

York Neighborhood Association
General Meeting Minutes March 8, 2017 7pm
at Garden St. Methodist Church

The meeting was preceded by a taco supper at 6:30pm
YNA Secretary Anne Mackie called the meeting to order at 6:45pm.

I. WTA bus route changes in York

Rick Nicholson, Service Development Director for Whatcom Transportation Authority, presented information about York bus routes that will change March 19. Route 9B, the shuttle from Lincoln Creek Park 'n Ride through York on Potter St., and to campus, will be eliminated. Many questions and comments were received. Additionally, there was concern shared by neighbors about the location of a new bus stop on the east side of Ellis St. near the crosswalk at Potter St.

TO DO: Secretary Anne Mackie was tasked with writing a letter to Rick outlining the issues raised. (*See attached letter dated March 15, 2017.*)

II. Guest Speaker: Steve Swann, VP of University Relations and Community Development

Steve Swann presented information about changes at WWU: new staffing positions, proposed expansion of the Buchanan Towers dormitory, creation of a transportation hub, and making the on-campus publication *Western Today* available to the community to help the public know what's going on at WWU. The "Town and Gown" initiative will move forward this year to create better relations between the university, the city, students living off-campus, and neighborhoods.

III. Neighborhood Crime Statistics

Bellingham Police Officer Eric Osterkamp provided a handout that analyzes neighborhood crime statistics. (Copies will be posted to the York Neighborhood website, www.yorkneighborhood.org.)

IV. Bellingham Neighbors Together

Scott Hendrickson, Volunteer Coordinator, Bellingham Police Dept., presented information about the new Bellingham Neighbors Together program, which will partner citizens with the police to create a visible public presence to reduce crime, educate residents, and promote safe neighborhoods. Volunteers are required to complete a comprehensive training program. To apply for a volunteer position go to: www.cob.org/gov/dept/police.

V. Bellingham Tenants Union (BTU)

WWU students Ben Larson (YNA Board member), Rheanna Johnson, and Galen Herz are working to organize a tenants union. Their goals include: (1) add mold inspection requirements to the Rental Inspections; (2) emphasize Bellingham's need for affordable housing; (3) increase housing equity opportunities; and (4) support sustainable housing forms.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35pm

Minutes submitted by Anne Mackie, YNA Secretary.

Minutes approved April 12, 2017

Attachment: Letter to WTA about bus route changes in York.



March 15, 2017

Rick Nicholson
Whatcom Transportation Authority
Director of Service Development
4111 Bakerview Spur
Bellingham, WA 98226

Dear Rick:

Thank you for attending the York Neighborhood Association general meeting on March 8 to address neighbors' concerns about the WTA route changes impacting the York Neighborhood. As you heard at the meeting, we have two issues of concern.

First, we recommended that WTA reconsider the location of the new bus stop on Ellis St., on the eastside of the street, which is currently posted at 1406 Ellis St. You had previously heard a complaint from homeowner Mary Newman at 1410 Ellis St. when she saw that a bus stop sign had been posted in her front hedge a few weeks ago. She had received no previous notification. She asked that it not be located there. Subsequently, the bus stop sign post was moved one house south to 1406 Ellis St.

Our concerns, as addressed at our meeting, are that the bus will be forced to partially stop in the crosswalk located adjacent to 1406 Ellis St.; and to avoid this, the bus driver will probably roll forward, thus stopping in front of 1410 Ellis St. anyway. This is a very challenging intersection with cars coming west out of downtown from Magnolia St., east from Potter St., and entering onto Ellis St. We have had discussions with Public Works about this unsafe intersection and hope to achieve some new signage and safety interventions by the City. To add a bus stop on top of the crosswalk seems to heighten the safety concern.

Our recommendation at the meeting was that WTA relocate the bus stop up the hill, one block south of the Potter St. intersection in the 1300 block of Ellis St. so that your driver has full visibility of the intersection in front of him/her when they stop for riders. In this location your driver can see riders exiting the bus walking down hill to the signaled intersection and crosswalk. It seems like a much safer alternative

and will also satisfy the concerns of the homeowner at 1410 Ellis St. Or, the bus stop could be located further down the hill away from both the busy Lakeway Dr. / Ellis St. intersection or away from the Potter St. intersection and crosswalk.

A second issue of concern is the removal of **Route 90B** that currently operates as a shuttle for WWU running from the Lincoln Creek Park 'n Ride to Lakeway, north on Humboldt, west on Potter St., south on Billy Frank Jr. St. and to the campus. This is a heavily used route for both WWU students and employees. Their alternative routes, now, will cause them to walk some distance to catch a bus on Magnolia St., an already very heavy stop, or at WECU on Holly and Billy Frank Jr. St., similarly very heavy. Route 90B has a stop in front of Nelson's Market on Potter St. that regularly has 40-50 riders beginning early in the morning and continuing for several hours. Typically, WTA runs a second bus behind the first in order to pick everyone up. This has been a great amenity to the neighborhood and has encouraged bus ridership.

The York Neighborhood has a high percentage of WWU student residents. By running this shuttle through the neighborhood headed directly to WWU in conjunction with class schedules, WTA has somewhat helped reduce the need for vehicles and traffic activity. Students are contributing a very high percentage of WTA's budget through their Associated Student fees; their bus passes are not "free," as was stated at the meeting. They pay whether they ride or not; and fortunately, many of them ride, as do WWU employees.

And lastly, it is unfortunate that the York Neighborhood Association was not included in the community outreach about service plan changes by WTA. We are a very visible and active organization with a 13-member board, of which three members are WWU students. Our board members do not recall receiving invitations to any meetings. Please provide samples of those notices so we can correct the address or contact information that WTA has for the York Neighborhood Association. We apologize for missing out on previous opportunities to communicate.

We hope that you will consider our two issues of concern. Our Board of Directors will meet on Wed., April 12, 7pm at the Garden St. United Methodist Church, room B (same location as March's meeting). Please join us for further discussions if you are available.

On behalf of the YNA Board of Directors,
Anne Mackie
Secretary
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cc: Gene Knutson, City Council, Public Works/Public Safety Committee
Ted Carlson, Director, Public Works, City of Bellingham