
The FREMONT Neighborhood Council

Incorporated 1980

Winter 2001/2002 Newsletter

WHO WE ARE

The FNC is a chartered organization representing the residents of Fremont [officially: 8th Ave NW to Stone Way N; 50th St to the Canal]. All residents are eligible to join, and members are eligible to serve on the board.

FUNDING

The FNC is seeking citizen input to determine funding for potential neighborhood projects. The Council has resources that they would like to see go to work for the community.

VOLUNTEERS

FNC has lots of opportunities for you to help fine-tune our neighborhood. You can join one of our existing committees --- they all have room for more. To join please contact the current Board member on the committee:

Land Use/Affordable Housing - Toby Thaler 783-6443

Guerrilla Gardening - Julia DeBroux; 545-4483

New Community Center George Heideman; 782-8779

Parks/Open Space - Chip Nevins 784-7856

Communication - Benjamin Grossman 545-9083

Bicycle Routes - John Ryan 632-3048

Public Safety – (open position)

Transportation – Chris Harder; 632-5415

We, your neighbors here at the FNC, feel that what we do matters. A lot. Fremont is a changing place, and your participation in that change will help shape the place that we all share. Last year there were over 7000 homes in Fremont; but only a few chose to join the FNC, and fewer actually contributed their time and effort. Right now, money is not the critical limitation on our actions; instead it is people. There are lots of things happening in Fremont right now that could benefit from an infusion of people power - good things that could be helped along, bad things that could be stopped or transformed, frustrating things that could be reworked into fun experiences for all of us. That is the dividing line between what gets done and what doesn't.

Please come join us and see if we can't make more cool stuff happen in Fremont. Thanks.

DUES

The FNC is a membership organization, with annual dues for the calendar year payable in January. [This means that **regardless of when last year you joined, dues are now due for the 2002 year**] Please take a moment to fill in the membership form and send it back to us.

GUERRILLA GARDENERS

Thank you to Fremont Gardens, Piriformis and Fred Meyer for their generous donations of plants and bulbs for the Fall Guerrilla Gardening Event. Also, thanks to the Fremont residents who gardened in the rain along Fremont Avenue and at the Troll Park. The spring guerrilla gardening event will be Saturday, April 27 from 9:00 to noon. Meet at the Powerhouse on Fremont Avenue or at the Troll (Rain date is May 4) If possible, bring a spade. Donations of bulbs are appreciated.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Did you know that the Seattle Police Dept. has a free program that can reduce burglary by an average of 60%? Have you ever wanted a more informed opinion about your home's security? Do you want to be more informed about your neighborhood's crime statistics, registered sex offenders, community events? Well then, please call or e-mail our Crime Prevention Coordinator, Terrie Johnston, from the Seattle Police Department at 684-4689 or terrie.johnston@ci.seattle.wa.us. She is happy to start, help maintain or revitalize your Block Watch and does free home security surveys, as well.

FLOATING HOMES

The Floating Homes Association is marking its 40th anniversary in 2002. Fremont's houseboat residents (floating just off Northlake Way) will join their fellow houseboaters around Lake Union in putting on a special 40th anniversary houseboat tour in September. Watch future editions of this newsletter for more information.

FREMONT PEAK PARK

The FNC supports the continuing efforts of Friends of Fremont Peak Park (FoFPP) to produce a new Seattle Park at 44th & Palatine. FoPPP still needs to raise funds to finish the purchase of the property and funds for the construction of the park. In March they will apply for a Neighborhood Matching Fund grant. To make a pledge of money or time, please contact the organization by mail at FoFPP, PO Box 17781, Seattle WA 98107, or by e-mail at info@fremontpeakpark.org

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BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE FREMONT NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

Membership in the FNC is open to residents of Fremont [between 8th Ave NW & Stone Way N, and from the Canal to 50th St]. Anyone else is welcome to become a supporter, with the same benefits as members but no voting power. Benefits include newsletters, notices, a role in the Annual General Meeting and financial decisions, pride and power. Memberships are counted on an annual basis, with dues being paid every year in January. There is one vote per membership. Please take a moment to fill out this form and mail your dues today.

Name(s): _____
Address: _____
City: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

I am interested in helping out with:
 Traffic Parks Bicycling Housing Safety
 Membership Guerrilla Gardening other _____

Mailing List Promise:

The FNC will not sell or distribute your name/address/phone/email. This info will be used by the FNC only to inform you about Fremont.

I am available to volunteer generally in
 Evenings Mornings Afternoons
 Weekends on-line

2002 Dues: \$12/Individual \$20/Household \$50/FreeAngel \$7/Senior-Low Income

Please make checks payable to FNC and mail to: FNC, at address shown below

The Fremont Neighborhood Council

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Seattle, WA 98103-6773

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FNC Hotline: (206) 781-6624
www.scn.org/fnc

ANNUAL MEETING

Monday April 22, 2002 at 7:00 PM
History House, 790 N 34th St.

AGENDA

Election of Board Members and Officers
Presentation of 2001 activities and accomplishments

All members of the FNC in good standing are eligible to vote and to serve on the board. Others are welcome to attend.

FNC BOARD MEETINGS

Fourth Monday of each month, 7:00[sharp!]-9:00pm
at History House, 790 N 34th St. Go up the ramp to
the north end of the building. The community is
welcome to attend!

2002 Spring / Summer Calendar:

March 25
April 22 (Annual General Meeting)
May 20
June 24
July 22
August – No Meeting

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AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN FREMONT

Can We Make It Happen Again?

Once upon a time, not so many years ago, much of Fremont's housing was "low rent." In the past few years, an economic boom has made Fremont one of the more expensive Seattle neighborhoods. Older rental housing is torn down and replaced with higher rent new housing (or expensive condominiums), and the cost of older homes has skyrocketed.

In recognition of the above, the 1999 Fremont Neighborhood Plan (prepared by an ad hoc committee of many neighborhood interests) contains a number of action items intended to ensure that affordable will continue to exist: "Preserve Moderate Income Housing," "Prepare a Fremont Affordable Housing Plan," "A physical inventory of Fremont housing," "Promote the establishment of an Affordable Housing Advocacy Organization/ Community Land Trust that will work to create additional affordable housing in Fremont."

The Fremont Neighborhood Council has also acted on its own to further the goal of affordable housing. For example, in the settlement with Security Properties allowing the Block 40 project to go forward without an appeal, the developer agreed to "support FNC's efforts to increase the availability of low-income and affordable housing in Fremont (including) actively support efforts by FNC to obtain changes in the City of Seattle zoning code for Fremont as follows: a) change the zoning or provide an overlay to allow housing and mixed-use projects in the industrial zones between 3rd Ave. NW and Fremont Ave. N.; and b) reduce the allowable height in all zones between 3rd Ave. NW and Stone Way N. from 65 feet to 40 feet, with an allowance for building up to 65 feet if a significant portion of the increased height is allocated to low-income housing."

FNC needs your help to make the above actions happen. 2002 is a good year for this: We have new, supportive chairs of the city council committees that

Land Use-Judy Nicastro, Neighborhoods-Nick Licata). And, it is likely that there will be a renewal of the city affordable housing bond issue on the November ballot.

If you are interested in helping with these efforts, please contact Toby Thaler (223-4088, x 4) or April Thanos (206-675-8761).

BURKE-GILMAN BIKE TRAIL

Burke-Gilman Trail Completion Is in Sight

Actually, the current end of the Burke-Gilman Trail is just beyond Fremont (11th Ave NW in Ballard). After many years of delay, three developments have occurred:

1. The segment from 8th Ave. NW (Fremont's far west end) to 11th Avenue NW was recently completed as part of the Fred Meyer project. It is a smooth, new paved trail (just beyond a rather difficult crossing of the street used by many of us to access Fred Meyer-be careful behind Hales!).
2. The City is in final design phase for construction (in 2002 and 2003) of the segment from the Ballard Locks to Golden Gardens Park, where it will end. See <http://www.cityofseattle.net/td/bgtrailtext.asp> for more information.
3. The "missing link" remains missing: 11th Ave. to the Locks, through Ballard. Much dispute has occurred over the years over where this segment should go (few argue that it shouldn't be built at all). Opposition by some Ballard industrial area businesses prevented use of the railroad grade for years. In 1996, the City Council adopted a resolution making Leary Way the preferred route from 11th to the Locks.

Many bicyclists detested the thought of a "bike trail" on Leary. Bicycle advocates kept at it, and last October the City Council adopted a new resolution directing Seattle Transportation (SeaTrans) to include the rail route as one of the options to be considered. Timing of further action by the city is uncertain. For more information, go to: <http://burkegilmantrail.org/>

The FNC New Bike Routes committee has also begun working to spur the city to create a bicycle route to connect Fremont and Wallingford / Greenlake neighborhoods, possibly entailing adding bike lanes to Woodland Park Avenue. If you would like to get involved in this effort, please contact John Ryan at johnryan@speakeasy.org or 632-3048.

FREMONT – ATTACK OF THE BULLDOZERS

Its gone now. Taken down to make room for some more construction. Another artful feature of Fremont hidden away in some warehouse somewhere. It happens every day you say. Why can you do? But I miss it already.

It used to stand near the southwest corner of 35th Ave NW (aka Leary) and Phinney. In front of Bozotronics. You remember? The “Attack of the Giant Cranes” bus shelter. Sure it was a bit hokey. The paint was a little faded, the story like a cartoon --- but it was fun. Right where the No. 28 bus stops headed downtown.

It’s only been gone for a week now. I miss it.

It was one of the first things I noticed, when I moved to Fremont almost ten years ago. I spent ten or fifteen minutes one afternoon (yes, I was playing hookey from work as I recall) puzzling out the story, figuring out what was going on. By that time the big construction boom downtown, which I think it was meant to comment on, was pretty much over. The next boom (the one that just ended) was still in the future. It was like a protest march that kept on going, always ready to talk to someone new, pass out a leaflet, wave a sign. Pretty cool, I thought.

I didn’t give it much thought after that. It’s not my usual corner; I only waited for the bus there when the rain was pretty bad or if I went by the 7-11 to pick up a paper on the way in. It’s not the first bus shelter to disappear --- we lost three others in the last two years.

Two weeks ago I noticed the small sign saying it was going away. To make room for some new project on that site (it was on private property). I sighed. Another small piece of joy removed from my life. Drat! I didn’t raise a fuss. I didn’t call the mayor (or Metro). I just put it in the back of my mind, something else I can’t find the time to do anything about, and went on with my life. Its what we do. Every day.

But I got to thinking. About Fremont. About the FNC. About this newsletter. About what I wanted to say this time around. I started off grandiose. I wanted to make up a map of Fremont, showing every building. And put a small red X through each building that had been torn down in the last ten years. And a small blue O around every new building that had gone up in those years (or was still being built). I thought it would tell a pretty noisy tale of change. Something that might get folks stirred up. I felt like stirring you up. I still want to do it, and if you’re interested give me a call.

Last year we focused on the Block 40 Project (AKA Red Door site) and did some good work. Before that we spent years working on the Quadrant and Fred Meyer developments. Made some changes, won some and lost others and generally really pushed it to make Fremont ours.

What I realized this week is that we have been concentrating (as necessary) on the big projects. But Fremont is made of little places. And an awful lot of them are changing. Some for the better. Some for the worse. Some as a toss-up. What these changes have in common is that they don’t reflect any great plan. They are scatter-shot across the landscape.

Don’t get me wrong. Just as much as I bemoan the loss of another single-family dwelling, I think it is important to try to increase density in the city. The more the Eastside looks like LA, the more I know things are going wrong.

However, and I think you’ll agree, many of these small projects – bulldoze a house and put in 6-8 townhouses --- are being done as if they were located in a vacuum. And that’s wrong. Every one of these buildings has neighbors. People live there. Children play there. Trees (used) to grow there. These matter, and we need to be working to make sure that each new bit of construction at least takes these into account. It’s a lot cheaper to built it right the first time, than to come back later and try to fix it (consider the cost of building light rail today).

What do you think? The FNC is not a monolithic organization. We don’t always agree, and I frequently find that someone else’s point is enough to make me change my mind. Discussion is good.

I’m going to call someone at Metro this week and see if we can’t bring the shelter back to Fremont. The giant cranes may have moved on, but the bulldozers are still attacking.

-Benjamin Grossman, 545-9083

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