

Dear Fairhaven Neighbors and Friends,

As you might know by now, Fairhaven Neighbors' Neighborhood Plan Update proposal was docketed by City Council at their April 14th meeting. The vote was 4 to 2. With Council Member Bjornson on excused absence, Council Members Snapp, Knutson, Buchanan, and Weiss voted for, and Council Members Ryan and Bornemann voted against. Fairhaven Neighbors sent a letter to Council dated April 4th requesting docketing, and some individuals sent emails or spoke at the public comment period of the 4/14 meeting advocating against docketing, while one FN board member spoke requesting docketing.

These are the recent facts, not exactly reported yet in the press, and I would like to add a huge thank you to the four Council Members who voted to docket our draft Neighborhood Plan.

Also, I would like to especially thank Council Member Snapp for his courage and leadership at this time.

I would also like to invite everyone in Fairhaven to not only read Council Member Snapp's messages below, sent to us all, but also to commit to working together for Fairhaven.

Fairhaven Neighbors' Board agrees with Council Member Snapp that we will cooperate with and include all stakeholders of Fairhaven, especially in finalizing the now-docketed draft neighborhood plan. If you have any additional comments to that end, please let me know. I would appreciate hearing back from you.

The next meetings on the neighborhood plan have yet to be scheduled. We may not get help from the Planning Department on that until 2009. Most likely, we will have the charrette for the Area 4 rezone request by Mr Haskell first, and of course, Planning Academy II on the subject of infill starts this Wednesday and continues through the end of May. I hope that everyone can start thinking about these planning issues relative to our neighborhood and will be ready to work and contribute when the time comes. Regular neighborhood meetings continue on the evening of the first Wednesday of every month. Hope you can make it!

Sincerely,
Vince Biciunas, President
Fairhaven Neighbors

Here is Council Member Stan Snapp's message, dated April 23, 008:

The following request for consideration is being sent to the email addresses I have for FN, FVA and OFA. I think the question that Ham Hayes says all members of these three groups should be able to answer is a valid one so I'll include it here: "What is important to you about the process of setting the future course of Fairhaven?" I think we all would like to have a neighborhood plan that we can feel good about and I hope you will renew your efforts to that goal.

Working For Common Goals

Assumptions – There are several associations that represent Fairhaven in various ways. The Fairhaven Village Association, the Old Fairhaven Association and Fairhaven Neighbors (FN). Secondly, only FN has a neighborhood plan with a scope to include the entire geographical neighborhood. It's most recent update was in 1980. The current draft plan update application is docketed for further refinement. Next, this plan update effort has been controversial as is often the case in a democratic process. Lastly, the people that worked so hard on developing the current draft document did so with the best intentions and good will wanting to have a plan that represents the best in what Fairhaven can be, until the next review process. There have been several efforts to resolve the different issues of disagreement and some of those have unfortunately served to cause groups to split off rather than to keep working on the plan completion. Now that the plan update application is docketed for further revision and refinement, it's a good time to regroup.

With those assumptions in mind, I would like to offer up several suggestions for the three groups consideration. Since the City is only willing to recognize only one group, for this planning process, I'm asking all parties to reconsider their decisions with regards to working together, for approval and submittal of a common plan. Since Fairhaven Village Association and the Old Fairhaven Association are private groups, one primarily developers and the other primarily merchants, it doesn't make sense that they would write a plan for an entire neighborhood. What does make sense is for both of these groups have their views and special interests represented in the overall plan document that is submitted.

In preparing for this writing, I reviewed the most recent version of the Fairhaven Neighbors By-Laws, updated in August of 2007. It looks very inclusive to me, here's the [link](#): Since one of the charges has been the FN is exclusive in board make-up if you look at their web

site their board members are listed and several are merchants or former merchants.

What has also become clear is that there are individuals; when faced with choices, have turned up the volume of conflict rather than choosing to turn the volume down. The frustration from that conflict caused some to leave the committee process while working on the plan draft. I ask here, that those individuals, help their groups decide, that progress towards a coalition is more likely, if they step aside, in favor of other members that would better represent their group as F N moves to the rewrite process to complete a Plan recommendation that will go forward. I expect all groups to have the desire for a good, workable, realistic plan recommendation and, a large enough following to find some members that are willing to work productively with F N and the Planning department representatives.

In most organizations, the way to deal with special interests like the merchants is to form a committee to work on their particular interest. I don't see that working here because that group would be recommending to the F N board the merchants and developers say they don't trust to take their ideas forward. Since the current F N board wants to be inclusive, I expect they will welcome input and will want a review process that is open and will be willing to have a vote of the membership before a plan draft is sent to Planning for the next steps in the process.

Of the people that asked me not to docket the F N application, the main theme seemed to be fairness and the flawed process that tried, last summer to bring in some outside facilitation help. Differing versions of what happened have surfaced, and each view wants to "be right" at the expense of the other. My pitch here is that we need to move on and to do so now. This is the time to move on and focus on the specific wording of the plan application that is in need of change and getting to work to make that happen. There will need to be compromises and those will be best achieved at the committee level where specific wording is crafted.

Once the document moves to the Planning Department, it will be reviewed for appropriateness for a neighborhood planning document and then move on to the Planning Commission for public hearings and a recommendation and then on to the City Council for our review, a public hearing and final inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan.

Council docketed this application to keep the process moving forward. Twenty-seven years is too long between plan updates. Thank you for considering this proposal. Though Council speaks with four

votes, I think I'm safe in saying, a the majority of Council members hope, that the FN President and Board will take the leadership role in restructuring the committees, to see this process through to ultimately be submitted into the Planning hopper.

This is an excerpt from a second message from Council Member Snapp responding to two messages he's received, dated April 25, 2008:

...I don't think the City switched from OFA to FN and clearly FVA was formed by three developers and hardly counts as representative. OFA worked with the City on several merchant interests, the main one being parking, but they've not stepped up to try and represent the interests of the neighborhood as a whole and have not, to my knowledge, undertaken anything on the scope of the F N Plan of 1980 and it's current update application.

FN is attempting to represent all interests but can only do so with volunteers from all segments of the neighborhood. It's easy to find fault with specific areas the merchants have concerns about, and they are valid, but the way to make changes is to get to work on the committee's. D..., blaming the City for what you feel are political decisions doesn't move us anywhere that's good. R..., wanting a new and different organizational structure that is inconsistent with the 23 other neighborhood organizations city-wide isn't reasonable either. Docketing is a tiny step towards developing a plan that, even though a compromise, as all plans are, will be representative of all interests. Please make a personal decision to join in the effort as the F N folks have stated repeatedly that they intend to be even more open than they've been. They have changed their By-Laws and have committed to voting on whatever comes out of this renewed effort. Democracy is messy, tedious and often contentious and always produces compromised solutions. We need to move past the fears of losing customers and thinking you won't be heard or your views won't be listened to. We all have the F N boards stated intention to be open to new ideas and wording and this is especially true from the merchants group. Robin, I think building heights and views are a city-wide issue that Council needs to tackle, they are far to contentious to dump in the lap of our Planning Director and there are several of us with the political will to take it on. Whether we have the four votes necessary for Council action, I'm not so sure, but we'll know soon.

It doesn't take long on Council to realize that people who come to speak usually represent a single point of view and is not

representative. That doesn't mean it's not appreciated, we very much want and need to hear from citizens and often they bring new information to the deliberations. Though you say the survey F N did was selective, it went to a thousand people and should not be dismissed. It was a subjective opinion survey and didn't attempt statistical validity. Having said that it contains worthwhile information which should be considered in context.

FN is criticized for being a small group but the 300 pages submitted contains input from a very large group, especially when you consider the relative small size of the neighborhood and like any, volunteer effort, it's always a small number that do the work and get the credit.

This came home to me in the election process. Of a hundred people, only half are registered to vote, of those, only half vote and of those one person over the half wins an election. If you do the math, 13 people out of a hundred actually elect candidates.

We only have one application to consider and only one group that purports to try and represent the entire neighborhood. They need your help. With all do respect, I need to get to this week's Council Agenda. Thank you both for taking the time to write.

Regards,

Stan Snapp, City Council

SnappCouncil@Comcast.net