

Bigelow Highlands Neighborhood Association General Meeting

Tuesday, April 10, 2012, at 6:30 at the Olympia Metro Church

- All officers were in attendance: President Rus Geh, Vice-President Angie Warner-Rein, Treasurer Melissa Allen, and Secretary Jim Burlingame.
- We did introductions.
- Melissa gave the Treasurer's report. We have \$372.02. BHNA has moved its money from Bank of America to Twin Star Credit Union; Melissa and Rus are the signees on the account. Rus said we received \$15.69 from Storman's (from people listing BHNA as the group they want 1% of their Ralph's or Bayview purchase cost to go to). Rus pointed out we should regularly remind people in the newsletter about how they could help BHNA by listing us on their Storman's rebate card form. Melissa said she's been wondering about whether we should remind people who've paid dues in the past that the time when they might want to pay is coming up. Bob Peller said BHNA has always left it up to residents whether to donate, and how often. Some people think the word "dues" has a confusing, obligatory connotation, so, when Bob and Jim look at updating the bylaws in the near future, one probable recommendation will be to change that to "voluntary contribution" there (and on the newsletter form, as well).
- Rus explained how we (the Grant Committee) put together an application for a Matching Grant, and how we received one worth \$2400 from the city. It's less than we asked for, but we can make it work for the three proposed projects: a neighborhood directory, BHNA signs, and sidewalk art. They must be completed by November (or, at least, all receipts for expenditures must be turned in to the city by then), or else the city won't pay its part. We'll be dedicating \$800 of the city money to each of these, and calculating our "matching" part through donated goods, services, and volunteer hours.
- Simone Boe talked about the neighborhood directory idea, passing around a mock-up of what it would roughly look like. She said the process (of creating it: neighbors meeting neighbors to gather information) is more important than the product, since that will also be about raising awareness of BHNA and networking. Concerns for privacy will be respected; it will be an "opt in" project. People will be able to get a copy, even if they don't want their information in it. There will be two versions: one will be the full thing (with the names, phone numbers, e-mail address, street addresses, etc, of those who want to be listed, as well as interesting/useful BHNA info) and the other will be a little sheet that can be hung on a doorknob or stuck to a fridge (with just emergency/basic BHNA info). The directory won't have ads, but, just as Bigelow Highlands residents will be able to be listed, businesses in this area will be able to describe themselves too. As to where the funds will come from to update the directory, next year or whenever, we will wait and see how this first version turns out and how it's received, before talking about whether we want to use BHNA treasury funds to update it or apply for another city grant to do so. Simone noted that part of the original vision was that bits and pieces of neighborhood history would be scattered throughout the directory. The next Directory Committee meeting will be at Simone's house (401 Lybarger St. NE) Saturday, April 21, from 9:30 to 11:00. Angie, Pam Judd, Susi Obryan,

Jessicarae Nuñez, Gail Garrard, Gail Sanders, and Diana McCandless will be on this committee. Anyone else interested can contact Simone at teachergirloly@gmail.com.

- Rus talked about the BHNA sign project. Depending on cost, we'll put up between two and four metal signs on either pre-existing poles or stand-alone poles on the boundaries of the Bigelow Highlands. We need volunteers to help A) choose locations for the signs, B) help design them, C) look into how we can get them made, and D) help install them. There will be one combined committee for this and the next project (at least initially), the Sign and Artification Committee. Jim, Rus, and Angie will be on it. Jim will send out an e-mail to the listserv soon calling for volunteers and proposing a few dates for the first meeting, at his house.

- Rus talked about the sidewalk artification project. Originally this was to be something done at the base of the BHNA signs, but that seemed too difficult, when the city awarded us less than we'd expected. Now the plan is to choose one or two stretches of sidewalk that are already in disrepair and replace the broken concrete with tiles that will have art and/or writing (stories or poems). Those living adjacent to these sections of sidewalk (and those they invite to help) will design, lay down, and maintain these areas. Besides beautifying our neighborhood, this project will personalize it and, hopefully, be an added incentive to draw people out onto the sidewalk together. The city's only concern about our changing the sidewalks is that whatever we put down be safe and durable. Jessicarae will get us in contact with a woman who lives on Puget who made the sundial mosaic in front of Roosevelt Elementary. She also said she and her husband Ruben could give advice on construction. Susi talked about Village Building Convergence, which is represented locally through the eco-building site at Fertile Grounds Guesthouse. Laura Young suggested we rely on talent from our own area. Anyone interested in having tile artification in front of their house, or in helping with this project in any way, should respond to the e-mail Jim will be sending out referenced above.

- Rus also talked about how, on the grant application, we'd talked about a fourth project, a group street painting (which we're calling a "mandala," but it could be a big flower or anything else). He wants to keep this idea alive, especially it would cost very little do. Jessicarae suggested getting kids involved. Jim suggested tying it in with our annual BHNA party. Jessicarae and Kate Arvin will meet to talk about this idea, perhaps later combining with the Party Planning Committee.

- Melissa talked about the Garden Tour, which will be on Saturday, June 30, at a starting time and place to-be-announced. As with last year's, it will be just for us (i.e., we won't advertise to the city at large). People can share their gardens or just their dreams for their gardens; it's not about perfection. Melissa will see if we can get an arborist (maybe the city's) to come along and talk about trees. If you're interested in participating or helping, contact her at Melissa.allen@comcast.net.

- Melissa also talked about the remodeling tour, which will take place sometime in the late summer/early fall. Kelly Smith said it could include wine and cheese. He also said people can get ideas and advice on their own projects, show before and after pictures, etc. Gail Sanders will chair the Remodel Tour Committee. If you're interested in participating and/or helping plan it, contact her at gail6877@netzero.com.

- Jim talked briefly about the annual BHNA party. Last year, we had it in the Capital Vision Christian Church, on the corner of Fir and Yew, because it was in the fall and we were concerned about bad weather, plus they had their own bounce house for kids. In previous years, we've had parties in the summer in Bigelow Park and we've had block parties. Susi said she's seen online where people are trying to organize more block parties in general, for example around a neighbor's cider press in the fall. Jim will put out a call for volunteers to help set a date/help with the annual party through the listserv and on our website (www.bhna.org) soon.
- Susi talked about Streetbank (www.streetbank.org), which can be used by anyone anywhere in the world to connect with their neighbors, nextdoor or across town, to share skills, tools, books and dvds, community info, etc. She said that, just in a mile range around her house, there are 150 things listed.
- Rus talked about the kiosk in Bigelow Park. Part of its bulletin board is for BHNA documents, the rest for people in our neighborhood to post things. When Pam questioned how people who aren't online can keep up on BHNA business in between newsletters, Jessicarae suggested posting the meeting minutes on the kiosk. Also, Angie pointed out that, like the North Eastside Neighborhood Association, we could post a list of all anticipated BHNA meeting dates. Rus said it would be great if someone could volunteer to check on the kiosk—say, for a year—and make sure outdated notices are taken down, post BHNA documents, etc. If someone is interested, contact Rus at president@bhna.org. Kelly pointed out that, during the door-to-door part of the directory project, we could identify who's not online and maybe find a neighbor of theirs who is who will agree to keep them in the loop.
- Jim gave a report on the Coalition of Neighborhood Associations Steering Committee meeting that he attended at City Hall the night before. He explained how the CNA began (6 years ago 19 NAs came together to, successfully, petition the city to clarify where cell phone towers are allowed) and he talked about a few of the things it is working on now. For example, Police Chief Ronnie Roberts spoke to the CNA about Olympia's graffiti problem. OPD is short 7 people and, until it fills those positions, it's stretched thin and could use all the help it can get from neighborhoods. He was hoping Olympia's NAs could ask their members if there's anyone who is a night owl who'd be willing to agree to work with the police on keeping an eye out for taggers. He praised the work the NAs are doing documenting and cleaning up tags. Someone else gave a report on the Gang Task Force, a large group (composed of about 70 representatives from South Sound law enforcement offices, politicians, county prosecutors, the CNA, etc). Gangs (real ones, not just graffiti crews) are not a severe problem around here, but it's at the point where it has the potential to become one. OPD has disrupted a major gang on the Westside near the mall. A few tags for MS13, the most dangerous gang in America, have shown up in Olympia, but mostly what OPD sees are local kids being recruited to do crimes in Tacoma (where the police don't know them), reservation kids being brought into Olympia to do crimes, and even a few prostitution rings. The Gang Task force is focused on prevention (keeping kids from joining) and intervention (once they have), since the police take care of the suppression side of things. The CNA has a subcommittee that is looking at where the city's 40 NAs are located and talking about ways that parts of the city that are not in one can become either new ones or else part of existing ones. It also has a subcommittee that is trying to get the city to do more about landowners who are repeat housing code violators. Someone brought up "The Hot Ticket" rolled-up newspaper full of ads that *The Olympian* tosses onto driveways, which everyone

agreed is unsolicited trash. The CNA President Bob Jones will talk to Olympia's Code Enforcement office about this, to see whether only an individual homeowner can ask that this not be delivered or whether more can be done. The main thing it is working on now, though, is trying to make sure that the best interests of neighborhoods are represented in the city's new Comprehensive Plan. (The draft of the Comp Plan is online, at <http://olympiawa.gov/imagine-olympia.aspx>, and there are two upcoming public input events: one April 21, from 9:00 to 2:00, at the Olympia Center and another April 28, from 9:00 to 2:00, at Percival Landing's Harbor House). The CNA has written an M.O.U. (memorandum of understanding) to the city on the topic of neighborhoods, and on either May 21 or May 22 it will meet with the full city council to talk about the M.O. U. and the Comp Plan. (A copy of the M.O.U. is attached to these BHNA minutes). Anyone is welcome there, as at any of the CNA Steering Committee meetings. (Those are the second Monday of each month; the next one will be June 11 at City Hall). Several people at the BHNA meeting were taken aback when they learned about the CNA, and we discussed for a while what it does and to what extent it does or doesn't represent us. Jim pointed out that, by attending CNA meetings, he is not only able to keep BHNA members informed about the CNA, but also, conversely, he (or anyone else) can take BHNA opinions on CNA activities (or on any neighborhood issues) back to future CNA meetings and have an influence on that entity. Jim said that, besides linking BHNA to CNA information (its website is: www.olympianeighborhoods.org), he would get clarification from the CNA about the representation issue. [The day after the BHNA meeting, I e-mailed and then talked with Bob Jones, who reassured me that, when the CNA meets with the city on various issues it would never say "Bigelow Highlands is with us on this," *unless BHNA (through a representative or through writing) had agreed to be part of that specific thing.* For example, when the city learned about the cell phone tower concerns, it was only presented with the names of the 19 NAs who came together on that issue—although, Bob Jones pointed out, other parts of Olympia, such as the Bigelow Highlands, certainly benefited from that. In a sense, the CNA is a dynamic body that is not a coalition of *all* of Olympia's neighborhoods, but, rather, *all those that are participating in the CNA at any given moment.* Bob Jones said that people need to realize that this is something that is moving forward, whether they want to be a part of it or not. Thus, it would be in our best interests to keep sending a BHNA representative to CNA meetings.] Rus closed this discussion by saying we'd probably talk more about the CNA at the next general meeting.

- Angie talked about the new BHNA google group that is slowly being put together to replace our old listserv. BHNA members from the latter will be invited on. The benefit will be more privacy (hidden e-mail addresses) and it will be just for announcements. Soon there will be a place on our website to join.
- Rus talked about the BHNA clean-up day we had. We removed 75-80 tags. Jim suggested we do it more than once a year. Jessicarae told us that not only had her fence been tagged, but then someone had painted over the tag without checking with her family. Rus reassured her that it wasn't the BHNA graffiti clean-up team, and that we would never touch anyone's private property unless we had their permission first.
- The next BHNA general meeting will be Tuesday, July 10, at a location to-be-announced in the newsletter that will be delivered in late-June (a week before the Garden Tour).