

Coalition of Gresham Neighborhood Associations
August 11, 2020 – via Zoom
Meeting Minutes

NEIGHBORHOOD	ATTENDEES	NEIGHBORHOOD	ATTENDEES
Centennial	INACTIVE	Northeast	INACTIVE
Central City	INACTIVE	North Gresham	Linda Parashos, Linda Van Deusen-Price
Gresham Butte	Jim Buck, Theresa Tschirky, Tracy Slack	Northwest	Dave Dyk, John Bildsoe
Historic Southeast		Gresham Pleasant Valley	
Hogan Cedars		Powell Valley	INACTIVE
Hollybrook		Rockwood	
Kelly Creek	Charles Teem, Carol Rulla	Southwest	Gail Cerveny
North Central	Mary Gossett	Wilkes-East	
Staff & Guests:	Mike Pullen, April Avery, Michael Gonzales, Stella Butler, Cassie Davis, David Koistinen		

Carol called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. There was no quorum so there was no review of minutes.

Carol introduced Mike Pullen with Multnomah County Community Affairs and Cassie Davis with HDR Community Involvement. Mike thanked Stella Butler for her participation in many community task force meetings held regarding the Burnside Bridge Project. The last major earthquake for our region was in 1700. Mike showed a graph depicting the regularity of earthquakes for the area. It has been 320 years since the last one, and one will occur eventually and the longer time span will likely cause the quake to have even more strength. The main purpose of the project was to have one bridge across the Willamette River that can be depended upon on immediately following a major earthquake. A river crossing will help in regional recovery and rebuilding efforts. The Burnside Bridge is 94 years old and needs repairs to last another 100 years.

Burnside Bridge was selected because it's on a regional lifeline route to the east and to west of Portland. The bridge is the weak link along that east-west route. On the graphic shown, the red indicates structures that were seismically weak, but Burnside has few overpasses and so it would be a more reliable route for transportation following a quake. The study has been underway since 2016. The project is in the Environmental Review phase now which will continue until 2022. Mike shared for the Coalition a preferred alternative that had been developed by the task force. Funding for the Burnside Bridge Project would come from the Metro Transportation Bond and Multnomah County vehicle registration fees.

Mike shared four options for seismic upgrades that had been proposed: seismic retrofit, short span, long span and Couch Extension. The preferred alternative was the long span style which still has lift span in the middle of the bridge. A decision is still needed on whether to have a bascule lift versus a vertical rising structure to allow boats to pass under. The long span alternative is the best for seismic resiliency and the least costly. This alternative would cost an estimated \$825M. He said the long span alternative would have better safety for pedestrians and cyclists as well as the least impact on natural resources. This option avoids more footings being placed in the river which preserves that environment from disturbance during construction. Attention will be given to not blocking the Made in Oregon sign on west side with the deer. The east side of the river bank has a problematic soil structure but the long span would be built

over this section of soil with a column set farther to the east.

Cassie Davis explained considerations for managing traffic during construction, including possibly building a temporary bridge to allow for vehicular traffic during construction. The community task force said it would be better to close the bridge and not build the temporary bridge which would save \$90 million. A temporary bridge would add 1.5-2.0 years to construction also. The project is at an important milestone now with this outreach on the preferred alternative. Information has been prepared in seven languages to engage the community in giving a voice to the project. Input is also invited online at: burnsidebridge.participate.online to give input until Aug. 31. It will go to the policy group on October 2. Jim Buck asked who is on the policy group and Cassie said it represented various groups, such as cyclists, disabled, social service organizations, senior agency staff to assure coordination among agencies such as utility companies. The policy group involves elected officials in the community and that leadership includes Karylenn Echols, Mayor of Gresham. Tracy Slack asked about what dollar amount goes to seismic improvement. Mike Pullen said this bridge would cost about 2% more than Sellwood which was built to seismic code specifications. He added that the Tillicum Bridge also met current earthquake specifications but the accesses, not the bridge itself, may pose a problem in a severe earthquake. Mike said he'll ask the architectural firm for that information. Tracy was wondering about the downstream rebuild for other bridges needing reconstruction using the Burnside as a model. Mike thought some bridges might be out temporarily but the Hawthorne might require a total rebuild. Over 3 bridges are over 100 years old and would require major rebuilding. David Koistinen asked if the powerpoint could be shared, and Mike said he'd share it with Carol who will distribute it.

John Bildsoe said Gresham is located pretty far from the bridge and not used that much by residents here. How do you justify outlying regions paying for this bridge from an equity of use standpoint? Mike Pullen said he empathizes with those who live far from these bridge projects, but essential goods and services those residents will need will likely cross the Willamette River at some point. When alternative bridges are so close, tolling wouldn't work as a viable revenue source. Mike said we've had improvements to I-84 that other residents have paid for. The Multnomah County fee can only be spent on Willamette River bridge projects. The gas tax though is distributed for use with Gresham transportation projects. Mike Pullen said that the current \$38.00 vehicle registration fee every two years would be going to \$112 in January 2021 to pay for this construction. The increase is for Burnside Bridge for an indefinite period, that is, there is no sunset provision. John Bildsoe said he has a number of business vehicles and these costs have to be passed along to his renters. Mike said equity is being examined. He didn't want people to have to sell a vehicle due to these fees. Tracy Slack felt a valid argument is that services we receive come over that bridge, but fee structure aligns with whether we use it personally. A part for my car, first responder, teacher using the bridge to go to work, etc. offers a more compelling justification for who pays. Tracy said we seem to be paying disproportionately more and a sales tax would be more equitable if based on that. Cassie said after earthquake we will depend on services coming over the river so we all will depend on this route. It's us making this investment now for economic recovery.

Carol experienced a technical difficulty in being heard on Zoom at this time so David Dyk introduced Michael Gonzales. Michael announced a request from Trimet asking if anyone from east county was interested in serving on the Trimet Board for Travis Stovall's seat for district 6. Michael will send out that information and noted they are looking for commuters or users of mass transit if possible.

John Bildsoe shared slides regarding heavy industrial (HI) zoning which is juxtaposed with zones for housing. John explained that heavy industrial use often includes mining which has occurred for years on this site, but heavy industrial zoning could involve production of goods such as chemicals or steel. "Heavy" refers to items produced such as iron, coal, ships, etc. Rockwood has seen a push for multifamily housing and a mix with commercial. Also higher density is being concentrated next to light rail. He asked does Gresham get it? Are there setbacks, screening, buffers, external effects and environmental equity? John showed map with the heavy industrial zone in Rockwood. Principal property owners are J.W. Underground, Multnomah County, Knife River and Trimet. Gresham Sanitation and Recycling also are situated in that area. John identified on the slide the John Winters Underground parcel and that he is in the business of bringing dirt from excavation business to fill in pits. He wants to expand into transit low density residential (TLDR) zone.

J.W. Underground wants to rezone two one acre parcels to industrial from what is now designated for housing. The rezoning would put pressure on surrounding residential lots to be rezoned and JW hasn't said what he's putting there. John then shared past quarries where rock has been excavated leaving pits with water now. John showed changes in area from 2015 to now. Knife River has a huge area filled with water that had been a pit. Water before had been pumped into Fairview Creek, but they were required to stop by the city since they were sending water without a permit. Seven acres of pit have been filled in so far. A home on one parcel has now been removed. One parcel had cliff but is now filled in so it's flat. Companies are paying to fill with concrete, etc. left from construction projects. John said, if not quarrying out rock, other heavy industrial could come in. The current city code requires a buffer of only 30 ft. between heavy industrial and residential. Light industrial has a much wider buffer requirement which didn't seem to be logical. Waste transfer could be another potential use in this heavy industry area. Zoning could be changed to light industrial use which would include commercial, warehousing, and green spaces. John said we need industrial zones, but many that were heavy industry previously have been converted such as Bridgeport Plaza, Oswego Pointe, South Waterfront, Burtchart Gardens in Victoria are examples of areas reclaimed. He's asking for questions and what should be done about this beyond buffers.

John showed a picture of Beirut and the blast zone of two miles. A similar catastrophe would affect a lot of people. What can we do? Tracy Slack asked if it was a choice between rezoning or strengthening code for setbacks and buffers to mitigate them. John said getting rid of heavy industrial is one option. John felt that JW may be inclined to shift to more light industrial use. Knife River did project in Beaverton and he gave other examples of changes. John thinks we need to look at code to see what the impacts might be for neighbors. Carol said besides the impact on nearby residential, this is close to Rockwood Rising and therefore impacts that. There is also an environmental justice issue around low income areas. Need to evaluate that.

Jim Buck asked about Portland with glass factories and Precision Castparts to know what their setbacks are. John agreed important to look but he didn't know what Portland has for setbacks. Carol asked about buffer for general industrial area which has 100 ft. buffer. Jim asked why 100 ft buffer for general and only 30 ft. for heavy industrial. John was not sure of the discrepancy. Carol thought it was an old code so doesn't make sense which is why we should discuss it and raise the issue with staff and Council. We have raised HI in our past Council Work Plan recommendations but city staff didn't review it much. They are reviewing Springwater Industrial as part of the current work plan, but there hasn't been much discussion of where heavy industrial should be located that would be compatible with surrounding uses.

Dave Dyk asked about the J.W. property evolving into a different zoning pattern. Are there incentives to assist that evolution? John thought it's more market driven, like the Pearl area changing and the south Portland riverbank from heavy industrial to high rise apartments. In Rockwood there is no market for that high rise apartment complex now. John said Fred Meyers gave up due to what was happening in the neighborhood. Majority of people don't understand what has occurred with abandoned rock quarries. John felt city councilors have only general idea and don't understand what legally could be put in that location under the current zoning. A large incinerator could go in there. A lease could be given for that. Tracy Slack suggested we focus on whether rezoning is feasible or if code modifications could be made so that heavy industrial zone becomes a better neighbor. He asked: can we understand our pragmatic options? John said that Metro and Gresham were tossing the ball back and forth. He felt there needed to be a multijurisdictional approach. A question was posed if there been a study to see if heavy industrial is necessary for this area. John doesn't think so. Carol said that she and John had met with city staffer and former Metro staffer, Brian Monberg, who said it was possible to rezone and it's not regionally significant for industrial land so should be easier to rezone. Carol said there is a need to bring this issue to the attention of people and balancing various interests.

Theresa Tschirky shared that the most immediate goal should be to update code. Start there and over the longer term study rezoning. Charles Teem thought using this property as an example would show the risky nature of the zoning and thought it would help focus on issues. Jim Buck supported Theresa's and Tracy's comments, but with so many acres now being wetland, wouldn't that bring up regulations governing bodies of water? John said, if there is a lake or pond on industrial land, it does not qualify as a wetland so those regulations don't apply. Carol asked if water is rising and going

somewhere, but John did not feel they could fill up the pit that quickly. As the pits fill up with dirt, the surrounding ground would absorb much of the moisture. Carol suggested that the Coalition bring it to attention of the Council and think about strategy with staff. This could be discussed at the September meeting. John said he would welcome ideas if people wanted to share suggestions with him.

Carol said Sept. 3 there will be a special meeting with city staff to discuss the Hogan corridor and funding for transportation projects (6:30-8:00 pm.) Carol said Council will be looking at the current year's work plan at its Sept. 8 meeting.

Tracy Slack had followup on Coalition input for hiring of city manager, and Carol introduced him to discuss this topic. Tracy said in July the Coalition discussed improving project tracking and being involved with the city manager selection process. He suggested that there are three parts to involvement in the hiring process: review the job description, submit interview questions and become involved in the interview process. Tracy said that several on the Coalition reviewed the job description for city manager which was just adopted this past year. The Coalition could not make a decision this evening due to not having a quorum, but Tracy outlined recommended changes in essential functions making more explicit certain responsibilities in this position. He felt the inclusion of these modifications would help recruiters look for those with qualifications meeting this skill set. Tracy felt an ongoing performance review of the city manager was important to spell out as an expectation in the job. Under knowledge and abilities he proposed project management, change management and project tracking capabilities. Tracy said current job description has almost no minimum requirements and studies of other cities showed Gresham was an outlier in this regard. Tracy recommended inserting minimum requirements that includes a masters degree in Public Administration or Business Administration with a specified number of years of experience. Tracy felt the final section of the current job description contained comments regarding physical requirements for the job which were not compliant with ADA. He advised these be rewritten to be compliant with ADA. Tracy urged this to be adopted and sent to the Council so it can be influential with the recruitment firm which will be brought in. This is timely to submit now. Theresa Tschirky says we don't have luxury of new mayor in place. We need to act sooner.

Jim Buck asked how can we move without a quorum, and Carol said Tracy could submit on his own saying he has had Coalition input on it. Gail Cerveny asked if we had consensus of those attending to move forward with this. Carol said that was a viable approach. Carol suggested that we discuss his interview questions at next meeting. Jim Buck thanked Tracy for his investment in this entire effort with his review of other cities' job descriptions and other documents. Michael Gonzales said HR is currently undergoing a review of all job descriptions and in reference to earlier comment of throwing shade on city staff with this advisory letter that it may be timely to offer some input. Linda Parashos said she was willing to help as well. John asked if anyone in city would meet the qualifications in Tracy's criteria. Tracy wasn't sure but felt it was designed around what we need here. There was consensus by the Coalition members present to move forward.

Carol said she'll send out announcements in an email given the late hour. In terms of candidate forum, the Chamber will hold one in Sept. 15, and the Coalition will hold in late September or early October before ballots are mailed out. 6:30-9:00 p.m. could work with the current number of candidates. Dave Dyk dropped out of the meeting for this discussion since he is a councilor candidate. Carol asked if we have a committee to help put together questions. She said we could do a survey monkey to gain questions from the community also in advance. Three questions to candidates would be given in advance and then they would be asked other questions that have been offered by the survey. Carol thought the format worked well before and could follow that again. Jim and Linda Van Deusen-Price volunteered to help with questions.

Adjourned 8:54 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Jim Buck, Coalition Co-Secretary-Treasurer

Next meeting: **Tuesday, September 8, 2020** – via Zoom