

## YORK GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

March 9, 2016, 7p.m.

at Garden St. Methodist Church

The meeting was preceded by a Taco Supper at 6:30pm (approximately 45 attendees).

President Don Hilty-Jones called the meeting to order at 7pm.

The agenda topic for the meeting was: "Town & Gown: How Neighborhoods and Students Can Work Together" A panel of presenters included:

**Steve Swan**, *Western Washington Univ. Vice Pres., Community Relations*

**Nate Langstratt**, *VP for Admin. Services, Whatcom Community College;*

**Ben Larson**, *York Board member and WWU student*

**Officer Eric Osterkamp**, *Bellingham Police Dept.*

1. Ben Larson shared his experiences of growing up in the University District of Seattle and now lives in York. He encouraged students to learn how to be good neighbors and find ways to become involved with their neighborhood's activities.
2. Steve Swan shared information about WWU's efforts to expand its on-campus housing, the difficulties with changing its Master Plan, and the importance of the university working on positive relationships with the surrounding neighborhoods.
3. Nate Langstratt presented information about the demographics of WCC's enrollment of 11,000 of which many are life-long Whatcom county residents.
4. Officer Eric Osterkamp provided information about the "Town & Gown" initiative that the City hopes to undertake if grant funding is acquired. He encouraged residents to use the services of the police and to call 9-1-1 to keep the police better informed about what's going on.

There was a lively discussion that addressed a variety of topics including:

- Students living on their own for the first time are learning how expensive it can be.
- Neighbors are unhappy about over-population in the neighborhood, too much noise, not enough parking, and run-down rentals.
- The city has not been enforcing zoning regulations for single-family neighborhoods or the rule of "no more than three unrelated" tenants per home. A 1974 U.S. Supreme Court decision supports this rule.
- The new rental registration and inspection laws will hopefully improve housing conditions in the neighborhood.
- Students are paying very high rents and, subsequently, they have to move too many people into one house to afford it.
- Good examples of community-university student initiatives are in Ft. Collins and Bolder, Colorado; these ideas could be useful to Bellingham.
- Criminal activity and problems in the neighborhood come from non-students; neighbors need to be in contact with the police to report what's going on.
- The YNA in the past has sent certified letters to landlords to provide information about problem tenants and, typically, this has helped end the problems.
- The Campus Community Coalition has accomplished a lot toward creating improved relationships between students and neighborhoods.

*Minutes submitted by Anne Mackie, YNA Secretary*

*Approved 4-13-16*

