

MINUTES

Mount Baker Neighborhood Association
Board Meeting

April 25, 2007, 7:00 – 8:30 PM
Dorothy Haggen Building

In Attendance: Stowe Talbot, Robin Hitz, Justin Taylor, Robin Hitz, Lurline Hammer, Mark Holzband, J. Kaye Faulkner, Tim Hope, Steven Neidermeyer.

Guests: Kathleen Weinand (WWU), Casandra Shoenmakers (WWU).

I. Introductions / background

Stowe described the history of how and why the City of Bellingham made neighborhood designations and why the lines were drawn where they were. Mt. Baker neighborhood is the largest neighborhood geographically and one of the fastest-growing. It is also very diverse, with shopping centers, a low-end rental apartment area, high-end housing on Barkley hill, and a light industrial area (Bakerview spur). The neighborhood's name is a source of confusion, as most residents don't commonly think of this as the "Mt. Baker" area.

A neighborhood association had existed for a few years in the early 1990's, but Kaye Faulkner re-started an association this last summer (2006). The current association board set itself the modest goal for 2007 to increase public awareness of the association, increase participation and establish a lasting organization.

Our mission statement: "The Mount Baker Neighborhood Association shall:

1. to provide a venue for the residents, business owners and property owners of the neighborhood to come together and discuss common concerns and issues;
2. to provide a mechanism to create neighborhood positions and make these known to government, business and other entities;
3. to foster a spirit of community among the people who live and work in the neighborhood."

II. Approval of minutes from the January 2007 meeting.

Approved unanimously.

III. General Discussion

Motion from Mark Holzband: "Resolved that the Mt. Baker Association petition the Mayor and the City Council immediately to address the reapportionment of association boundaries to more accurately reflect the commercial, residential, and industrial interests which are now inadequately being served. Direct the current Association Chair to present this petition to the Council and to the Mayor."

Discussion: Mark explained that Mt. Baker neighborhood is too large; he wants to reduce the size of it's boundaries to allow association members a more intimate connection with the neighborhood area. He says participants from other neighborhoods have more

cohesion with their neighborhoods.

Stowe and Robin recounted a meeting with Pat Carmen and Kathryn Hanowell (COB) about how to go about "splitting" the Mt. Baker Neighborhood into two neighborhoods, if we decided to do so. P & K suggested that this should be addressed in a "neighborhood update". Stowe, Robin and Steve explained that we feel a neighborhood update is badly needed, but we have enough work this year and would like to do the update (and propose a split) in 2008. Mark suggested that Kathryn (or COB staff) come to our July meeting to see if nine people would meet the criteria for enough support for a split. Stowe and Robin will see what the city staff says. Mark feels like we should not delay this until next year; and that residents may become more active if we split. Steve, on the other hand, believes we can be effective as a neighborhood at Greenways and traffic meetings (for example) while we prepare for a neighborhood plan update in 2008.

Vote: 2 voted for Mark's proposal (Kaye and Mark), 5 against.
Motion fails.

Steve made a motion for the splitting of the neighborhood to be a priority item in 2008 for the amendment of the neighborhood plan.
Vote: Unanimous. Motion carries.

IV. Neighborhood Plan update

We will make a proposal for a neighborhood plan update in 2008. Meanwhile, in 2007 we will concentrate on getting neighborhood input and involvement.

V. ABN and MNAC

ABN: No replacement for Kaye, we will have no representative at this time. Mark declined.

MNAC: Alternate for Robin is Lurline.

VI. Traffic issues (the City requested our "priorities")

Major arterial improvement: We submitted the I-5 underpass "connector road" between Birchwood and James as our top pick.

Residential streets: We need to identify three streets in need of traffic calming in the neighborhood. We have 4 ideas. Tim Hope suggests Magrath needs speed bumps, and gave the example of those recently installed on St. Clair.

Kaye questions James St. getting sidewalks. Stowe: There will be sidewalks put in as development continues.

Woodstock is an arterial. This it turns out is listed as "arterial" and therefore ineligible for residential street calming.

Woodside Way: Good candidate for traffic calming, especially with the new parks up there.

Sylvan and Crestline extension into Barkley: If those were put through, Steve suggests a "platform speedbump" for pedestrian

crossing at the intersection. Suggestion of stop light at this intersection? Discussion. Tim is against. Stowe wants more connected streets, which facilitates better traffic circulation and hopefully calmer streets. He gave the example of "blood circulation" in the body. Of course, those that live on dead-end streets will always fight against proposals to allow through-traffic. Tim: Traffic calming needs to accompany road developments. Tim is really concerned w/ speeders and believes that more inlets cause more problems than benefits.

Traffic stop lights on Barkley Blvd? Maybe 25 mph signs?
Discussion. Steve made a motion to propose changing speed limit to 25 m.p.h. to the City This was 2nd.
Steve made a motion for a mini survey of what the people living in the Sylvan and Crestline neighborhood think of the streets going thru to Barkley. Stowe: We'll do this (inquire with Alabama Hill Neighborhood)

Stowe: We will propose Magrath and Woodside as the two street for the City to consider traffic calming.

VII. Parks and trails issues

VIII. Communication and outreach

We need suggestions how to reach a broader audience. Direct mail? 3-4,000 mailers.

Lurline suggestions splitting up areas to disperse info to in order to split up work.

Another suggestion was to pick a special "theme" or "topic of interest" for each quarterly meeting.

IX. Barkley Village construction update by Stowe.

X. Next meeting: Wednesday July 26, 7 PM Dorothy Haggen Building.

Adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,
Robin Hitz
Secretary - MBNA