

Morningside Neighborhood Association
October 14, 2020 Board Meeting
MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER – 6:29pm by Chair Pamela

INTRODUCTIONS – 16 persons present in the beginning, including 13 current MNA Board Members. 2 additional persons joined later, including 1 current MNA Board Member.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – A Motion to approve the September Minutes passes, with no corrections.

CITY OF SALEM – Rob (Update on Fairview Park)

Rob displays a map of our general neighborhood area, showing the orientation of Fairview Park. In 2016 the City adopted a Park Master Plan for Fairview. The Plan includes a large playground, a splash pad, picnic shelters, community gathering space, restrooms, a dog park, and sports courts, among other things. Since 2016, design and development has begun on the first phase of the Park, called Phase 1A. Phase 1A is focused on the parking lot and restrooms, multi-use sports fields, and basketball courts along new Strong Rd. The estimated cost of Phase 1A is approximately \$5 million, far in excess of what was originally expected. The grading of the Park, coupled with its prior history as an institution, are major cost factors. The City of Salem is also contributing 50% towards the development of Lindburg Rd adjacent to Fairview Park. There are additional requirements (e.g., archaeologists on-site) and associated costs for a public entity to make this type of development.

Grants are need to move forward with Fairview Park. Unfortunately, Covid has impacted forecasting for Grant funders. The City is currently in a holding pattern waiting to determine the next step. No construction date has been set. Rob suggest possible interim uses for the land, including application for SPIF grants.

Pam asks if the City will allocate costs for grant monies the Neighborhood might put towards a (any) Park. Rob says between the Master Plan and the actual construction documents, City Planners are making judgment calls on how to satisfy the original requirements.

Muriel asks Rob for suggestions (verbiage & language) to apply for a SPIF grant for Fairview Park by month-end. Rob recommends a SPIF grant for a soft surface trail through the grove, as drawn in the Park Master Plan. Rob suggests City Park Operations could help the Neighborhood Association in estimating the amount of the grant. Muriel also asks about grants for the proposed dog-run/dog park in Fairview Park. Rob explains that aspect of the Park is well defined by the Park Master Plan and will require more infrastructure and investment. As such, the dog park will come into play at a later time.

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Dan asks if Pringle Creek will connect to/through the Fairview Park, and what this might look like (natural vs. manicured). Rob says it will be an “ecological enhancement”, and offers Battlecreek Park in South Salem as a model.

A suggestion was made about using Old Strong Road as an “exercise loop”. Rob says Old Strong Road will become a 10-foot wide shared-use path, and some of the asphalt from Old Strong Road will be repurposed for parking lots. Also, Fairview Park and Reed Road Park will eventually connect by shared-use path.

Geoff asks about the timing of improvements to Reed Road in light of 3 new multi-family developments surrounding both parks. Rob speculates that updating the Salem Transportation System Plan (as part of Our Salem) will accelerate these improvements, although he is not managing the overall public works effort, and is not directly involved.

Alan asks about the City’s responsibility to improve Reed Road based on ownership of Reed Road Park, vis-à-vis Lindburg Rd and Fairview Park. Rob speculates there may be a responsibility for the City to do a half-street development, based on specific language in the Purchase Agreement. Alan asks if the Purchase Agreement is publicly available for review. Rob says yes, the Purchase Agreement is an attachment to the Staff Report on the date it went to City Council for approval.

POLICE REPORT – Officer Andy, Salem Police Department (SPD)

SPD is excited to move into their new building the second or third week of November. Trevor has toured the new building and agrees it is very nice. Four new Officers have been hired in the last couple of weeks. SPD is preparing for the upcoming election while maintaining staff levels for the Covid pandemic.

There is limited criminal activity in the Morningside Neighborhood. Businesses along Turner Road and Lancaster have experienced an uptick in crime due to camping in Cascade Gateway Park and Wallace Marine Park. North Salem has a recent spate of shootings.

Pam asks about transients on Market Street and I-5. Officer Andy says ODOT crews are planning to fence and gate the area underneath the bridge, an approach which has been successful elsewhere.

Benny asks who is responsible for damage to fencing. Officer Andy says if the fence is on private property it is incumbent on the property owner. If the fence is on public property, it is City or State responsibility. Regardless of where the damage occurs, SPD wants to be informed so they can devote resources towards preventing a recurrence.

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TRAFFIC – Alan

The fight to widen Reed Road dates back to the proposed Simpson Hill Development, which precedes most of the current MNA Board membership. At that time, a contingency to widen Reed Road was successfully added to the subdivision approval. Unfortunately, the Simpson Hill subdivision was never developed. Since then, new developers have studiously avoided responsibility for widening Reed Road. Of critical importance is the location of a creek that runs through this area. The creek is located south of Reed Road, which means any widening will need to happen on the north side. The City could condemn this land north of Reed Road and purchase it for improvement (unlikely), or wait for a developer to come along and take responsibility.

The fight to widen Reed Road is difficult but has not been without success. With this in mind, Alan asks that we regroup and begin anew. Barbara adds that timing is of the essence due to important City meeting(s) next Tuesday.

LAND USE – Geoff

Tuesday of next week at 5:30 pm there will be two public hearings for two zone change applications. Both zone changes are for multi-family housing. The first hearing is for a large 10-acre parcel off of Reed Rd. Of special traffic significance, this 10-acre parcel could max out at 280 apartment units. The second hearing is for a smaller 2-acre parcel which is adjacent to the 10-acre parcel. The City Staff has recommended approval for both of these zone changes. Among other reasons, the City Staff have cited “no input” from MNA in their recommendation.

Geoff believes we must now escalate our concerns about Reed Road to the Planning Commission. In the short term, Trevor proposes we submit a brief letter saying we oppose the zoning change due to a community concern about Reed Road, and based on prior acknowledgment of the hazards posed by Reed Road. Geoff suggests our Traffic Chair should write this letter as it is a traffic matter.

Trevor says a confluence of several factors, namely, the Comprehensive Plan Update, the Strategic Plan Update, and several smaller site plan reviews and zoning plan changes all bear on this issue. Trevor would like to set-up another meeting with Eunice at the City to reconvey our community sense that Reed Road is dangerous.

Geoff reemphasized the urgency of having Reed Road improved before construction of the apartments begins, even if it means halting building permits and/or certificate of occupancy.

Muriel and Trevor both suggest that a successful appeal could also allude to City transportation goals and bus access along Reed Road.

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Motion that Traffic Chair Alan will write a draft letter tomorrow and appear at Council next Tuesday on behalf of MNA. Motion Passes.

PARKS – Muriel

Based on a prior conversation with Rob at City Parks, Muriel will draft a Letter of Intent seeking grants to begin work on soft trails at Fairview Park. The soft trails will be part of Fairview Park Phase 1. Mutt Mitts and other ancillary items can come from Salem Parks Foundation. This will follow the same approach successfully employed at Hilfiker Park.

There is an unknown group meeting once a week at Morningside Park, similar to that which is happening at Clark Creek Park. Per Pam, people do not need a reservation to play organized sports at neighborhood parks, as only large parks require reservations. There is concern about adequate social distancing during these organized park gatherings. Trevor says Code Enforcement for parks at the City is limited by the number of full-time employees (currently 5).

Brief discussion about how to proceed on Halloween, with regard to wearing masks and protecting against the spread of Covid-19.

CERT TEAM/LIQUOR LICENSES –

No updates from CERT.

No new liquor license applications.

COMMUNICATION FUND/COMMUNITY HOURS MEETING

Muriel 4-hrs

Richard 4-hrs

Dennis 6-hrs

TRANSIT – Bob

Bob is not present.

COMMUNICATION – Richard

Richard is going to follow up with Brady at the City (and others) on when MNA can discontinue Zoom and begin meeting in person at Pringle Creek Community.

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Pam solicits feedback from the Board about meeting in person while wearing masks and social distancing. Janet is not opposed. Geoff said he has attended one (1) other in-person neighborhood meeting at a park while the weather was still nice. Trevor has expressed concern and reminded us that we must still wear a mask while indoors. Trevor and Alan both agree it is easier to communicate by Zoom than while wearing a mask.

Some discussion about applying for grants through the City and how this dynamic could work to the benefit of MNA.

CITY COUNCILOR REPORT – Brad

Brad is not present.

ADDITIONAL/MISC –

Janet has witnessed two City employees not wearing masks while riding in the same vehicle.

Benny asks about the street sweeping schedule. Some neighbors have inquired about leaves being blown into the street.

ADJOURN – Pam adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:05pm