

Point Roberts Community Advisory Committee

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Minutes May 19, 2022 Regular Meeting

Members Attending:

Chairperson Allison Calder (Point Roberts Registered Voters Association)

Annelle Norman (Point Roberts Taxpayers Association)

Prakash Sundaresan (member at large)

Brian Hunter (member at large)

Absent - Bill Zidel (member at large)

Call to order at 7:02 pm

Approval of agenda. Member Norman makes motion to Amend agenda to include discussion of regional transportation plan. Approved unanimously.

Minutes approved unanimously.

First public comment - John Lesow speaks to Air B&Bs, noting while there is limited crime or houselessness in Point Roberts, there is an issue for residential renters. The commodification of housing as both investment and residence when combined with plethora of foreign auxiliary homes and the tourist application of the Air B&B concept is creating a market driven shortage for the resident renter. The ability to recoup in a few days from tourists what is average monthly rent for resident entices maximum capital accruing oriented property owners to remove property from resident market. Mr. Lesow notes this is issue before County Council of Whatcom County amending Title 20 on May 24, 2022 and suggests the City of Vancouver, Canada model. Invites all to attend.

Member Norman agrees rental housing is significant issue. Chair notes 94 Air B&Bs in Point Roberts.

Fiber optics Presentation by Martha Ford of Whidbey Telecom re: upgrade of internet service as they begin fiber optic mainline construction phase. Electronics supply chain and worker shortage due to Covid has seriously altered previously reported timelines. Company is hiring throughout State fiber slicers, installers, etc.

Now construction on this phase projected through summer. Construction zone is South Beach Road from Benson to Edwards, then across to Lighthouse Park, plus Tye from Gulf to marina. Opened presentation to community questions.

Old Business -

Drainage/Flooding Issues - Member Hunter thanks Chairperson Calder (hereafter referred as "Chair") and member Zidel for their excellent field reconnaissance of the Maple Beach area that was noted at last meeting.

Member Hunter has contacted the County, State, and Federal government re: this issue. While awaiting response, research indicates the State of Washington

Water Quality Control Program (WQCP) has annual funding that combines State and Federal grants to projects with annual application covering all funding sources. The 2023 fiscal grant year competition was held October of 2021, the month before extreme rain and floods effecting Whatcom County last year. Next funding cycle competition will be August of this year for grants beginning July 1 next year. However as of meeting State was advertising the water quality grant coordinator, so certainty of competitive grant date not ascertained.

Firewood Memo of Understanding - Jed Holmes, staff to County Executive, thanks Chair for reminder that this is still necessary item on their "to do" list.

Spring Clean Up Green Waste - dump is accepting one time one load per household free. Dates noted on their website.

"Dark Sky" initiative - County requests three public opportunities to understand and comment. Member Norman is leading, and along with one other member of committee to avoid misapprehension of quorum, will schedule June 12, June 30th, and July 10th tentatively for these meetings.

Additional members - The two positions will be opened to public for non binding vote.

New Business

Public Highway Bike Lanes, Walking Paths, Golf Cart Zone - proponent for improvements, Bob Fitzsimmons, recognizing capital improvement costs to be major, suggests minimally a consideration of one way streets to keep opportunity for adequate right of way and separation.

Chair notes there exists golf cart zones in Birch Bay with 25 mph speed limit. Notes potential for golf carts at marina to allow transient boaters to connect with rest of community, especially commercial. May be opportunity for State or Port to fund "green" grant. Chair suggests polling public and following up with Town Halls.

Regional Transportation Authority Master Plan update - Latest draft treats Point Roberts as non extant. Member Sundaresan will provide letter to them from committee demanding rectification.

2nd public comment - none

Meeting adjourned at 8:32 pm.

