

**Coalition of Gresham Neighborhood Associations
December 14, 2021 – Remotely Held (Zoom)**

Meeting Minutes

NEIGHBORHOOD	ATTENDEES	NEIGHBORHOOD	ATTENDEES
Centennial	Rick Dwyer, Mary Edmeades, Gigi Saban	Northeast	INACTIVE
Central City	INACTIVE	North Gresham	Mike Elston, Linda Parashos
Gresham Butte	Jim Buck, Theresa Tschirky, Tracy Slack	Northwest	John Bildsoe, Chris Fast
Historic Southeast	Philip Svabik-Seror	Gresham Pleasant Valley	
Hogan Cedars	Matt Callison	Powell Valley	
Hollybrook		Rockwood	Catherine Nicewood
Kelly Creek	Charles Teem, Carol Rulla	Southwest	Gail Cerveny
North Central	Mary Gossett	Wilkes-East	
Staff & Guests:	Michael Gonzales, Office of Neighborhood and Community Engagement (ONCE) Manager; Travis Gullberg, Chief of Police; Daniel Tatro, Gresham Police Officers Association; Jawan Mullen, County DA's office; Mariel Mota, County DA's office; Jef Kaiser, Britt McConn		

Carol Rulla opened the meeting at 7:02 p.m. Minutes from 11/9/21 were adopted as presented with the exception of one name spelling correction. There were no guests who requested a public comment. Attendees introduced themselves.

Carol introduced the Police Chief Travis Gullberg, representatives from the DA's office for the County, Jawan Mullen and Mariel Mota, and Officer Daniel Tatro. Chief Gullberg said that the situations around the rise in violence concern everyone and that includes domestic abuse and child abuse as well. It has raised questions about how to serve the community around violence. The county is preparing violence reduction initiatives and the Chief is hoping to align with them in the city's planning. Mid October Gresham Police Department (GPD) publicized staffing shortages that have caused reassessment of the department's work. Before taking his position the city last spring began a comprehensive assessment of the department which includes procedures and engagement with the community. Last night they held the first community forum to hear from the public with a third party consulting firm managing the process. This should give more objective review that will be completed in 4-6 months. It will help the police set approaches or activities that better align with community values and priorities. It's a long process they are committed to. January 5 is scheduled for an online forum. The public can provide feedback about the process now online and they have had 150 responses already which is positive. The goal is how to better connect with the community and how to move forward. Crime over all might be down but there is concern about the rise in violence and for social justice issues as well.

Jawan Mullen said the chief covered much of what he wanted to share. He said the pandemic has made it difficult for the organizational pillars that serve the community to

function well in their roles. He said there is a strong partnership between law enforcement and the DA's office. Mariel Mota said she is the neighborhood DA. She is responsible for everything east of 52nd. They work on livability issues although her office is greatly understaffed. They should have 120 attorneys but currently have only 70 which limits what they can handle. She said she was here to listen and answer questions from the Coalition members.

Daniel Tatro from the police officers union said he's contacted many on the Coalition already. He said the rise in violence is disturbing and public safety is the number 1 priority. Messaging from the city historically has not been great. The NET Team, Traffic and Transit are going away Jan. 1 due to staffing issues and with the resignations the department is down to 110 sworn officers and but they are budgeted for 127. At one time the department had 135 officers but now the only special teams will be SROs (School Resource Officers) and the mental health team. It takes 18-24 months to train a police officer. The union is trying to be more vocal in communicating with city residents. Some neighborhoods Daniel said have not been given information about changes in police. He said the reallocation is likely not temporary given the shortage of officers and with the time it takes to bring on new personnel. 7-8 police officers are on the street at any one time with 1-2 sergeants. When NET is discontinued then 3 officers and a sergeant are not there, Traffic is 4 officers, and Transit is 3 officers and a sergeant, leaving just 7 patrol officers to deal with a large incident. 7 cops for 115,000 population is a scary proposition. The national average of officers is 2/1000 population and Gresham is down to 1/1000. Daniel said the chief and department are trying to retain officers and the City Council is aware of the understaffing. Daniel introduced discussion of possible solutions such as a levy option or a special district such as to support the fire department freeing up resources for the police in the city budget.

Carol asked if people had questions. Carol started by asking for clarification about what the response would be if there was a big incident after the three special teams disbanded. Daniel said NET could have responded if they were working at the time but without them GPD will need to see if the County or other agencies could assist but they have shortages also. They can call officers in from their homes but that takes time.

Mike Elston asked if we have lost officers isn't there money from those vacancies to offer bonuses to hire new police transfers from other departments? Daniel said that command staff is working on this, but they need to negotiate with the union on any compensation offers. He said the city wanted to wait three months until January to begin negotiations with the union. Chief Gullberg said we need more staff and so do others. Compensation and bonuses need to be negotiated with the union and they are working on that. We need to work on retention practices and looking at that as well. He said he knows people want NET to remain but they simply are trying to deal with the current needs to help officers who are having to work so much mandatory overtime. The chief said the NET reduction was stated as temporary but doesn't mean just two weeks—Daniel is correct that NET team being disbanded will be long term. Carol added that the Council has just voted to allocate money coming from the American

Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to assist police and fire. Some of the money for police is to help with recruitment efforts such as bonuses.

Tracy Slack said the fire chief used a metric for how long it would take to get to a fire in various areas of the city. He asked Chief Gullberg and the DA office what metrics do you use to measure your services? Chief Gullberg said public safety is not as simple as a response to a fire call. He said the department is data driven and evidence based however they would need to do a deep dive assessment to get to that information and it would need to include dispatch information as well. How do we better serve the community is the question being asked now in the assessment process. Javan explained the time it takes from charging to resolution for misdemeanors and felony cases sharing about the complications in the process.

Tracy asked another question about access to data to demonstrate to the public the need for more funding and the chief said there is data analysis but he said the last levy to support police wasn't passed here. He felt there was a need to communicate better about the rationale for the funding. Mariel Mota said they track success that interventions are having in preventing crime and reducing recidivism. Some of this isn't just responsibility of police but others in justice system. If a person is out of prison and again has a gun, we know that what's happening with interventions isn't working. Public health has an impact on crime as does poverty. Strategic prosecution and trying to do more with less requires science to help with making best use of the data. She reiterated that the staffing problem isn't they are down just two people but dozens.

Daniel said stats show last year there were 71 shootings, now 139 in the same time period. He felt this was an extreme increase but there was a lack of accountability. The voters have legalized narcotics and see its use as a disease not a criminal matter, so there is no enforcement for meth and heroin use. Addictions he said are accompanied by criminal activity. This makes it difficult to do proactive policing. Gangs know police aren't stopping them for weapons now in Portland so they are armed now and the number of incidents of shootings reflects this.

Jim Buck asked about a specific case last month, Jesse Hall, an ex felon with a gun who shot someone in front of police officers in North Portland. He was immediately arrested but released and Jim asked why this would occur. Mariel said that while the person may present risks the DA has no unilateral power to hold in custody. Those decisions are made by judges but she explained it could be due to jail overcrowding or a number of other variables operating. She sympathized with the situation and the DAs often feel that same frustration.

John Bildsoe asked about vehicle registrations that have lapsed and what will happen when the state moratorium on enforcement expires. Daniel said unless governor signs continued moratorium officers can pull people over if their registration has expired. John asked if it will be a priority. Daniel said they would be directing people to do more online reporting. Some calls police won't go to such as medical calls and they will be

directed to go online for things that deal with insurance matters. Agreement with union has occurred on this.

A question in the chat about private security was read. Chief Gullberg said he won't direct private business on the use of private security. They are concerned about safety and this added security personnel can be helpful if it's appropriate and if the right requirements are being met.

Gail Cerveny said she shared Jim Buck's concern that officers say they arrest but in the process the case is thrown out and they are back on street. She asked if we get more officers will there be backup from DA for people causing problems. Jawan said the DA works in partnership with police depts in the county. During the pandemic it's been difficult to keep things rolling due to what Mariel said about other parts of the criminal justice system having a role in decisions. Hundreds of cases come through and if there is evidence they will get prosecuted and it's then up to a judge or court to decide on who gets held and what the bail amount is. Jawan said DA office is concerned about safety. Gail Cerveny asked about the changed dollar amounts like in CA where cases not prosecuted any longer. Mariel said there is no dollar limit on what will be prosecuted, but at times cases are dropped if there isn't the manpower to process it. She said the DA has higher standard of proof to meet than police in making an arrest. The DA needs to make sure the investigation was proper and deal with defense attorneys and court rulings on evidence. Victims may not show up as expected at hearings, along with other reasons that cases are not prosecuted. Carol said sometimes release occurs due to space at the jail, but that does not mean that the case won't be prosecuted. Mariel agreed and said COVID reduced capacity in jails significantly also. Chief Gullberg said he appreciates DA office is here this evening and he has talked with the DA and has been getting feedback from the community. He has let officers know the DA will prosecute and it is our responsibility to make sure they have evidence and the investigation is handled properly.

Tracy said much of what they do is reactive. If they each had magic wand in justice system or crime prevention where would they inject those resources? We jail more in US than any other country so where would they put more funding. Mariel said she would put it in public education, exposing young people to better choices. Chief Gullberg said he agreed but money is needed to help people support themselves in homes and jobs. We can't convict our way out of the present situation. We need police but criminal justice can't solve everything. Jawan agreed with comments—need to work on prevention and help to reduce recidivism. Need to do more on front end for back end to be successful.

ONCE and NA Updates

Michael Gonzales reported that Jessica Harper who manages livability issues said that without NET it may take longer such as acting on abandoned vehicles. Code staff will request assistance from police on patrol rather than NET so it could take longer, but many times NET isn't needed. In terms of homeless services, the homeless services staff is always the first to offer resources and most of the time NET isn't involved. Now

police on patrol will be asked to assist them if needed. Code staff has been down one inspector since fall due to retirement and he worked with NET but in January a new inspector is coming on board. We now have a third homeless service specialist, the most ever in the city. John Bildsoe asked what hours they work and Michael said they work regular staff hours during the week, but there is some flexibility for covering evening or weekend hours. Michael will send a follow-up email.

Jim Buck shared that the Jan. 12 meeting for GBNA will focus on homelessness efforts and METRO and county representatives will be present. He said he'd like to invite other NAs to participate in this discussion. He will send zoom link to Coalition members that can be shared.

Carol addressed a question in the chat about whether it takes 12-18 months to train transfer officers. She said that it took less time, but our financial situation makes it difficult to attract lateral transfer officers. Catherine Nicewood said Officer Tatro told her that it took 2-3 months to train transfer officers before they could patrol on their own.

Michael asked about the interest in signs to post in yards as part of Image Gresham. How many signs can NAs distribute in neighborhood over the next couple of months? Could NAs let him know the number. He said he would send a picture of the sign.

Carol said Mary Phillips is coming to the January 10 meeting of the Planning Commission for a work session on new legislation that requires an expedited process for middle housing lot divisions.

At the January Coalition meeting Emily Bower will come to talk about urban renewal district extension which is on the May ballot. Elections will be held for Coalition officers at the January meeting as well. Carol put in a plug for secretarial position as Jim has indicated an interest in serving as co-president. At the March meeting the DA and Sheriff will be attending. For February she will invite staff for a presentation on the Middle Housing code change.

Matt Callison asked about the bill for middle housing lot divisions. Carol said it has passed but local jurisdictions have been given time to amend their codes so it is not available right now.

Gail Cerveny asked about information regarding the budget presentation that Carol sent out. Carol said she sent the slides to budget staff for review before she sent them out. She pulled together information staff have presented previously.

John Bildsoe said he went to the Wallace Medical Clinic to get a shot for his child and he said the triangle area in Rockwood is open and impressive. Rick Dwyer said the restaurant is great also.

Rick Dwyer reported on the arts plaza housing project—citizens, that is local business owners, have filed an appeal and the City Council will hear it on January 4 at 6:00 pm.

Those filing the appeal had to pay \$2700 which would be free if the NA did it. Carol said the project calls for a mixed use building. Rick said that little was known about the Trufflehunter property on West Powell as the NA is inactive, but the project seems to have restarted there, although Rick said the city review determined that the project application was incomplete. Michael thought land use and safety issues might motivate activation of the Central City NA and he is working with some individuals.

Michael said the mayor along with the city manager had a kickoff for an engagement effort on Facebook Live with the community. He spoke about Rockwood. He'd doing these community interactions on a monthly basis—and they are recorded. Can ask questions live. It was posted on Nextdoor for notification and access information.

The meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Jim Buck, Coalition Secretary-Treasurer

Next meeting: **Tuesday, January 11** – Remote via Zoom