

Morningside Neighborhood Association
October 13, 2021 Meeting
MINUTES

Note: In-person meeting held at Morningside United Methodist Church. Quorum was present (See Attendance Sheet)

Call to Order – Meeting was called to order at 6:33 PM by MNA Chair Pamela Schmidling.

Handout Information – Pamphlet about this year’s leaf haul was distributed to all present.

Minutes – Minutes for the September 8, 2021 meeting were approved.

Police Report – Salem Police Officer Jason Donner reported:

- Message from SPD Chief regarding community participation in Department’s Strategic Plan and its efforts to build public’s trust in SPD. Brief discussion ensued regarding the survey format and vagueness of questions.
- Halloween “Dress Rehearsal” cancelled again this year due to Covid-19 concerns. Officer presented safety tips for Trick-or-Treaters and for drivers on Halloween night.
- Safer Pedestrian Crossings Program – Several new yellow flashing lighted crossings are under consideration around the city.
- SCRAM Program – SPD is still pushing for businesses and residents with security cameras to get on a list that the Department can consult (with owner’s permission) when crimes are recorded in camera location. SPD would have no direct access to the camera and recordings.
- Crime Statistics – As promised at last meeting, statistics on violent crimes were outlined - uptick for City in “Shots Fired” calls (469 so-far compared to 460 last year); person shooting incidents (six homicides this year vs. two last year) and 15 injuries this year vs. 20 for all of last year (some in South Salem.) Mention made of two recent incidents; and no apparent pattern.

Questions – Alan Meyer asked if SPD had a Vaccine Mandate; answer was No. Bennie Yows asked when the Strategic Plan survey was sent out; he and others said they didn’t receive it until last day or so – not leaving much time to submit their input. Are police aware of new homeless campers at various places in South Salem (including MNA?); SPD is aware of most of the locations, and new ones in vicinity of Les Schwab Tires, Applebee’s, Planet Fitness and Walmart was pointed out by visitor attendee/ proposed MNA Board member Antoinette M. (officer took note and will pass along to HQ.) Officer mentioned there are seasonal homeless visitors to Salem who work a circuit out of California. Trevor Phillips and

others in attendance reported uptick in mailbox break-ins and mail thefts at several locations; officer was aware and suggested switching to a PO Box for more security.

Bryce Bishop – Salem City Planning Director- presented coming changes to Salem Development Codes including to Chapter 808 which is concerned with tree protection. He cited changes in qualification for significant trees – some more and some less-stringent depending on tree species; also concerning root zone protection during construction. He mentioned tree conservation plan, and the idea of “Tree Banks” as way to preserve tree canopy functions – similar to wetland functions. Code changes will go into effect on December 6. He fielded some questions about residential development density (cottage clusters, etc.)

Committee Reports -

Traffic – Alan Meyer said “nothing new to report

Land Use – Geoffrey James reported that City had received about 30 letters from citizens concerned about the plan, and that there was something to report and discuss regarding Meyer Family Farm land – which can wait until after Trevor Phillips gives his City Council report and can leave meeting to comply with Council rules. Geoffrey recommended MNA be the vehicle for any appeals – since appeal requires fee from private parties, while MNA is exempt from fee requirement. Regarding proposed zone change to allow more retail development near Kuebler Blvd and 27th Street: Geoffrey recommended MNA board send City another letter registering concern about its furthering of impact on traffic in the area. Alan Meyer will draft a letter for MNA Board review for Chair to sign and send. Comments on the proposal are due by October 28th.

Parks – Following comment by Chair Pamela “Kudo’s to Salem City Parks Department for recent tree debris clean-up at Clark Creek Park,” - Muriel Meyer reported our request for grant to buy two additional picnic tables for Morningside Park was given a boost to allow purchase of four more resilient metal tables – two of which will replace the existing wooden ones. There was some discussion about the barbeque stand near the existing tables and whether or not the other two new tables will necessitate installing another barbecue. Geoffrey James brought up the situation in which formal access has not yet been acquired for west access to Hilfiker Park, and that he had sent a personal letter of concern to City in that regard – not as representative of MNA.

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) – Pamela Schmidling reported “despite several attempts to schedule” there have been no meetings since last report. The storage unit is located at Morningside Church. Benny Yows asked “How does CERT

inform the public about this?" Problem is that info goes out by Email, and not all MNA neighbors get email. Snail mail (even postcards) is expensively prohibitive. Discussion ensued about alternatives for getting info out; suggestion was made to use bulletin boards in stores, churches, schools, etc. Victoria Self and Pamela Schmidling offered to look into this. Sara Duncan suggested means and possible funding for mailings may be available from Salem Leadership Foundation/South Salem Connectors (also that SSC is the community lightning rod for things such as this, and that they meet the third of fourth Tuesday of each month.)

Transit – Sara Duncan – announced upcoming South Salem Transit Center “open house” event. In addition to serving as bus transit satellite hub, it will serve as a Mobility Center. There is money coming to connect more-directly with North Salem, and with important destinations such as Social Security Office and Veterans’ Administration. Better lighting is planned for those stops. Geoffrey James asked if there were any plug-in electric powered busses yet in the Salem Transit fleet; they are coming. There are three new members on the Transit Board.

City Council Report – Trevor Phillips reported Council approved certain System Development improvements including 75% of Reed Road (last 25% to be done with developments at intersection with Battle Creek. The improvement will include sidewalk on West side of road (also something about bike path.) Councilor Phillips also announced process underway to develop several managed homeless camp sites to replace unmanaged sites such as Wallace Marine and Cascade Gateway park sites. Also, a Federal Funded Navigation Center will be opened on Mission Street (Highway 22) which will help 100 people per year. He also mentioned City is starting a Climate Action Task Force to study ways to reduce Salem’s carbon footprint. Councilor Phillips presented Muriel Meyer with City award recognizing her longtime service in securing grants to improve the parks in Morningside Neighborhood. There were brief discussions of the Hilfiker Park access easement, and Flood Zones. Public Works received an award for work on Mill Creek Business Park. Back to “Homeless” issues: Council is asking city to put more concentration on contacting the homeless population not being served by existing services.

Dr. Phillips – closed report with report on Covid-19 situation and staff vaccination statistics at Salem Health, also with staffing labor issues which allow nurses to make more money by travelling around to serve different locations.

Announcement – Sue Reid – Morningside UM Church will hold a “Trunk or Treat” drive-thru for Trick or Treaters on Halloween afternoon beginning at 4PM. Also, Sue reminded Board and visitors to sign-out before leaving the building to help Church with Covid contact tracing efforts.

(Note: Councilor Trevor Phillips left the meeting to allow further Board discussion of Land Use/Meyer Family Farm issues.)

Back to Traffic – Alan Meyer confirmed that he will draft the letter concerning zone changes at Kuebler and 27th, but wanted a motion passed for him to do so to confirm all are on board with this concern. Motion passed.

Back to Land Use – Meyer Farm – Geoffrey James said that Lisa at City Planning will make official decision on the development matter within the next few weeks, and it is likely to be approved. He reiterated that it is important for MNA to stay involved and be conduit for appeals. He also explained the dynamics of the family factions pro and con to sale of the property, and that Judge Hart’s decision that the proposal should go ahead. The developer has the option to purchase the property if it goes up for sale. The family member group who wants to retain the property as open space has put together a \$3 Million to offer to buy out the other interests. He said that further donations to the cause may help this succeed; and MNA Board needs to approve sending out letter of our intent to appeal – which Geoffrey offered to draft.

Good of the Order – Board unanimously invited and encouraged visiting attendees Antoinette M., Victoria S. and Sara D. to join the Board. No further announcements.

Adjournment – Chair Pamela Schmidling adjourned the meeting at 8:30 PM.