**MINUTES of the BRIARCREST NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION -- APPROVED --**

**Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2024 – meeting via Zoom**

Attendance: Sarah Kaye, Devra Gartenstein, Bettelinn Brown, Alice Keller, Kristine, Ann G, Rebecca Chan, Jim Miller, Lee Keim, Patty Hale

Guest speakers: Shoreline Fire Chief Matt Cowan and Erik Ingraham of the Firefighters Union

Meeting called to order by Sarah at 7:02.

Minutes from Dec. 10: Approved as amended.

Treasurer's report, Sarah: $562, unchanged from last month.

Camp United We Stand -- Devra will swing by the camp since we haven't had any communication with or about them since last month. We are still up for scheduling a collection for them again if we can find out their current needs.

Follow-up on possible revision of BNA Bylaws, Alice

Alice sent out the existing bylaws with the minutes in December, asking for any volunteers interested in working as a committee to decide if they need revising. Volunteers so far: Alice, Devra, Rachel Roberts, Bill Bear. There was also an additional emailed opinion that it's a good idea to look at them this year. No opinions were received on whether they should be revised.

The bylaws were last revised in 2015 (plus an amendment in 2018 about election of officers).

It was suggested that the committee meet, at least by Zoom if in person isn't feasible, before our February BNA meeting. Alice will contact the other volunteers to suggest dates.

National Wildlife Habitat Steward Training (virtual), Bettelinn

This training is being offered in February for Washington.

Spring party, Bettelinn

Jim Miller is working with Shoreline Christian Reformed Church again, like last year, to see if we could have a BNA dinner there on Saturday, April 26.

This has to be approved by the church council, which is meeting this week. We'll know by the end of this week.

Last year, $5 per person at the door was enough to pay for the food from Patty Pan.

City Council meeting last night

Jim attended the Council meeting in person, and Alice watched part of it on line.

The grant proposal to fund the purchase of 100 E-bikes was approved, though not unanimously. Some Council members had various questions about this, as did residents who submitted comments. Cost is one question since it seems a lot of money for only 100 bikes.

Options for proposals were limited by the way the grant was worded, so some possibilities couldn't be considered.

Will the Febuary BNA meeting be Zoom only or hybrid?

Sarah would like to try hybrid next month to see how it works and whether there's bigger attendance.

Bill asked Briarcrest Elementary about meeting space. We'd have to pay for a custodian and get approval, so that could be difficult, a significant financial and administrative deal. Someone from the school would have to stay there the whole time. This doesn't make sense for us since we don't know if we'd have more than a few people.

Is the North City Water Dept. a possibility? Sarah will check with them.

Briarcrest Park Project

Sarah has not received any more information.

Special guests Shoreline Fire Chief Matt Cowan and Firefighter Erik Ingraham

Topic: Prop 1, a ballot measure for the creation of a Regional Fire Authority (RFA) between the Shoreline and Northshore Fire Departments.

This will be on the February 11 special-election ballot.

The benefits of the RFA include savings for all homeowners in the fire district in the fire-levy portion of property taxes.

This merger has been discussed for decades, especially in the last decade in the northern part of King County.

Two and a half years ago, all Northshore fire personnel became Shoreline employees. The blended operations at that time resulted in the different fire departments acting 95% as one fire department. Consequently, there have been lots of efficiencies and financial savings by eliminating redundancies, increasing rescue capabilities, and more.

The departments want to lock those in, long-term, and to further improve. There are more savings that can be realized -- $3 million savings can occur by increasing efficiencies. Reduction in levy rates will result.

All homeowners will get a reduction, as well as 98% of property owners.

There will be better resource sharing, more flexibility in assigning personnel, a better financial rating (currently 2) among fire departments in Washington.

Administrative staff have duplication of efforts now; this will be streamlined, eliminating the need to manage two different capital budgets and maximizing purchasing power.

There will be a combined governing board, more reflective of the communities.

In brief, the RFA is like starting a clean slate, as if a new fire department.

For more info, including FAQs -- **info: https://shorelinefire.com/rfa/**

A committee is against the RFA, having provided a voters'-pamphlet statement against the measure that is false, claiming that there will be an increase from 70 cents to $1 per $1000 of assessed valuation in the fire levy rate in 2026. In fact, by law this cannot be increased more than 1%.

The statement also says that spending down reserve funds is risky. Chief Cowan says a major point of the RFA is to eliminate redundancies, thereby saving money.

How much of the proposed budget includes prevention and medical response?

There's a fairly robust prevention department now. Fire departments can be proactive in that regard.

Health care: currently 2 social workers and 2 EMTs, addressing some gaps in what firefighters can do. Many people need more help after firefighters respond to an emergency, so this pairs them up with services that they need. The fire departments (Shoreline, Lake Forest Park, Kenmore, Bothell) are excited about expanding this to 7 days a week.

Erik Ingraham spoke on behalf of the Firefighters Union, which strongly supports this RFA. As a union member, he can ask and is asking for people to vote YES. A 60% Yes vote (60% plus 1 of those voting on this issue) is required to pass. Go to **yesrfa.org** for more info from the union.

An open house for more information will be held at Station 61, 175th and Aurora,

on Jan. 21, 7:00 p.m.

Patty Hale suggested sending an article to the Shoreline Area News to clarify discrepancies between the Pro and Con statements in the voters' pamphlet.

Q from a participant: Are all front-line staff to be retained in the RFA? Yes, all will keep their jobs. No staff reductions. The hope is that the RFA will reduce workloads, in fact.

Q: Will the departments be using the Kirkland Mental Health Connections center? Yes. They are currently working through details as part of integrated health care, though the distance from Shoreline to Kirkland is an issue.

Chief Cowan has been in contact with the lead of the Con statement, but other person persists in publishing false information. All of the endorsements in the pamphlet are Pro.

In sum, Chief Cowan said this is "a really big deal" for the fire department and would set it up for the future.

Both the Firefighters Union and management support it.

Shoreline Schools: Bill Bear

More volunteers are needed for the Power of One program.

Re. middle school and high schools -- There's "ongoing chaos," one middle-school student said, because of access to phones, with too many video games, too much social media; Many students are there in body only. A ban of cell phones at school could happen.

Bill said that it might be done on a volunteer basis. BNA members could let the School Board know that we support voluntarily not using phones at school. PTAs will be involved.

Bill will write a statement and send it out to BNA members for a vote at the February meeting.

Someone commented that some students should be exempted from a ban, such as those needing reminders to take meds, or access to an app to help with panic attacks, etc.

Meeting adjourned at 8:18.

Next BNA meeting: Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2025, either Zoom only or maybe hybrid (in-person and via Zoom).

Submitted by Alice Keller, Secretary