

Rockwood Neighborhood Association

November 20, 2023 Minutes

6 p.m., Rockwood Village Community Center

6:00 p.m. Meeting called to order. Neighborhood Officers were introduced.

6:02 p.m. Police Chief Gullberg gave an update on the Police Department.

There are still eight openings in the Police Department. Retail theft, and gun violence are up. With the Safe Gresham Initiative technology is being used to assist the Police Officers on calls. Drones are being tried as first responders on calls to access the situation and determine how many Officers are needed, and if it is a true call for service. They put eyes on a location, and can get there in one to two minutes whereas a Police Car can get to the call in seven minutes. One situation where a drone was used was a house fire. The people were trapped in the backyard. The drone was able to lead the first responders on how to get to the people in the back yard. They had to cut a hole through a fence in order to reach the residents trapped in their back yard.

There was a question about delayed responses to 911 calls. It is from a County run dispatch system which the City of Gresham has no control over. The City of Gresham has a contract with the dispatch system and the City of Gresham is working with the dispatch system on ways to improve service. The Dispatch Center is short staffed which is part of the problem.

There was also a discussion on when to call 911, non-emergency, 411, and 311. Call 411 to report homeless services. Call 311 to find out where to go for services. Call 911 for a person on your property that is a threat to harm, a person with a gun, a fire, and a medical emergency. Call non-emergency 503-823-3333 about a crime that has already occurred and the suspect is no longer at the site.

There was a discussion about problems with security at Rockwood Station. There is no enforcement with the on-site Security Staff, and they tell the residents to call Gresham Police. Chief Gullberg stated that he will work with the staff at Rockwood Station to help clarify the situation.

John Nelsen stated that there were 12 burglaries at Rockwood Prep. Academy 18 months ago, and since the Hope Center started there have been no burglaries. The cooperation with Rockwood Village, Rockwood Prep. Academy, and the Hope Center has really helped decrease the crime in the area. There needs to be more cooperation between apartment managers, police officers, and management companies of the apartments to bring down the crime. Rockwood Village and Gresham Police are working on a plan to address issues and provide education for residents on how to provide proof of incidences committed.

6:51 p.m. Brian Monberg from Urban Renewal spoke on the Downtown Rockwood site. Latino Network is the first site for the Preschool for all.

The four focus areas of the Urban Renewal are families, children, wellness, and economic opportunity.

The five areas that the current year Urban Renewal is working on are: 1. Housing, affordable ownership housing 2. Fire Station on Halsey. It is the oldest fire station in the City of Gresham and needs to be replaced. 3. Yamhill Street with more lighting, crosswalks, and resources. 5. Economic Development with small businesses. They are working on a storefront improvement Grant to help with awnings, windows, and doors, and a Grant to bring in new industrial jobs. 5. Community Vibrancy-Rockwood Tool Library is being worked on.

Rockwood B188 on the corner of 188th and Burnside will have a tech center, POIC School, gym used for concerts and events after school and weekends, and retail spaces.

Burnside and 184th will be developed in conjunction with Life Works NW and the Tri-met Park and Ride on 182nd.

Questions about the Rockwood Market Hall: The residents would like to see more food choices and the availability to use SNAP and EBT cards. Brian is working on a bakery, and a grocery store for the Market Hall.

Discussion on Yamhill from 181st to 174th. There are no sidewalks. With the amount of people that are disabled in the area with foster homes there needs to be ADA sidewalks.

John Nelsen expressed his concerns for more home ownership opportunities, more sidewalks, and grants for small business owners. There is also very little parking at the Market Hall. If the Market Hall is to be successful, there needs to be more parking. He also expressed his concerns about POIC School being in downtown Rockwood. Their students have a history with the criminal justice system, and their school is not a good fit for Rockwood. He is concerned about the already high crime rate and high mobility of students and families in Rockwood.

7:36 p.m. Jason Naumann spoke about the Rockwood Tool Library. He is using Metro Grant funding to provide tool skills and repairs. He will need volunteers to sign up to help with the Tool Library on the days that it is open. He has a sign in sheet for people to volunteer that are interested. Urban Renewal is working on purchasing the Carpentry Shop behind Taco Bell to be used for the Rockwood Tool Library.

A motion was made to approve the June 26, 2023 minutes by John Nelsen, and seconded by Janice Henderson. Motion passed.

Discussion followed on the election of officers for next year. Raine mentioned her concerns about the same officers from year to year. Catherine's response to her is that the Rockwood Neighborhood Members elected five new officers to the Board last November. Raine also said that she feels the RNA is not addressing racial issues. Catherine's response to her is that the RNA has always tried to be racially diverse. In the past we have had a Ukrainian Vice-President for several years, but he had to resign because he did not have the time to devote to it anymore. Before COVID, Catherine was training Charles Hysaw to be on the Board, but he backed off because he was planning to move to the East Coast to be close to his daughter. As it turned out, his daughter moved to Gresham, and he wants to be more involved now. He sang for us at National Night Out last year, and in years prior to COVID. Catherine was also training several others to be on the Board and they moved out of Rockwood.

Being an Officer required time, commitment and a desire to advocate with the City of Gresham for changes to be made in Rockwood. The RNA is not a non-profit. Our work is to be a go between with the residents and the City of Gresham, and to provide information for the residents about work being done in Rockwood by the City. For other work to be done in Rockwood, the RNA can support groups to deal with specific issues. We used to have a Safety Committee, and a Park Committee that worked on specific issues outside of the General Meetings which require more time and advocacy. The problem we have is a lack of people willing to be involved and having the time and commitment to devote to the RNA.

John Nelsen made a motion and Kelsey Pleasant seconded the motion to accept the following slate of Officers for next year: President: Catherine Nicewood, Vice-President: John Nelsen, Secretary: Deanna Stewart, Land Use Co-chairs: Anthony Crosman, and Laurie Sitton, Member At Large: Kim Richmond, Social Coordinator: Yolonda Menefee.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:30 p.m.