

Northwest Neighborhood Association General Meeting

May 8, 2023
Meeting Minutes

The meeting was held at Gresham United Methodist Church and was called to order at 7:08 p.m.

Kat welcomed everyone and said that this is our first in-person meeting since the pandemic in 2020. Five people attended via Zoom. The board introduced themselves.

Kat introduced Gresham Mayor Stovall who came to make a presentation about the Safety Levy. He said we need to pass the levy because currently the safety systems are under unsustainable stress, resulting in the loss of specialty teams, longer response times, and homeless services only available during business hours. He said Gresham is the fourth largest city in Oregon.

- Thirty-one staff were lost in 2019. Compared to Hillsboro, Gresham employs 673 employees vs 954 in Hillsboro, \$85 million vs. \$123 million general fund revenue, even though Gresham is slightly more populated.

- The Safety Levy is a property tax voted on by residents this month.

- The monthly impact for typical Gresham homeowners would be \$28.50/month (based on tax assessed value). It is a five-year levy.

- The city has continued to grow, yet staffing by the city has stayed stagnant or gone down since 1998.

- Community impacts if passed: restore specialty teams, like neighborhood enforcement team and traffic enforcement and re-open the Rockwood Public Safety building. It would reduce response times and enhance community engagement. It would increase crime reduction efforts and provide alternate response through public safety specialist and add additional mental health crisis response services.

- It would preserve 21 existing firefighter positions in the first year and add 16 new positions and maintain four temporary positions over the five years of the levy.

- It would add one homeless services specialist, maintain one temporary position. He said for us to access Metro services Gresham needs “boots on the ground.”

- It would add two new positions to existing Behavioral Health Unity and Mobile Integrated Health which would reduce impacts on police and fire by responding with a trained resource. An independent study recommends this response is less expensive over time.

- Without passing services will be eliminated, and the city would still have a funding shortfall.

The mayor invited questions from neighbors.

1. A neighbor asked about salary increases. He said that a salary study has been done and that the city is competitive. He said when an officer is hired there is an 18 month-long training each goes through, from time hired to the time they are out on the street.
2. A neighbor talked about violence and wondered if this levy will address the root causes to why violence/discontent/homelessness occurs (lack of equity, trauma informed care, etc.). He said he is troubled by this levy and how the conversation over time regarding the levy has gone. The mayor said he is a believer in prevention, and that he has seen firsthand from his own upbringing how hardship affects communities. Lori Moness Anderson said some of this support comes from the county.
3. Another neighbor addressed the idea of community based public safety. He said that six positions will be added to build relationships with the community, and that the levy is community focused, that it is about prevention.
4. A neighbor addressed drinking water. He said that Bull Run reservoir is great water and that it is and has been the water source for Gresham, but is slated to end as the city's water resource. He said that it is his understanding that the water source will change to well water and that he is concerned about the safety of this water source. The mayor began addressing this question/point, then another neighbor asked that the mayor stay on the topic of the safety levy.
5. A neighbor asked what rate business owners will be paying re the safety levy. He said that the city has "vertical tax credits" which encourage investment and multi-family housing projects. He pointed out that a microchip company is planning to invest millions more into their plant here in Gresham, which provides many good-paying jobs. He said inequities are created by previous laws that have been passed.
6. Regarding fees attached to our water bill for fire/police/parks (\$30 every 2 months). What's up with that? Will it end? Will it be renamed? The mayor said the City council is wrestling with this and that they are waiting to see what will happen with the levy.
7. A neighbor asked if any of the levy will go to effects of climate change? Like helping people in the community access help and services during times of extreme heat and extreme cold. The mayor said it does by providing more services to unhoused people. He said this past winter the city was able to open up warming centers. He said the city works to find housing or at least semi-permanent housing to chronically unhoused people.
8. A neighbor asked who the clinicians will be who will respond to unhoused individuals and/or people going through mental health crisis?

Who is the city contracting with? The mayor addressed the one particular event that the questionnaire mentioned and said that there is a larger response/history to consider. (There was a long conversation re this, not able to fully capture in my notes).

9. A neighbor talked about homeless support and confirmed that the levy would help address this. She said she works at a local church and shared a story about an unhoused person lighting fires near the building. The church staff tried to help, she said they contacted the police and someone from the city to come, but that no one was able to come to help. The mayor acknowledged the complexity of this issue and said that the city did help house 111 people last year and strives to help as many as they can.

The Mayor thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. He said his goal is to improve Gresham as much as possible and that our voice is critical in the conversation. He said there is a distrust of government and that he would like to understand why. He invited people to contact him through the city's website to share their thoughts.

Kat thanked the mayor for coming. She asked that everyone look over the Feb. 6, 2023, minutes. Kat noticed a few typos. There was a motion to approve the minutes. It was seconded and approved.

Kat said that we recently created a tree committee but are now in need of voting on a new chair for the committee. Neighbor Alex Kampt introduced himself and said he is nominating himself as the chair. He said he lives in the neighborhood on a one-acre-plus piece of land and it's full of trees. A neighbor made a motion to approve his nomination, it was seconded. A vote was held by hand and 18 voted in favor. Kat said that we are only the second neighborhood association to have a tree committee.

Alex said his first priorities will be to find out what the committee can do and what its limits are. He talked about biodiversity and habitat, restoration and preservation. To begin, find out what's here, walk through the neighborhoods to see what's out here already.

Board reports:

- Kat announced that we will have an Adopt-a-Park clean up Saturday, May 20 from 9:00-noon.
- John Bildsoe, land-use chair, is not here tonight. Chris Fast read through John's land-use highlights:

1. CIVIC DR @ 13TH ST; SOUTH OF MAX STN —
Multi-Family/Use

[LD-23-00224 - In Review]

The developer, Palindrome Properties, is pursuing new market-rate and workforce apartments on NW 13th St and NW Civic Drive. A lot partition is required to separate the single existing parcel into two lots for ownership purposes. The lot partition is in response to project funding requirements where separate funding sources for the 438 workforce and market-rate housing portions of the project are being pursued. Several ENN meetings have already been held.

(Original Site: 4.23 Acres → Proposed North Lot: 2.40 Acres & Proposed South Lot: 1.83 Acres)

2. 2022 NW DIVISION ST —

Proposed 57-unit cottage cluster on 4.9 acre property.

[PRE-23-00111 - Minor Pre-Application Summary Issued]

This property is owned by HOME OF GOD CHRISTIAN CHURCH, which had intended to move their ministry from its current location on SE 182nd Ave.

All proposed units are under 900 SF footprint (except those with bonus 200SF attached garage).

No Early Neighborhood Notification meeting has been scheduled to date.

Potential Neighborhood Concerns:

- Possible setback issues (5' ~10' from neighbors' backyards);
- Stormwater Drainage
- Parking (8 units facing Division St appear to require garages/curbcuts on Division)
- Interior roadways and green spaces

1445 NW 4TH ST [LD-22-00820 - In Review] —

Current plan consistent with details provided during 04OCT2022 ENN meeting.

68 NW BIRDSDALE AVE [FMFP-22-00066 - Expired] — Final plat for 7-unit residential development in red-line review. Property currently on market for sale.

3. BRYN MAWR DEVELOPMENT [PFSA-23-00261 In Review; LD-22-00274 Approved with Conditions]

— The plan to subdivide this 3.79-acre lot into a 39-unit subdivision was approved by appeals officer with conditions SEP2022. Property purchased by Chet Antonsen's development company NOV2022. Currently, a Public Facilities Permit remains pending (applicant needs to re-submit water, stormwater, engineering, addressing proposals). Signage advertising future housing development is in place on Powell Blvd.

4. DIVISION STREET CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT — Constructing frontage

improvements (bike lane, planter strip, upgrading existing driveways, a new 6-inch curb and 6-foot sidewalk) to meet current City and ADA standards. This City-led project will be constructed in approximately June 2024 – June 2025. The project is in the right-of-way phase; CoG has approached property owners about purchasing a 3-year Temporary Construction Easement with a maximum of 1 year of non-continuous work. Project commencement is determined by when the bid package for the improvements is advertised, which is estimated for March 2024.

5. Bella Vista Park & Cottage Cluster Transition Amenities

What are the fencing/landscape transition requirements for new development abutting public parks?

The required buffer between detached residential uses and a park use is a Type-A buffer which consists of a 10-foot separation/setback only. This buffer type has no other requirements for landscaping or barriers such as walls or fences.

Treasurer's report: \$638 in our On-Point account right now.

Kat asked Mary to pass around the donation basket to help cover expenses for this meeting. She said that we will give Gresham United Methodist Church a donation for letting us use their facility.

Kat thanked everyone for attending our meeting. She said she was grateful that Gresham United Methodist let us use their church so we could have an in-person meeting.

To close we held a raffle with two prizes, a gift certificate from Jazzy Bagel and one for Café Delirium.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.