



Samish Neighborhood Association

FALL 2018

www.samishneighborhood.org

NEIGHBORHOOD PICNIC

NOON TO 2:30 P.M. SEPT. 16 AT
THE LAKE PADDEN PARK PLAYGROUND PAVILLION

Yes, we'll have grilled Coho salmon at our picnic again this year. For those not favoring fish, we'll provide hamburgers, brats, and veggie burgers for our vegan friends, buns, chips and fixin's. We'll also provide drinks: water, iced tea, & soda. (No alcohol allowed in city parks.) *If your last name begins with A through N, please bring a side dish or a salad. Last names starting with O thru Z, please bring a dessert item.* We've had some unique dishes at past picnics and hope to continue in that tradition. Dust off the old family recipes and bring something amazing!

We look forward to seeing you on the 16th. Enter the park through the east entrance and follow the road to the pavilion next to the playground. There is no extra charge for members of the Association. Guest fee is \$5 per person. Or, if you are not a current member, consider joining. Details are on the back of this newsletter, or you can join at the picnic. Bring your folding chairs and maybe a blanket to sit on and we'll see you there, rain or shine.

Board of Directors

Steve Abell, president

Dick Conoboy, vice president
and MNAC alternate rep

Tom Dohman, secretary

Tom Read, treasurer

Kevin Probasco,
MNAC representative

Joe Carpenter

Nikki Long

Joy Hale

Jon Neville

Board meetings are held 7 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month (except March, July, September and December) at the Community Baptist Church, 810 Samish Way,

and is open to all.

There is a public comment period at the beginning of each meeting so that anyone attending can be heard. These public comments are limited to three minutes, but issues needing more time can be put on the meeting agenda by contacting the President of the Association.

Email

info@samishneighborhood.org.

President's Comments

The overall mission of the Samish Neighborhood Association is to maintain the neighborhood character and quality of life in Samish Neighborhood. We're fortunate to have Lake Padden Park included in our neighborhood. I hope all residents recognize and appreciate how this park enriches our lives, not just for Samish but for everyone. Nearly all of the rest of Samish is residential in nature. Many Samish residents bought or rented a home here because they were attracted to the neighborhood character. Experiencing unanticipated changes after moving in can be upsetting.

Some ongoing city activities may impact Samish. The City Council adopted a new ordinance allowing detached accessory dwelling units (D-ADUs) anywhere in the city. The city has not completed the promised inventory of existing D-ADUs so no one really knows how many there are now. No one knows how many will be built. The Council currently is working on a new ordinance that will govern how many and where short-term vacation rentals (STRs like Airbnb and VRBO) can be operated. If you would like to be more informed about what's happening with the city, consider attending our board meetings (announced on our website). If you would like to go beyond just being informed, consider joining the board of directors. We have current vacancies and would welcome new voices.

Our annual picnic on Sunday, Sept. 16 (details in this newsletter), is an opportunity to chat casually with board members, express your concerns, meet more neighbors and share good food. I also encourage residents to join the Samish Neighborhood Association if you are not already members. Membership information is in this newsletter, and you can join at the picnic.

- Steve Abell

Future Development Atop Samish Hill

Everyone living on the sides of Samish Hill in both the Samish and Puget neighborhoods should be aware that there is once again a strong drive to develop the vacant land at the top of the hill. Eventually there will be hundreds of dwellings there. There are a number of obstacles for the developers to overcome (the water supply, for instance) but the issue likely to be of most importance to those who now live on the slopes of the hill is the circulation plan—the route(s) that the future residents will travel to get from their homes to downtown Bellingham and Fairhaven.

There was a similar push for this development 10 and more years ago. At that time the city administration had a plan for traffic circulation — it was to build San Juan Boulevard (SJB for short) as a new east-west arterial from Yew Street Road to Samish Way (or actually to the top of Elwood Avenue at 40th St.) The city had a substantial grant for this, though it turned out to cover only about half of the cost of the rather elaborate plans for the road, and San Juan Boulevard was completed only from Yew Street Rd. to the top of Samish Hill where the new synagogue has recently been completed.

The full length of SJB has remained in the city Comprehensive Plan as a prerequisite to development, meaning that development cannot proceed without construction of SJB. However, around 2010 the commitment to construct it was removed from the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This means simply that development is blocked by requiring a road for which no plan to build exists. To rectify this conflict the current potential developers successfully docketed in June a proposal to amend the Comp Plan to delete completion of SJB as a prerequisite. We don't yet know when this proposal will appear for consideration on the city's 2018-19 meeting agendas. Should this be approved, the default situation will be that development at the top of Samish Hill can begin to take place without any new road construction in advance.

If this occurs, the new traffic will need to traverse existing roads, either north to meet Lakeway via Puget St. or farther east on Lakeway, or via Wildwood Drive to 40th St. and then either north to Elwood or, for traffic to Fairhaven, south to Mill Ave. None of these roads are suited to be arterial routes, so it is natural to look for some substitute for SJB. Unfortunately, a short perusal of a map showing existing homes makes it clear that the only way to avoid destruction of existing houses is to follow essentially the route planned for SJB. This route has drawbacks (the west side of Samish Hill is quite steep in places), but Bellingham has managed to operate with other steep arterial streets (e.g. Alabama St. or Knox St).

What makes discussion of possible options particularly important is that one area to be proposed for development lies precisely on the route proposed for SJB. Thus, the development of a relatively small number of lots could close off this last possibility for a new arterial.

Based on what we heard during the docketing hearings, at least some members of the City Council might be willing to agree that the removal of the completion of SJB from the city's Comp Plan must be accompanied by the adoption of an alternative for a new arterial. The Samish Neighborhood Board anticipates mounting an effort (participation in public hearings, lobbying Council members, and submitting comment letters) to insist on this approach. The Board is very interested in learning the opinions of SNA members about this issue. Do you agree that a new East-West arterial road is necessary to service new construction? If so, would you participate in an organized effort to insist on it? Let us know. Please send your comments to samishneighborhood@gmail.com or to one of the Board members listed on the SNA website. We'll keep a list and keep you informed.

–Tom Read

Samish Neighborhood News

Published twice annually by the Samish Neighborhood Association, P.O. Box 5144, Bellingham, WA 98227, and mailed to all Samish residents. Editor: Greg McCracken. Meetings held at 7 p.m., second Thursday of the month in the basement of the Communist Baptist Church, 810 Samish Way, except in March, July, September and December.

To receive this newsletter by email, send a request to info@samishneighborhood.org

Ridgemont Park Remodeling Project

Ridgemont Park (a neighborhood park on 38th St) has a pending remodeling project that was delayed when the Bellingham Parks & Recreation Department received no bids to complete the work. The city has already procured the planned playground equipment and reserved funding. Parks & Rec is hoping to find a way to get the park project completed either in Fall 2018 or Summer/Fall 2019. In addition to new playground equipment, the project will include a new paved path from the street to the playground area and will apply new paint striping to the small basketball half-court.

– Tom Dohman

Small Neighborhood Groups

If you have recently moved into the greater Samish Neighborhood, you might check with your new neighbors to see if there is a small informal neighborhood group nearby that functions to pull neighbors together for social gatherings or other neighborhood activities. For example:

- The Ridgemont Neighborhood schedules a coordinated garage sale (with centralized advertising listing participating addresses) each September to facilitate a good turnout of interested buyers. It will happen this year on Saturday, Sept. 15th. Contact Don Hale (don@donaldhale.com or 360-319-4141) if interested.
- The Whitewater Drive neighborhood typically schedules a summer meal gathering to bring neighbors together for a Meet & Greet.
- The Parkhurst/Samish Crest neighborhoods schedule some periodic social gatherings at neighbors' homes.
- The Stair Step Streets area (near South Ave & Harrison St) typically schedules a summer gathering and other calendar events as well.

– Tom Dohman

Status of Short-Term Rental Ordinance

With an estimated several hundred vacation rentals operating in Bellingham, the city decided several months ago to review the status of these enterprises. At present short-term vacation rentals (that is, rentals of less than 30 days) are illegal within the city limits. The Planning Commission was given the task to create and recommend a Short-Term Rental ordinance for consideration by the City Council. This draft ordinance to allow the city to control these essentially commercial operations, especially in residential areas, is now before the City Council for further study following a public hearing several weeks ago. A work session was held by the three-member planning committee of the City Council on Aug. 20, however, at least one more work session is necessary before the ordinance is brought before the full council. The council members are wrestling with the issue of allowing vacation rentals, which takes rental units off the long-term market, at the same time the rental vacancy rate is so low and rental affordability and availability are of prime importance. You can find further information on this topic on the city's website www.cob.org where the search term "short term rental" will point you to several pages regarding the topic.

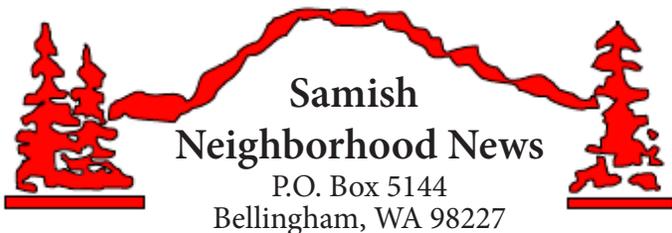
– Dick Conoboy

Keeping up with What's What



There are several ways to access neighborhood information if you have Internet access:

- www.samishneighborhood.org is our website. On it you can read minutes of past board meetings, see notes of future meetings and announcements, and find links to other useful and interesting information.
- www.facebook.com/samishneighborhoodassociation is our Facebook page. Anyone can access it but only Facebook members can post or make comments.
- <https://samishhill.nextdoor.com> - Sign up for this Nextdoor login page for Samish Hill (aka Samish Neighborhood). This is a free private network that Samish residents can listen in or contribute to ongoing on-line conversations (like having a friendly chat with your "Nextdoor" neighbor). If you're interested in law enforcement news, Bellingham's two NPO's (Neighborhood Police Officers) post messages to Nextdoor.



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SNA Membership Benefits

Your dues help maintain our ability to host our March annual business meeting and the September picnic. Your dues also enable us to mail informative newsletters to all Samish residents twice a year, and cover expenses such as our post office and website.

We appreciate the support of all members. We will happily accept new members at any time of year – for example, at the September picnic. Annual dues are \$15 or (\$12 for seniors) and will extend membership to the following April 1. If you have questions about your membership status, contact Steve Abell at 360-734-1098 or info@samishneighborhood.org

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Yes, I want to join my friends and neighbors as a member of the Samish Neighborhood Association, a 501 (c)(4) non-profit association. I want to be a member that supports and promotes the high quality of life in our neighborhood and in our city. I am enclosing annual payment of dues valid through March 31 of next year.

Please Print clearly, esp. your email address

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Circle one: \$15 household \$12 senior household

Circle one: Renewal New Member

Send check and form to SNA, P.O. Box 5144, Bellingham, WA 98227. Thank you for being a member.