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SAM INC.



FALL 2014

NEIGHBORHOOD PICNIC

NOON TO 3 P.M. SEPT. 14 AT
THE LAKE PADDEN PARK PICNIC PAVILLION

We look forward to seeing you at our annual meeting and picnic at Lake Padden. As always, we are at the covered shelter right next to the playground. Enter through the east park entrance.

If your last name starts between A-P, please bring a side dish or salad. For those with last names between Q-Z, please bring a dessert. Our association will provide hamburgers, hotdogs, and veggie burgers. We will also provide soda.

If you know any elected officials or citizens running for election, please be sure to ask them if they are coming. Bring your chair or blanket and we'll see you there, rain or shine.

President's Comments

This neighborhood ROCKS! As your new President, I am excited to be a part of such a dedicated, conscientious association of neighbors. And we are sooooo very much neighbors.

Our goal is to make sure this neighborhood retains its character and charm, by protecting it and by being open to new ideas that will make it better.

1) Membership!!!! Please join if you haven't. It so helps us, and gives us more strength and clout. If you love our neighborhood, you should join.

2) Rezoning. Oh my gosh, we have three initiatives right now going before the City Council:

a. Next to the Baptist Church, rezoning for retail and residential/multi family units. (We are not in favor.)

b. Church of Christ across the street from the Elks, to commercial. (We are not in favor.)

c. Ashley St. above the park and ride, to multi-family. (We are in favor of duplexes, but not big apartments that would create traffic and neighborhood issues.)

3) Picnic. YES, please come Sunday afternoon Sept. 14th, at noon - 3pm.

4) Thank you Steve Abell, Gary Vodopich, Dick Conoboy and all members of the Board! Your active involvement really makes us so much better.

5) Shameless plug for the Ridgmont Garage sale, Saturday, Sept. 13. Look for it, and call Don Hale (319-4141) if you want to participate. We were thinking it would be cool if the whole Samish Neighborhood wanted to join in.

6) Our next board meeting is at 7 p.m., Oct. 9th, at the Baptist Church on Samish. Feel free to come and watch/participate. You will be a better informed neighbor if you do.

Sincerely,
Don Hale

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 September 2014 to April 2015.

Please Print

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Check all that apply

\$7.⁵⁰ household \$6 seniors Renewal New Member

Send check and form to SNA, P.O. Box 1551, Bellingham, WA 98227. To check on membership status, contact Steve Abell at 734-1098, info@samishneighborhood.org.

Board of Directors

Don Hale, president

Tom Roehl, vice president

Brian Benjamin, treasurer

Steve Abell, secretary

Dick Conoboy,

MNAC representative

Kevin Probasco,

MNAC alternative

Garey Vodopich

Don Hale

Junga Subedar

Suneeta Eisenberg

Nikki Long

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.

Rental Unit Licensing Proposals

Are city inspections necessary for renters' safety or are current regulations sufficient? You be the judge.

The City Council is having extensive debate about adding into law licensing requirements for rental properties to include registration and inspection. The Samish Board has had similar discussions. The inspection portion of licensing has been the most controversial. At the Board meeting on June 12 the Board approved 6 to 4 sending a letter to the Council expressing Samish Neighborhood's support for registration and inspection. The letter was signed by Board President Don Hale and sent. But because our vote was close and our discussion lively, we thought it worthwhile to offer our readers both sides of the debate. If you have opinions for or against the proposals being considered by the Council, we urge you to make your feelings known to the Council by letter or email prior to their final deliberations.

Health and Safety are Paramount

The City Council expects to hold a hearing, likely in September, on a proposed ordinance to register rentals in Bellingham. The proposal is one brought forward by Council Member Roxanne Murphy several months ago. Hers was one of three proposals considered by council. All three proposals called for the registration of rentals and self-certification by the landlord that the unit was safe. One required audit inspections of a maximum of .5% of rental units each year — that is about 65 units. Another called for audit inspections but placed no limit on the number of units to be inspected. The third proposal by Ms. Murphy, which the council voted to move to a hearing, contained no requirement for inspections and relied solely on complaints — essentially a registration program.

The Samish, Sehome, Roosevelt, and York neighborhoods have all sent letters or supporting messages earlier this year to the City Council and the mayor encouraging the passage of an ordinance to register and inspect rentals. Rentals that are owned or operated by state or federal agencies and that have their own inspection programs would be exempt. The total number of rental units in Bellingham is about 14,000. Over half of Bellingham's housing consists of rentals that house approximately 40,000 citizens. Inspection programs in other cities in the United States indicate that 10-30 percent of rentals present health and safety issues due to age or poor maintenance. A 2010 code revision in Olympia explicitly gave Washington municipalities and other jurisdictions the authority to inspect rentals. At least 6 cities have since adopted such ordinances.

— Dick Conoboy

Existing Law Already Protects Health and Safety

Opinions and information by opponents of licensing include:

- 1) We have one of the best supporting tenant laws in the nation.
- 2) Almost everything that the pro-registrationists want is already law in the City of Bellingham.
- 3) Thus, why create another level of Bureaucracy, another area for increasing the cities overhead? I fear more government bureaucracy, and more public invasion of tenants' (yes, the tenants' rights can be infringed on as well in this arena,) and landlords' rights.
- 4) Less than perfect (NOT dangerous) housing is important for students and non-students who don't mind imperfection, in order to save some money.
- 5) The city has received 24 complaints in the last year or so. Most of which revolve around 1) trash in the yard and surrounding areas, 2) parking, and 3) noise.

— Don Hale

A briefing on rental inspections was presented in April to the City Council by the city attorney's office. To learn more about this discussion, you can read the briefing on the city's website www.cob.org and search for document AB20382. Previous proposals and discussions also can be found by searching for **rental inspections**. The SNA letter to the Council can be found in the 2014-06 meeting minutes at samishneighborhood.org

Opinion —

Ashley Street Rezone: Here We Go Again

The docketing request to be heard by City Council covers three Samish Neighborhood rezone proposals. The second proposal is to rezone a skinny rectangle of property on the west side of Ashley Street, immediately above the WWU Park-and-Ride from Auto Commercial to Commercial Planned, which allows for residential use. This narrow property consists of a large percentage of steep slope that is subject to Critical Area rules, and abuts against the 40th Street power line easement, which cannot be used, even for parking purposes. It lies immediately in front of the five-bedroom party houses on Ashley at the corner of Byron, which were built in 2001, and which rent exclusively to WWU students.

In 2004, the Samish Neighborhood Association waged a successful battle to prevent rezoning of this land to Multifamily Residential. The proposal was for a 69-unit apartment complex for unsupervised dormitory-style housing, without adequate parking on-site. Sound familiar? Let's make a prediction: we're going to have to fight another University Ridge-style, ultra-

dense student dormitory development on this parcel, similar to the battle successfully fought in 2004.

The current rezone docketing and approval is essentially a done deal. We have heard promises from developers for family-friendly condos or duplexes to be built subject to the rezone. Moderate density infill would be welcome here as envisioned by the Infill Toolkit, but there's no guarantee. Wouldn't it be nice if our City Council would approve docketing of this property with strong language recommending NO student-only, dormitory-style housing be built here? Our recent University Ridge experience taught us that to fight successfully we should have a small war chest to fund a couple hours' time for the Seattle land use lawyers to write key letters similar to the one written to the Hearing Examiner in the University Ridge case. A small investment early, if we catch a whiff of another mega student dormitory proposal for this Ashley Street property, will ensure that our voice as a Neighborhood is heard loudly.

George F. Sanders
4062 Consolidation Ave

Membership Dues

As you may recall from earlier newsletters or from a mention at the March 2014 meeting at the Elk's Lodge, we are working toward getting all our members onto a standard March/April annual dues payment schedule. At our upcoming fall picnic on Sept. 14 we welcome all members in good standing, plus any Samish residents who wish to join our Association, or former members who wish to re-activate their memberships. In order to reach our goal of annual dues payment in March/April each year, we ask for your cooperation as follows:

Any one of these situations will maintain your membership in good standing until April 1, 2015.

- You paid full dues at the March 2014 meeting.
- You paid full dues at last year's picnic and half dues at the March 2014 meeting.
- You paid full dues at last year's picnic but have not paid half dues since. Please consider paying half dues either by mail (address is in this newsletter) or, preferably, at the picnic.
- You have not paid dues for over a year but would like to join or re-join our Association. Please consider paying half dues either by mail or at the picnic.

With some luck and your kind cooperation, this plan will get us to annual payment in March/April. If you are unsure of which situation you're in, you may send an email to samishneighborhood@gmail.com or call me at 734-1098 to find out.

As before, full annual dues are \$15 per household (\$12 for seniors). Half dues are \$7.50 (\$6 seniors).

Samish Neighborhood News

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Editor: Greg McCracken. Meetings held at 7 p.m., second Thursday of the month in the basement of the Community Baptist Church, 810 Samish Way, except in March (general meeting) and September (picnic).
To receive this newsletter by email, send a request to info@samishneighborhood.org