



HOA Presidents Focus Group Notes June 15, 2017

First meeting of Mill Creek HOA Presidents Focus Group.

- *Facilitated by Joni Kirk, City of Mill Creek Communications and Marketing Director*
- *Minutes recorded by Holly Harvey, City of Mill Creek Communications and Marketing Coordinator*

I. Welcome and Purpose

Joni Kirk introduces the purpose of the focus group – to get valuable feedback from HOA leaders and community members. The rules of the focus group and guidelines are explained.

II. Introductions

Eleven attendees were present to represent their HOAs, including:

- Bob Pentz, Belvedere Place
- Gerald Rowe, Cherry Lane
- Marianne Andringa, Copper Tree Condominiums
- Mary Anne Heine, MCCA
- Jon Erickson, MCCA
- Bob Goodmark, The Parks
- Carolyn Sacco, Copper Tree
- Barbara Hubbard, Lakewood Condominiums
- Beth Taylor, St. Moritz
- Jan Ott, The Lakes
- Rich Dockendorff, The Springs

III. Baseline Focus Group Issues

a. SWOT Feedback

i. Strengths of the City –

- Pride comes from living in Mill Creek
- The city is responsive to requests
- City personnel are approachable and helpful
- City is beautiful and clean
- City population size is good (not too big or small)
- City has a good reputation
- Affluent population
- Well-patrolled

- Outsiders like to visit
- Good security
- Good retail offerings

ii. Weaknesses of the City

- Diversify the commercial business
- Better parking
- Traffic
- Lack of farmer's market
- Street medians are not kept up properly
- Rush hour traffic
- Traffic light sequences
- Lack of retail and restaurants
- Too many speeders
- Better library
- More regional and local variety, seafood restaurants, street cleaning, farmer's market

iii. Opportunities that exist for the City

- Street fair with more artisans, musicians, more creative booths and less business vendors. More art-centered than business-driven
- Cleaning streets more often
- More beautification (flower baskets etc.) in Town Center and the rest of the city
- Encourage additional retail opportunities
- Food and art festivals
- Annex adjacent subdivisions to increase tax revenue
- Develop empty parcels

iv. Threats to the City

- Old city code limits signage for retail and business
- Awareness of businesses that are here
- High density and smaller lot size affects the culture of community in Mill Creek
- Rising crime and attracting undesirables
- Too much high density housing
- Require sufficient parking for businesses
- High density housing is increasing as well as number of apartments

b. Pressing Issues for Focus Group Members and Their Constituents

- Implement an Adopt-a-Street program
- In parks, trees are interfering with the sidewalk and creating a hazard for pedestrians. Create a communication plan for replacing trees and working with Sherrie Ringstad.
- Country Club Drive and Village Green Drive is a safety hazard for pedestrians crossing the street. Would like better signage/flashing lights etc.
- 32nd Traffic circles are "dangerous". Traffic circle education is needed.
- Cleaning and maintenance of Country Club Drive.

- Speeding on Seattle Hill Road to Winslow Road. Shrubbery is growing into the road on Seattle Hill Road.]
- Trail parallel to 35th Street is heavily infested with blackberry bushes and needs to be maintained.
- Is crime increasing in the city?
- Can we put out a communication to ask people to let pedestrians or bikers know when passing from behind on sidewalks? They sneak up on you.

c. Thoughts on How the City Could Best Deliver Information

i. Existing communication channels

- Joni introduced the social media channels

ii. Newsletter thoughts

- General consensus is satisfaction. “No single answer. If people are interested then they’ll find a way.”
- Consistency is key. Do it for a certain frequency and stick to the schedule so people will expect it and come to rely on it.
- Could send news to HOA for them to distribute to their lists.
- If sending electronically, send shorter newsletters with more links.

IV. Invitation to July 17 Town Hall Meeting

- Joni brought up the Town Hall meeting and invited participants to attend.

V. Closing Thoughts

- Discussion of future meetings and timing, possibly having meetings at 6 p.m. or 4 p.m. on Thursday in mid-September
- Participants noted they were thankful for the Focus Group and think it’s a great idea and a “learning opportunity” for the HOA leaders.



HOA Presidents Focus Group Notes September 14, 2017

I. Welcome and Purpose Reminder

Meeting started at 6:30 p.m. Joni Kirk welcomed attendees and reminded them of the meeting's purpose. She shared the Focus Group Guidelines, which were posted on the table.

II. Introductions

Ten attendees were present to represent HOAs, including:

- Mark Beales (Amberleigh)
- Barbara Hubbard (Lakewood Condos)
- Mary Ann Heine (MCCA)
- Hilary Bublitz (MCCA)
- Kirk Gomez (North Pointe)
- Janet Ott (The Lakes)
- Lynn Daily (The Masters)
- Bob Goodmark (The Parks)
- Rich Dockendorff (The Springs)
- Ron Smullin (Trillium Court)

City representatives included: Joni Kirk, director of communications and marketing, and Holly Harvey, communications and marketing coordinator.

III. Current Issues / Topics from Focus Group Members and Their Residents

Update on Previous Topics

Joni recapped some issues that were brought up last meeting and have been addressed.

- **Maintenance issues**, specifically trimming overgrown landscaping, was been addressed by the City this summer.
- **Crime:** At the last meeting, a question was asked about whether or not crime was increasing. As shared in the Town Hall Meeting on July 17, Mill Creek's crime rate has actually decreased. Aggravated felonies dropped by more than 46%; stolen property offenses dropped 18%; motor vehicle theft decreased 12.5%; violations of weapons laws decreased 50%; DUIs decreased by more than 70%; and total adult arrests dropped from 79 to 51, a 35% decrease. However, like other cities around us, we are seeing an increase in crime directly related to the proliferation of the heroin epidemic. This includes an increase in drug paraphernalia cases from 17 in 2015 to 31 in 2016. Burglaries for such purposes (as admitted by those arrested) also increased 23% in 2016.

- **Tips for bikers and pedestrians:** The City has actively been promoting pedestrian and crosswalk safety through social media and the City newsletter. It will continue to provide tips to encourage safety and courtesy.

Trees

HOA attendee brought up an issue regarding City-required trees in developments, which are raising the sidewalks and creating problem. Further, when an old tree is removed, they are required to replace them with three other trees. Public Works is conducting concrete shaving as tree roots pop up the sidewalks. If the City didn't require the trees, it wouldn't have this perpetual issue. The resident did not want the HOA to pay for the removal of the trees; he wants the City to pay for it. Another attendee suggested hounding City Council to fix the issue; he discussed his experience in removing trees to the tune of \$30,000. Another attendee mentioned that homeowners own the property to the curb, including the trees, and should be responsible for removing the trees in front of their own homes; it should not be an HOA responsibility.

Joni suggested attendees raising these important concerns to make them known, including through the use of the City's citizen comment form online.

There was discussion about challenging tree requirements, including the types of trees required. The group noted that Sherrie Ringstad at the City has been a very helpful advocate regarding tree issues. She is working with HOAs to identify types of trees that can be planted that don't have such a large root structure and will create fewer problems for residents.

Joni followed the conversation to share about the reorganization/combining of the Public Works and Community and Economic Development departments into a new Department of Public Works and Development Services. She noted the process for hiring a new director is underway. This position will be able to pull these functional work areas together to strategically shape how development and maintenance take place.

Parking

Parking was another issue raised by the attendees. There was discussion about how townhouses are not required to have ample parking for the number of units. The change in requirements has transpired in the last five or so years and is creating issues for new developments. Attendees feel that the City is not requiring sufficient parking. They feel that it is getting worse. There is an issue of traffic on Bothell Everett Hwy and the Old Seattle Hill Road and a blind spot. Attendees discussed how more homes can be built on a lot than they feel is space for and discuss tandem parking garages. This is an issue in both the County, specifically on land adjacent to Mill Creek, and within the City.

Attendees noted that ambivalence is a problem in the City, where people won't comment until it directly impacts them.

Pavement

Mary Ann Heine with MCCA thanked the City for acting on the chip seal as quickly as they did and noted that residents are pleased with the action. Mary Ann mentioned that this happens because residents mobilized.

Pedestrians Crossing 132nd

The attendees brought up the issue of a pedestrian being hit while crossing 132nd at a non-crosswalk on September 8. Comments included how people speed on this road, and people cross when it's not safe. Attendees raised the question of putting up a "No Jaywalking" sign and suggested passing more stringent fines for jaywalking. They also suggested having a police officer babysit the corner and ticket people.

Traffic on 164th

Focus group participants also discussed how cars headed east bound on 164th are blocking traffic as they turn into McDonalds to the north. They would like to see that specific turn eliminated, noting that the turns at the lights are sufficient.

Also, they want more enforcement regarding not blocking the intersection of 164th and Bothell Everett Hwy. They also suggest cycling the light to a three-cycle system, where pedestrians can cross any direction all at once. This approach follows other cities.

Package Thefts

The North Pointe neighborhood rep noted that they are having an issue with packages being stolen. He asked for advice from other neighborhoods. The Amberleigh neighborhoods also noted that packages being stolen and that some delivery companies don't ring the bell any more. It was suggested that people have packages delivered to their workplace or a safe Amazon box.

Joni also noted a recent concern the City had heard about someone with a lot of packages in the car. She reminded the group that in addition to being vigilant in their neighborhoods, they need to be aware of a package delivery system that Amazon is using (Amazon Flex) that utilizes unmarked cars and ordinary people not in uniform, similar to services provided by Uber and Lyft.

Roundabouts

There was discussion of roundabouts in The Parks being dangerous, as drivers don't complete a full circle and treating it as a normal intersection, including left turns. He suggested putting in a three-way intersection. Joni noted that this topic was raised at the last meeting and she followed up with the Police. The Police noted they haven't observed this in person, but that doesn't mean it's not happening. She suggested developing a neighborhood tip sheet on how to use roundabouts. It was also suggested by another participant that the City paint directional arrows on the pavement to make it clear how traffic should flow.

Public Safety

An attendee brought up a car idling in a parking lot with a drug user inside. The resident wanted to ask other residents if they've seen similar issues. He wants more police presence on Trillium Blvd for speeding and drug use, especially as people seem to think it's a safe place to use drugs and park unobserved by others.

Administrative

Attendees want a copy of the meetings notes distributed to them. Joni noted she also would sent notes from the previous meeting. It was requested that the notes also be sent to Council; Joni noted that the previous meeting minutes were shared with Council.

IV. Fall Events

Joni shared a list of fall events that the City is producing or sponsoring and encouraged people to share the handout within their neighborhoods.

V. Closing Thoughts

Based on participant feedback, the next meeting will be scheduled for January 2018.