



SPRING 2016

Board of Directors

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Judy Brightman
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MNAC alternative
Garey Vodopich
Don Hale
Junga Subedar
Tom Read
Joy Hale
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.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

7 P.M. MARCH 15 AT THE ELK'S CLUB LOWER LEVEL,
710 SAMISH WAY

Please join us for our annual Samish Neighborhood General Membership meeting.

This meeting, and our September picnic at Lake Padden Park, are great opportunities to meet new and current neighbors and talk to board members about topics that are important to you. This meeting, like all our meetings, is open to all Samish residents – whether members of the Association or not – plus the general public. We'll be in the lower level "game room" while the Bingo game goes on above us on the main floor.

Our guest speakers include Chief Cliff Cook and Neighborhood Police Officer Eric Osterkamp of the Bellingham Police Department, and Mr. Paul Gazdik, the city's Emergency Manager.

If you are not a member of the Samish Neighborhood Association please consider joining. Among other benefits, your dues support these newsletters. Annual dues, due by April 1, are \$15 per household (\$12 senior household). If you are a current member, please remember to renew your membership by paying dues. Dues can be paid in person at the meeting (we can accept cash or check but not credit/debit cards) or by mail using the membership form in this newsletter.

President's Comments

The main goal of the Samish Neighborhood Association is to maintain the character of our neighborhood and the quality of life of its residents.

We very much appreciate receiving both financial and organizational support from Samish residents and encourage all residents to become members of our Association. If you are interested in getting more involved in neighborhood issues please consider joining the Board of Directors. We currently have several openings for new board members. The Board meets eight times per year on the second Thursday of the month except for March, July, September, and December. In March we hold our annual business meeting for all residents. In September we hold our picnic at Lake Padden Park. Board elections occur at the March meeting, and nominations can be made at any time, including from the floor at the March meeting. If you are interested or would like more information, please email info@samishneighborhood.org or call Steve Abell at 734-1098.

The speakers for our March meeting include Bellingham Police Chief Cliff Cook, Neighborhood Police Officer Eric Osterkamp, and Bellingham City Emergency Manager Paul Gazdik. Chief Cook and NPO Osterkamp will talk about patterns and history of criminal activity in Bellingham and particularly in Samish. They will also give us a look at new police programs such as Bellingham Neighbors Together and Town-Gown. Both of these programs are aimed at improving cooperation and relationships between residents and the police. They also will answer questions. To that end, they have asked that we send them our questions

President's Comments cont., page 2

Campus Community Coalition Update

You may have heard about the Campus Community Coalition only recently, but it was actually founded in 1999. A small group of administrators at WWU met to try to resolve problems with student alcohol use. Ten years later the CCC mission was expanded to include building better overall relationships between our local colleges and communities and improving the health, safety, and quality of life for the entire community. Samish has no colleges within its boundaries, but we have a multitude of rental housing units in which students reside. If there's a student rental house near you, you are aware of some of the issues that arise.

A current project led by the CCC is the Off-Campus Living website (publicly available at <http://www.wwu.edu/offcampusliving/>). Full-time Samish residents and student renters move in very different orbits, but at the end of the day we will all be happier if we get along with each other. Look at the website and see that much of the advice offered to renters is also good advice for homeowners, namely, how to be a good neighbor. There's a section on resolving conflicts without resorting to angry confrontation. The 2011 WWU Rental Housing Survey listed late night party noise, theft, and parking as areas in which conflicts most often arise. One good suggestion is for off-campus student residents and neighbors to get to know each other before conflicts arise. This approach is also highly recommended by the Bellingham Police Department.

The coordinator for the CCC is Carmen Rasmussen, who has come to our board meetings to keep us informed of progress and to hear from us what issues have come up in Samish. We appreciate the time she spends with us. She welcomes input from both students and residents, particularly reports of recent bad and good experiences. She will also try to help resolve conflicts when she can. She's not afraid to be out and about, and she's a good listener. Carmen can be reached at Carmen.Rasmussen@wwu.edu or by calling (360) 650-6863.

President's Comments, cont.

prior to the meeting so they can be better prepared to provide answers. If you have a question for our Police Department, you may send it via email to info@samishneighborhood.org or simply call me (734-1098) and tell me your question. I'll collect and forward them.

When you spin the disaster roulette wheel for our region it can come up earthquake, landslide, severe weather, flood, or even the odd tornado. Paul Gazdik will cover hazards that can impact the county, what individuals can do for themselves to prepare for those hazards, and how they can get involved in emergency preparedness for the public.

One of the things we tend to pay close attention to is rezone proposals. Looking around Samish Neighborhood it is clear that we are a residential neighborhood. Most homebuyers bought or built in Samish because they liked that aspect, so the Board gets concerned when a rezone proposal appears that would change a residential zone into a commercial one. We also get nervous when a proposal seeks a large increase in housing density. Opposing a residential-to-commercial zoning proposal is a heavy lift and normally requires a sustained effort by many residents in a letter-writing campaign and speaking at several levels of public hearings. Dick Conoboy's article in this newsletter shows where our recent efforts have been spent. We win some and we lose some. Often all we can expect to do is reshape a proposal in a way that minimizes the impact on our neighborhood. While we don't automatically oppose any and all changes, we want to continue to preserve the residential character of the neighborhood we all call home.

We will continue to be advocates for Samish Neighborhood. If you have an issue you'd like to raise, please let us know. On our website, samishneighborhood.org, click on the SNA window and you will find contact information for the entire board. We look forward to seeing you at the March 15 meeting.

- Steve Abell

Samish Neighborhood News

published twice annually by the Samish Neighborhood Association, P.O. Box 1551, Bellingham, WA 98227
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

Activities of your Neighborhood Association

Aside from holding regular board of directors meetings during the year, the Samish Neighborhood Association organizes the yearly general meeting of the membership in March and an annual BBQ in September. Your association dues go toward supporting these meetings and allowing several newsletters to the membership with information of interest to those in the Samish area. Your neighborhood association is also active in representing Samish residents with the city by appointments to the Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission, cooperation with the Neighborhood Policing initiative and testimony before the Planning Commission and the City Council on planning and zoning issues. We also maintain liaison with the Campus Community Coalition of WWU on issues involving the student presence in the community.

Over the past several years, the Neighborhood Association has acted on behalf of the residents on the following development and zoning proposals: The association was able to successfully block a change of zoning for a large complex of multi-family housing (Padden Trails) which would have placed high-density development at the outskirts of the city south of Connelly St. This was in part due to testimony provided by members of the Samish Board and letters to the Planning Commission and City Council. The association, in conjunction with the Puget Neighborhood Association, worked successfully to challenge the construction of a very large (500+ units) apartment complex for students at the Puget/Samish boundary along Consolidation Ave. at Nevada St. The Hearing Examiner ruled against the project after a group of more than 60 residents of the Puget and Samish Neighborhoods (with the assistance of the Puget and Samish Boards) campaigned for rejecting the project.

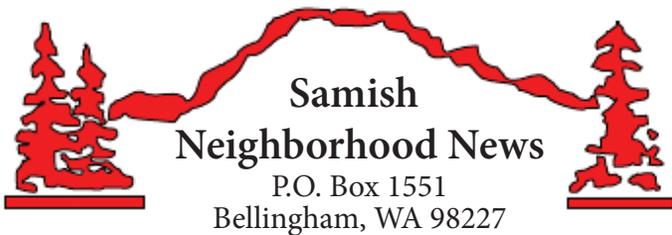
Last year, the association worked to limit the effects of three rezones within the Samish Neighborhood. The rezones involved commercial zoning changes for a property on Ashley St. adjacent to the WWU Lincoln St. parking lot and two properties on opposite sides of Samish Way near the Elks Club. Regrettably, all rezones were approved by the City Council against the advice of the association. One property on Samish where a church once stood is being converted to offices for a psychology practice that permanently removed the acreage from single family zoned land to commercial. We did have a small victory here – the commercial zoning was restricted to offices only, which will block the intrusion of blatantly commercial enterprises with bright lights and heavy traffic. The other parcel on Samish that was rezoned to commercial planned is now for sale. Plans for the third rezoned parcel are unknown; however, the owner stated that apartments were to be built on the lot. The association also assisted the Puget Neighborhood in attenuating the effects of traffic and noise associated with the construction of student oriented housing with more than 500 residents along Lincoln St. south of the Fred Meyer shopping complex.

The Samish Association was active in promoting, with several letters to the city, the passage of a rental registration and inspection ordinance to protect the health and safety of more than 40,000 renters in Bellingham. The ordinance is now in the implementation phase with the successful registration of over 18,000 rental units. Inspection of these units is to begin during the second quarter of 2016.

About a year ago, in an effort to assist a group of local residents near 40th St. (between Broad and Wilkin Streets), the Samish Association approached the Department of Public Works regarding building a gravel pathway on the east side of 40th Street. There was a ditch on one side of the road with brush and another shallow ditch on the other side that provided no room for pedestrians to walk safely to and from Lake Padden. The city determined that this path would qualify as a street improvement project and within a month the path on the east side of 40th St. had been completed.

Your Samish Association board is constantly alert for developments that may affect the residents of the neighborhood. Check the Samish Neighborhood webpage for additional information on meetings and other actions. www.samishneighborhood.org.

- Dick Conoboy



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SNA Membership Benefits

Your dues not only show your support for our Association but also enable us to provide food and beverages for the Spring meeting and Fall picnic. Dues also help us send two informative newsletters per year to all households in Samish Neighborhood plus cover incidental expenses such as post office box and website.

Please complete the membership form and add or update your email address, then mail the form with your check payable to SNA to the address shown. You may also pay dues at the March meeting (cash or check only please). We will not share your email address; we use it for timely information updates and SNA meeting information.

If you have questions about the current status of your membership please contact Steve Abell, 734-1098, or email 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 payment of dues for April 1 to March 31 of the following year..

Please Print clearly, esp. your email address

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. Thank you for being a member.