
From: Paul and Nancy Berry
Sent: Friday, January 23, 2009 9:11 PM
Subject: Late West Hill Community Council Mailing

I am the President of the West Hill Community Council. I wanted to reply to your contacts with the WHCC web site expressing dismay at the late delivery of our newsletter and announcement of the January 20 meeting.

First, your dismay is but a small reflection of the anger and outrage of myself and the Board. We had very carefully planned this first area wide mailing to 6000 households on the hill, in major part to get the word out about what we considered a very critical meeting. We decided to spend a substantial fraction of the very small amount of financial resources we have available this year to produce and mail it, trying to make sure everyone got it. It was planned to hit the mailboxes about 5-7 days before the meeting.

We chose to utilize a mail house that had previously done mailings in our area for the Fire District. We had no expectation there would be any problems. We made financial agreements, procedural arrangements and a general agreement as to what we wanted done well in advance.

We provided them a draft of the copy, had them set it up, reviewed and corrected their proof, and approved for production 10 days before meeting date. As it turned out, they only then started planning what addresses to send to, despite our clear indication to them of our timing needs, and that we essentially wanted the same distribution pattern as used earlier by the Fire District.

Despite our "pushing" on them to get it out, we were enraged to discover on the Friday before the meeting (with Monday being a mail holiday), that they had not yet started printing. At that point there was nothing we could do to get it in people's hands before the meeting. I can't express to you the extent of anger and frustration I felt at that point. Only because the newsletter has substantial additional information in it beyond the notice of meeting, did we not call off the printing and mailing. We will not use that firm again.

We do expect to do more area-wide newsletters in the future, both to alert folks of the quarterly community meetings, and to generally get out information.

The good news is that Rob, our webmaster, digitally records the meetings and posts those recordings on our website. So you can go there and listen to what occurred and catch up that much at least.

As to who and what the West Hill Community Council is:

Each unincorporated area of King County has what is called an "Unincorporated Area Council." The WHCC is the one for the area that includes Skyway, Lakeridge, Bryn Mawr, Campbell Hill, Earlington, Panorama View, etc. It is essentially the area covered by Fire District 20. It has existed in some form for more than 30 years, first as a community improvement club, and since the early 90s, (When King County set up this system) as a UAC. The "West Hill" term comes from King County and is how they refer to the area. I believe it invokes our area as the "West Hill" of Renton, expecting in the Growth Management Plan, that this area would eventually annex to Renton.

Though the WHCC gets a very small amount of financial support each year from King County, it is not a "creature" of King County, and is not under their direction or control. The entire community is considered "members" of the Council, and meets once every three months (third

Tuesday of January, April, July, and October). At the April meeting, all those attending elect members of an 11 member Board (half each year to two year terms).

That Board meets monthly (2nd Wednesdays) to plan and implement the activity of the Council. The newsletter you received describes much of that activity. The Board also functions as a conduit of information from, and comment/complaints to, the officials and departments of King County government, and other organizations involved in our community. All Board members are volunteers, and do these activities around the demands of the rest of their lives. We do our best.

Feel free to send me concerns, ideas, or comments you may have. Also feel free to come to our Board or quarterly meetings. Or if you cannot, you can go to the website to listen to the recordings. Also the website has posted agendas, minutes, and announcements of all the WHCC activities, as well as those of many other organizations.

I am sorry for this failure, but I am glad you cared enough about the community to be upset, and that you contacted us. Keep in touch.