

THE YORKER



York Neighborhood Association • www.yorkneighborhood.org • December 2008

York Submits Plan Amendments to City

by Anne Mackie, Planning Committee Chair

After nearly two years of meetings, surveys, voting, and more meetings, the York Neighborhood Association (YNA) finalized its Neighborhood Plan Amendments and submitted them to the City on December 1st. These are "hot list" issues that were voted on by a neighborhood-wide ballot process, with final approval by the YNA Board at its November meeting.

When we started this process two years ago, the original intent was to do a complete rewrite of the York Neighborhood Plan. However, in August 2008 City Planning Director Tim Stewart

announced that the Planning Department would not be working on full-scale neighborhood plan updates, so we shifted gears and trimmed our proposals to key amendments. Final amendments submitted to the city included two important proposed rezones (Sub-Areas 1 & 9), land use regulation changes, two parks/open space proposals, support of historic preservation, and eight transportation/traffic safety proposals.

YNA began the lengthy public process by conducting a neighborhood-wide survey to assess issues of concern and gain input for the plan update. Public meetings were widely publicized and held in 2007 and 2008.

A YNA Planning Committee organized the ongoing work with monthly meetings and workgroups. The YNA Board met monthly and stayed abreast of the planning process and developments. Three mass mailings to 1,000+ residents and businesses were issued publicizing meetings and the plan voting process. The Yorker newsletter was published four times this year with information about the neighborhood plan update.

On November 10, 2008, a special meeting was hosted to discuss the specifics of one plan amendment for rezoning density on Ellis Street. Individual letters of invitations were mailed to 175 property owners on Ellis and Franklin streets.

Finally, ballots were made available via the yorkneighborhood.org website or via paper copies. Fifty-five residents and/or business owners participated in the voting: 82% home owners, 9% renters, 13% rental property owners, 11% business owners. (Some people qualified for more than one category; totals are rounded.)

Sub-Area 1 Amendment: This is the area on Whatcom Creek currently housing the Bellingham School District bus barn, which we hope the City will eventually purchase. Rezone the western section of Sub-Area 1 to change it to public land use with the goal to convert the public land into a City park. 98% favored; 2% opposed.

Sub-Area 2 Amendment: This area borders downtown and includes Wilson Motors' property; the amendment hopes to encourage use for multi-family housing or commercial uses. Special regulations: No more than 40% of any one property shall be taken up by open surface parking. 90% favored; 10% opposed.

Sub-Areas 4, 5, and 9: Promote historic designation within these areas. 86% favored; 14% opposed.

(continued on page 3)

Come celebrate the holidays at the 4th Annual YNA Holiday Caroling and Wagon Ride!

Join us at Nelson's Market on Saturday, December 20th, at 6 pm for cookies and hot chocolate. Departure times are at 6:30, 7:15, 8:00, and 8:45. If the roads are too icy, it is unsafe for the horses and the wagon ride will be cancelled. Songbooks will be provided, but please dress warmly and bring a flashlight in order to see the words — just in case you don't have Frosty the Snowman already memorized.

Interested in baking cookies, or donating money or your time to help with this event? Please contact Elisabeth Stark at President@yorkneighborhood.org.

2009 YNA Board Elections

Do you have a New Year's resolution to become more active and engaged in your community? Perhaps joining the York Neighborhood Association Board of Directors is just what you're looking for! There are many opportunities to become involved: neighborhood planning, disaster preparedness, Franklin and Rock Hill Parks, neighborhood safety, Wine and Roses Garden Club... and the list goes on. Time commitment is attendance at 6 of 12 board meetings (held the third Wednesday of the month) and leadership on one committee or time-sensitive project (like the annual picnic). The next board meeting will be on December 17.

The YNA Board of Directors elections will take place at the general meeting to be held in late January 2009 at the Garden Street United Methodist Church. Keep your eyes open for the date, to be announced after the New Year. For more information contact Elisabeth Stark at <president@yorkneighborhood.org> or 715-3728.

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Results of Plan Amendment Voting

(continued from page 1)

Sub-Area 7: Identify and include the accessible, open spaces surrounding Franklin Park that are currently classified as unimproved street rights-of-way in the 1200 block of Franklin Street. 98% favored; 2% opposed.

Sub-Area 9: A rezone to density of 3,000 sq. ft. per unit is proposed; Eliminate Special Conditions except: Historic Buffer between Area 5; Special Regulations should be amended to state that office uses are limited to conversion of existing housing stock, with reduced parking required to preserve the historic housing stock: 67% favored; 33% opposed.

Design

Enforce and expand current regulatory codes to prevent degradation of existing historic housing stock and remove incentives to neglect such properties. 83% favored; 17% opposed.

Establish neighborhood design standards to ensure new development is in scale with and architecturally compatible with historic character and single-family homes. 92% favored; 8% opposed.

Add supporting open space, parks and recreational opportunities. 98% favored; 2% opposed.

Use environmentally sensitive planning and construction for multi-unit construction and remodeling. 69% favored; 14% opposed.

Transportation

Install pedestrian crosswalk at Lakeway Drive between Franklin and Grant streets. 96% favored; 4% opposed.

Install pedestrian crosswalk on Samish Way on Maple St. 96% favored; 4% opposed.

Improve pedestrian crosswalks at Gladstone and Ellis streets for visibility and safety. 96% favored; 4% opposed.

Install traffic calming devices to slow traffic on selected streets. 78% favored; 28% opposed.

Install sidewalks and curbs on blocks where there are none to facilitate pedestrian safety. 98% favored; 2% opposed.

Residential Parking Zones to be considered in selected areas that suffer from inadequate residential parking. 74% favored; 26% opposed.

Create identified, safe pedestrian and bicycle causeways, running north to south and east to west, to link the neighborhood internally and externally to destinations and encourage non-motorized transport. 96% favored; 4% opposed.

Implement safety, visibility improvements for (1) sidewalk/underpass of I-5 at Lakeway Dr.; (2) Ellis, Lakeway, Holly intersection; (3) alleys throughout neighborhood. 91% favored; 9% opposed.

New Year's Resolution: Be Prepared

by Carol Dixon

Come and bring your neighbors to the York Disaster Preparedness Presentation on January 28, 2009, 7:00 pm at the Garden Street United Methodist Church. Don Davis, Emergency Management Specialist for the Bellingham Fire Department, will give an overview of the Washington State Map Your Neighborhood Program. The 90-minute session is based on the premise that in communities where neighbors help neighbors, survival rates are higher after a disaster.

Treats will be provided!



Disaster Preparedness Committee members Ivy Yap and Carol Dixon, ready for any emergency at the Night Out Against Crime picnic. *Photo courtesy of Jeff Bates.*

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Yorkers Unite Against Crime

by Sarah Grout Bates

Last August 5th, the York neighborhood was one of many that participated in the 25th annual National Night Out Against Crime. Neighbors met at Franklin Park for a picnic, and to talk about how to keep one another safe in York. If you missed the event, and chances are you did, here are some tips from the city about Block Watch philosophy.

LIGHT IT UP: Keep front and back lights on when it's dark out. Consider motion lights.

LOCK IT UP: Remember to lock your home and vehicles. About 60% of all vehicle prowls and burglaries are from unlocked vehicles and/or homes. Take all valuables out of your car every time you leave it.

LOOK AND LISTEN: Look out for yourselves and your neighbors. If you hear or see anything suspicious in your neighborhood, take action. Always try to solve the problem at the lowest possible level...taking your safety into account. Call the neighbors, take down descriptions or license plates, and call 911 as needed.

BLOCK WATCH: Become a Block Watch captain. If you're interested in organizing a block watch and leasing a Block Watch Sign visit www.cob.org/services/safety/police/blockwatch.aspx or contact the Bellingham Police Department at (360) 778-8800.

York Quality Committee

by Lesley Keenholts

The York Quality Committee is looking for neighbors who have some ideas, talents, and time to serve on a sub-committee to brainstorm finding ways and means to help our neighborhood become brighter-lit and to promote safety and security for our neighborhood. The Quality Committee meets on the second Sunday of the month, 7pm, at Nelson's Market. All are welcome. Those interested can contact Lesley Keenholts (leslieljk@msn.com, 647-7768) or Anne Mackie (annemackie@yorkneighborhood.org, 738-0547).

The days are getting shorter, and it's getting dark earlier and earlier. Adequate exterior lighting is even more critical during the winter months to help prevent accidents and reduce potential for burglaries and home invasions.

Turning on our front and rear entry lights at dusk provides easier and safer approach to our homes for mail and UPS deliveries, friends and family, and emergency services. A well-lit exterior discourages criminals, as they risk being seen by neighbors or passers-bys.

Alley lighting is also encouraged by both the police and fire departments; some neighbors have installed alley lighting that is motion-controlled to reduce expense. Painting (or purchasing) light-reflective address numbers on the back of your home or garage where they are clearly visible from the alley assists emergency vehicles in locating your address quickly from the rear entry when necessary. In an emergency time can be critical, so adequate lighting and clear address identification could save lives.

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York Closer to Historic District Designation

by Lynn Gobush

One part of the York neighborhood is moving a step closer to application for National Historic District status. The area north of Lakeway and bounded by Ellis St. on the west and 1-5 on the east (area 5) is tagged as the probable choice.

Neighbors will be asked to vote on the nomination early in 2009. Watch for announcements of a public meeting sometime in January or February.

For several years now, York residents have expressed interest in historical preservation, through surveys, neighborhood plan updates and public meetings. The YN Historical Preservation Committee, endorsed by the Board, has been researching the process to designate some or all of the neighborhood as a National Historic District.

In 2008, the City of Bellingham won a matching \$150,000 Preserve America grant award from the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. This gave the Committee a big push forward to work toward nomination.

York, along with the Lettered Streets and South Hill neighborhoods, is working with the City of Bellingham to survey and inventory their properties by photographing, researching and documenting buildings over 50 years old. All this can be folded into the nomination application.

The National Historic District designation is honorary, and imposes no restrictions to property owners. It provides an incentive for possible increase in property values, and can aid in securing federal and state grant funds. It helps in understanding and documenting change, defining neighborhood character, and advancing neighborhood pride and revitalization efforts. It also supports efforts to secure local historic district designation, which DOES require design review and restricts demolition.

To learn more, visit the City of Bellingham's web site www.cob.org. Click on Services—Planning and Neighborhoods—Historic Preservation—Historic Resource Survey and Inventory Project. Also, see www.hp-nw.com/bellingham for specifics on the project tasks and timelines.

To see some of the work that has been done on surveying York properties, visit City of Bellingham City Hall for a display of maps. In addition, a professionally done display of architectural styles and features found in the neighborhood is shown.

There are still opportunities to help with the Grant America project! Some intensive development of written work lies ahead. Kolby LaBree is the research coordinator for this project. You may contact her at househist@gmail.com or through our dedicated phone line at 360-778-8953.


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Volunteers Pitch in at Franklin Street Island

by Helen Jackson

Make a Difference Day, Oct. 25, brought 40 volunteers from the York neighborhood, the City of Bellingham, and WWU to the Franklin Street Island Planting Party. Over 850 small bulbs, plants, shrubs and trees were planted in one fell swoop.

Thanks to Lynne and Jamie Henefin for donating their time and skilled crew to devise a plan and build the forms for our stone benches on the Franklin Street Island. We couldn't have done it without you! Kudos to you for enriching our community through your generous contributions.

Starbucks at Sehome Village provided coffee and tea for the Make a Difference Day Work Party. We applaud your community spirit!



Photo courtesy of Jeff Bates

Many Thanks to:

- The crew leaders who led the way: Cindy Kaufman, Ron Barnett, Sarah Bates, Kirsti Charlton and Vilma Camp
- The Parks Department Volunteer Program Coordinators: Kathy Eldred, who was here to organize and enlighten, and Rae Edwards, for always lending a supporting hand and thought
- The many resourceful neighborhood, city-wide and WWU student volunteers
- The City of Bellingham for the Small & Simple Grant that funded this great project.

It will take a couple years of growing and caring for all these native plantings to mature into a diverse, colorful open-space. I know we'll all enjoy the process and appreciate the result for many years to come.

Many thanks to Anne Mackie, Helen Jackson and the YNA Planning Committee for their dedication and hard work spent on York's Neighborhood Plan Update. Your expertise, flexibility and perseverance is very much appreciated.

A big thank you to Garden Street United Methodist Church for their continued support of the York Neighborhood Association!

Many thanks to the neighbors who donated to the York Neighborhood Association:

- Barbara Davenport
- Andrew and Holly Fletcher-Love
- Karl and Robin Frank
- David and Yvonne Hall
- Lesley Keenholts
- George Liepart
- Michael Neville and Don Hilty-Jones
- Mark Nuyens
- Mark Sherman and Leigh Mcdiarmid
- Alice Swan
- Darol Streib

A special thank you to the landlords who have continuously and generously donated to support the YNA: Judy Frane and David Chicovsky

And, of course, to the businesses who graciously contributed to the YNA:

- AA Anderson
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- Mt. Baker Planned Parenthood
- Signs Plus
- Stan's Auto Body
- Sterling Automotive

Your donations contribute to neighborhood activities and create opportunities for Yorkers to come together and build community. Thank you for your support!




As our days get shorter remember to turn your porch lights on for Mike the Mailman!

Mission Statement of the York Neighborhood Association

The mission of the York Neighborhood Association is to reduce isolation among residents, enhance the quality of life in a low and moderate income urban neighborhood, create a sense of community, reduce or prevent crime, and preserve the historic character of the neighborhood.

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