amendment Process***
 - ***2007 – 2008 Neighborhood Planning Underway***
 - ***Waterfront Advisory Group (WAG) meets February 21***
 - ***Shoreline Master Program moves along***
- ***A note from the Library Director***
- ***New BTV10 Feature—The Bellingham Public Library, the rest of the story***
- ***MNAC discusses public involvement report***
- ***Parks storm damage—the work continues***
- ***Lake Whatcom stormwater meeting February 28***
- ***Public Works projects in the neighborhoods***
- ***City Recieves Financial Reporting Award***
- ***Fairhaven Harbor Project – Decision may limit height***

Reminder

The deadline for the Mayor's Small and Simple Grant applications is **March 15, 2007**. Small & Simple Grants fund up to \$2,500 for neighborhood sponsored projects that have a general public benefit. Some fund matching is required. In 2007, grants will only be available to organizations (not individuals). Grant application packets and information will be posted on the city's website at www.cob.org. For additional information contact Travis Cary @ 676-6880, tcary@cob.org.

Neighborhoods work on traffic issues

Most Bellingham Neighborhood Associations are busy this spring working on traffic issues:

- **Neighborhood Traffic Safety Program:** The neighborhood associations are starting work with our Public Works Department to identify and resolve their "Top 3 Neighborhood Traffic Safety Program" priorities for residential (**not arterial**) streets. We hope this annual neighborhood review for the Neighborhood Traffic Safety Program will both empower and educate residents to solve some of their traffic issues. Once they provide their 3 priorities to our Public Works Department, staff will study the traffic issues at the locations indicated. Staff will then work with the neighbors to either solve the problem through education and enforcement or, if a street qualifies, to design an appropriate traffic calming improvement. You can look on our website for information about the program at <http://www.cob.org/pw/NTSP.htm> . We will be posting the names and contact information of the traffic point person for each neighborhood on our website so that you may contact that individual with traffic safety concerns in your neighborhood. Look for this list in early March as well as our staff talk about the program on March BTV10's Inside Bellingham.

- **Six Year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):** Additionally, our Public Works Department has requested the neighborhood associations' assistance to identify the neighborhood's top traffic improvement priority listed in the City's Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element but not already listed on the Council approved 2007 – 2012 TIP.

Bellingham applauded for pollution reduction through Green Power

The City of Bellingham is gaining national attention for efforts to curb pollution that causes the planet to warm. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's recently updated national Top 10 list for various types of organizations purchasing green power ranks Bellingham 7th among local governments, and is topped only by local governments serving larger populations. Bellingham is among the largest local governments in EPA's partnership to supply 100 percent of its electricity from renewable sources.

We purchase 100 percent "green" power for all city operations which, according to the EPA, places our community among the top green power purchasers in the nation, and, when combined with green power purchases by Western Washington University and Whatcom County, prevents nearly 34,000 tons of carbon dioxide pollution - the equivalent of taking 3,700 cars off of the road for the entire year.

Research shows that buying 100 percent green power is the most significant step the City of Bellingham can take to protect the climate, eliminating more than 65 percent of the global warming pollution caused by municipal operations.

City officials expect many benefits from this purchase in addition to reducing its own pollution by displacing demand for conventional electricity, creating a greater market for development of additional green power sources, and helping to raise awareness and encourage residents to take similar actions in their homes and businesses.

"Scientific data clearly indicate that global warming will affect the lives of Bellingham residents in the future," Bellingham Mayor Tim Douglas said. "Sea elevation changes and protecting our drinking water supply are just two examples of the challenges that lie ahead. We need to take thoughtful, deliberate steps to help reduce our impacts on our planet. Purchasing green power is one of those steps."

The Bellingham City Council voted unanimously in August 2006 to buy enough green power to supply 100 percent of the city's electrical usage beginning in January 2007. The city's purchase will amount to approximately 25 million kWh annually.

"Green power" includes electricity that is partially or entirely generated from clean, renewable resources, such as solar, wind, geothermal, biogas, biomass and low-impact hydro. Green power is considered cleaner than conventional sources of electricity and has lower carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, a greenhouse gas linked to global warming. Green power purchases accelerate the development of new renewable energy capacity nationwide. [For more information on EPA's Top 10 local government list, visit <http://www.epa.gov/greenpower/partners/top10localgov.htm>.]

You can help! Green Power Neighborhood Challenge – deadline approaching

Neighborhood Associations are in competition to encourage their residents to sign up for Green Power. \$1,000 for community projects will go to the two neighborhoods with the highest percentage of residential electric participants signing up to buy "green power" from Puget Sound Energy" by

February 28, 2007. Columbia Neighborhood is in first place as we move to the end of the Challenge. Fairhaven is in second place. Volunteers from more than 12 neighborhoods have been letting their neighbors know about this opportunity and they are having a big effect: Almost 2000 Bellingham residents are signed up for Green Power!

Don't miss out on the opportunity to win \$\$ for your neighborhood association. At the same time, you will be supporting the development and use of renewable energy resources. Green Power costs as little as an additional \$4 a month. To sign up, call a PSE energy advisor at 1-800-562-1482, or visit the website at www.pse.com/solutions/greenpower_signuphome.aspx

Planning and Community Development updates

2007 Neighborhood Plan Amendment Process

For the neighborhood plan amendments proposed for 2007, the Planning Commission has now reviewed and recommended for or against "docketing" by the City Council. Docketing means the amendment would be studied by staff and discussed further with the neighborhoods. Then staff will prepare a final recommendation for the Planning Commission and City Council for action during 2007. The "docketing" recommendations will be going to the City Council for their review on March 12th. All the amendment proposals are available online at <http://www.cob.org/pcd/planning/2007NeighborhoodPlanAmendments.htm>.

2007 – 2008 Neighborhood Planning Underway

For those of you working on your neighborhood plans:

- Any neighborhood that has scheduled public meetings, or wants to distribute updated information regarding their 2007 neighborhood planning activities, is invited to send to Nicole Oliver (noliver@cob.org) documents for publication on the city's neighborhood pages.
- GIS maps and mailing lists are also available. Contact Kathryn Hanowell, Neighborhood Services Coordinator, for information regarding these (khanowell@cob.org or call 676-6855 X305).
- We are in the process of assembling a resource list to further assist neighborhoods with this project.
- Also, we will be scheduling a workshop in early April and again in September to assist our neighborhood associations with their work, provide technical assistance, and allow neighborhoods to share ideas. Stay tuned for a schedule and let Nicole know of your ideas and needs for this meeting.

Waterfront Advisory Group (WAG) meets February 21

The WAG will meet Wednesday, February 21st. Their agenda includes follow up work on input from the public open house held earlier this month on the plan update of Fairhaven Scheme of Harbor Improvements. WAG will also discuss the Shoreline Master Program after an update from Staff on the status of the Program.

Shoreline Master Program moves along

Speaking of the Shoreline Master Program, the Planning Commission recommendations on the update to the Shoreline Master Program is set to be finalized in late March, and we anticipate starting City Council review in April.

A note from the Library Director

The Bellingham Public Library Board received approval from the City Council on January 22, 2007 to begin planning for a replacement Central Library on the current library block. The process has just begun; site selection was the first step!

You may be unaware of the many ways the library is “present” in our citizen’s lives: library and information services are available through the Fairhaven Branch on the south side of town; the Central Library in downtown Bellingham; through “virtual” library services provided through our website; three convenient drop boxes at area Hagggen grocery stores; and, through twenty-nine personalized monthly library visits to city retirement, nursing, and assisted living facilities.

While the Board was actively working to narrow their top site choices for the Central Library, staff was busy preparing a report entitled “Comprehensive Citywide Library Services”. We were pleased to have participation on the committee by a member of the Cordata/Guide Meridian neighborhood. The resulting report is a companion to the library’s “Facilities Needs Assessment” and to the “Fairhaven Library Condition Assessment”. All reports are available on the library’s website at www.bellinghampubliclibrary.org.

I’d also like to direct you to the link on the right side of our homepage called “Library Planning News”. Here you will find links to all the information we’ve been reviewing, discussing, and providing throughout this complex process.

Our next steps will include a final review and recommendation from the Fairhaven Branch Assessment, a recommendation on increased library services for the north side, planning for interim library services while the Central Library is moved to interim quarters, and much more.

We are just beginning, and are eager for your feedback, questions, and comments about library services for the future! Please contact me at pkiesner@cob.org for more information. --Pam Kiesner. *Library Director*.

Bellingham Public Library: the Rest of the Story! New BTV10 Feature

The Bellingham Public Library has been in the news a lot lately. A site has been chosen to build a new central library, and the citizen members of the Library Board are discussing plans for comprehensive citywide library services. Why does Bellingham need a new central library? Be sure to watch the new BTV10 feature, *Bellingham Public Library: the Rest of the Story* to learn more!

Program days and times for the month of February:

Mondays - Noon
Wednesdays - 630PM
Fridays - 7PM
Saturdays - Noon

Want the latest news about facilities planning at the Bellingham Public Library? Check out the information on the library's website under "Library Planning News" at <http://www.bellinghampubliclibrary.org>

MNAC hears results from public involvement assessment

During 2006, city officials initiated several projects to improve the effectiveness of efforts to involve people in key city decisions. Improvements are intended to be research-based, using both qualitative and quantitative research to identify public involvement strengths and weaknesses. One of these efforts was the Public Involvement Assessment, in which 116 neighborhood leaders, members of City boards and commissions and City staff participated in detailed qualitative surveys and interviews, in a project led by Dumas and Associates.

Mayor Mark Asmundson prompted this initiative early in 2006, due to his concerns that, despite significant investment in time and resources in the City's citizen involvement efforts, results sometimes were ineffective or even counterproductive. Residents have much at stake in major decisions affecting them. Mayor Tim Douglas shares Mayor Asmundson's desire to make improvements in our processes, and has stated that he wants to make sure we don't simply add more activities. Everyone's time is precious, he said, so we must use it wisely as we shape our community's future together.

City staff and Mary Dumas presented an overview of our public involvement research and the results and recommendations from the Public Involvement Assessment to the Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Committee on Feb. 14. The full report can be viewed on the Mayor's Office section of the city's website at www.cob.org. For more information, contact Janice Keller, Communication Manager, at 676-6979.

Parks storm damage—the work continues

Our Parks department has been busy handling the damage done to our parks during this winter's storms. Below is a list of the department's response to November 15th's wind storm and their continued efforts:

- From November 15 to November 30, 2006 we had 36 calls or e-mails requiring immediate inspection, removal or for trees to be put on a priority list. These calls included trees or parts of trees on vehicles, houses, roads and trails.
- We did not have the staff resources to handle all cases and so asked homeowners to contact their insurance companies to handle their situation.
- We closed the community parks until we could get parking lots clear and trails open and safe for use.
- Of the neighborhood parks, Elizabeth Park in the Columbia Neighborhood was hit the hardest with some very large trees or parts of trees down.
- Lake Padden Park (Samish neighborhood) had over 100 trees down over trails. This does not include all the trees down within the park boundaries.
- All of our parks suffered some type of damage. At this point all parking lots are open, the trails are clear and we recently have moved on to opening the turf areas that were closed due to storm damage.
- We also handled other types of damage:
 - Turf areas in all major parks and some secondary ball fields suffered tire damage by cars doing "doughnuts."

- Many trails experienced trail wash outs due to clogged culverts, excessive rain and debris filling drainage lines.
 - The snow in late December caused significant damage to evergreen trees such as pine, hemlock and fir trees. Boulevard Park was hit especially hard.
 - There is structural damage to the main bridge at Arroyo Park.
- Costs to the City to address this damage as of 12-15-06 include:

| | <u>Labor</u> | <u>Equipment</u> |
|---------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Community Parks | \$22,223.00 | \$2,520.00 |
| Institutional Parks | \$12,035.00 | \$ 948.00 |
| Neighborhood Parks | \$ 5,397.00 | \$ 437.00 |
| Open Space | \$ 3,217.00 | \$ 383.00 |
| Trails | \$ 9,822.00 | \$1,327.00 |
| Utility | \$ 914.00 | \$ 120.00 |
| Right of Way | \$ 151.00 | \$ 19.00 |

We will continue to work during 2007 to repair our existing assets. This will be our major focus. As we work on trees, trails, developed parks and open space we will have a better assessment of the damage that occurred during this round of storms as well as the budgetary impact of the repairs.

Lake Whatcom storm water issues meeting February 28th

On February 28th the City Council, County Council and Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District Commissioners will convene a meeting of the Lake Whatcom Joint Councils to hear presentations on Stormwater Best Management Practices. Presenters with different perspectives have been asked to respond to several questions of interest to the Joint Councilmembers. The meeting will start at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers. Staff contact is Clare Fogelsong at 676-6961. We encourage all interested to attend.

Public Works Projects in the neighborhoods—new and updated project info

Birchwood

- We are working on the design for various pedestrian safety improvements in the Birchwood neighborhood. These include curb, gutter and sidewalk on Birchwood Avenue west of Meridian Street including an east bound right turn lane. Also in the design stage are curb, gutter and sidewalks for the south side of Birchwood Avenue adjacent to Morrie’s Drive-In.
- We are also working with Whatcom County to select a design consultant for an extension of Illinois street to Marine Drive along Timpson Way to divert truck traffic from Oeser Cedar and Morse Steel from residential area to its designated truck route.

Birchwood and Columbia

- A new replacement water line under the Eldridge Street Bridge is being tested. This water line will replace an older section of line that crosses under Squalicum Way. This section of line represents the last piece in a long-term water system upgrade that will help improve fire flow to the area.

Birchwood and Guide Meridian

- Northwest Avenue/I-5 Pedestrian Improvements: After a well attended neighborhood meeting earlier this month, we are moving forward with the next phase of design to provide pedestrian and bicycle improvements on Northwest between McLeod and Bakerview Roads. This is a major walking route for school children traveling to and from Shuksan Middle School so this is a priority project. We also plan to improve traffic flow in the area, especially at the I-5 interchange. To do so, we will work closely with the Washington State Department of Transportation.

Central Business District

- We have several projects in the design stage for the Central Business District including:
 - Work on the Federal Building to improve life safety elements of the building, make it more attractive to tenants, and enhance historic preservation of this Bellingham landmark.
 - A Flora Street Streetscape for this Arts District corridor to increase citizen safety, mobility, improve lighting and generally enhance the downtown.
 - Construction of Holly Street Streetscape from Ellis to State Street for which we have recently opened bids.
 - The new Art and Children’s Museum at the site of the former Employment Security Building on Grand Avenue is in the design stage. As is typical for major facility construction for the City, our engineers work with the stakeholders (in this case the Public Facilities District Board and our arts community) and manage the construction of such projects.
- We have completed installation of radiant heat in the Depot Market Square building and are completing other details.
- With the grouting and completion of the retaining wall, our work is now finished on the Holly Street Bridge to extend the service life of the sewer main and bridge and increase safety.

Columbia

- West Street: This project is to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety and the street itself between Squalicum Parkway and North Street. The pervious asphalt trail for pedestrian and bicycle safety, the first layer of asphalt and the median are complete. A period of dry weather is required before the second layer of asphalt is laid and the traffic lanes and pedestrian cross walk markings on Squalicum installed.
 - City Crews will be out to put a solid yellow sign in the middle of the traffic circle at the intersection of West and North Streets. The sign helps identify that there is a traffic circle in the middle of the intersection. Motorists need to remember that the stop signs are in force.
 - The Conservation Corp will begin the landscape restoration planting soon, using a variety of native plants. These will go in the areas with wood chips. Preliminary start date is Feb 19th.
 - Look for another 1 1/2 inches of asphalt to be placed on the road. This will bring the pavement up to the level of the catch basin grates and will complete the paving. (Asphalt production plants have been closed due to the poor weather but are scheduled to reopen in March.)
 - After the paving is complete the new lane markings on Squalicum will be installed; this includes the pedestrian activated cross-walk.

Happy Valley

- We are waiting for dry weather to complete pedestrian improvements at Donovan and 21st Street and at Bill MacDonald Parkway and Birnam Wood. The flashing warning system for pedestrian crossings (similar to those installed on Lakeway, Samish and Bill McDonald Parkway) will be installed as soon as the concrete and pavement marking work is complete which requires a period of dry weather.

Lettered Streets

- As part of our annual sewer replacement program to assure the long term system health and service to the public, we are near completion of repair to the sewer lines on Dupont Street.

Mount Baker

- Pedestrian improvements at Barkley Boulevard and Chandler Parkway—still waiting for dry weather to allow for cross walk pavement markings after which the flashing warning system will be installed.
- We're moving ahead with the design of the second phase of Sunset Drive improvements (from Woburn to McLeod). Existing 2-lane highway will become 4-lane with curbs, gutters, sidewalks and bicycle lanes on both sides with the center two-way left turn lane. This will improve traffic flow and safety on this heavily traveled arterial and State highway.

Puget

- We're also waiting for dry weather to complete pavement markings on Phase I of our Fraser Street Improvement Project (Between Puget and Lincoln Streets). We are beginning the design work on Phase II which is on Puget Street south of Fraser. This project is to improve pedestrian and bike safety as well as to enhance storm water treatment. We will also resurface the roadway.

Roosevelt

- We are getting close to finishing the clean-up work on the Dixon Grocery Demotion at Woburn and Alabama. This is being done to provide space for turn lane improvements at this busy intersection to improve circulation and safety.

Samish

- San Juan Boulevard, Phase I: We are beginning the design process for this new street to provide a connection between Yew Street and I-5 in the Samish neighborhood. This project has many challenges as the street would route through a forested area with stream crossings.
- Another project to provide needed infrastructure to Samish Hill is the construction of a new Upper Yew Street Water Reservoir. This will be a 2.5MG potable water reservoir for service to areas to elevation of 873 feet. We are in the design phase using CH2MHill engineering consulting firm's expertise.

Silver Beach:

- We are working on the design for storm water handling improvements for East Oregon Street on the North Shore of Lake Whatcom, on East Maryland, on East North Street, and on Hayward Drive. These projects are part of our efforts to improve water quality in Lake Whatcom. Construction planning is time-sensitive since this is in our watershed.
- We are also beginning the design work on improvements on Northshore Drive from Britton Road to Alabama Street. This project is to replace a failing storm water system and will include resurfacing the street. We will determine if a sidewalk can be added without impacts to the watershed.

See City Public Works Department website for more information about capital projects under construction: http://www.cob.org/pw/curconst/index_current.htm.

An indicator of good government: City receives 6th consecutive financial reporting award

The City of Bellingham was recently honored with an award from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). For the sixth consecutive year, the City has received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting in recognition of its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for 2005.

Finance Director Therese Holm explains that the award is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting. Standards for receiving the award include demonstrating a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate the city's financial status and to motivate potential users and user groups to read the report.

Rating agencies, such as Moody's, considered the award when determining the City's bond rating. The City currently has a very favorable Aa3 bond rating from Moody's on its voted debt and an A1 rating on non-voted debt. The strong bond ratings allow the City to repay bonds it issues at lower interest rates.

The GFOA is a nonprofit professional association serving approximately 15,000 government finance professionals with offices in Chicago, Ill., and Washington, D.C. For more information, contact the Finance Department at 676-6900. To view the 2005 annual report, go to www.cob.org/finance.

Decision may limit building height for Fairhaven Harbor project

The Fairhaven Harbor project developers must modify their plans to lower building heights, or go back to the drawing board and resubmit plans with a new environmental evaluation that considers the 10-story buildings currently proposed, according to a decision issued by the City's Planning & Community Development Director, Tim Stewart. The decision approved with conditions an amendment to the Design Review Permit issued for Fairhaven Harbor, a mixed use development proposed for 8th & Harris. The applicant, Ted Mischaikov for 8th & Harris Holdings, LLC, already has a completed Planned Contract, Shoreline Conditional Use Permit, and Design Review Permit for the project.

The approval of the amendment to the Design Review Permit was issued on the condition that the building design adheres to the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Checklist and Determination of Nonsignificance completed for the project in December 2004. The SEPA checklist identified building height at no more than 85 feet above mean sidewalk elevation. Therefore, Stewart concluded that the new design should be approved, but that the building plans must be modified to be consistent with the 85 foot height restriction (currently the proposal includes one building of 102 feet).

The applicant has 14 days (from the decision) to either accept the amended Design Review Permit and proceed with the project or to withdraw the application to amend and resubmit the application with a revised SEPA checklist that evaluates the environmental impacts of a building taller than 85 feet, he can appeal the decision to the Hearing Examiner, or he can withdraw the application and proceed under the original Design Review Permit.

The City will consider reasonable requests to extend this 14-day deadline to allow the Applicant more time to determine a course of action. If the Applicant declines to take any of the above actions, the City will consider the amended Design Review Permit, DRC2004-00033A, in effect and the original Design Review Permit, DRC2004-00033, as withdrawn. For more information, see the city's website at <http://www.cob.org/pcd/planning/fairhaven-harbor.htm>