

Morningside Neighborhood Association
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
October 11, 2017
Pringle Creek Community Hall

Meeting Called to Order – 6:32 PM, by Chair Pamela Schmidling.

Introductions – Those present introduced themselves – there were 15 persons present at the beginning of the meeting, including nine board members – enough for a quorum. An attendance sheet was circulated by Chair Schmidling for attendees to sign.

Minutes to September and July Meetings – September minutes were approved with one correction (Spelling of Scott Schaefer’s name. July minutes were approved after Scott located them with his smart-phone on the city’s Website and suggested they were complete. (Al T. did submit those minutes to the city in July, and sent another copy to Chair Schmidling last month; Muriel Meyer said she also received a copy.) On this subject, there was also some discussion of the situation that City no longer has a neighborhood liaison – the function has become part of another position, and she is just getting up to speed on her responsibilities.

Police Report – Officer Doud of the Salem Police Department (SPD) reported that our neighborhood seems to be a popular dumping ground for stolen cars from around the area. Thieves are stealing the cars for immediate transportation and abandoning them when they get near their destination, or to where they can steal another car. According to a recent crime analysis, Morningside Neighborhood has the lowest crime rate in the city. But, some trends to point out were: increase in vehicle thefts – especially break-ins; and increase in business thefts – especially items left outside. Officer Doud encouraged us to be more vigilant during the coming Holiday season – particularly to avoid having delivered packages left on porch; have neighbors keep eye out, or specify packages only be left when someone is home to receive them and otherwise arrange to pick them up at the USPS, UPS or FedEx station. Regarding auto thefts: Honda vehicles model years 1990 to 97 are the most common stolen, because their ignition key lock is easily picked.

Questions: Alan Meyer asked Office Doud if there was any progress in the investigation of a recent home break-in, assault and robbery at his neighbors’ on Sunland Ave. Officer Doud later checked the record via the computer in his vehicle and reported the investigation pointing in the direction that it was not a random break-in, and they are following some leads. Pamela S. asked him if anything is being done to improve communications between Public and SPD Dispatch. Specifically, she had called SPD to report suspicious activity in Clark Creek Park, and could not get the dispatcher person to understand what she was reporting (person scattering items around her car – dispatcher reported complaint as “abandoned car” thus delaying police investigation of the situation.) Officer Doud said there is a lot of turnover in Dispatch staffing, and it takes a lot of training and experience to maintain effectiveness (paraphrase), so – most often the dispatcher “doesn’t have a clue” about exact nature of complaint.

Guest Speakers –

- Report on Status of Hillcrest Property – Rex Emery, DHS, followed up on his commitment to keep MNA Board informed of progress and status of closure of Hillcrest School, possible disposition and interim maintenance of the property. Closure occurred earlier this year as scheduled, and students moved to new facility at McClaren in Woodburn. Property was turned over to State Department of Administrative Services (DAS) for maintenance. Emery recalled that the Board asked him to be sure the property was not allowed to run into neglect, and that except for some minor issues, the transfer is working.

He then introduced Shannon _____, a representative from DAS. She said the big concern other than physical maintenance is vulnerability to break-ins and occupation by itinerants. To address that, DAS jumped on a security program involving patrols including 5 times per night and three times per day. They are looking at putting in solar powered security cameras (similar to what was eventually put into the vacated north Salem property.) Strategy is to maintain the facility in “mothball” condition until it is finally disposed of. It will be getting at least 20 hours per week of maintenance work in that process.

She said that the property is not yet on the market. It first needs to be appraised and vetted environmental and other concerns including a review by State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO.) DAS *has* been contacted by Salem Housing Authority who has interest in the facility for addressing certain housing needs. However, the agency is in the middle of a budget period which would not allow such expenditure, and they would need to wait until vetting process is complete before considering actual purchase. There are also other strategic considerations, such as current lack of bus service to the site. DHS and DAS have also made reports to a Legislative committee interested in this matter.

Chair Pamela S. asked that DAS keep us posted on further developments. Brad Nanke suggested the paths taken in this process should pay attention to what has and what is going on with the Fairview property disposition.

- Hilfiker Park – Rob Romanek, City Park Planner – reported the park is getting an initial site assessment, and the matter is scheduled for a meeting to discuss design of the park. The meeting is to be held here at Pringle Community Hall on November 2nd. (Time?) After the design is set, it will be submitted to City Council for approval. She added that the park design will target local neighborhood use (residences within ½ mile of the park.) Post cards will be sent out – possibly this next week – to possible stake-holders. Results of site assessment will be posted online.

Alan Meyer expressed concern that the plan needs to address access needs from west of the park. Brad Nanke expressed concern about possible nuisances generated by human trails (off of the hardscape) through the park (Traffic to/from Trader Joes, etc.) Rob Romanek said that the normal planner for this project (Toni _____) is on leave and will be back soon to pick up on this. Brad Nanke added concern that the process not drag-on like the Fairview clean-up process. Pamela S. asked the planner if he could see to the matter of some large hazardous rocks next to the playground at Clark Creek Park. Rob said he would give the word to Parks Operations (no one left in Parks Ops. with institutional knowledge of situation.)

Committee Reports

- Traffic – Alan Meyer – Nothing new to report, other than there has been some discussion with City about whether or not another crosswalk is needed on Commercial Street – no action yet. Board defers to Scott Schaefer’s suggestion that action on the issue follow set guidelines.
- Land Use – Geoffrey James – Nothing new to report, except the plan for two subdivisions – one a 15 lot residential development near 12th and Madrona, and another several hundred lots between Battle Creek and 27th (Eagle View?) are moving forward. There were some comments about Reed Road needing widening – thought to have been covered by the proposed multi-residential development in Fairview. With that development on-hold, Dan Reid asked “what is the effect in such time lapses on developers’ commitments to make or fund such road improvements?” Finally, question was asked about Rumors of new Costco store to be located in the proposed retail/commercial development northwest of the intersection of I-5 and Kuebler (East of 27th); nothing is certain on that matter.
- Pringle Creek Watershed – Brad Nanke (for Chap Milbank, who has recently undergone surgery and is home recuperating) – mentioned Pringle Creek is within the sphere of the North Santiam Watershed Committee. Ken Hedsel (MNA Board member – not present) is interested in taking over PCWC chair spot. Brad N. had been involved in it for several years before being elected to City Council, and is contemplating getting involved in the committee again.
- Parks – Muriel Meyer – mentioned that temporary signs are being made to post at Morningside Park to request donations from public for cost share on needed resurfacing of the park’s Tennis/Basketball court.
- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) – Pamela Schmidling said there will be a meeting next Monday night. CERT is planning a drill early next year to be held at Temple Beth Shalom. She thinks it will most likely take place in May ’18.
- Liquor Licenses – Pamela Schmidling – Nothing new to report.
- Transit – No Report (Bob Krebs not present)
- City Council – Brad Nanke – is involved in hands-on addressing of illegally posted signs on city rights-of-way; He mentioned coming discussion of the “Bee Hive” food truck/cart development on the lot across S. Commercial from Safeway; Council will soon be touring City Shops to look at needs for repairs and improvements; Brad cited some funds from City’s selling certain property rights might be used in place of or addition to bond levy – but they may need to compete with need for scheduled fire engine replacement and seismic refitting needs if Library Bond levy fails; Brad said that South Commercial Street Pedestrian Safety Study is on Council agenda for November 18th, and added that visibility for motorists and pedestrians alike is of concern; A discussion of Transit Tax money use will be held on November 20; a Budget Committee meeting is scheduled for November 6, another Budget meeting is scheduled for December 13th to discuss the Five Year Plan, and what to do with the anticipated \$400K from City share of Marijuana tax moneys.

Question from Alan Meyer – Has Council put any pressure on State to provide some support for such needs? State has held its position that it brings jobs to City and employees to reside and pay taxes.

City Council Report (continued)

Further Discussions with Nanke –

Tax incentives given to corporations to locate in Salem (i.e. new Amazon Fulfillment Center in Mill Creek Industrial Park); Brad mentioned planned re-doing of renewable energy development plant at Panasonic Center (expansion possibly hampered by existence of dense stand of Oregon white oak trees, which are a high priority for preservation in the valley – expect resistance.

Garbage Rate Increase – Geoffrey James expressed concern about proposed increase in garbage rates – when the promise was made that increases would be less-likely when/since the garbage burning energy facility bond is paid-off; also, the County seems to be spending an awful lot of money on improvements –with funds still being collected (for the bond payment) in garbage bills. County claims the improvements are being funded with “loans.” It was added that the burner is now operating at 100% capacity; also that China companies who have contracts to receive and recycle “Blue Barrel” materials are now balking at buying because of impurities in the materials sent them.

Announcements – Geoffrey James noted we apparently now have a key to Pringle Community Hall; Chair Pamela S. affirmed such; Alan Meyer – asked about the number of Board positions allowed; 15 positions are allowed; We currently have 12 Board members, and apparently need to recruit three new members.

Open Issues – All

We currently have no members from Pringle Creek no from Commercial Street side of neighborhood; visitor Jonathan Baker asked if there are members from Ewald/12th Street area; Brad Nanke said we should also try to recruit members from small businesses in the neighborhood.

Finally, Alan Meyer reported what Officer Doud told him about the home-invasion/robbery that took place on Sunland not being a totally random act, and neighbors shouldn't be overly concerned about recurrence from same perps (paraphrase here – correct me if I am wrong – AI T.)

Adjourn – Chair Pamela S. adjourned the meeting at 7:38 PM.