

## Minutes for board meeting of Fairhaven Neighbors – May 2, 2005

Time and Location: 8:00-9:15 p.m., at house of Thom Prichard

Present: Bob Keller, Glenn Denkler, Migo Biciunas, Thom Prichard, Michael Lilliquist, and Janet Simpson. Deborah Frost arrived at 8:30.

Absent: Brennan Schumacher, Paul Shissler, Karl Thomas, and Jim Johannessen

1. Meeting started 15 minutes late, at 8:15 p.m. Minutes from previous meeting approved by voice vote.
2. Update on Ralph Thacker's over lay map of all of the south side of Bellingham. Ralph requests \$58.00 as financial assistance to help with this project intended to aid in planning and discussions of real estate developments in the area. Ralph will be working with a fellow in Happy Valley who can digitize the images. Janet moved that we approve the allocation, seconded by Migo; passed by voice vote without dissent.
3. Discussion of the proper role of the board, the extent and limitations of its authority, was initiated by Bob Keller. When can we speak, and in whose name? Can we say that we speak for all of Fairhaven residents, many of whom may have little awareness of our activities, when we are a small group, largely self-volunteered?

Migo responded that we are the voice of Fairhaven, de facto. People have been given a chance to be involved, and the association is the result.

Bob replied that that's not good enough. A "well attended" meeting of 30 people is not the general population, unless we can be more certain that the general population knows what we are up to at those meetings. We need to do a better job informing the public. We need to send out invitations to general meetings with a better indication what sort of actions/decisions will actually take place, rather than nonspecific description of topics.

Michael suggested that the bigger the decision, the more we should get the assent of the full membership and the general population. We don't need full participation for more ordinary business. Also, we don't always know what actions will be voted on ahead of meeting time

Thom said that it would be cumbersome to seek assent for actions; it's bad enough as it is, getting people to stay involved. We've tried and tried. Glenn also felt that involving the association might be too slow at times, and he might chose to act more quickly on his own as an individual. He added that we still have yet to act, really. Thom and Janet said that we move too slowly already, and they don't want to slow

things down. Thom pointed out that our actions and meetings have prompted a lot of individuals to take action on their own.

Bob contended that we need a policy telling the board when it needs to seek approval at general meetings, when to advertise specific actions being put up to a vote. We need a better way of getting a mandate to act and to speak for Fairhaven as a whole, he said. It's unclear what our ability as a board is to act on its own discretion, in the name of people who may or may not know what we are doing. Do we have that right?

Migo countered that we are the duly-elected leaders; we are the drivers. We are the members of the executive Board of a nonprofit corporation, not simply representatives. Glenn agreed, saying we should be here to lead. That is the spoken preference of the neighbors at general meetings. Thom added that we are accountable; we can be recalled at elections.

Deborah pointed out that there are two ways of getting participation: in person, and by email. We can boost our base by including and soliciting those people who may be involved mostly by email. Using multiple modes of communication we can move fast and more fully notify the neighborhood.

Michael reiterated Bob's issue, i.e., that we should commit to greater participation, as a matter of policy, to increase our authority to act and speak. Then we can move on to achieving our goals.

Bob still felt that we are not ready yet, and we still need to think about this. He suggests that we proceed as before, until something comes up where he thinks the board is acting without wide support, at which time he will call the board to task. Bob was generally encouraged to do so by the other members present.

4. Michael reported on our search for a lawyer to represent and advise the Fairhaven Neighbors. Almost all land-use attorneys declined to consider it, because they have conflicts of interests. They already represent developers. Attorney Philip Buri, on the other hand, was recommended by several sources and comes with a good reputation for community involvement. In addition, in phone conversations, Phil seemed to understand the Association's position and needs right away. Michael recommended that the board meet with Philip, in order to confirm that he should be retained by the Association.

Thom suggested that we don't all of us need to meet with Philip Buri. Michael thought that the more people, the better. Glenn said that we need to develop a list of questions for the lawyer, and that we should have people send questions to the email list. Deborah said that we should post a general call for candidate questions to the fairhavenneighbors mailing list, making it clear that we don't want questions about the 100-Acre Wood, just Fairhaven proper.

Michael will call Philip Buri to confirm a meeting with the board next Monday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, at 8:00 at Thom's house. It was tentatively agreed that we meet next Friday at 8:00 p.m. to go over the questions. Bob also said that we should spread the news by word of mouth.

5. Michael let it be known that he was going to meet City Counciler Barbara Ryan on his own initiative to discuss the politics of development. Several people suggested possible issues to bring up, such as the Council's understanding of the GMA, and Barbara's proposed moratorium of large developments in Bellingham. Apparently, she did not have the votes in Council. Only Terry Borneman was on board. Louise Bjornson was not on board, even though she has spoken in favor of preserving community and wise growth. Thom said that Richard Maneval's hat is in the ring for Deger's seat. Lynn Carpenter and Gerald Baron's conservative action committee may or may not be pro-development; we need to check.

Deborah asked if anyone had attended any planning commission meetings yet. Glenn said that he had and expressed disgust; he sees them as sycophantic tools of the developers, not independent watchdogs.

6. Report on the hearing examiner's decision on the McKenzie Ave vacation between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. To no one's surprise, the vacation was "approved with conditions," chief of which is that the City Council can consider additional compensations to the City.
7. Glenn asked about the special membership category. Has anyone been elected yet? Michael said that during the last board meeting we had only approved the amendment to the by-laws, but that no one had been voted in yet. We will probably report to the general membership before acting.
8. Brief discussion of an agenda for the upcoming general meeting on May 13<sup>th</sup>.
  - a. Special membership category
  - b. Appointment of block captains to disseminate news to neighbors
  - c. Report actions on retaining legal counsel
  - d. Update membership on city planning dept. actions
9. Update on the Fairhaven Neighbors sign. Migo said that he's not yet had time to act. Janet wondered who we needed to ask about putting a sign in city right-of-way. Bob said the sign was fine where it used to be, and that he would look into asking the city about putting up a sign.
10. Thom wondered if anyone knew about the survey stakes in the greenbelt. Bob said that there were survey markers in the creek, too. It may have something to do with extending the sewer lines to the Haskell property, but no one knew for sure. Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Submitted by Michael Lilliquist, , May 11, 2005.

