

Happy Valley Neighborhood Association Board Meeting
Tuesday, April 12, 2022
7:00 - 9:00 via 'Zoom'

Present included: Aaron Stolby, Jake Charlton, Pat Burnett, Todd Lagestee, Wendy Scherrer, John Hymas, Alex McLean, Hue Beattie, Gabe Travis, Kathy Hasenjaeger, Donna Gibbs, Terri Wilde, Tip Johnson, Sheila Dunham, Margo Hammond, Bobbi Vollendorff, Jennifer Tennessen, Nick and Bridget Galati & family, Sheilagh Brown, Rachel, Richard "Sully" Sullivan, Mary Raikes, Deborah Garrett, Rachel Belt (WWU student), Jasmine Fast,

Guests: WWU reps: Chris Roselli, Donna Gibbs

1. Welcome + Introductions

Alex welcomed all.

2. Treasurer Report:

Bobbi, Treasurer, reported HVNA financials:

Totals from WECU accounts:

- Checking account: HV Membership account = \$471.52
- Savings accounts:
 - Tree account = \$2938.08 (After receiving \$ from the Community Foundation)
 - Grant account = \$0.24
 - HV business account \$1181.92

3. Approve Minutes:

March Minutes were sent to the board members on Monday. No corrections were received. None were offered at the meeting. Minutes were then approved. Margo, Secretary, will retain the minutes document.

AGENDA

1) Western Washington University representatives:

- ❖ **Chris Roselli, WWU Director, Community Relations/University Relations & Marketing**
- ❖ **Donna Gibbs, WWU VP, Community Relations/University Relations & Marketing**

First Topic: WWU growth - past reflections and future - A PowerPoint presentation_

➤ Population and housing

Student growth:

1830 students have been added to WWU the student population in the past 20 years. Growth has been slow and steady. Bellingham has grown 20,623 in the past 20 years. WWU is the 3rd largest campus in WA State, yet it is the smallest campus of all

educational institutions. Hence it is a challenge to accommodate student housing on campus.

Recent student housing:

- WWU
 - Buchanan Towers = 125 beds
 - Alma Clark = 264 beds
 - 100 super-singles to doubles = 100 beds inc.
 - 200 double rooms to triple rooms = 200 beds inc.
 - Total = 689 beds
- Private development
 - Lark (648), Elevate (423), Stateside (513) beds
 - Total = 1584 beds

Future:

- Projected number of high school students is dropping nationally.
- Diversity is important to WWU to reflect our community diversity and beyond.
- New buildings
 - Interdisciplinary Science Building – Opened April 2022. LEED Gold. Chemistry + . Replanting plan and parts utilized as benches,
 - Kaiser Borsari Hall – First carbon neutral academic facility in the region. Electrical Engineering +.
 - Coast Salish Longhouse – House of Healing. Est. 5000-7000 sq ft. Open to the public. A gathering space for the native community. A proposed location in the Arboretum with a COB land swap, yet TBD.

(Post meeting add-on from Hue: Note increased storm water into the retention ponds from run-off from new buildings.)

Second Topic: Nearby nature area

Agenda: Discussion about the ecological status and possible routes to future improvements of WWU's stormwater facility acreage on the 22nd Street ROW (between Douglas Ave. and Bill MacDonald Parkway) – "What would it take to remove three acres of invasive species and restore this site so it was a community and ecological asset?"

- WWU: The WWU water retention facility is underneath the tennis court. It flows underneath the street to this green space south of Bill McDonald Parkway.
- Alex: This is a couple acre area which is covered in blackberries. "An ecological nightmare", with a lot of potential. It would be nice to attack the invasives and improve this area.
- John: Mentioned this was an engineered bio-swell and needed to be cleaned out every 4 years.
- WWU: Chris mentioned that Facilities Mgmt. does clean this area out periodically.

- WWU: Donna explained a WWU Campus Master Plan which is going to be generated in the next 12-24 months. Target completion is fiscal year 2023. This is different from the COB Master Plan. Scope to look at what can be improved, done differently, etc.
- Alex: Imagines climate change aware students to be able to attack issues like this. A possibility to engage students to remove the blackberries and invasive species. Alex described the Larrabee ROW work done and how this is now a positive place, instead of a dead zone covered in blackberries.
- Terri discussed the wide variety of flora and fauna there. It would be great to rid the blackberries, yet keep it a natural area. She described: alder trees, sequoia trees, ducks, owls, songbirds, rabbits, deer, and more.
- Tip mentioned the blackberries as a vector to cause damage such as invasive fruit flies.
- Bobbi has the original notebook from 22 years ago of this area documenting the area, design, plants, etc. An invitation to the person, Gary Hodges, who has been maintaining this area for this length of times. It would be great to work with him and follow this instruction.
- WWU: Gary is the Head of Grounds for WWU. Chris would like to communicate with him and facilitate the community working together on this common goal.
- Wendy (via Zoom notes): Could WWU, COB and HVNA collaborate on a maintenance plan for the storm drainage facility?
- Bobbi: Somebody has to start somewhere, so propose working with WWU.
- Tim: Recommends deciduous instead of conifer wood chips.

Topic 3: Roadways and pedestrian & bike pathways.

Agenda: Possible strategies and mutual goals for improving bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure here in Happy Valley – “How can HVNA, the residents here, and WWU engage with and influence the “Bike/Ped Plan” update to get the best results?”

➤ Historical perspective

- Tip: Unsafe road ways into Happy Valley. Tip identified there were many suggestions in the past, addressing biking, pedestrian, roads. Tip mentioned the new engineering building blocks one of the pass suggestions for a potential transportation pathway.
- WWU: A WWU pedestrian plaza idea, has not been funded by the State. Also opportunities to coordinate with the City.
- Tip: Will send the WWU reps some past documents addressing these issues.

➤ Current issues

- Alex: Does WWU have a bike and ped plan and how does this coordinate with HV?
- WWU: WWU has an Alternative Transportation person, Jullian Trinkhaus. Chris will follow with her what is a plan for bikes and pedestrians across campus.
- Bridget: 32nd St, and Douglas St. extremely dangerous. What is the vision for areas close to WWU for bikes and pedestrians?

- WWU: Chris commented - Waiting to see what the COB priorities are.
 - WWU: Wants to see what the COB plan evolves to be. WWU will support this plan.
 - Bobbi: The COB has said there is not a problem. An outcome of this meeting would be to collaborate (WWU and HV) to solve these problems.
 - Bridget: Is looking for advocacy to solve these problem areas. Asked WWU, as they are in a leadership role, to advocate for these areas.
 - Jennifer: With more students come further obligation for safely walking around the neighborhood.
 - WWU: Donna – What would you like to see?
 - Alex: We need more permeability and infrastructure for our routes throughout the neighborhood. We see emergency situations as: Douglas (with no sidewalks, blind hill, people walking in the streets due to the cars and mud on the sides); and, 32nd St. with over 300 units added in the past few years and no added infrastructure.
 - Jennifer: Recommends walking the streets. Offered to take anyone from WWU on a walking tour. There are some significant issues which are amongst the worst in our city.
 - Alex: Another problem, as with the temporary nature of students, they are not long-term advocates, hence there is difficulty getting heard with the City. So, an advocacy role from WWU for bike and ped plans would be welcome.
 - Hue: Remembers coasting on bikes from water tower on Highland Dr. all the way to Donovan Ave. It would be great to have this created into a bike pathway.
- Grants
- Alex: Asked if WWU applies for grants.
 - WWU: Yes.
 - Alex: Mentioned that HVNA is willing to support these grants.
- WWU site at Douglas and 25th St.
- Alex: Commented on the Facilities Management building and wondered of future plans.
 - WWU: There are not any plans for this building or the field area nearby. This is to be reviewed on the campus master plan.
 - Alex: 27th St. was vacated at this Facilities Management building area. It would be nice for WWU to put a bookmark as a future connector for two pathways that dead end there.

Closing

- WWU thanked HVNA for being invited to speak. Additionally, for being an active partner in our community in which we share.

2) “Shall HVNA contribute \$100 for gift cards to encourage (Varsity Village) resident participation in upcoming design meetings?”

- Wendy Scherrer: Discussed this proposal, as well as explained the scope of this project. *(Note: See details of the Varsity Village Project upcoming meetings at the end of these minutes.)* As she and Kathy H. are on the Housing Committee, and working with UW on a revisioning for the Varsity Village Area. In the near future, there are three planned meetings with various stakeholders and goals. Rick Sepler, the past COB Planning Director, asked HV to provide the locations for the meetings. He also asked for HV to provide some incentives for the Varsity Village residents to attend. Hence a request for \$100 from gift cards.
- Alex: Made a recommendation to follow through with this funding request.
- Hue: Suggested HV match amount to a Rick Sepler contribution.
- Alex: Mentioned that \$400 is being provided from somewhere, in addition to this \$100 request.
- Wendy: Noted that that Varsity Village is a prime corner of the neighborhood.
- Tip: Likes the space around this area. Why drive out community space for community building? As he lives nearby, he likes it the way it is. It works now with all the open space with the community buildings.
- Nick: Brought up McKenzie Ave. and COB said no sidewalk improvements due to lack of density; therefore we are in a bind. We need more density to justify sidewalks to the COB.¹
- Tip: Mentioned that there is an LID there.
- Tip: Noted the development on Samish Way, where there is no community space, and hence no community building.
- Nick: Has there been anyone from Varsity Village attending these meetings?
- Alex: Yes, Shovia lives there and was a board member.
- Alex: Brought the conversation back to the \$100 request.
- Kathy: Made a motion to contribute \$100 to give an incentive for Varsity Village residents to attend the focus group meeting.
- John: Seconds.
- Alex: Proctored a vote: All in favor (many), 2 opposed. The Ayes win, then \$100 is approved.
- Hue: Would like to see an edible landscape as part of future improvements.
- Wendy: Commented that she is receiving all ideas to give to the UW students.

3) Wednesday, April 27, Special 'Zoom' meeting with Public Works' Bike/Ped Plan leads, Chad Schulhauser and Andrea Reiter, to discuss the Bike Ped and how we can engage with the Update process. As a courtesy to Chad and Andrea, we will only focus on this topic and, if possible, submit our questions beforehand via Alex McLean to ensure an efficient meeting.

- Alex explained the reason for this meeting. Bicycle and pedestrian related questions are being solicited from all and will forward these to Chad. This is a special meeting as Chad could not make it on a Tuesday night for a HVNA meeting.

Old/New Business

Update on Hospice House property – Alex

- An email from Hospice house (Linda and David), in discussion, and agreement with the Parks Dept. They will probably put up no trespassing signs, and recommended any guerilla plantings should cease. Alex seems like there is a mixed signal to the many people who use this site. They will be building a fence along Douglas Ave., as cars are still entering this area. Seem like they are still in the vision of the utilizing this area (8.6 acres) as a park-like area for public spaces.

Update on 27th Street ROW – Alex

- Met with Pat and Amy, as there are more trees being cut down on this property. Alex has the school district, Parks Dept, in agreement on a public trail, yet Public Works seems confused. Will reach out to Michael Lilliquist again to see if there are any answers, as there is a hold-up of some sort. Hue mentioned an At-Large person, Christina Martins. Alex has emailed several City Council people involved with Public Works.

Additional – Work Party scheduling

- Pat: Was wondering how work parties are organized and communicated. How are the various work parties in various areas mentioned in this meeting being communicated? Pat mentioned he can post information on work parties on the HVNA website.
- Wendy: Offered some details.
- Thank you Pat!

Additional – Upcoming events: Work Parties etc.

- Wendy: Will host a work party at Larrabee ROW.
- Alex: Is hosting a work party on North end of Connelly Creek on June 4th 9-noon.
- Wendy: Mentioned on June 4th, is the Native Plant Walking Tour. Landscaping at Wendy's house and the Larrabee ROW is on the tour list.
- Jake: Mentioned some community garden workshops (w/ fee) coming up at the Fairhaven Community Center.

➤ **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

A. HVNA website: Jake, Pat

- Website updates: Pat just added a work party tab on the google site:
<https://sites.google.com/view/happy-valley-neighborhood-asso/2022-april-meeting>
- Jake and Pat will work together on updating the website.
- Alex thanked both with being our tech wizards.

B. Trees, Trails and Streets: John

- No work parties planned.

- Recently had a meeting at Shelia's house to discuss next year planting. From now until October, looking for planting sites. These could be right-of-ways and front yards. Looking to recruit some students. Going to contact out of area owners to see if they would like street trees in front of their property. No guerilla planting planned.
- A meeting is planned for later this month, next Tuesday at 5pm.
- Request for locations for street tree planting. Send to Sheila and John.

C. Housing: Wendy

- Previously discussed.

D. Newsletter

- None

E. MNAC: Bobbi/Jake

- A while ago. Bike/Ped plan won't consider ROWs unless there is any other infrastructure connections, i.e. a sidewalk.

Additional announcements

Politics

- Hue: August primary. Jason Call running against Rick Larsen. Hue suggests voting for Call in the primary. So far, raised \$100k, and needs \$1,000,000 for a congressional run. Rick has been in this position since ~2000. Alex Ramel has a competitor. Hue likes Alex.

WWU follow-up

- Tip: Asked for WWU speakers email addresses to send historic documents relating to pedestrian and bike transportation.

HV Community

- Hue: Greeted Deborah Garrett. Asked for any words of wisdom.
- Hue: Mentioned it was nice to see everyone at this meeting. 🐼

Environmental idea

- Sheila: Posed a question to Wendy, about the topic "No mow May", an community effort to make gardens inviting to pollinators. Recommended review by the Tree Committee.

Closing

- Alex thanked all for participating.
- Hope to see everyone on April 27th for the Public Works meeting. Will be noted on the HVNA website.
- Motion made to adjourn. Seconded. The meeting officially ended. Bye all!

(Note: See Zoom meeting comments at the end of these minutes. Provided by Jake.)

Next HVNA Board meeting: Tuesday, May 10, 7:00 p.m. – 'Zoom' or in-person TBD

Varsity Village Housing Project

(Attached items – courtesy of Wendy Scherrer and Rick Sepler)

This is the blurb that the Housing Authority will send to their residents (via Wendy).

“The Bellingham Housing Authority (BHA) is working with a team of University of Washington (UW) graduate students to assess future needs and opportunities for Varsity Village. The students will evaluate the need for community facilities to serve both the residents and neighborhood, the potential for infill development and other possible improvements. The results of the study will inform long-term planning by the BHA.

The UW team will be working with BHA staff, community members (through the Happy Valley Neighborhood Association) and residents of Varsity Village to identify priorities and opportunities that will frame the development of preliminary alternatives for the site.”

(Via Rick Sepler)

Hi Wendy -

We really appreciate all that you have done in support of this process! The good news is that we believe that the BHA is becoming increasingly supportive of the idea of adding density and housing choice at the site! I also know that City staff have indicated that they believe in the process and can support the effort. This is all good!

As we come closer to our first events (2 Focus Groups and the Varsity Village residents' open house), we will start to accrue some small expenses (beyond what the UW can support - most of the allocated UW \$ are going towards arranging the transportation to get the students to the meetings).

I've asked the BHA to support the copying and materials for all of the events. They will also take care of mailing materials, posting in Varsity Village, etc. I've also asked them to provide snacks at the “everyone attends” meeting in May.

We'd like to ensure a good turnout for the Varsity Village residents at the open house. One way is to have a drawing for two \$50 gift cards at the open house with only Varsity Village residents who attend eligible. We'd put this on the posters, e-mails and flyers. We'd also like to provide snacks at the open house.

Do you think the Whatcom Community Foundation would provide some funds to support this effort? Purely on a reimbursable basis - not to exceed \$500? Do you have a connections with the Foundation? Would you like me to follow-up with them?

Thanks for any help you can provide on this!

Rick

Rick Sepler, retired City of Bellingham Planning Director, is working with the Happy Valley Neighborhood Association (HVNA), as he is teaching a class for the UW Master of Planning students in spring quarter, that focuses on a case study of Varsity Village. Attached is a class description. I met with the students in February and gave them an orientation to the Happy Valley Neighborhood. The HVNA Board is working with the students to educate them about Happy Valley housing challenges and examine the current site plan at Varsity Village and generate ideas regarding possible future infill and the Varsity Village community, with cooperation with the Bellingham Housing Authority Director Brien Thane.

- **4/18 6:30-8:00 pm:** Students meeting with HVNA Board
Our Saviour's Lutheran Church Social HAall
- **4/20 5:00 pm-6:30 pm:** Open house for Varsity Village residents
Happy Valley Elementary School Library
- **5/23 6:30 pm:** Open house and bringing all the groups together
Our Saviour's Lutheran Church Social Hall

Varsity Village as of 2/3/2022	
Number of Tenant Households	99
Number of Households w/ Dependents	56
Total Number of Household Members	205
Household Members Age 0-5	18
Household Members Age 6-10	16
Household Members Age 11-15	25
Household Members Age 16-18	30
Household Members Age 19-61	91
Household Members Age 62+	25

HAPPY VALLEY NEIGHBORHOOD 2022

2022 Population

Single Family Population: 1,739
 Multi-Family Population: 5,110
 Mobile Home Population: 140
 Group Housing Population: 68

Total Housing Units: 3,681

77% Rental Units

TOTAL POPULATION: 7,057

Meeting commentary as noted on Zoom:

Bridget Galati

7:07:46 PM

Hi Bridget and Nick at 32nd and McKenzie

Pat Burnett (he,him)

7:10:21 PM

Ducks in order...love it!

Bridget Galati

7:13:52 PM

Is there a presentation? We can't see it yet if so. Thank you!

Rachel Belt

7:13:52 PM

we can't see anything

Bridget Galati

7:17:20 PM

Are 1-4 WWU owned and managed and then what is the category for 5-7? Thank you.

5-7 are private on Western campus proper, right?

Donna Gibbs

7:18:13 PM

Hi Bridget, 1-4 are WWU owned and managed and 5-7 are privately developed and managed.

Bridget Galati

7:18:21 PM

Thank you

Tip Johnson

7:20:04 PM

I see you have increased beds and enrollment. What is the current ratio? What is the goal?

Donna Gibbs

7:21:13 PM

We can house about 5,000 on campus of a Bham student population of about 15,000.

Rachel Belt (wwu student)

7:25:53 PM

Where will the Kaiser building be?

Wendy Scherrer

7:30:44 PM

Could WWU, COB and HVNA collaborate on a maintenance plan for the storm drainage facility?

Donna Gibbs

7:39:17 PM

Thank you, Terri!

Right, Bobbi!

Bridget Galati

7:49:20 PM

Nice segway to bike and ped discussion

Terri Wilde

7:53:28 PM

I need to put my birds in. Perhaps we can have a walkthrough and maybe small work party with Gary Hodges and interested neighbors in the near future. Could someone at wwu organize that?

Thanks, Terri wildefoods@yahoo.com

Bridget Galati

7:57:08 PM

Exactly. I see Western shirking its responsibility to its students. I am disappointed Chris and Donna.

We count on you. We really do.

32nd street was in 2014 bike plan and COB has done no improvements

No crosswalks exist on 32nd

Western could be such an important voice on this

Gabe Travis

8:01:25 PM

For those who may not be aware, Western's Urban Planning Studio class (ENVS 474) is taking a close look at the Happy Valley Neighborhood this quarter.

Bridget Galati

8:01:38 PM

^^^ thank you Gabe!

nothing

Wendy Scherrer

8:03:35 PM

Happy Valley Neighborhood has 78% multifamily housing units, including housing for WWU, WCC, BTC NWIndian College, Sehome HS, Happy ValleyES, and other students, their families and staff. We have 7000 residents, the largest neighborhood in the city, We need safe bike and pedestrian routes connecting us all.

Bridget Galati

8:03:49 PM

^^^

And love that Jenny

Jennifer Tennesen

8:04:43 PM

jennifer.tennesen@gmail.com

Jasmine Fast

8:04:45 PM

Thank you, Jenny!

Rachel Belt (wwu student)

8:04:53 PM

^^^Little correction ^^ My class, Planning for Sustainable Communities ENVS 474 is looking on working on a project in the HV neighborhood.

Bridget Galati

8:05:07 PM

So awesome

Rachel Belt (wwu student)

8:05:17 PM

I am a WWU Urban Planning Student btw

Pat Burnett (he,him)

8:05:38 PM

Welcome Rachel! Thanks for attending :)

Rachel Belt (wwu student)

8:06:09 PM

Thanks for hosting!

Bridget Galati

8:15:08 PM

Thank you!

Pat Burnett (he,him)

8:17:15 PM

<https://sites.google.com/view/happy-valley-neighborhood-asso/2022-april-meeting>

Dates are here on this page

Margo H.

8:19:39 PM

Nice.

Wendy Scherrer

8:34:19 PM

-4/18 UW students meet with HVNA, Our Savior's Lutheran Church 6:30-8pm + -4/20 5-6:30pm Open House for Varsity Village + -5/23 6:30pm Open house, bring HVNA, Varsity Village, and UW folks, bringing all the groups together

Bridget Galati

8:38:39 PM

Kristine Michele Martens is good too

Thank you all so much we gotta get kids to bed have a good night!

Jennifer Tennessen

8:42:55 PM

I need to catch the end of another meeting and then do kid bedtime. Thank you everyone.

Margo H.

8:44:38 PM

Alex when is your work party on N. Connelly Creek.

Pat Burnett (he,him)

8:47:17 PM

<https://sites.google.com/view/happy-valley-neighborhood-asso/2022-april-meeting>