

Columbia Neighborhood Association

Membership Meeting
November 8, 2011, 7:00 PM
Immanuel Bible Church
2000 W. North Street (Lynn and North Street)
<http://www.columbianeighborhood.org>

NOTES

1. Announcements (Mark Keller)

One or possibly two seats on the board of directors will become vacant at the end of this year and candidates are needed. Please contact the board as soon as possible to indicate your interest or to nominate a candidate. The election will occur at the February 2012 meeting. A term on the board lasts for two years.

The current editor of the quarterly neighborhood newsletter, Ginger Oppenheimer, must step down from this role and volunteers are needed as soon as possible to keep the newsletter in publication. Please contact the board for more information.

2. Long-term plan for the airport (Dan Dunne)

The port district is working on an airport master plan update. Neighbors are encouraged to forward their input on such matters as flight paths, hours of operation and community impact relating to the airport to the port district. Council member Jack Weiss was present at the meeting and stated that he sits on the airport advisory committee and will be happy to convey input he receives from the community to the committee.

3. Coal train status update (Dan Dunne, change in agenda order)

As the time approaches for SSA Marine to file the next application in the process to develop the proposed Gateway terminal, the board is considering the option of composing a position statement on the project. Neighbors are encouraged to forward their input on this matter to the board. The Sierra Club will host a community discussion on this topic at the Bellingham Public Library on Monday, November 14, 2011 at 6:15.

4. Neighborhood plan (Dean Martin, new agenda item)

The board is preparing to undertake a revision of the neighborhood plan, with special attention given to the urban infill toolkit. The neighborhood is very close to being completely built out, so infill concepts would likely take such forms as splitting double lots, accessory dwelling units (ADUs). Feedback from the neighborhood is due to the city by April 2012.

5. Monroe Street (Craig Mueller, Raven Whitewolf)

In February 2012 replacement of a water main below Monroe Street (between Cherry and Broadway) and Lafayette Street (two blocks in Columbia neighborhood) will begin. Occasional detours will be required during this period. In addition to the water main, this project will include installation of some new fire hydrants, replacement of some sidewalk, curb and gutter, installation of some ADA ramps at street corners and repaving along the construction route. Road closure and construction will take place in sections of approximately 2 blocks at a time and the affected road will be temporarily paved with gravel until late May or June, when the entire stretch of road is repaved with asphalt. The new paving will be "warm mix asphalt," a new

technology that reduces energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions during installation. The new water main must be installed and then tested under pressure before individual homes can be connected. Affected homeowners will experience service disruptions of one hour or less and will be informed before service is interrupted for the final connection. Because Monroe Street is a secondary arterial (an access route for emergency services) no traffic calming strategies (such as sidewalk bulb-outs or speed bumps) can be used along this route. No new crosswalks are planned for Monroe Street.

Some elements of the Fountain District Urban Village plan will be implemented in spring 2012. At the Fountain Plaza, adjacent to Diamond Jim's Grill, traffic bulb-outs will be installed, existing crosswalks will be improved, storm water management will be improved with an underground infiltration trench, and sidewalks will be widened and will receive the "2 x 2" joint pattern that can be seen in the recently renovated sidewalks near the Post Office on Dupont Street.

6. Squalicum Creek remediation (Susan Gardner)

Phase 3 of the Squalicum Creek Park improvements are now being considered by an advisory committee composed of members from the Columbia, Birchwood and Cornwall Park neighborhoods. Extensive improvements to the park have already been completed and are described in detail in the Fall 2011 newsletter. Many additional improvements are still scheduled and a request for proposals will be published by the city in early 2012 for work that will begin in 2014. Neighbors may submit feedback or questions to Susan Gardner or the Department of Parks & Recreation on this project. Susan also remarked on the current state of pedestrian crossing conditions between West Street and Squalicum Creek Park, explaining that the crosswalk indicators and lighting are insufficient for the amount and speed of traffic on Squalicum Parkway. Susan requested that neighbors participate in advocating the city for additional improvements for pedestrian safety at this crossing, perhaps signage and improved lighting.

7. House 2 Home Network (Abby Lund, new agenda item)

The House 2 Home Network is a project of the Whatcom Volunteer Center. This service supports recently homeless residents who have acquired housing through housing case management and lack furniture. The service maintains a virtual "furniture bank" in which no items are warehoused, but instead volunteers pick up donations and transfer them directly to residents in need. In the last year the service has enjoyed tremendous success, delivering over 400 donated items to over 100 recently re-housed residents. Volunteers, trucks and, of course, donations are always appreciated to fulfill a growing need. Contact Abby Lund via (360) 224-7185 or visit <http://www.whatcomvolunteer.org/programs/house-2-home-network> to learn more.

8. Crime prevention (Flip Breskin)

Flip discussed a variety of strategies to reduce vulnerability to break-ins and crime around the home. In conversations with local police, she learned that there is an inverse relationship between incidence of neighborhood crime and being acquainted with one's neighbors on a first name basis. That is, the better acquainted we are with one another, the lower the probability of crime occurring in our neighborhood. Most neighborhood crime is opportunistic, i.e., a potential wrong-doer will ring doorbells under false pretenses until he finds an unoccupied home and will then attempt a break-in. If a suspicious individual knocks at your door and cannot adequately account for his visit, call 911 to report your concern. Tall fences, although favored for backyard privacy, also provide privacy for a criminal attempting a break-in. In many homes the strike plate (located in the door frame) for a door latch is often installed with insufficient screws 1-1/2 inches

or shorter in length. One simple security enhancement can be accomplished by replacing these with screws 3 inches in length, which will reduce the probability of the door being kicked in.

9. Map Your Neighborhood (Flip Breskin)

The Map Your Neighborhood (MYN) program is easy to participate in and can reward your efforts handsomely in the event of a major disaster. The program is carried out block by block, and brings together neighbors for a 90 minute exercise to exchange information and create a shared directory of contact information, supplies and abilities that can be shared, and to develop an emergency plan. In the event of a large disaster, the capacity of municipal emergency services is often overwhelmed and neighborhoods that are prepared to support themselves from within experience better outcomes. Neighborhood blocks that participate in MYN strengthen the bonds of community and enjoy the confidence of being prepared for emergencies. Flip exhibited an example of an emergency kit that can be kept in the bedroom that includes a hard hat and several common first aid supplies. She also explained that informational supplies and a few host incentives (a hand crank emergency radio) are still available from the fire department for neighbors who are interested in hosting a Map Your Neighborhood gathering in their block. Flip is also happy to co-facilitate a gathering for any neighbors who desire assistance.