



Wilkes East Neighborhood Association

Public Meeting Minutes

March 13, 2023

Meeting called to order at 7:00 by Greg Hartung. This Board Meeting was held at the Moose Lodge.

Roll Call: Greg Hartung, Land Use; Gail Voge, Secretary; Billy Simmons, Treasurer; Bob Lundbom, Website & Newsletter; Krista Harrison Member at Large.

Greg Hartung, Land Use

Kris Freiermuth, President – not feeling well today so Greg is standing in.

This is the first meeting that we have had at the Moose Lodge. They have a nice meeting room, they set it up, they have audio video for us to use and it is free of charge.

Thank you to Bob Lundbom for preparing the WENA March Newsletter. If you have any ideas for articles in future newsletters let Bob know.

Elections

November meetings ran long so we did not get to have the elections at that meeting.

We have a need for volunteers for Member at Large. We had a couple of Members at Large that cannot make the meetings anymore due to personal issues. Anyone can be a Member at Large. Krista Harrison volunteered to be a Member at Large.

Motion to elect all current Board members and Krista Harrison as a Member at Large. The motion was seconded and approved.

Motion to adopt the August and November WENA Public meetings. It was seconded and approved.

Jessica Harper, Community Services Manager, City of Gresham

There are 3 outreach workers. Discussed the funding and outcomes for the fiscal year. Homeless service specialists are the point of contact for individuals in need of shelter, housing, or other related services. They help people experiencing homelessness and connecting them to resources to be successful. Ensure environmental health and community livability by protecting Gresham's parks, trails and open spaces. They approach this using a team approach by daily contact, building trust, timely access to services, rapid cleanup of camp sites and the consistency to build trust.

A Typical Day for the team – Check for new reports, visits parks, trails, follow up with clients, patrol, and monitor, respond to inquiries, provide referrals to resources, and track



service provided.

They are serving people's needs, are an advocate for helping people experience homelessness, they make sure that the Unauthorized camping regulation 7.10.165 (No person shall camp in any public place or on any public street or right-of-way, other than an area approved by the city for the permitted use and built for the purpose of camp grounds or overnight parks.

RV parking permit program – the permits are free, RV parking allowed for 72 hours with no-cost permit. Parking must be immediately adjacent to a property, only the owner will be issued a permit, and RV cannot be abandoned.

Gresham's population experiencing homelessness at a point-in-time 138 in 2015, 127 in 2017, 103 in 2019 and 48 in 2022.

Recent Success is to try to have the homeless go to shelters in Gresham n try not to have them go to outside Gresham area.

Behavioral Health Team are still working and helping mental health and people dealing with effects of drugs. This team responds within a day when they get a report of tents being set up.

Billy thanked Jessica and her department for doing a great job.

Michael Gonzales, Neighborhoods and Community Enhancement, City of Gresham

Gresham Safety Levy Information – Our community safety systems are under unsustainable stress. The Safety Levy goals are to Stabilize Fire and Police Services with adequate staffing levels, expand the availability of our homeless services, and avoid layoffs.

Gresham is at a critical turning point with 31 staff positions eliminated in 2019 and demand has increased. Independent studies agree, Gresham needs more police and fire to provide the level of service our community needs. Gresham property taxes, one of the lowest in the state, only funds 44% of police and fire costs.

Majority of Gresham voters support the Safety Levy – 59% of Gresham voters polled in fall 2022 support the Levy with more Police, Fire, and crisis response for \$1.50/\$1,000.

For the Police - The Levy will preserve 34 existing police positions in the first year and adds 26 new positions and maintains 13 temporary positions, over the five years of the levy. Some of the community impacts will be to restore specialty teams, like Neighborhood Enforcement Team and Traffic Enforcement, reduce response times, and increase crime reductions efforts.



For the Fire Dept – The Levy preserves 21 existing firefighter positions in the first year. Adds 16 new positions and maintains 4 temporary positions over the five years of the levy. Community Impacts – Improve emergency response, less reliance on Portland, and proactive fire protections.

Homeless Services – Adds one homeless services specialist, maintains 1 temporary position. Community Impacts – Expand response to some evenings/weekends and anticipates potential increased needs.

Crisis Response – Adds 2 new positions to existing Behavioral Health Unit and Mobile Integrated Health teams. Community Impacts – Reduce impacts on Police and Fire by responding with a trained resource. Expand response to homelessness team, reduce 911 calls and cost efficient.

If the Safety Levy is not passed jobs will be cut, minutes matter in an emergency and services may be eliminated or reduced.

The Gresham Safety Levy will help protect our community and keep the City running efficiently. The proposed Safety Levy will – Stabilize police and fire services through adequate staffing. Expand the availability of our homeless services. Implement a coordinated crisis response team. Avoid city-wide layoffs.

Safety Levy vote to be included in the May 16, 2023 special election.

Lucy Harden, Little Houses, United Church of Christ
12505 NE Halsey St., Portland, OR. 97230

United Church of Christ constructed pods housing for the homeless on church property in connection with We Shine organization (weshinepdx.org).

Pods were built and a fence surrounds them. People moved into them in September 2023. The next item to be built is a community building for a kitchen and bathrooms. Right now they partner with the Gospel Mission to bring in a shower once a week. Other partners bring in meals and clothes.

All participants must sign an agreement and go to classes at the church and have weekly meetings.

Billy Simmons, Treasurer

Expenses this month include new stickers for the yard signs and printing the March WENA 2023 Newsletter.

Most of the money in out account is from The City of Gresham grant.



We passed a basket for donations.

Adjourn 8:30

Motion to adjourn. Seconded and approved.

Next Public meeting, August 13, 2023

Next Board Meeting, Monday May 8, 2023

Website: www.wilkeseastna.org

All Board Meetings start at 6:30 pm.

All Public Meetings start at 7:00 pm.

Until further notice all meetings will be held via Zoom.