

Council of Neighborhood Associations (CNA) Minutes

Monday, October 12, 2020

6:30 - 8:30 PM

Virtual Meeting

Present: Council of Neighborhood Associations Officers: Larry Dzieza (Nottingham) - Chair, Melissa Allen (BHNA)– Vice Chair, Jim Rioux (ENA) – Co-Secretaries

Members: Bruce Coulter (NWOA), Bob Jacobs (GSNA), Darrah Johnson (Wildwood NA), Jenn Wulf (DNA), Dana McAvoy (Eastbay Drive) Judy Bardin (NWOA), Dave Marty (ICNA), Sal Munoz (Cooper Crest HOA) , Bob Van Schoorl

City Representatives & Presenters: Lydia Moorehead (Community Planning and Development), Clark Gilman (City Council), Michelle Bentley (Community, Planning and Development)

6:30 – 7:00 Agenda Presentation and Neighborhood Happenings

Larry reviewed the proposed Agenda.

Mellissa – we cancelled our Halloween event. It’s difficult to plan anything. Zoom meetings don’t appeal to people that don’t have a clear role.

Jenn – We held our quarterly meeting this month. Only board members and except two previous board members attended. We are re-thinking how to connect. We are using other groups to raise issues and then will schedule another meeting in a month. Hoping the preparation will increase motivation to attend a Zoom meeting.

Bruce – We have postponed our membership meeting. We wrote up a detailed update about what to look forward to in the coming months. We primarily highlighted three projects the Olympia Crossings Project, the Hardel Site Plan developed by TAS and the West Bay Woods project. Regarding the Hardel site, our concern is impact to West Bay Drive and traffic increase. The West Bay Woods project has cleared a large portion of the site of invasive species from the site. The project will ultimately enhance Schneider Creek.

NWOA Board will extend the board and officers through the next year. We will start having meetings when the virus subsides.

Jim – On Wednesday we will hold a joint meeting with Parks and ICNA to meet the artist for the next Art Crossing Project.

We will piggyback on that meeting and hold a Special Meeting to shift our Annual Meeting to October so that we line up better with the City’s timing for submitting our list of officers.

Tomorrow Roger Horn will testify to Council during public comment to support funding for small sidewalk projects on local access streets.

Darrah – We held our annual meeting last week and held virtual elections. We delivered a neighborhood history power point presentation. That drew a few members. We are discussing Halloween plans, but we are not sure what we will be able to do.

We also updated our Bylaws.

Sal - We will attempt a November Zoom meeting. We have a couple of seats open on the board, so we are not sure if we will have a quorum for election.

I will talk about sidewalks later in the meeting.

Judy – The planning commission is now considering the Housing Options proposal. They will discuss them again at their October 18 meeting and then the proposals go to Council.

They went through accessory dwellings and will approve with a few concerns. There was some discussion of moving from 800 sq. ft. to 850 sq. ft to be consistent with Lacey.

They are going forward with no additional parking but there was some concern and there was also discussion about areas where there are no sidewalks.

They looked at duplexes and saw a possible need for a Comprehensive Plan amendment, to do what is proposed in the Housing Options.

Thurston County is about to release their Climate Action Plan. We may want to hear a presentation from them.

Dana – We had our annual meeting last week and it was successful. About 24 people participated, like our normal meetings. We elected officers and held a good discussion around speeding on East Bay Drive. We worked with the City to put up speed monitoring signs and increase patrolling. Another hot topic is RV parking on East Bay Drive.

We had a report out on oyster planning which is an important topic for many in our neighborhood.

We also approved a donation to Hummingbird the solar panel project on the Hands On Children's Museum

Dave - We will hold our annual meeting tomorrow. We will take part in the Arts Crossing meeting on Wednesday

Larry - I have a message from Denise. She regrets missing the meeting. Would like to share that CRANA participated with other neighborhoods in the Thurston County Food Project in collecting 5,900 pounds of Food.

Land Use and Environment Committee will be discussing increased and expanded use of Ingersoll Stadium at Olympia High School. Neighbors have expressed some concerns.

Larry also updated the group on discussions with the Sounding Board, a group pulled together to discuss the RV parking along Deschutes Parkway. He indicated that the discussion went "off the rails" focusing

more on what the State should be doing in the larger context to address housing and the challenges to people without homes.

Mellissa – Does everyone know how to get phone numbers and e-mail addresses of members?

Larry – Agreed to do a tutorial and will take on collecting that information and sharing it with members.

Melisa and Lydia offered to help.

Dave agreed to post that information on the CNA website.

7:00 – 7:20 Update from Council Member Clark Gilman

We will begin the next Parks Plan Update. This will be a significant effort.

On November 2nd we will have a briefing on the Log Cabin Road extension. We realized that several Council members have joined since the previous discussions, so we are launching another conversation to educate those newer board members.

The Department of Commerce is releasing Cares Act funds and Thurston County has a short timeline to put those out. Thurston Strong Initiatives are getting funding which includes small business assistance, non-profit group assistance and childcare opening assistance are also seeing funds for rental assistance being released.

The General Government Committee held three extra meeting to review 71 applicants for a position on the Critical Use of Force Board. The applicants were all very strong. We narrowed that list down to six members who will serve in a pool. In the case of a “critical incident” two of those people will participate in the investigation.

Last Thursday we interviewed two law firms for the position of Police Auditor.

With regard for RV parking, we have two people talking with people living in RV’s along Ensign Rd. We are telling them they will not be allowed to stay. The challenge is we do not have anyplace for them to go. We are working with neighboring local governments.

Melissa – Wasn’t there a plan to create an RV parking place?

Clark – We have gotten close, but have had obstacles related to either regulatory constraints or citizen opposition so we have not been successful

Mellissa - What about the Port?

Clark - The Port has been in conversations and they are talking about property by the airport.

The issues on Deschutes and Ensign are elevating the issue.

A community member named Jeff Lawyer is building small shelters using plywood.

A number have been built at the Nickerson Camp and there are two at the mitigation site.

The hope is to replace tents with something a little more durable. The advantage is they are rodent proof and they can be made secure.

Dave – I would be concerned with fire hazard of plywood boxes in the camps.

Lark – There are issues with just about every option we have right now.

We decided to extend boards and commissions for one year due to challenges of the pandemic.

Regarding traffic on East Bay Drive, we are installing a new crossing at Olympia and East Bay Drive. This should slow and calm traffic at that intersection and improving pedestrian and bike access.

7:20 - 7:25 CNA Survey

Larry briefly reviewed the results that were sent to all members.

7:25 - 7:30 Break

7:30 – 7:55 Homeowner Responsibilities for Sidewalks and Trees

Larry opened the topic by explaining that we are confused about who to contact when there is a sidewalk or tree issue.

Shelly Bentley explained that her program, Urban Forestry, is housed in CP&D, the street tree maintenance crew is based in Parks and she does a lot of work with Public Works related to street trees. She then asked what question the group had for her.

Jenn – In downtown we have extensive issues with tree roots causing damage to sidewalks. Who do I contact?

Shelly – I got involved when tree roots are lifting sidewalks. Calls to the City about tree damage to sidewalks are directed to me. I then contact the individual to find out what the problem is.

The responsibility falls on the adjacent property owner if you're not in an HOA. I can help work with the property owners to determine what needs to be done.

We start with the property owner contacting a certified arborist. We try to retain trees and often we can prune the roots. It depends on the soil, the tree species and the age of the tree.

Melissa – This is related to a larger discussion about sidewalks. In my area we are a working-class neighborhood. Most can't afford to hire arborists and install new sidewalks. In these older neighborhoods I don't see a solution.

Shelly – San Francisco is the only jurisdiction in the country that takes care of all their street trees. I do understand the concern about the difficulties of determining what's needed. Sometimes I can provide a solution like grinding the sidewalks.

Bruce shared a story about walking to an evening meeting and falling over a raised sidewalk. The lift was about two inches. Is grinding the responsibility the homeowners the City?

Shelly – The homeowner. Grinding is not always the best solution. Two inches is typically more than you would grind. You would want to contact the City's Transportation Department to discuss sidewalks

Bob – I understand the desire to have large trees. I don't understand why people try to have large trees along streets. It seems ridiculous for that to be our policy.

Shelly – I've learned a lot about the impact of soils. The ability of roots to penetrate soils is very important. I have also learned a lot about the species of trees that need more space for roots. For example, Maples have roots that need to be at the top of the soil to absorb oxygen

We have developed a recommended street tree list for this area. There are some options that we can work towards

Sal – Based on my research, there is no difference between HOA's and others in the code. HOA's can voluntarily accept that responsibility but it is not spelled out in the code.

Regarding contacting an arborist, it would be good to know who to contact and have some information about potential cost.

Shelly - Regarding the question of who is responsible you will not find that in our code. You need to go to the plat and the CCR's. I work with several HOA's. Sometimes it's the HOA, sometimes it's the property owner sometimes its split. I am currently working with some HOA's to revise their CCR's.

As a City employee I cannot recommend one arborist over another. I do have list of arborists and I do share that. I always advise that people talk to three and get three estimates.

Larry - I can share your information with our members. Do you feel it would be cheaper for people to work together?

Shelly – Yes, we have done that in the past.

Jenn – In my section of the neighborhood we have several fruit trees. The trees have become overgrown and yield a lot fruit. Some like this, but the trees seem out of control and a bit of a nuisance. Are there programs to address this.

Shelly - Some arborists have taken on projects like this. I recommend contacting the Gleaners. We don't have a program. I have worked on issues on a case by case basis. I will keep this in mind. This is an issue especially when it comes to fruits and nuts.

Shelly – The City takes care of 2,500 street trees in Downtown and along ten major corridors. This was established in the 1990's when the City developed a street tree maintenance manual. That effort made the determination that those trees would be taken care of by the City. We need to update that manual. The City has more large arterials that will need work. There are also several emergency routes that have low hanging limbs.

We hope to update that manual in the next one or two years.

Finally, hazardous trees are my number one priority. If anyone sees a tree that could be hazardous, they should contact me.

7:55 – 8:20 Sidewalk Responsibility Issues for HOA's

Sal – We noticed sidewalk issues in our neighborhood, and we were aware that the adjacent property owners were responsible for maintenance and repair. We did not think this made sense and we thought we should investigate taking care of this on a neighborhood level. We were not aware of the specific agreements made by the HOA.

The code states the Public Works Director will give notice when repairs are needed. Is there a program of inspection that the City employs to inform the PW Director a when to make such notice?

The ordinance was written in 1909. Is it time to revisit this?

As an HOA we wanted to know if the intent was to pass on cost as well as liability associated with disrepair. Liability is not spelled out at all in the ordinance or information shared by the City.

In our case, our insurance does cover this liability, but I don't know if other HOA's or property owners are even aware of their responsibilities.

My research also revealed that not all property owners are treated the same. The City takes care of the major commercial areas and downtown, but not other places. The neighborhoods are on their own,

Sal made a point that he did not have information about claims for incidents on sidewalks and mentioned a recent inquiry from Clark Gilman to Leonard Bauer about such claims.

Sal went on to discuss Cooper Crest HOA's efforts but said he was concerned about taking responsibility for weather related maintenance such as snow and ice removal. They are considering communicating to residents that snow and ice removal is their responsibility.

Sal again asked if the 1909 ordinance should be updated to modern conditions. The CNA could play an important role in addressing the related issues.

Sal also raised the issue of responsiveness of City staff. He did not get a return call when he tried to contact the City Attorney's office and felt that issue should be raised.

Bob Van Schoorl mentioned that the City has installed access ramps on every corner, but the sidewalks in between are not passable. He mentioned that he has eighty-year old trees on his property. The neighbors would scream if he cut them down. Why doesn't the City find funding to address tree damage?

Clark explained that funding for existing responsibilities are not adequate. The access ramps are linked to funding for street repair. Right now, there are no "unspent" funds to put toward these problems.

Sal – I would recommend that HOA's and NA's take on this responsibility. It does not make sense for individual property owners to bear this responsibility.

Mellissa – This is a good example of how we get stuck. We advocate for our neighborhoods, but we hear from the City this just not their priority. The City does not have funding, but then we have downtown housing that has an eight-year tax exemption. The City has just decided to not get revenue from Downtown. So, we need to think outside the box to look at alternatives rather than just hearing what the rules are. That’s what ENA and ONNA are trying to do.

8:20 – 8:21 Approval of Minutes

Minutes for the September 14 meeting were approved.

8:21 – 8:37 Future Topics

Larry – Backflow Prevention Device Testing

Mellissa – Why isn’t the CNA represented on groups and committees formed by the City?

There was a great deal of discussion about how this could be accomplished and the history of past participation by CAN on various workgroups.

Bob – Parks Plan Development

8:29 – 8:37 Meeting was adjourned

Addendum

Report from SWONA

1. We had our quarterly meeting on September 24 and I think 11 people attended. Two main topics were (1) plans by Unity Church to provide hygiene services (mobile shower bus) once a week (Tuesdays) for homeless and potential they would host 23 older homeless for a time starting in November when shelter at 2828 Martin Ave. is demolished (to be rebuilt), and (2) organizing maintenance of mural along Olympic Way (connection between roundabouts west of 4th Avenue bridge). We also discussed revising current NMG for unused funds for Gloria Dei meeting room rentals towards fall planting for beautification of a few neighborhood roundabouts.
2. Mural was pressure washed and repainted (to hide graffiti) weekend of October 3rd per 2012 maintenance agreement with City. Pictures of work sent to Lydia Morehead at City.
3. Neighborhood Zoom meeting by Unity Church on October 7 to answer any questions about their plans to supply homeless services. Presentations by Build a Bus Home (www.buildabushome.org), Interfaith Works, and Unity Church.