

York Neighborhood Association General Membership Meeting

In Norway Hall—1419 North Forest Street

May 25, 2022 Minutes - DRAFT

Approved: Motion _____

Present: YNA Board members Colin Beazley (President), Chris Donaldson (Vice President), Anne Mackie, Mark Ellis Walker, Todd Kleinbrook, Jeremy Ferrera, Rebecca Hobbs (*Yorker* Editor), and seven or so community members as well as a handful via Zoom/chat (including Opie?).
Attending via phone: John DeOrio (Treasurer), Élan Engel.

Tom Scott, Secretary, was unable to attend due to a last-minute family requirement, so Mark recorded the minutes.

Gathering at 6:00pm, with light refreshments. **Called to order** at 6:34pm with general introductions of community members.

1. Emergency & Disaster Preparedness

Greg Hope of the Bellingham Fire Department's Office of Emergency Management gave a presentation on Disasters and Preparedness, starting by establishing the difference between an emergency and a disaster (emergencies happen every day; in the case of a disaster, need exceeds local-response capacity). He set the scene for how these play out in the Bellingham area by noting local hazards (both potential and occurring) such as earthquake, severe winter storm, seasonal flooding, volcanism, tsunami, and extreme heat.

In his presentation, he addressed the importance of establishing a communication plan with one's family or network, including anticipating that it may be some hours before any communication can even occur and to allow for that. Such a plan should also include knowing that reunification after an initial event can be delayed by such things as school protocols that will keep kids together until stabilization allows their retrieval and that the schools will notify parents when that can occur. It is also good to plan for all household members and possibly a few days of interruption of their mobility or medical needs; for example, electricity outage will impact medical devices.

Disruption of water supply should be considered as a possibility to be prepared for. Toileting may be limited/rudimentary, and you should be wary of adding disease to disaster. Storing water for shortages is good but isn't easy, given how heavy water is, but do what you can. For example, you can save empty detergent bottles and fill them with water to use later for washing of hands.

He provided two documents of varying usefulness/thoroughness: a light "2 Weeks Ready" brochure and a deathly dull but extensive and info-laden 50-page "Disaster Preparedness Guide."

Preparing a home for riding out a disaster includes keeping in mind perishability/expiration of food, recharging electrical devices, and fuel. A well-stocked pantry is better than storing bulk fodder, because it's kept up to date and contains foods you actually like to eat rather than being for bare survival. Plan for loss and spoilage, but do also have stuff on hand that brings you happiness so there's some optimism and routine in your survival too.

A way to think of the challenges posed by disasters' interruptions of infrastructure and conveniences is "Living in 1870"—before rural electrification, indoor plumbing, etc. You can practice simple blackouts from time to time to see how well you can manage this before really being tested by an event.

Questions from attendees, both in person and online, concerned whether there was financial assistance available for purchasing preparedness resources (FEMA currently only supplies in response, not in advance); making Greg's digital slides available via email (also now via http://www.yorkneighborhood.org/OEM_Preparedness_Launch_may22.pptx); what requirements there are that businesses should/must have survival/preparedness resources on hand (mostly they're concerned with "continuity of operations," but there are obvious requirements such as sprinklers and basic safety); how prepared schools are (Bellingham's school district is constantly upgrading/replacing their buildings well and has regular earthquake-preparedness drills). Also, in response to a question about what a neighborhood can do to prepare, Greg said that we should know and care about each other, and stock your pantry with an eye to sharing with neighbors. There's also a "Map Your Neighborhood" program to check out: <https://mil.wa.gov/map-your-neighborhood>.

2. Committee Reports & Priorities

SAFETY: Todd described this committee as still getting started but intending to package information for distribution, possibly organizing some training sessions on incident response and helping responders as well as some certification programs in fire suppression, light triage, command-system organization, etc. Greg Hope added that the County will revive such certification programs if they hear community interest to that end.

A Lights On campaign and revival of a Block Watch program are being explored. Regarding traffic safety, lodging more complaints to the city is likely to lead for asking for studies to be done so traffic-calming measures can get introduced—possibly as part of the bike/pedestrian plan currently in the City's spotlight.

PARKS: Regarding Rock Hill Park, John reported that the basketball hoop and repainting of the court's lines should be happening in the next 30 days, per the Parks Department. Steve J of the Parks Department will be coming to the June 22 Board meeting to talk about what sorts of options are realistically available as improvements to the park, ahead of asking for community input on what's desired. Also, the work part at Rock Hill on the 14th of May was a success and joy; what's needed is more workers to show up, plus a watering schedule should be established. The next work party is on June 11 at Harriet Spanel Park.

ENGAGEMENT AND BOARD GROWTH: Rebecca is posting to Facebook and NextDoor more regularly (NextDoor being more Bellingham-general, with not many York neighbors present as members), indicating among other things that the YNA is wanting to grow the Board (including students). Colin is pushing for a Rocking Rock Hill concert in autumn.

The May *Yorker* newsletter looks good, but its production team (Rebecca, Anne, and Mark) are always open and welcoming of suggestion for content. Also, Anne is fostering some community activity with local bee enthusiasts (and indicated later in the meeting that the Washington Department of Agriculture is pushing an Adopt-a-Wasp program to encourage reporting/monitoring of wasp

presence and activity as part of its efforts to locate and eradicate “murder hornets” this year, starting June 1 and especially in Whatcom County.

In response to a question from a community member regarding the restoration of York’s annual picnic, the Board indicated that a date for one will be established at the June Board meeting and is open to thoughts and suggestions for its features.

Also, the Wine & Roses Club event was enjoyably held on the 19th but, alas, without the attendance of Mayor Seth Fleetwood as he apparently got lost looking for the address. City Council member Lisa Anderson was there, however.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION:

Chris reported on this currently small committee’s purpose. There was a brief discussion of the creation of an interactive website on local buildings/trees such as a walking tour perhaps building on the historic-buildings map published many years back. Ideas were floated of ideas for small local signage that could indicate the presence nearby of sites of historical importance. Chris also brought some historic-overview maps for York neighbors to browse and get a feel for what potentially could be presented.

It was suggested that a graffiti-cleanup task force could be created. Committee meetings will get started this summer, once family commitments are out of the way.

3. Technology Status & Input

Colin reported that he, Chris, and Tom are intending to poll neighborhood members’ needs and wishes for technological communication forms and content. Chris wants to see the YNA being able to quickly communicate to its membership. An Instagram account is also being set up. In general, the committee wants to review our current technology means and communication plans as well as to simplify access and permissions to elements such as Board email addresses and the email lists.

It was suggested by a neighbor that we work with Julia Burns and Chris Roselli more to reach students, who are less likely to read printed flyers. Colin noted that we’re currently working with Julia and Chris on an email about to go out to York and neighboring ’hoods’ landlords regarding their responsibilities pertaining to students moving out and cleaning up after them (a draft of which has been circulated already to the Board via email), as WWU will not be hosting a Move Out Madness event this year to help students move out responsibly (staffing shortages being part of the reason for this).

4. Upcoming Events & June Meeting Topics

Dumpster Day is coming up (June 18), and volunteers with trucks are wanted for collecting large items cluttering alleys.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:03pm, although discussions of committee projects continued out into the parking lot.

Respectfully submitted by Mark Ellis Walker, on behalf of Secretary Tom Scott.