

Gresham Butte Neighborhood Association

November 10, 2021

Officers present: Jim Buck, President; Sandy Davidson, Vice-President; Theresa Tschirky, Treasurer; Lynn Saint, Secretary; Tracy Slack, Land Use Chair.

7:00 p.m. Gresham Butte Neighborhood Association meeting commences

Evening Topic: Parks

Last spring and summer, **Tracy Slack** researched with data driven approaches to local parks relating to **diversity, equity and inclusivity**. Tonight, Tracy presented a Power Point slide presentation, with discussion was invited. Main points include:

1. Our initial definition of "**community park**" -- one with picnic spaces, playgrounds, and sports courts/fields -- expanded to also include sites having an events venue, dog park, walking trails, restrooms and handwashing and fitness apparatus. So, the definition of "community park" can range widely in scope of amenities.
2. We spent much time discussing how to **quantify the subjective terms** "accessible" and "nearby" and how the presence or absence arterial streets, sidewalks, as well as walking distance itself can help or hurt accessibility. Quantifying this is an important part of addressing parks equity.
3. In terms of access, we believe **Gresham Butte is unique** among all neighborhoods, and that we are less served by existing community parks than most residents. Unique in Gresham, our neighborhood is split (by the butte) into four different pockets of population. Furthermore, steep topography, combined with lack of sidewalks on key access roads, presents a big barrier to accessibility, even if the distance to certain parks appears close on paper.
4. Our neighborhood believes that a **successful community park must be considered a safe place** by residents, for all age groups, all the time.
5. We hope and expect that a robust **survey of current parks usage**, deployed City-wide but tabulated by each individual neighborhood, will be an important research technique. All neighborhood association officers should help in encouraging participation in such a survey, if it is conducted.
6. Because **2020 census data and 2020 census polygon boundaries** are now available, we believe it is important for parks equity (and a hundred other projects besides) that the City of Gresham generates statistically valid, current 2020 population data, by neighborhood. If simply mapping block group or census tract centroids to neighborhoods does not produce good enough data, then the City should employ more sophisticated polygonal mapping techniques to get all census bureau population statistics summarized by neighborhood. In addition, this mapping should be published to the City's website for both staff and public usage.

7. This past spring/summer of 2021, Tracy Slack (Gresham Butte Land Use Chair) authored both **a general parks equity research document, as well as an accompanying Excel spreadsheet**, wherein he tried to pursue a set of working definitions and assumptions to create a quantified, data-driven view of parks access, adjacency, and density figures by population stratum, for each Gresham neighborhood. These documents may at least be useful in illustrating some ways of thinking about how to quantify the parks equity research project.

8. The Gresham Butte neighborhood earnestly **hopes all meetings of the Park Advisory Committee are open to view-only public attendance**, and that the committee will record those proceedings and publish the recordings. We anticipate the committee will encourage ongoing public input from beyond the committee members themselves, in the form of verbal and/or written testimony. We also hope to see the committee's progress periodically reported back to the Mayor and Council, so that the public may also stay up to date on your efforts.

Treasurer's Report

Theresa Tschirky reported the account remains the same as previously posted: \$2,496.50,

Land Use

No land use activity.

Old Business

Regarding the **reforestation project**, Scholl's Valley nursery has not yet responded. Currently, the association is looking at early March instead of the end of April. Mike Wallace will indicate areas of concentration and focus.

On **the Saddle Trail**, the city is taking down hazardous trees near the trails. Hopefully, they haven't mowed down all the newly planted trees. Having a water truck go up once or twice in the summer should help. Elderberry trees, started at six inches, must be four feet high now. A work party needs to start **cutting blackberries** starting in late winter and early spring.

New Topics

An **agenda topic for January** could relate to the enormous amounts of tax dollars spent for the homeless. Metro has set aside **\$210 million a year for homeless services**. In three years, the tri-county area has spent \$140 million for the homeless. **Has anything helped** given the enormous outlay of services? Many tax dollars have been devoted to a relatively small area of the population.

Tracy explained that by January we should have some feedback on financial sustainability. He has testified a few times but has not observed positive City responses. **For February**, this can be a topic.

Adjournment 8:17 p.m.