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NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

7 P.M. MARCH 20 AT THE ELK'S CLUB, 710 SAMISH WAY

All Samish residents are welcome, but only paying members can vote. We will elect new board members and a new president. Scheduled guest speakers are Firefighter and Interim Emergency Management Director Randy Vanderheiden on how to prepare for emergencies, and Port Commissioner Dan Robbins with an update on Waterfront Plans. Feel free to arrive early for neighborly conversation.

President's Comments

Your Samish Neighborhood Association and its elected Board of Directors continues to strive toward maintaining the character and quality of life in our neighborhood. In this pursuit we continue to be actively engaged with you, the residents, and also with the City of Bellingham and its various departments.

This will be my last letter as President and I am glad to report that our neighborhood and the association that represents it are in good shape. Our successes include an association membership that is higher than it was two years ago. Without our members and the dues they pay, it would not be possible to maintain adequate funding for our semi-annual newsletters. We also continue to maintain an enthusiastic and energetic group of board members that represent the neighborhood. This group, however, is small and risk becoming increasingly dependent on a smaller and smaller group of board members. I would ask you to please consider a position on your Samish Neighborhood Board of Directors. We are a diverse group with different backgrounds all working with our neighbors' interests in mind. If you are interested, but have questions about the time and energy requirements, please contact any of us for more information. See you at our General Meeting on March 20, 2014!

— Joe Carpenter

Update —

University Ridge Development

After the Samish picnic last Fall the Ambling University Development Group's proposal for University Ridge, a new student housing complex in Puget neighborhood on the northern border of Samish neighborhood, progressed through the Hearing Examiner phase. Since then the proposal appears to have hit a dead stop, at least as far as public information is concerned. Public information is posted on the city website and can be viewed at www.cob.org/services/planning/neighborhoods/puget-uni-ridge.aspx.

Here's a timeline of events starting from last Fall:

- September 11: A public hearing in front of the Hearing Examiner was held. A presentation by the city Planning Staff highlighted the detailed Staff Report submitted to the Hearing Examiner. This report approved es-

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SPRING 2014

- Board of Directors*
- Joe Carpenter, president
 - Brian Benjamin, treasurer
 - Steve Abell, secretary
 - Dick Conoboy, MNAC representative
 - Kevin Probasco, MNAC alternative
 - Garey Vodopich
 - Tom Roehl
 - Don Hale
 - Junga Sinclair
 - Suneeta Eisenberg
 - Christopher Morrison
 - Edward Alexander

Board meetings are held 7 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month 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

SNA Membership Benefits

Your dues maintain our ability to host our March annual meeting and the September picnic. These two events provide you with the opportunity to meet other interested neighbors, get an update on what is being proposed in the neighborhood and provide feedback to the SNA Board on these and other issues of concern to you.

Your dues also enable us to mail informative newsletters to you twice a year. We look forward to having you join us as a new or renewing member.

Please complete the membership form and add or update your email address mailing in the form with your dues. We do not share your email address; we use it for timely updates and SNA meeting information.

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 payment of dues for March 2014 to March 2015.

Please Print

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Check all that apply

- \$15 household \$12 seniors Renewal New Member

Send check and form to SNA, P.O. Box 1551, Bellingham, WA 98227. To check on membership status, contact Brian Benjamin at 319-1787, info@samishneighborhood.org.

Lincoln Street Development

Work has already begun on a large commercial and residential project on the west side of Lincoln Street just south of the Fred Meyer complex. There are three separate areas to be developed. Clearing for the commercial development that will border Lincoln directly has already been accomplished with tree removal. A total of two sets of four buildings, as well as parking for clients and customers, are planned with entrances directly off Lincoln. Two other areas will contain rental apartment complexes and will be built on the west side of Lincoln Creek just behind the commercial buildings.

The permitting process for these projects began in 2005 and continued until 2009. The development plans were restarted in 2013 with the modification of a previously issued SEPA (State Environmental Policy Act) determination by the city. [To view documents online, search the city website for "PUGET SEP2013-00033 1199 Lincoln Street".]

The first phase of the residential apartment development is on the southernmost end of the property and will be accessed via E. Maple Street near the car wash. This is the only entrance to the Phase I apartment buildings. No traffic light is planned for the intersection with Lincoln. This phase consists of three buildings, each with 49 units, and one building with 28 units. There will be studios and one- and two-bedroom units. Some parking will be outdoor and some under

the buildings. The 175 units likely will house around 300 tenants.

The second residential phase is on the northwest corner of the property abutting the Fred Meyer parking lot. The entrance to this nine-building, 584-bed apartment complex will be via a driveway that will empty onto Lincoln and bisect the commercial development areas.

Both apartment complexes, which will be marketed primarily to students, may hold up to 900 people. This may cause problems with parking since most students tend to have their own cars. Although they may not drive to the university because they can use the shuttle service at Lincoln Creek parking area, many have jobs to which they will have to drive. One also wonders how the management of these complexes will handle the overflow of visitor cars since there will be no parking along Lincoln.

These rental units will also compete with the 164-unit University Ridge complex, which appears to be stalled in reaction to the Hearing Examiner's decision on Oct. 23, 2013. If University Ridge is built, there will likely be a potential addition of more than 1,200 vehicles to the roads adjacent to Lincoln and the Park-and-Ride.

— Dick Conoboy

Prepare Your Pets for Disasters

Planning ahead is the key to keeping yourself and your pets safe if disaster strikes. Follow these tips to make an emergency plan for your pets.

1. Microchip your pets and keep a collar on all cats and dogs.
2. Plan a pet-friendly place to stay. Search in advance for out-of-area pet-friendly hotels or boarding facilities, or make a housing exchange agreement with an out-of-area friend or relative. Never leave your pet behind if you evacuate!
3. Use the buddy system-if you're caught outside evacuation lines when an evacuation order is issued, your neighbors or friends can evacuate your pets for you.
4. Prepare an emergency kit for each animal. Store the following basic supplies in an easy-to-grab container: one-week supply of food and fresh water, medication, copies of vaccination records, photographs of you with your pets to prove ownership, photographs of your pets in case you need to make "lost pet" fliers, pet first-aid kit, temporary contact info tags (if you've evacuated, use this to record your temporary contact information and/or the phone number of an unaffected friend or relative), carrier or leash for each animal.
5. Identify emergency veterinary facilities outside of your immediate area.
6. Plan for temporary confinement. Have a plan for keeping your animal safely confined. You may need a tie-out, crate or kennel.
7. Comfort your animals. Some animals may find toys, especially long-lasting chew toys, comforting.
8. Know where to search for lost animals. When animals become lost during a disaster, they often end up at a local shelter. Keep handy the locations and phone numbers of the shelters in your area.

—by Junga Subedar (adapted from REDROVER.org)

University Ridge cont.

essentially all major aspects of Ambling's proposal. A presentation by the Ambling representatives emphasized the appropriateness and value to the community of their proposal, and attempted to justify the project. Public comment from a council room full of concerned neighbors and citizens cited disadvantages and problems that would likely arise if the development were built as planned. All public comments at this hearing included opposition to the development.

- September 8-23: Submitted written public comments cited a wide variety of potential damages and problems that would occur in the neighborhood, including excessive noise, parking problems, drainage and runoff, traffic concerns, safety issues, litter, and adverse effects on neighborhood character which, in the vicinity of the development site, is single-family residences.
- September 30: The city staff submitted detailed post-hearing comments that included some of the items requested by the Hearing Examiner and reiterated support for the project. The law firm representing Ambling also submitted detailed comments that also requested modifications to the city's staff report. It defended classification of the project as a "boarding/rooming house" renting exclusively to students, not as "family housing" available to non-students, something the Hearing Examiner questioned during the hearing.
- October 23: The Hearing Examiner's full decision granted approval of the project but with several conditions and requirements that conflicted with Ambling's plans. Importantly, she rejected the boarding/rooming house classification and required the buildings to conform to the requirements for multi-family dwellings, including no more than three unrelated persons per unit. This eliminated from the plan all 124 four-bedroom units. She also imposed height restrictions on the two buildings closest to Puget Street, limiting their peak height to the elevation of Puget Street at its centerline. This would seem to eliminate at least the top floor of both buildings.
- November 4: Ambling submitted a Motion for Reconsideration, claiming that the Examiner made certain errors of law which led to the re-classification to multi-family housing and unnecessarily restricted the height.
- November 8: The City of Bellingham attorney's office issued a short response to Ambling's Motion for Reconsideration, in which Assistant City Attorney Alan Marriner supported the Hearing Examiner's decision in full.
- November 12: Ambling submitted a reply to the city attorney's response, claiming that the attorney's response failed to address Ambling's Motion to Reconsider because it did not cite legal or factual arguments to back up the city's position.
- November 13: In a one-page statement, the Hearing Examiner denied Ambling's Motion for Reconsideration.

The only way to appeal the Hearing Examiner's decision is to file legal action in Whatcom County Court. No such filing occurred before the deadline for appeals. Although Ambling is free to move forward with their project in a way consistent with the restrictions placed upon it by the Hearing Examiner, no activity seems to be occurring. No permits have been applied for. These restrictions, plus the appearance of two new housing projects for students and families along Lincoln Street south of Fred Meyer, may have made the University Ridge project untenable. We will continue to follow this.

— Steve Abell

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