



September 7, 2007

To: Vince Biciunas, Fred Haskell, Jim Johannessen, Phyllis McKee, Ted Mischaikoff, Stewart Plotnik, Doug Robertson, Brad Rose, Connie Shannon, Janet Simpson

From: Kathryn Hanowell, Neighborhood Services Coordinator

**RE: City Sponsored Discussions on an Inclusive Neighborhood Association**

Based on action taken at the Fairhaven Neighbors general membership meeting of last Wednesday, Vince notified us, that she and the other representatives from Fairhaven Neighbors no longer have permission from the organization to continue with small group facilitated discussions. Instead, Vince requests that the facilitation be continued, but in a large group format. We believe this is something that the Fairhaven Neighbors should best manage without City support.

We have given considerable thought to this turn of events. Although not a legal and formal mediation process, the small group discussions coming out of our June meeting were meant to create an environment where designated representatives of Fairhaven stakeholders could come together with professional assistance and work on the issue of "an inclusive neighborhood association". As stated in various communications, any agreements between the participants would have to be approved by their respective organizations.

Our decision is based on an important principle in working with any neighborhood association: We must be able to depend on the elected leadership to be able to do business in a reasonable and efficient way; specifically, that they are able to carry through with commitments made.

I wish to address the specific concerns that have been raised regarding who was at the table and their representation of various interests within Fairhaven. The City did not provide for a comprehensive assessment of what interests should be at the table and who would best represent those interests. Rather, we held the expectation that the primary contact people for the organizations would do your own due diligence to ensure that your named participants were the appropriate people to represent the varied interests. The agenda for the second meeting would have provided an opportunity for the parties to address any participant's concerns about representation and process.

From these recent events, Fairhaven Neighbors appears to be struggling with issues of how to appropriately conduct business so that members have effective voice (inclusion) while still allowing the board of directors to efficiently move ahead. The fact of these struggles gives us pause, but does not cause us to withdraw recognition from Fairhaven Neighbors. These are problems for which there are tried and true organizational procedures. We will offer to you the time scheduled for next Thursday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, at 8 AM, ending at 9:45, in the Whatcom Museum Board Room, to again meet with the

assistance of the facilitators. The purpose would be to provide an opportunity to discuss organizational approaches with Ann McCartney. Please advise Rob Kelly of your interest no later than noon on Wednesday the 12th.

I understand that work on the Fairhaven Neighborhood plan update is moving along with many of you actively participating in committee work. This is heartening. As stated so often by Tim Stewart, when FN or any other organization brings proposals to the City, the ability to show us that you have used an inclusive and adequate public involvement process and that you have worked diligently towards consensus among stakeholders is important to success.

Again, regardless of Fairhaven Neighbors having the status of "Recognized Neighborhood Association", City staff and elected officials listen responsibly to all citizen input.

CC Mayor Douglas  
Tim Stewart, Planning and Community Development Director  
City Council  
Rob Kelly and Moonwater, Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center  
Ann McCartney, Ph. D.