

Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission (MNAC) Member Fact Sheet

MNAC Charter	<p><u>Bellingham Municipal Code Section 2.33.040:</u> “The primary purpose of MNAC meetings is to provide a regular forum for: 1) representatives of neighborhood associations to communicate their interests and concerns to the City administration; 2) the Mayor to inform representatives of neighborhood associations of City activities that may be of interest to neighborhoods, and 3) MNAC to have timely opportunity to formulate and/or review proposed changes to the City’s comprehensive plan and neighborhood plans and to prepare recommendations on those proposed changes for the Mayor and the Planning Commission to consider.”</p>
Core Commitments	<p>MNAC members commit to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Facilitate and support two-way communication between City and neighborhood ➤ Maintain objectivity when representing the neighborhood to the City and the City to the neighborhood ➤ Keep neighborhood association leadership informed of what happens at MNAC
Preferred Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Commit time and energy to MNAC responsibilities ➤ Effective written and verbal communication skills ➤ Excellent listening skills ➤ Maintain objectivity and put self interests aside ➤ Active in neighborhood association
Term of Appointment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Once appointed by the Mayor, primary MNAC representatives serve two-year terms, renewable one time, for a total of four years possible as a primary MNAC representative. (Exceptions may occur when an appointment is made for a partial term in the event of an unexpected vacancy.) ➤ Once appointed by the Mayor, alternate MNAC representatives may serve in that capacity indefinitely, based on the needs of the neighborhood.
Application and Appointment	<p>Primary MNAC Representatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Each Bellingham neighborhood is allowed one primary MNAC representative. ➤ Vacancies occur when a member’s term expires or there is a resignation. ➤ When a vacancy occurs, neighborhoods can nominate up to three (3) candidates for appointment consideration.

<p>Application and Appointment (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Nominations are made in writing (email or hard copy) by the neighborhood association president and submitted to the Mayor’s office or neighborhood services coordinator. ➤ Nominated candidates submit an “Application for appointment to City of Bellingham Boards and Commissions” form (hard copy), directly to the Mayor’s office or neighborhood services coordinator. ➤ Only candidates nominated by the neighborhood association president will be considered. ➤ Once neighborhood nominations and candidate applications are received, a determination will be made regarding appointment. ➤ Appointment notices and regrets are sent to the candidates and the neighborhood association president. ➤ If no nominations are received from the neighborhood association, the Mayor may select other representatives who are interested in serving and whom the Mayor believes will effectively represent the neighborhood. <p>Alternate MNAC Representatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Each Bellingham neighborhood is allowed one alternate MNAC representative ➤ Application and appointment process is identical to that of the primary MNAC representative process.
<p>Time Requirements</p>	<p>Regular MNAC meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month, usually at 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., in the Mayor's Board Room, City Hall.</p> <p>Meetings last approximately 2.5 hours. Work outside meetings includes providing information to the neighborhood association and neighborhood residents regarding the work of MNAC; keeping abreast of neighborhood issues to bring to the attention of the City; forwarding information to the neighborhood association and residents when requested by the City; taking active part in the meetings of the Commission and follow up activities. This outside work can add up to approximately eight hours per month.</p>
<p>Member Roles & Responsibilities</p>	<p>Serving as representatives of their neighborhood association and appointed by the Mayor, MNAC members agree to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Objectively communicate neighborhood interests and concerns to City administration. ➤ Serve as a conduit for timely, accurate information about City government programs and services, including reporting and/or forwarding to their neighborhood membership information provided by the City.

<p>Member Roles & Responsibilities (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Maintain consistent, effective communication with neighborhood association leadership, to ensure that information is conveyed in a timely manner. ➤ Collaborate on the development of MNAC meeting agendas by communicating with staff and following through with presentation of topics during meetings. ➤ Attend (or arrange for an alternate appointed member to attend) MNAC meetings, prepare for meetings (review agendas and meeting materials), and participate fully. ➤ Participate in group discussion and process to formulate and/or review proposed changes to the City’s comprehensive plan and neighborhood plans and prepare recommendations on those proposed changes for the Mayor and Planning Commission to consider.
<p>Group Expectations</p>	<p>During MNAC meetings and activities, members agree that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Individual members and the collective group are respectful of staff and each other. ➤ Meetings are conducted in public session and noticed in accordance with State law, unless otherwise advised by the City Attorney. ➤ The role of MNAC shall be advisory only. Members respect the limitations of their individual and collective authority. MNAC appointment does not authorize individuals or members to direct or supervise staff. ➤ Members strive to appreciate differences in approach and point of view, whether from each other, City leadership or staff. ➤ Each member participates in the group discussion and work assignments, without dominating the discussion or activity. ➤ Members attempt to reach consensus on issues. If consensus is not possible, differing opinions are recorded and acknowledged in the meeting minutes.
<p>Meeting Structure</p>	<p>MNAC meets once per month and are open to the public.</p> <p>MNAC members may offer ideas and topics for meeting agendas by communicating with staff during agenda development.</p> <p>MNAC meetings provide a comfortable environment to support the free flow of information back and forth between neighborhoods and the City.</p>

<p>Meeting Structure (continued)</p>	<p>Large and small group exercises, formal presentations, question/answer sessions and other meeting formats will be used to assist in member understanding and ability to provide input and recommendations.</p> <p>It is expected that the meeting facilitator will keep meetings on track. To the extent possible, the facilitator will ensure that the presentations and discussions conform to the agenda and that all members have the opportunity to speak and be heard. When necessary, unresolved discussion topics or issues may be carried over to a future meeting.</p>
<p>Decision-Making Process</p>	<p>The group is encouraged to reach consensus on issues before moving on to the next steps in a process. Every effort is made to answer questions and provide technical information that clarifies unresolved key issues and concerns.</p> <p>In the event that the group does not reach consensus, a vote will be taken and the conclusions and recommendations of the majority will be advanced, in addition to noting the opinion(s) of the minority.</p>
<p>Role of City Staff</p>	<p>City staff is committed to the following, in support of MNAC success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Structure meetings to remain on a progressive track within designated timeframes. ➤ Accurately document MNAC member concerns, issues and requests, via clear and concise written meeting notes. ➤ Provide members with background information, technical data and responses to questions. ➤ Answer questions and provide information in a respectful and open manner. ➤ Convey member issues, concerns and recommendations to appropriate City leadership for consideration. ➤ Summarize actions, decisions and next steps in simple, plain language. ➤ Be available to assist members with understanding complex issues or topics.