



SPRING 2017

Board of Directors

Steve Abell, president
Dick Conoboy, vice president
and MNAC alternate rep
Joe Carpenter
Judy Brightman
Kevin Probasco,
MNAC representative
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 16 AT THE ELK'S LODGE,
710 SAMISH WAY

New! Come early at 6:30 to enjoy our new

CHEESECAKE BAR

Never been to an SNA Meeting? This one's for YOU!

Come and have cheesecake your way (with cherries, blueberries, caramel syrup, chocolate syrup, ???) while we enjoy a friendly gathering with our neighbors... It's the perfect complement to the evening's disaster preparedness speakers!

Preparing for Disasters

At the March 16th SNA Annual Meeting, the board is pleased to host representatives from three local disaster preparedness agencies. Valuable information will be offered to prepare ourselves, our neighborhoods, and our community to respond to disaster. In the event of a major disaster, 911 will not be available. We will be dependent upon each other, and our own planning and skills will have the most favorable effect on our immediate recovery.

Scheduled guest speakers are:

Chalice Dew-Johnson, Whatcom County Sheriff's Office Division of Emergency Management.

Map Your Neighborhood is a simple program to organize you and your neighbors to respond during a disaster until emergency services can reach you. Neighborhoods prepared for disasters save lives, reduce the severity of possible injuries, and reduce the amount of damage the neighborhood may sustain. In addition to strengthening your community, MYN is designed to give you the structure and tools to implement the 9 steps to take immediately following a disaster. Info: <http://www.whatcomready.org>

Greg Hope, Program Manager of the Community Emergency Response Team of Whatcom County.

CERT educates people about disaster preparedness, and trains them in basic disaster response skills. CERT members are prepared to safely and efficiently assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help. In the event of a disaster, you will be grateful to have CERT graduates in your neighborhood. Consider CERT training for yourself. Info: <http://www.whatcomready.org/cert/>

Gayle Shipley, Volunteer Mobilization Center.

The VMC is a reception and referral center for spontaneous volunteers who respond to disasters in Whatcom County, WA. When a crisis strikes, human nature prompts many to help others. It is the VMC that gets that help to the most urgent locations. The VMC is young in Whatcom County and welcomes anyone who wants to be prepared to help out in time of crisis. The VMC holds meetings on the second Monday of each month at the Center for Spiritual Living, 2224 Yew Street Road, Bellingham. Info: <https://www.facebook.com/VMCWhatcom/>

- Judy Brightman

Planning Commission Makeup Changed

In the waning days of 2016, the Bellingham City Council passed an amendment to the ordinance that established the Planning Commission that places limits on the number of appointees to the commission who are also members of the development industry. The Council did this in acknowledgment that over time the planning commission had come to be heavily over-represented (6-1) by career developers and their associated industries such as real estate investors (land and real property), Realtors, real estate developers, development and environmental consultants, architects, appraisers, contractors and landscapers. The Council expressed concern that members of the same or related industries are subject to group bias and that a healthy Planning Commission ought to have representation from other professions and from the residents of the various neighborhoods.

The Council recognized this by the following paragraph from the ordinance: “The membership of the commission, should, to the extent practical, reflect a broad range of opinion, experience and expertise with the objective of providing sound advice representative of the citizenry. To achieve that purpose, the membership of the commission should, to the extent practical, include residents from different neighborhoods within the City, citizens of underrepresented and diverse communities, and citizens active in neighborhood or community affairs.”

The amendment takes effect on April 1st with the appointment of two new members to the commission who will not be in development-oriented fields. As a result of this change, the public should expect to see more questions from the commission members from the point of view of the neighborhoods. There was certainly a change in the number, tone and the direction of questions from the commission to the planning staff after the appointment of the first (in many years) “non-development” member to the board last year.

- 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.

Rental Inspections Update

The city has been carrying out rental registration and inspections mandated by the City Council. The Sehome and York Neighborhoods have been inspected with an initial failure rate of about 50% in Sehome and approximately 31% in York. No inspected units have been declared unfit for human habitation although the city is prepared to assist tenants who lose their rental due to safety and health conditions. All rentals were to have been registered by the beginning of 2016. Only a few holdouts remain from that initial registration round and the code enforcement office of the Bellingham Police Department has these cases in hand, which number less than 75. There are approximately 16,000 rental units in Bellingham subject to inspection that are contained in 5,700 properties. Each property must be re-registered at the beginning of each calendar year, however, the first renewal period ended in January 2017 with about 2,400 of 5,700 properties not re-registered, a phenomenal 42%. The reasons for the non-compliance are not readily clear but the city is working to recontact property owners who have not re-registered. Nevertheless, inspections are moving forward, now in Happy Valley and then on to South Hill, Fairhaven and Edgemoor.

- Dick Conoboy

Samish Neighborhood News

published twice annually by the Samish Neighborhood Association, P.O. Box 5144, 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

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. If you are interested in getting more involved in neighborhood issues please consider joining the Board of Directors. 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, 734-1098. We will continue to be advocates for Samish Neighborhood. If you have an issue you'd like to raise, please let us know. We hope to see you at the March 16 meeting.

Judy Brightman's article lays out the main agenda item for our March 16 meeting. Come and learn from a team of experts how to protect and care for your family and neighbors after an earthquake or other disaster. Judy is also the organizer for the shared dessert we will offer at the meeting. Save room during dinner at home that night.

Dick Conoboy's articles will give you information on city-related events, including changes in the membership of the city's Planning Commission, plus some possible future changes in city regulations.

It's been a relatively quiet year in Samish Neighborhood. A number of single family homes have been/are being built around the neighborhood. We welcome these. The conversion of the former Church of Christ property on Samish Way into medical offices was completed with negligible effect on neighborhood character. There's a logging project scheduled for this summer up on top of Samish Hill. Truck traffic will primarily affect residents on Wildwood and Whitewater Drives, and 40th Street north of Wildwood. There will be information on this at the March 16 meeting. We've been pleased to have Neighborhood Police Officer Eric Osterkamp attend most of our board meetings. He's an excellent source of information on law enforcement issues and has a permanent spot on our meeting agendas. We've also been pleased to have Julia Burns, Coordinator for the Campus Community Coalition, attend some of our meetings. If you're unfamiliar with this organization you should take a look at their website, www.campuscommunitycoalition.com. Samish has a large number of students living within our boundaries, and the Commission has a lot going on to help the residential and college communities sing together in harmony.

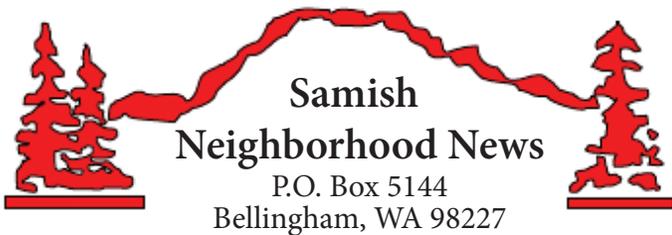
- Steve Abell

Accessory Dwelling Units and Vacation Rentals

These two topics will arise for discussion, if not formal action, by the Planning Commission and City Council in 2017. As a run-up to discussions about Accessory Dwelling Units, also known as ADUs (either attached to a single family home or detached) the planning director has already convened several sessions of a focus group to provide feedback on what should be considered as the ordinance on ADUs undergoes review and revision. The focus group, composed of neighborhood representatives, development & real estate professionals and affordable housing specialists has already provided a list of topics for consideration to include issues of owner-occupancy, limits in areas zoned single family, design standards, parking requirements and nuisance control. The focus group will likely meet again in March 2017 to review its actions to date and to finalize a package of recommended actions.

Closely allied to the ADU issue is the presence of vacation rentals (some being ADUs) in Bellingham. At the moment hundreds of short-term, vacation rentals can be found on Craigslist, VRBO and the AirBnB sites. These rentals compete with hotels but are not regulated in any way. More importantly, these short-term rentals also remove available units from the market for permanent residents of Bellingham where we already find a tight rental market. Questions of health and safety are foremost in the mind of the city as it brings forward possible laws to regulate their placement, use, registration and inspection. According to the Planning Director, the ADU ordinance will not be revised until such a time as the vacation rental issue is resolved by council.

- Dick Conoboy



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SNA Membership Benefits

Your dues not only show your support for SNA but also enable us to provide food and beverages for the Spring meeting and Fall picnic. Dues also help us send two newsletters per year to all households in Samish Neighborhood plus cover incidental expenses.

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.

Most members renew their memberships at this March meeting. Annual dues will extend membership to April 1 of the next year.

If you're not sure if your membership is expiring please call 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 5144, Bellingham, WA 98227. Thank you for being a member.