



City of Bellingham MAYOR'S NEIGHBORHOOD ADVISORY COMMISSION

The Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission meeting was called to order by Kathryn Hanowell, Neighborhood Services Coordinator, on **Wednesday, January 17, 2007 at 6:00 p.m.**, in the Fireplace Room, 625 Halleck Street.

APPROVED MINUTES

	<p>ATTENDANCE: Unless noted below, all were in attendance. Substitutions: Birchwood (Barb Campbell), CBD (Frankie Damman), Guide Meridian/ Cordata (Paul Sorenson), Lettered Streets (Howard Steiner) , Sunnyland (Hugh Conroy) Sehome (Charlie Dyer) Absent: WWU (Brady Dykgraaf) Reminder to notify Kathryn/Torhil of leadership changes given elections for many associations.</p> <p>Minutes Approved from December 13, 2006 meeting.</p>
	<p>Information from the City</p>
	<p>Reports from the Mayor's Office - Kathryn announced that the City is making available \$700 per neighborhood association to be used in compliance with a new City policy; asked neighborhood reps to review the Neighborhood Association Support Grant Information – clarified that this is different from Small and Simple Grant monies and Planning Academy Funding. It is an administrative grant not requiring a match and provided in the 2007 City Budget. Members expressed appreciation.</p>
	<p>Small and Simple Grants – (Travis Cary, PCD) – Travis presented information on the Mayor's Small and Simple Grants Program. Noted a change in match program. Minimum of \$500, maximum of \$2500. Change in eligibility – organizations that have valid tax ID are eligible. Individuals are not eligible. Project needs to demonstrate City-wide benefit Deadline is March 15th. Grant is administered through reimbursement of expenses. Need to show proof of match. Volunteer hours are valued at \$10/ hours – one way to achieve the match.</p> <p>Gave examples of past projects – tree planting, neighborhood events in parks open to the public, park maintenance, fundraising activities: flyers, mailings, etc. Hoping for 30-day return on grants after deadline.</p>
	<p>Malcolm Fleming – Report on Public Involvement Survey results and recommendations at next MNAC Meeting; Presentation by Library Board of library building site recommendation at next council meeting (Jan. 22); Council Retreat on Jan. 20 – Goals and Workplan for 2007 – Open to the public Waterfront Update – Working w/ consulting team on evaluating the draft framework plan to achieve a robust Environmental Impact Statement</p>
	<p>Mayor Tim Douglas – Spoke on Library Board's upcoming decision. Announced working on an arrangement whereby citizens can use the Whatcom Community College Library to pick up/ drop off books. May become vital community center for north side. Tim asked reps to continue to keep us informed on issues that neighborhoods are trying to accomplish.</p>

	<p>Discussion on branch libraries. Mayor Tim said that putting branches in neighborhoods is not currently financial feasible. Spoke to need of the north side. Tim cautions expense of facilities. Working on long-range plan to address needs.</p>
	<p>Planning Director – Report and Dialogue (Tim Stewart) 18-19 neighborhoods have successfully proposed planning grant for neighborhood plan updates. Greg Aucutt will be heading up team to assist with this effort. Kathryn is helping with financial logistics. Organizing a few sessions to bring neighborhoods together to discuss common interests, additional technical assistance and information (Parks, Public Works, etc.)</p> <p>Noted new neighborhood website – receiving accolades for site from across the state. Website will provide functionality and transparency.</p> <p>Annual review of comp plan and neighborhood plan – Department will provide transparency of process with all documents and comments posted on web by proposal. Will also include staff reports, meeting dates. Provides way for citizens to follow along in process.</p> <p>Discussed complexity of annual review process: GMA limits review of comp plan and neighborhood plans to once a year. Anyone can request a site-specific neighborhood plan. Council will decide if it gets placed on annual docket. Docketing: Neighborhood plans amendments can go through a different process where they can be sponsored and initiated by Planning Director, Planning Commission, or Council. Once docket is set – Spring – then hearings take place on actual proposal. Provides for a lot of opportunity for public comment. Flow chart of whole process is available on the City’s website. Discussion of using local media to help with notification.</p> <p>Noted distinctions noted between type A (general) and type B (Site Specific) plan amendment proposals (see hand out). Type Bs had not gone to Planning Commission before Council but will now.</p> <p>Discussion on how public comments are used. Tim noted best way to comment is to email – to Greg Aucutt and Cheri Gleichmann (gaucutt@cob.org, cgleichmann@cob.org) Planning Academy follow up – Greg Aucutt is primary contact on process for neighborhoods. Nicole is working on timelines, assistance w/ proposals, 2 work sessions in Spring and Fall. Question about what to do after submitting proposals? Start having neighborhood meetings, contacting neighbors, planning development of amendment proposal [if for 2008 planning year] planning address to commission and council, etc. Discussion on update/ revision of Development Code. Current code is very complex, confusing, and leads to frustration. Tim wants to organize an understandable development code. First, agree on definitions, language, to ensure they are right and correct and all in one place; second – look at neighborhood plans, look at subareas and zoning districts (350) in community. Vision to build development code with large matrix with simple definitions. Create better understanding of what the zoning rules are, and easier to propose changes through an open, fair legislative process. Organizational structure is critical to have in place and then have content debate. Organizational work is mostly technical. Possibility of doing second Planning Academy to deal w/ definitions. There will be a process for MNAC’s involvement, but Tim is not exactly sure how that is going to come together.</p>
	<p>Neighborhood Traffic Safety Program—Presentation by Chris Comeau,</p>

Transportation Planner and Brent Baldwin, Development Manager, Public Works Invitation for Neighborhood Involvement

Discussing 2 things: Six Year Transportation Improvement Program priorities and Neighborhood Traffic Safety Program.

6-year Transportation Improvement Program – List of 150 projects needed over next 15 years (2007-2022).

Asking MNAC to provide input w/ top ten priority list. By March 1, come up w/ top-ten priority list (10 for entire City) out of current list of 150 from Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Element. Need early input from group to help inform Draft 6-Year TIP. PW wants to have draft ready in April due to other deadlines (Hearing = May; Adoption = June; Submit to State July 1). Result of neighbors asking how to get transportation improvements installed in their neighborhood. Long-range planning tool to use for transportation. TIP has list of projects and funding.

Brent said that with advanced notice, PW staff can attend neighborhood meetings to discuss transportation issues.

Q- how do you get an item removed from the TIP?

A-Council ultimately has authority to remove/ add items. However, projects that are listed are necessary to maintain levels of service for arterials. Project removal means lower level of service on other arterials. This is a policy choice that only City Council can make.

Changing street sections w/ items in comp plan, would have to analyze the effect that has on surrounding areas. List is based on forecast of future needs; if community doesn't see need for it, it won't be done, as long as lower level of service is acceptable to community.

Construction of transportation projects is guided by need and public benefit.

Q- Historically, what fraction of the items on the TIP end up being implemented in 6 years?

A-Depends on need; don't know what percentage. First 3 years of TIP is required to have dedicated funding.

Q- Who are authors of this?

A-Staff works with recommendations of public, boards and commissions, etc. Use long-range modeling, needs analysis, population numbers, etc. Will take priority list to present to council.

Chris – noted opportunity for public comment outside of providing a priority list, such as public hearings and written comments.

Discussion of choosing projects that are easier to finance, rather than large, multi-million \$\$ projects. Brent – looking for smaller-scale projects for the most part, such as sidewalks, bicycle lanes that do not require road widening.

Need to know missing links in neighborhoods. List is a starting point, may be missing some recommendations that aren't on list.

Traffic Calming \$\$ comes out of different funding sources. (TIP is completely different than traffic calming improvements. Also different from the Concurrency Report.)

Funding breakdown page is online. Funding comes from a variety of sources.

PW just increased traffic impact fees to Development significantly this year. Grant funding is just one of the sources as are impact fees.

Q- Mechanism for suggesting small projects (installing signs, signals, etc.)?

A-Best way is to contact Public Works staff, operations team is sent out to review, and makes recommendations to staff.

Transportation Element Project List is based on 20-year, full build out of adopted land uses; addresses transportation needs to accommodate population growth and land use build-out.

Discussion of bridge retrofits, in terms of bridge over Fairhaven Creek (contact Ravyn Whitewolf for more information on that particular bridge).

Discussion of working w/ WSDOT – City does work w/ DOT on freeways. DOT is working on community input project for Freeway Master Plan. City is willing to report back;

	<p>request to have WSDOT come present to group. Cautioned there is no guarantee that any neighborhood projects will be included. PW is simply asking neighborhoods to help inform staff of priorities. Question on input – can neighborhoods choose 1 project as vital? A-Yes Chris clarified work of Bike/Ped Board as identifying missing links in bike/ped network. Kathryn – not sure how the MNAC process is going to work to obtain the priority list. May need to call special meetings. Neighborhoods need to come together quickly to start discussing priority.</p> <p>Neighborhood Traffic Safety Program: (Note: NTSP is Completely separate from 6-Year TIP) Chris provided handouts on neighborhood traffic safety program. Clarified that NTSP is completely different from 6-year TIP. New procedures for 2007. Asking neighborhood associations to get top-three priorities for residential streets in each neighborhood annually, by April 30. Will spend remainder of year conducting traffic counts. If they don't qualify for Phase 2, traffic calming devices will not be installed. Most residential streets will stay in Phase 1; PW staff will work w/ neighborhood to address traffic safety issues. NTSP Purpose is to maintain appropriate speeds on residential streets, minimize cut-through traffic. This program is specifically for residential streets, not arterials. Asking for list from neighborhoods for top-three residential streets in neighborhood. Submit to Kathryn by April 30th. PW staff will spend 2007 working on follow up from other traffic calming solutions that were implemented. Trying to have more formal and programmatic approach. Put more responsibility on neighborhoods to handle their own traffic problems and gain more neighborhood consensus on what neighbors want. Question on arterials – how can improvements be made on arterials? A-Depends on what type of improvements. Arterials can be addressed through 6-Year TIP (capital projects). Discussion of pedestrian safety on arterials. A-Sidewalks should be addressed through 6-Year TIP neighborhood priority list. Q – how does PW work w/ County on shared roads? A- Working w/ county on similar issues. Look at section that is in the City limits and do a count and make improvements Q on new I-5 intersection – A- Problems with speed and curb extensions and bike lanes. Issue has been raised w/ City staff, Brent will bring it to staff's attention again. 24-hour count – broken down into 15 minute increments.</p> <p>Discussion on school traffic issues: Brent noted that PW is working w/ school district on variety of issues; will have some transportation issues due to new school location choices.</p> <p>NTSP: Main goal is to change this from a complaint-driven process to a formal, neighborhood-based programmatic approach. Neighborhoods establish Top 3 priorities annually, which establishes PW staff's annual NTSP work program. Complaint calls will be referred to MNAC representatives to explain formal neighborhood NTSP annual prioritization process. In future, PW will experiment with temporary devices to help notify people of pending changes. Kathryn asked associations to provide a point-person for this project.</p>
	<p>Items from the Neighborhood Kathryn asked group to email any items from the neighborhoods.</p>
	<p>Meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.</p>