

**Coalition of Gresham Neighborhood Associations
October 8, 2019 – Oregon Trail Conf Room, Gresham City Hall**

Meeting Minutes

NEIGHBORHOOD	ATTENDEES	NEIGHBORHOOD	ATTENDEES
Centennial	INACTIVE	Northeast	INACTIVE
Central City	INACTIVE	North Gresham	
Gresham Butte	Jim Buck, Theresa Tschirky, Tracy Slack	Northwest	John Bildsoe, Dave Dyk
Historic Southeast		Gresham Pleasant Valley	
Hogan Cedars	Matt Callison	Powell Valley	Regina Blake, Jim Boersma
Hollybrook		Rockwood	Catherine Nicewood
Kelly Creek	Carol Rulla	Southwest	Gail Cerveny
North Central	Mary Gasset	Wilkes-East	Greg Hartung
Staff & Guests:	Metro Councilor Shirley Craddick, Gresham City Councilor Eddy Morales, Jef Kaiser, Lee Dayfield, Cathy Sherrick, Jim Labbe, Hugh Harris, Luz Reyna, City of Gresham Office of Neighborhoods and Community Enhancement Manager Michael Gonzales		

Carol Rulla called the meeting to order at 7:00PM. A quorum was present. The 9/10/19 minutes were adopted as presented

Public comment was offered. Lee Dayfield, a Wilkes-East Neighborhood member, provided public comment. Lee provided testimony regarding the challenges and opportunities facing the Friends of Nadaka, and programming at Nadaka Nature Park. As of end of 2019, Nadaka will no longer have sufficient funds for continued programming. This includes the coordinator role for programming and events, the ambassador program for youth engagement, and restroom cleaning. The City has provided limited maintenance, focused on mowing grass and garbage pick-up. Since the Nadaka park was opened 5 years ago, volunteers have raised funds from grants and donations. Lee noted concern about the future financial sustainability of Nadaka programming. She expressed optimism for long-term solutions, including the potential for a parks district with sustainable funding.

Carol introduced Metro Councilor Shirley Craddick. Shirley provided a presentation that discussed several initiatives on the agenda of Metro Council. The presentation began by discussing investments that have been made in Gresham by predecessors: Examples include investments in natural areas and the urban growth boundary. Collection of cities and towns in East County have become a major metropolitan area, which brings both benefits and challenges. She noted that it is a time for investing in the future of the region.

Councilor Craddick discussed challenges around housing affordability, and the impact that the Metro affordable housing bond will have. This is a first of its kind regional housing measure which was approved by voters in November 2018, and is in an implementation process. Councilor Craddick noted that this program will produce 3,900 affordable homes for 12,000 people, including 1,600 deeply affordable units (less than 30% Area Median Income). At least half will be sized for families (2 or more bedrooms). This program will lead with racial equity, and focus where there is most need.

Councilor Craddick discussed transportation, including traffic, public transportation, and congestion, and the Metro Transportation Funding Task Force, which is focusing on investments in transportation corridors and regionwide programs. The foundation of the work includes the Regional Transportation Plan, last updated in 2018, and various local investment teams and community engagement efforts. This work may lead to a potential 2020 funding measure. Key corridors in East County that are areas of focus include four Tier 1 Corridors (north-south corridors 162nd and 181st/190th and east-west corridors Burnside and Powell) and three Tier 2 Corridors (east-west corridors Sandy Blvd, Halsey and Division).

Councilor Craddick next discussed protecting parks and natural areas. Metro voters passed natural area bonds in 1995 and 2006 which allowed for the purchase of significant natural area assets throughout the region, including in East County. In November 2019, a renewal bond at the same tax rate will be decided by voters (\$0.19 per \$1,000 of assessed value). This will cost about \$4 per month for a home assessed at \$250,000, and raise \$475 million. Funding will be spent across 3 counties - Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties.

Jim Labbe noted that he and Lee Dayfield had discussed participatory budgeting with the Coalition previously, and some of the Nature in Neighborhoods grant funds in this measure could be allocated with a participatory budgeting process.

Councilor Craddick noted that if passed, the natural areas bond funds would be spent in six proposed program areas: Land purchase and restoration, Metro park improvements, Nature in Neighborhoods Grants, Local parks and nature projects, Walking and biking trails, and Complex community projects.

John Bildsoe asked for additional context on the examples of projects that could be considered along the 181st corridor. Councilor Craddick provided several examples of the types of projects, including linking the corridor south to Clackamas County, and transit improvements.

Tracy Slack asked if Tier 1 Corridors were a higher priority than Tier 2 Corridors. Councilor Craddick confirmed that.

Jim Labbe asked if transportation planners are working with wildlife specialists in Metro to coordinate investments to support protecting wildlife corridors. Councilor Craddick expressed interest, and noted that she would follow-up with Metro planning staff to learn more about this area.

Gail Cerveny asked about Portland's reduction of traffic lanes on Glisan and Division, and whether Metro worked with cities. Councilor Craddick noted many of those streets have more housing and pedestrians, and that the City of Portland has been focusing on public safety. Councilor Craddick noted similarities with Foster Boulevard, which also has reduced travel lanes, added a center turn lane, areas for busses to pull off when loading, and similar. She commented that she travels Foster often and the changes have not increased her travel time. Regina Blake noted that responsibility for pedestrian safety is a shared responsibility.

Catherine Nicewood noted that in California some truck pollution filter rules have led to a movement of dirty diesel trucks north to Oregon, and that this is an area that should be considered at the state level by DEQ. Councilor Craddick noted that the state legislature has considered this topic, and there will likely be a consideration of policy in this area in the next legislative session.

Carol Rulla introduced City Councilor Eddy Morales. Eddy thanked Councilor Craddick, and noted he serves on the Metro Parks and Transportation committees, and appreciates representing Gresham residents. Councilor Morales noted that the city's community enhancement grant program was again accepting grant proposals for small projects. He also noted that the city's charter review committee is scheduled for appointments. The charter review committee would be the opportunity for citizens to consider any potential changes to the structure and charter of the city. Councilor Morales provided brief updates on several areas of policy priorities on his agenda, leading into the primary topic for the night: The need to invest in parks and recreation.

Councilor Morales noted that in the City of Gresham, a trend of long-term divestment in parks has been troubling. Today, a modest number of full-time employees within the City work on parks, serving over 1200 acres of parkland owned by the city. Some recent growth in capital projects are exciting, though Councilor Morales expressed concern that ongoing recreation services and operations are not

adequately funded. He noted that in 2010 a parks feasibility study was performed to initially consider a parks district, and the subsequent failure of a community center bond measure, created a narrative that voters will not support parks and recreation. However, as the city demographics have changed, the opportunities for a parks district are being re-ignited. Parks districts can be approved by voters, and can be driven directly by community members.

Councilor Morales envisions a multi-year effort to build momentum towards a parks district. Over 30 businesses and non-profits are joining an emerging coalition which will begin by advocating for the Metro parks and nature bond, and gauging the support for a parks district.

Regina Blake asked about the difference between a parks department and a parks district. Councilor Morales noted that a special district would have a new tax base. Lee Dayfield noted that one model of this is the Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation District, which is a special district.

Councilor Morales is asking for advocates to lobby the City to re-visit the 2010 feasibility study, and increase support for parks and recreation. This is intended to build momentum towards a parks and recreation district. This process may take several years of work.

Theresa Tschirky asked whether a proposed parks district would be within the boundaries of Gresham. Councilor Morales noted that initial planning is focusing on Gresham, though there could be interest from neighboring communities.

Jim Buck asked if a parks district would compete with City property tax revenue. A brief discussion about compression and regional equity took place.

Gail Cerveny asked if property taxes are the only funding option. Jim Labbe noted that a special district feasibility study could consider a variety of revenue sources. Cathy Sherrick noted that there are other potential funding sources, such as a soda pop tax or other special tax. A brief discussion about property tax funding levels necessary to adequately fund a robust parks district were considered.

Lee Dayfield noted that more parks advocates need to step up.

Jef Kaiser was on the green ribbon task force in 2010. He noted that at the time, there was a large levy for policy and fire on the ballot which would have competed with a parks levy. He also noted that initial conversations with smaller communities in East County were difficult.

Jim Labbe noted that recent engagement with smaller communities shows a similar divestment in other East County communities. Councilor Morales noted that recent engagement with East County leaders has been very positive.

Jef noted that Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation District also has a strategy of committing to specific investments when putting a funding measure on the ballot.

Catherine Nicewood expressed the sentiment that the community center bond measure was rushed with inadequate planning, and commercial opposition led to a challenge.

Gail Cerveny asked if a new district would create a new organization with a bureaucracy. Carol noted that a new elected board would likely be created. Cathy Sherrick noted that some city councils take on this role. This led to a discussion about the use of existing assets. Councilor Morales noted that a model of using assets from School Districts through a parks district is one example. Councilor Craddick noted that in Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation District, district assets are often adjacent to local schools and coordination allows for better use of funding. Opportunities for coordination with

our school districts and MHCC are certainly available if we had a parks district.

Councilor Morales asked neighborhood leaders for support of the Metro bond, and for support of the feasibility study. He provided a handout summarizing the discussion topics.

Carol Rulla asked if the Coalition would like to adopt a motion of support for a parks feasibility study. Dave Dyk made a motion: That the Coalition adopt a policy position advocating for City Council to initiate a parks district feasibility study in the current fiscal year. Jim Buck seconded the motion. He noted that the Coalition is an opportunity to provide a collective voice for good governance, and the city's worsening financial sustainability is a significant concern. Discussion on the motion included a consideration of regional equity and compression.

A vote was taken with one representative for each neighborhood. 7 Yeas; 0 Neas; 2 Abstentions. The motion passed.

Carol asked if there was also a motion of support for the Metro bond. Theresa Tschirky made a motion: That the NA Coalition adopt a policy position of support for the Metro Parks and Nature Bond Measure, and advocate that City Council similarly adopt a position of support. The motion was seconded by John Bildsoe.

A vote was taken with one representative for each neighborhood. 7 Yeas; 0 Neas; 2 Abstentions. The motion passed.

Carol Rulla noted that she would send a letter of public comment to City Council noting the policy positions of the Coalition.

Councilor Morales thanked the Neighborhood Coalition for their support and volunteerism.

Michael Gonzales provided City updates:

- NA elections are in process, and the City ONCE office is available for assistance.
- Office of Neighborhoods and Community Enhancement is the new name of ONCE.
- Congratulations to North Gresham NA who successfully raised funds related to Kirk Park improvements. Significant progress has been made in this area.

Carol Rulla made several announcements:

- A reminder to associations to report to the City and the Coalition the results of annual elections when complete.
- Agenda for next month includes the Development Code Update project (which includes the Early Neighborhood Notification code change and later the Middle Housing code change) and consideration of Coalition recommendations for the 2020 Council Work Plan.
- Within the next week, the City Manager will provide a written response to Coalition concerns raised at last month's meeting. A follow-up discussion will be at a future Coalition meeting.
- At today's Council meeting, staff noted that \$2M in funding has been allocated by the State Legislature for Gradin Sports Park and another \$1M might be allocated by the Council from city SDCs (System Development Charges) .
- The October 5th neighborhood association outreach event was postponed. Michael will coordinate organization for a rescheduled event.
- The next Council listening session will be on the topics of parks. This will be on January 28.
- An updated Early Neighborhood Notification Meeting Guidance document was sent to planning staff for review and will be sent to the Coalition when it's finalized.

Gail Cerveny asked if NA leaders had seen the KGW program on emergency planning. She noted

that Portland has a program called BEECN (Basic Earthquake Emergency Communications Nodes), which are caches of emergency supplies located throughout the city. Team leaders throughout the city volunteer to provide emergency response. Gail proposed we have a Portland representative visit to discuss this topic. Carol noted that the December Coalition agenda will be on Gresham's emergency preparedness program.

John Bildsoe noted that there was an industrial fire which resulted in poor air quality in Gresham earlier in the day. He noted this was in the Centennial industrial-zoned land. He noted this, as well as the proposed planning for SW Community Park, are good opportunities for the re-activation of Centennial NA.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:33PM.

Minutes prepared by Dave Dyk, Coalition Secretary-Treasurer

Next meeting: **Tuesday, November 12** – City Hall Oregon Trail Room