

Fairhaven Neighbors Board Meeting Notes, Feb 7th, 2007

Fairhaven Park Pavilion, 7:00–8:30 p.m.

1. Consent Agenda

The Treasurer's Report and the Minutes from the last meeting were approved.

2. Fairhaven Harbor decision

The Planning Director has issued his decision on Fairhaven Harbor project, basing his decision entirely on the technical error that a special SEPA checklist for buildings over 85 feet was never completed. The decision give the developer the choice of reducing the building to no more than 85 feet above grade, re-applying and meeting the SEPA checklist, or building the previous, larger design under the conditions of the old Design Review permit.

3. Haskell Property Rezone

FN will deliver a letter to tomorrow night's Planning Commission meeting, outlining five areas of concern for any possible rezone of the Haskell property along Harris Ave. Our concerns are 1) building heights, 2) traffic, 3) protection of Padden Creek, 4) stormwater management, and 5) loss of light industrial property and the associated jobs base. FN believes that a rezone is not in agreement with the stated goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

4. Report on 1989 Agreement

The Coalition of Southside Neighborhoods has submitted a letter to the Planning Commission outlining history and the faulty follow-through on the 1898 Agreement. Among the significant points is the fact that no height regulation was ever presented to the city Council, as required in the Agreement.

5. Fairhaven Neighbor's Proposed Amendment to Fairhaven's Land Use Laws

Fairhaven Neighbors has proposed an amendment to the Design Review code. Specifically, the intent is to close loopholes in height regulations that allow buildings in the area surrounding the historic core area to have no height restrictions, unlike the rest of Fairhaven.

6. Railroad Quiet Zone

FN endorsed a Resolution for a Railroad Quiet Zone, as part of the community's efforts to roll together improvements to the railway along the waterfront.

7. MNAC Report

The Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Committee (MNAC) received a request from the city for each neighborhood to appoint two representatives to the Neighborhood Traffic Safety Program (NTSP), to serve as a point of contact between the city's Public Works and citizens who have traffic issues and complaints. There was some confusion about the actual workings of this position. Glenn graciously agreed to step forward from this neighborhood, and he will contact the city to obtain clarification.

8. More on our Proposed Amendment to the land Use Laws

The board expressed appreciation for Michael's guest editorial in the Bellingham Herald on January 15th, 2007, defending the moderateness of our height limit proposal, and decrying the false choice between high-rise buildings and urban sprawl.

As part of the required procedure, we need to organize and hold a public meeting. The plan is to aim for a meeting in early June, upstairs at the Fairhaven Library.

Per our meeting with city planner Jackie Lynch, our proposed changes to the Design Review code now will include changes to other areas of the Land Use law that will be affected.

9. Neighborhood Questionnaire

Michael has been working on finalizing the neighborhood questionnaire that will hopefully be mailed out in the next few weeks, well before the public meeting. To increase the response rate, should we send follow-up postcards as reminders?

10. Lights on the Treatment Plant

A resident of Fairhaven has complained that the new lights on the Treatment Plant are too bright and aimed at the neighborhood.

12. Publicity

Migo has been working on updating the website (www.fairhavenneighbors.org). The feasibility of a newsletter (“Around the Block”) has yet to be fully investigated, and the idea of new signs is still being pursued by Migo.

14. Three New Building Projects in Fairhaven

A four-story building has been proposed for the southwest corner of 12th & Donovan, where the gas station currently resides. There are no height limits, but there are limits on individual building size. To get around those limits, the owner has proposed two tall buildings rather than one large building. FN has concerns about stormwater run-off, given the proximity to Padden Creek, and about traffic impacts at that already-stressed intersection.

A small two-story residential complex has been proposed for the southwest corner of 14th and Old Fairhaven Parkway.

In addition, Ralph and Mark Black, the owners of the block between Mill and Harris Avenues, east of 12th Street (where there is now a closed gas station and the railroad cars), have approached Fairhaven Neighbors about their plan of that block. According to Vince, the owners envision a large, multi-story building covering most or all of the block.

15. Kudos for the Painting of Chuckanut Manor

It turns out that the Bellingham Housing Authority, which owns the high-rise public residence, is responsible for the much-appreciated new paint job. Vince will be drafting a letter of appreciation to be sent to the Housing Authority from the neighborhood.

16. Board Vacancies?

Glenn will serve as chair of a nominating committee in the case that any board members decide to resign this year, prior to the end of their 3-year term. Vacancies, if any, will be filled at the next General meeting.

17. Fairhaven Merchants Association

Should we arrange a time to make a presentation at the Fairhaven Merchants Association regarding our proposed changes to the land use laws? If so, when?

18. Educational Workshops

Sue has run several educational workshops, using her “Bingo” format, to show how poorly the city has been tracking Public Works monies intended for storm water management and for day-lighting Padden Creek. She requested and received authorization for more funds to cover expenses

Minutes submitted by Michael Lilliquist, FN secretary