

Morningside Neighborhood Association
Meeting 9/13/23
Morningside United Methodist Church

Minutes

Meeting called to order at 6:33pm

Chair Pamela Schmidling presiding

Board members present: Pamela Schmidling, Janet Bubl, Liz Backer, Geoffrey James, Kurtis Smith, Muriel Meyer, Alan Meyer, Bennie Yows, Sue Reid, Mark Olson, Nathan Soltz; Jenny Hiatt is excused

Quorum present

Correction to August minutes: Janet Bubl and Liz Backer were excused

June and August minutes approved unanimously

Police report: officer not present

Councilor report:

-Trevor Phillips says he hears from us that staff are not responsive, it is frustrating for him too; Geoff James says public works is good about responding to issues if provide details and have immediacy; Pamela says that if we call and specifically ask for a call back and give a phone number and don't hear back, that is important to know so that Trevor can help elevate the issue

-Trevor says there's only park ranger and the whole city is extremely short-staffed and we don't have the revenue/resources to adequately staff

-It is extremely important that people show up to council meetings and voice their issues there if possible so that staff can hear from the public, not just councilors

-Pamela asks why we need more park rangers, even though she knows we only just have the one; Trevor says that among other things, park rangers are very involved in supporting code compliance in the parks, "SOS" (Salem Outreach and Livability Services; formerly community response team) team is made up of police officers and code enforcement; problem is that even if we enforce the code, there's no place for unhoused individuals to go; Alan said park ranger led the operation to clean up the woods and did a very good job

-Payroll tax vote will occur in November; things we are investing in like Church at the Park, community action agencies, managed shelters; about 300 folks would be back on streets if vote fails, along with massive cuts to police and fire, just not sustainable the revenue; this has also forced a conversation in the legislature about our property tax system and contribution in lieu of taxes (CILT) from state; our property tax rate is capped at a rate less than inflation, so we will always be running out of money if we don't do something; other communities get CILT; in response to question from Alan Meyer last month, PGE has a "franchise fee" which is how they compensate us, like cable fee, but PGE's fee is much smaller than cable fee; Alan would also like to know about Salem Electric since they are a PUD, Trevor says he'll try to get that information

-90 Parks in 90 Days: didn't end up happening because of staff constraints from the lack of revenue; in the next 3-5 years, what does that look like if we don't have the new revenue? The problem will get worse; if we don't raise revenue, West Salem library will be closed, we would be able to maintain fire through the end of June next year, but by 2027-2028 we'd be down two out of eight fire stations; call times already at 6.5 minutes, 5.5 minutes is maximum goal; call times in our

ward can be upwards of 10 minutes; new fire station in our ward wouldn't be built because we wouldn't have resources to staff it

-Cities' general fund comes from property taxes, that is how city funding in this state is set up; citizen budget committee process January-May that refers budget to council; police and fire are 60-70% of the general fund; county, schools and city all get funded through property tax, that's pretty much the source of income for a city's general fund; this budget shortfall has been coming for years, there was going to be a vote in 2020 but pulled it due to COVID, then got federal money for a couple years during the pandemic; there are no easy answers; it actually costs us more money to completely shut down libraries because we are part of a library consortium that brings in about \$1-2 million per year; chief of police, chief of fire, city manager have all said that cutting any more is basically cutting bone; even with the staff positions that the city is hiring, it is hard to hire since there is no job security due to the revenue shortfall

-Kurtis says the main sources are property taxes, utility fee and operations fee; also franchise fees for cable and PGE; get some money from library program;

-Trevor says we are at 83 police officers, if we get below 80, we are in crisis;

-Trevor announces he is not seeking reelection, the position is 20-30 hours per week of work and councilors get no compensation; with the pandemic, being an ER doctor, taking a major toll on his family; board members expressed thanks for his service

Committee reports:

Traffic:

Alan Meyer – there is now a speed reader board in front of Leslie Middle School; Trevor says data should be shared with council, but the last time it was shared with MNA, that's when Trevor learned it, but didn't hear it otherwise

Land Use:

Geoff James – this morning, checked city website, three-lot partitioning off 12th Street, just north of Heather, borders Ridgewood, city planner says there are three trees and they plan to save all three; filed two days ago, takes a week or two but the city will send out notices

-Bennie says he got a notice on his doorstep of an appeal regarding the Meyer Farm, the developer proposed to change the dividing line between the farmhouse and the rest of the 30 acres; Geoff says that city staff said MNA could not appeal, Friends of the Meyer Farm may appeal to LUBA, the Friends just put out a flyer seeking donations to help cover the appeal and that's what Bennie found on his doorstep; Trevor says he understands that the developer has the legal right to proceed with the current plan

-Trevor says staff is looking into street names based on the motion our board passed

-Geoff says developer did file an application for duplexes, then withdrew it; just single-family homes in the approved plan

Parks:

Muriel Meyer – Braden Lane Natural Area was supposed to get a sign, but it hasn't yet; received a report from Robert, the Parks Planning Manager ([appended to minutes](#)); Alan Meyer says there was an approved Fairview Park plan many years ago, but now they're doing it all again, there was even money appropriated, now we don't know where the money went or what's happening with the park

-Muriel says Salem Park Improvement Fund Grant coming up, would like to apply for Fairview kiosk; **Liz Backer moved that we apply for the grant; seconded; approved by unanimous vote.**

CERT:

Pamela Schmidling – says still hasn't heard from the new CERT manager

Liquor license: none

Transit: none

Hours: Liz Backer - 1; Muriel Meyer - 6; Geoff James - 1; Nathan Soltz - 2; Pamela Schmidling - 8

Communications:

Jenny is excused but Pamela reports that the newsletter will be out shortly, hopefully by end of the week; Alan said Jenny is working on Salem Reporter which is now writing about neighborhood associations, would like ideas of what to put in there; the Salem Reporter has a daily email for subscribers

Announcements/general discussion:

-Geoff: apartments at Hilfiker park; fire danger at Meyer farm, would like public works to contact Michelle Morrow, the representative of the trustees for the developer, big concern is all the dried grass, used to be farmed for hay, but hasn't been done for years

-Liz: homeless in Hilfiker park, links on city website to report, shared it with her mother and both times staff were out the next morning telling those camping there to move out; it's not necessarily the same people coming back; link to resources: <https://www.cityofsalem.net/government/shaping-salem-s-future/housing-shelter/help-with-problem-properties/report-concerns-about-homelessness> (or navigate: cityofsalem.net > Government > Shaping Salem's Future > Housing & Shelter > Help with Problem Properties > Report Concerns About Homelessness)

-Muriel: asks Trevor if city still has volunteers who would patrol area; Trevor says he doesn't know if Hilfiker has population density to patrol like Woodmansee and Minto has, it is park by park though; Geoff says he did it at Minto and they were police-trained

-Pamela: says she is disheartened by how she has seen city staff not taking pride in their work; would like to know how community members can help staff serve the community, things like code enforcement; people are blowing leaves into the street which they shouldn't be doing, city hasn't put out any announcements about not doing it; Trevor says part of the problem is they have had a vacant communications position for over a year and a half

-Bennie: asks how city can afford to pay city manager that much money; Trevor says we were the largest city in Oregon to have only one manager; even with new managers, we've just retitled directors

-Nathan: announces he is running for Trevor's seat, City Council Ward 3; board members express their support and appreciation

Meeting adjourned at 8:05pm

Respectfully submitted,

Nathan Soltz

Board Secretary, Morningside Neighborhood Association



From: Robert Romanek RRomanek@cityofsalem.net
Subject: RE: City Council Fairview Historic Plaza
Date: September 12, 2023 at 4:12 PM
To: Muriel Meyer MurielMeyer@comcast.net
Cc: Trevor Phillips TPhillips@cityofsalem.net, Keith Stahley KStahley@cityofsalem.net, Info info@cityofsalem.net, sidrakdragon@live.com, Chris Hoy CHoy@cityofsalem.net, Robert Chandler RChandler@cityofsalem.net, Brian Martin BMartin@cityofsalem.net, Raymond Joseph rjoseph@cityofsalem.net, Kimberli Fitzgerald KFitzgerald@cityofsalem.net, Jennifer Kellar JKellar@cityofsalem.net, Scott Archer sarcher@cityofsalem.net

Hi Muriel,

The City has retained the services of a landscape architecture firm, Cameron McCarty, for the park master plan revisit and refinement effort. The Cameron McCarty team officially kicked-off their work on August 31st. They are currently gathering and reviewing background information for the entire park property.

Community outreach and engagement will begin this fall. We will have more detailed information to share soon. We will also have more consistent information. Prior to your October meeting I will begin sending the Morningside Neighborhoods Association (i.e., you) monthly email updates. I will send updates throughout the planning process.

For now, I want to flag two early involvement opportunities.

- **Interviews.** The Team will conduct two rounds of phone or virtual interviews with stakeholder groups to understand areas of need and/or desire for future development of the park. The first round of interviews is intended to occur relatively early in this planning process so we can gather and confirm information about needs prior to generating any conceptual plans. We will be inviting you to represent Morningside Neighborhood Association in one of these groups along with representatives from the five other neighborhood associations closest to the park. Two other interview groups will be comprised of residents closest to the site, including residents of The Grove apartments, Legacy Heights, Fairview Additions, and/or the Pringle Creek Community.
- **Pop-Up Events.** We will be hosting two rounds of pop-up events. Like the interviews, the first round will occur this fall before any conceptual plans are prepared. The objective will be to gather information about needs and desires. Weather permitting, we hope to host one of these events at the park to engage the local community – those living closest to the park. We would be more than happy to coordinate with the Morningside Neighborhood Association to make this a true neighborhood event.

Interview and event dates all still to be determined, but I hope to share them with you soon.

Rob Romanek

Parks Planning Manager

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From: Muriel Meyer <MurielMeyer@comcast.net>

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 11:42 PM

To: Robert Romanek <RRomanek@cityofsalem.net>