



NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES COORDINATOR

MAYOR'S OFFICE

Tim Douglas, Mayor
City Hall, 210 Lottie Street
Bellingham, WA 98225
Telephone (360) 676-6979
Fax (360) 738-7418

DATE: August 22, 2007

TO: Fairhaven Neighbors, Fairhaven Association, Fairhaven Village Association, and Fairhaven Merchants Association

FROM: Kathryn Hanowell, Neighborhood Services Coordinator

SUBJECT: FACILITATED DISCUSSIONS ON FAIRHAVEN ISSUES

I wish to clarify the purpose of the City's offer to provide the services of a professional facilitator for two separate discussions on matters of concern to Fairhaven Stakeholders. I am offering this with the hope that the principle spokespersons for the organized Stakeholders groups will move forward into productive discussions. Please share this communication with others in your organization who are interested or concerned.

In a June meeting with representatives of the above Fairhaven organizations, the City offered to fund the facilitation services for **two** separate facilitated discussions. It appears to me from emails circulating that some are confusing the processes.

Facilitated Discussion 1: Because all groups expressed the common concern that a neighborhood association include and represent all stakeholder interests, those present at the June meeting agreed to meet together with the assistance of a professional facilitator ***to explore the development of an agreed upon structure for an inclusive neighborhood organization.***

Rob Kelly and Moonwater of the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center will serve as the facilitators. In addition to the facilitators, and because bylaws figure heavily in such an effort, we have made available the services of a person of considerable expertise on organizational bylaws as a resource for these discussions. My role is that of City staff representative for this project.

The City's policy on Recognizing and Supporting Neighborhood Associations requires that a number of basic standards be met that lend themselves to inclusive neighborhood associations. These standards include that the neighborhood association:

- Is registered with the State of Washington Secretary of State as a non-profit organization with by-laws and a Board of Directors and maintains this status,
- Has clear geographic boundaries, consistent with the City's comprehensive plan, except that
 - o Neighborhoods which border an urban growth area may have membership from and include a geographic area of an adjoining Urban Growth Area.

- Neighborhoods may include a reasonable additional sphere of influence.
- The Association's by-laws
 - Describe an objective or purpose that include the preservation and enhancement of the community, and citizen involvement in civic affairs,
 - Open membership to all persons eighteen years of age or older and who reside, own property, or operate a business within the neighborhood association boundaries,
 - Require democratic deliberation and voting procedures including the election of a board of directors and/or officers by the general membership,
 - Require periodic meetings open to the public at which minutes are taken, with no fewer than quarterly general membership meetings per year as well as quarterly board meetings,
 - Require notice of general membership meetings to all residents, business owners/operators, and institutions within the association's boundaries by published newspaper notice and at least one of the following: general mailings, electronic media, delivered handbills or flyers, other media notices, and/or notices and signs posted prominently throughout the neighborhood.

The Fairhaven Neighbors revised bylaws now meet the City standard. However, by agreeing to these discussions, Fairhaven Neighbors has indicated it is willing to work together with the other Fairhaven organizations' representatives to explore the development of an organization that is acceptable for all stakeholders. It is our expectation that all participants will operate in good faith towards such a goal.

I would like to reiterate the importance of working in good faith and in a cooperative manner on these discussions. I have been copied with a number of emails discussing the process and advocating certain views and positions. While this activity is not unexpected in the period before the facilitated discussions, it can be counterproductive at this point. It is my hope that this energy can be channeled into the discussions ahead where it can be the most effective.

We have asked the facilitators to commit in writing any agreements that the participants make, recognizing that these must be reviewed by the organizations they represent. This would not be a legally binding mediation agreement. The success of the hoped for result - an inclusive organization - will always depend on the quality of interactions of both members and leadership. We hope you will take this opportunity to create such an outcome.

Facilitated Discussion 2: These facilitated discussions are for the purpose of developing an agreement on a neighborhood **Process for developing consensus**

around Fairhaven Design Standards. These standards would be implemented through the Development Code. Jackie Lynch is the city staff on this project and is currently in the process of selecting a facilitator.

In June, one of the business groups suggested their willingness to fund an architectural consultant to work on design standards. This facilitated discussion is simply to create an agreement for a process for working together on design standards and flesh out the ideas discussed at the June meeting which includes defining the process for: 1) developing the Scope of Work for the architectural consultant, 2) how the consultant will gather community input, and 3) how the consultant's recommendations will be reviewed within the broader Fairhaven community, by all interested parties. ***The facilitated discussion is not to develop the design standards themselves.***

The City remains willing to move forward with Facilitated Discussion 2. Please contact Jackie Lynch to indicate your willingness to move forward with this second project.

In closing, it is very important to point out that although the City of Bellingham has a policy of recognizing and supporting neighborhood associations and hearing from their representatives on the Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission, there are many other stakeholder groups active in the City of Bellingham. City elected officials and staff responsibly listen to all the voices in our community.

CC Tim Douglas, Mayor
Bellingham City Council
Tim Stewart, Planning and Community Development Director
Jackie Lynch, Planner
Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center, Moonwater, Rob Kelly
Ann McCartney, Ph. D.