

WHATCOM FALLS NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING NEWS

The Whatcom Falls Neighborhood Association met on May 9th, and with only 11 in attendance, the meeting was just an hour long; nevertheless it had plenty of important subject matter!

After the routine welcome and approval of the last meeting's minutes by President Rick Sawyer, the first speaker was JEAN LAYTON who introduced herself as a candidate for the City Council at-large position. Her HQ is at 1609 Broadway Suite 202, telephone 360.807.5162. Find out more at her website, www.electjeanlayton.com.

President Rick then updated the group on the status of our elections and officers. Steve Williamson, our loyal past Secretary stepped down as Amanda Cook volunteered to step in; "Thanks" to both Steve for his long service and Amanda for stepping in. Our VP is Steve Dillon, Treasurer Claudia Oates, and Jeff Cook is our rep to the Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Committee. Thanks to these volunteers...so far there has been no suggestion that the WFNA needs to have a special prosecutor appointed! ;-)

Next up was our Neighborhood Police Officer, ERIC OSTERKAMP from the Bellingham Police Department. As usual, he brought up interesting topics and answered questions. Highlights:

- Yes, homeless camps increase crime; a report will be posted to Nextdoor.com. There are 78 camps but not enough Police staff to supervise all of them all the time; citizens should call 911 if there is a problem. The Parks and Public Works Departments prioritize cleanups based upon safety and environmental issues. To get a change in priorities, deal with the Council or Mayor.
- Alarm companies may have misled some of us regarding burglar alarm response by the City. Between 6AM and 10PM, police will only be dispatched if someone is home; after 10PM through 6AM, police will come out. (This is not the rule for panic alarms: those are always answered by an officer.)
- Also, re crime: Eric confirmed that "nanny cams" and other surveillance systems are helpful for dealing with crime; he also reminded us all to CALL 911 if you see suspicious activity --- don't just post it to Nextdoor (or Facebook or Twitter) expecting our police to see it!
- Regarding litter problems: The Litter Control Officer is Langley West, lwest@cob.org, 360.778.8623.

Our third speaker was PAUL GAZDIK. He is with the City of Bellingham Emergency Management Department. He brought pamphlets on emergency preparedness. He works managing emergency responders and policy makers when a disaster arises.

He talked about how a few simple steps can help you prepare for an emergency:

- Purchase a few extra cans with pop top lids when at the grocery store;
- Have a supply of non-perishable food items;
- Have extra water on hand. Recommend one gallon of water per person per day;
- Plan on having supplies to last 2 weeks for a major disaster;
- Extra medications;
- Supplies for your pets;
- Matches, batteries, blankets and games;
- Have an emergency contact who is long distance -- most of the time long-distance phone calls or text messages can get outside of the area in trouble and relay messages to other family or friends.
- Know your neighbors and discuss what to do in case an event happens.

What skills can you provide to help support each other?

- Pool your collective resources;
- KGMI is the local radio station to tune into in case of emergency;
- www.whatcomready.org is another great resource for tips and information;

PRESIDENT SAWYER then then gave us some other updates:

- The Woburn Street parking and trail access has been approved to be developed, there will be 11 new parking places installed.
- At the Water Treatment Plant, work is ongoing, reports are posted to NextDoor and are available at:

www.cob.org/gov/projects/Pages/Public%20Works/pretreatment-ew-180.aspx. The dirt excavated from the site is being recycled to the new bicycle pump track located in the upper section of the park; recycling at it's best!

- Bellingham Swim/Run is May 14th located at Lake Padden Park. More information at COB.ORG.
- The next Planning Commission meeting is May 18th
- Bellingham Neighbors Together is beginning training this month. It's not too late to sign up for this program.
- NextDoor is up to 438 neighbors in the Whatcom Falls Neighborhood. Remember, members can set their preferences on the home screen using the upper right pull-down menu. This will allow only Whatcom Falls Neighborhood to show or can be set to show all posts from the surrounding neighborhoods. www.nextdoor.com

REGARDING OUR MEETINGS: Is there a desire to have a summer picnic in Whatcom Falls Park? If so, we need someone willing to step up to organize the event. Rick is willing to make sure the information is sent out to the neighbors on Nextdoor, but he needs someone willing to run the event. We need to act soon to make sure we can reserve a shelter in the park. Reach out to Rick if you are interested.

- National Night Out is Tuesday August 1, 2017
- Mark your calendars for SEPTEMBER 12th and NOVEMBER 14th for our next meetings, and notify Rick if you have suggestions for future presenters.

--- Submitted by Joe Coons (with special thanks to Secretary Amanda Cook; I was not present at the meeting and her minutes were so complete I hardly did a thing writing the above that wasn't her writing!)