

**Coalition of Gresham Neighborhood Associations
January 11, 2022 – Remotely Held (Zoom)**

Meeting Minutes

NEIGHBORHOOD	ATTENDEES	NEIGHBORHOOD	ATTENDEES
Centennial	Rick Dwyer, Mary Edmeades	Northeast	INACTIVE
Central City	INACTIVE	North Gresham	Mike Elston,
Gresham Butte	Jim Buck, Theresa Tschirky, Tracy Slack	Northwest	John Bildsoe, Kat Todd
Historic Southeast	Philip Svabik-Seror	Gresham Pleasant Valley	
Hogan Cedars	Matt Callison	Powell Valley	
Hollybrook		Rockwood	Catherine Nicewood
Kelly Creek	Carol Rulla	Southwest	Gail Cerveny, Dana Duval
North Central	Mary Gossett	Wilkes-East	
Staff & Guests:	Michael Gonzales, Office of Neighborhood and Community Engagement (ONCE) Manager; Jef Kaiser; Emily Bower, Executive Director of GRDC; Tom Stanley; Jack Ardner; Kate Batten		

Carol Rulla opened the meeting at 7:01 PM and allowed those present to introduce themselves. Minutes of 12/14/21 were approved as presented. Jack Ardner requested time under the public comment period and he communicated that the Charter Review Committee was reactivated with 12 members with two more planning to be added. Next meeting is Feb. 7 at 6 pm. The committee is active and will be discussing whether to propose a change from elections citywide to elections by districts and trying to determine how to move forward especially with the public engagement component. He said they will have public input at the beginning of every meeting. Carol said one can register for announcements about the Charter Review Committee.

Carol introduced Emily Bower to share information on the proposed Urban Renewal Extension. Emily shared a celebratory video about urban renewal in Rockwood. Over \$44 million investment was coupled with private investment to help with the redevelopment. It included developments benefiting youth and education such as Rosemary Anderson High School building called The Kitchen.

Rockwood-West Gresham Urban Renewal District began in 2003 with a plan for renewal. How goals are executed now may be different than the vision set in 2003. After the recession and recovery in 2007-08 there was a reassessment of what original goals should be pursued before it sunsets in 2023. There is a feeling more time is needed to complete projects. There have been apartment refurbishing grants, development grants for business and others. This included infrastructure investment also. Emily said the Gresham Redevelopment Commission (GRDC) considered alternatives to the renewal which included extending the timeframe. \$92 million was authorized under the plan but only \$53 million has been spent so far, thus \$37 million of bonded debt can still be used. Another alternative was to expand district to include a broader footprint. Should the urban renewal be kept with Rockwood and industrial properties to the north, or should it be expanded to other areas in Gresham for reinvestment? The Commission believed the extension was the most viable option at this time and it would be best to use the \$37 m to build on the work and then engage in analysis on whether to expand in the future. In September 2021 the GRDC proposed an amendment for people to vote on this measure in the May 2022 election. Historically, the city hasn't had a public engagement process for what projects should be priorities. Emily said she would like to come back with more information about the ballot measure. Polling so far reflects optimism on the measure, but work must be done to help those who are undecided since they may not know that much about this urban renewal tool so education is key. Zoom meetings are being held with schools, neighborhood reps, etc. The measure will need to be finalized in March for the May 2022 election.

Carol noted the difference between the the Gresham Redevelopment Commission and the City Council and said that councilors serve as GRDC members. Carol said that she had heard from former executive director Josh Fuhrer that, if all the money is not spent, it would return to the federal government. Is that accurate? Emily said that the district set up to borrow until 2023 but all debt needs to be paid by that time as well. Therefore, it has to be paid down within the same timeframe. The tax incrementing timeframe freezes taxes within that boundary which was for a period of 20 years. Property values have fluctuated and have grown due to investment and they can borrow against that to help with investments, such as the Boys and Girls Club and other investments. They borrow from the bond, so it's not a new tax but redistributed differently so it can be leveraged into urban renewal. Taxes after the urban renewal district expires come back onto the books then for those taxing districts. Emily said they have been successful in attracting and retaining industry and business in this area.

John Bildsoe inquired about the Federal dollars tied to the funding mechanism and asked for clarification about Carol's question: if we collected money but didn't spent do we lose it? Emily said she didn't know any provision to pay back any dollars to the Federal government. She said she would contact Josh to clarify this regarding federal involvement in this matter. John said he was on advisory committee for GDRC for 8 or more years and he said the ballot measure was poorly written as Gresham was required to pay sooner than other urban renewal projects due to an error incorporated in the measure to repay this debt within the 20 year timeframe. He said it harms no one if this extension is granted. Emily admitted that the provisions hampered or constrained opportunity to use dollars due to debt service repayment obligation timeline. Emily said there needs to be a dialogue for how to prioritize the remaining \$37 million investment now. If the district is extended she raised the question about what projects should be included. She has heard that 181st corridor north to Sandy Blvd is dangerous for people in terms of traffic and pedestrian safety and that might be targeted. Another improvement has been suggested for parks and recreation equipment for the area. Mike Elston asked about urban renewal map sections in North Gresham and he said no one has contacted him asking why not. Mike said they can use \$30 million and he could propose projects. Emily said she'd be happy to meet with him and the North Gresham Neighborhood Association.

Tracy Slack asked about incremental tax revenue and the net negative or delaying impact which an August staff memo mentioned as a "con" for expanding the district, specifically why it takes time for incremental tax revenues to increase from the frozen base in a new urban renewal area. Carol said Tracy should listen to the GRDC presentation because we don't have time here to talk about it. Tracy then asked if the 2020 census data would be very different from 2003. Emily thought this was a critical factor to determine if the plan is meeting the needs of those living there today. She has some information about this in the status report. It has shifted for people of color in the area, based on the 2016 American Survey analysis. Tracy asked about the housing goal in the original urban renewal plan and what was achieved quantitatively. Emily said every project that was funded is identified in status report and what was invested in each from public and private side and goals that were accomplished. For example, in apartment rehabilitation it will show data on the number of units affected. She said she isn't aware of any new ownership housing in the district. So they are net zero but the quality of housing has improved. John Bildsoe asked how do people pay for house ownership then? Emily responded that they are looking at new models for home ownership such as cooperatives or duplexes and habitat for humanity townhouses. It would be smaller scale and vertical home ownership models perhaps. Emily encouraged contact for those with further comments or suggestions.

Carol introduced the Coalition Board election process and John and Mike said they would continue as VP and Dana Duval said she was willing to be sec. treasurer with Jim Buck and Carol serving as co-presidents. Tracy asked for more information on what does co-president translate into? Carol said it would be worked out with Jim but she anticipated sharing the chairing of meetings and sharing responsibilities and roles. Gail Cerveny proposed the slate and Kat Todd seconded. Nine neighborhoods approved the slate unanimously. Carol thanked Dana for being willing to serve as secretary treasurer.

Carol said the Coalition bylaws have not yet been updated to incorporate neighborhood bylaw template changes adopted last November and it has been the responsibility of the vice presidents to guide this.

Carol asked if there are other changes to review in the bylaws more comprehensively. No one suggested any other changes. She will leave that charge with the vice presidents.

Michael Gonzales shared from ONCE that there is a need for a Coalition representative for an ARPA advisory committee. It will be administered under the city manager and they need the committee to help decide on applications from non-profits. The committee will also include a representative from the Community Development and Housing Subcommittee, from the Finance Committee and from the school district also. ARPA is the American Rescue Plan Act for dealing with the impacts from COVID. The Council has allocated ARPA funds for public safety, homelessness, etc., based on priorities from a community survey. The grants to community organizations is one use that Council has specified for the funds. Jan. 24 is deadline for applications. Mike Elston said he was willing to be involved. Mary Edmeades said she would like to serve also. Mike said he was willing to let Mary represent the Coalition in this. Michael said there might be a component for businesses impacted by COVID but this one is for supporting people impacted by COVID through non-profit services. By consensus Mary Edmeades was chosen as the Coalition representative with Mike Elston as alternate.

Michael said he is working on Imagine Gresham and the yard signs he mentioned are delayed and he's not sure when they will arrive but hoping sometime in the next week. He shared a link about Imagine Gresham ideas they have received and information about future sessions.

Michael followed up on the question about code enforcement and homeless services on weekends given that staff works on a Mon-Friday regular hours. He knew of non-emergency line response delays. He related that Jessica Harper from code enforcement said if there is issue on weekends it can be reported through My Gresham but won't be addressed until Monday. He said that with unions there is much to be negotiated for weekend work, but Kevin Dahlgren in homeless services is sometimes reachable during weekends with the use of flex time. He is overseeing other specialists that have been brought on. Coalition dialogue with him might be good. John Bildsdoe shared about a homeless man having psychotic episodes on New Year's Eve that went on for hours.

John asked about ARPA funding for Shaull property that was promised by Sen. Gorsek and Rep. Ruiz, but Michael didn't know about it. Carol said Councilor Morales would be the best contact for that.

Carol said for next meeting the Middle Housing draft code won't be ready so they are willing to share at March meeting. So we have switched out for the sheriff and County DA coming to the April meeting instead. But now there is no February presentation and Carol asked for suggestions. Gail Cerveny suggested city budget with departmental requests—can we learn more about that? Theresa on the Finance Committee said there is no advance information prior to April but broad directions could be shared before that. Carol will contact the city manager who could share about this in general terms, however. John Bildsdoe asked about the new library planning and if the county could present more information about that. Carol said Commissioner Lori Stegmann was hoping to attend our meeting with the DA and sheriff. Carol will ask if she will give an update on the library if one is available at that time.

Carol said she raised questions about Type 3 appeals at a Planning Commission meeting. The Arts Plaza housing appeal went before Council and it upheld the decision and rejected the appeal. Part of the reason for that was that our code specifies that appeals of Type 3 applications can't introduce any more evidence than what was initially raised in the first hearing, which is different from lower level appeals in Type 1 or 2 applications where our code allows new evidence to be introduced in appeals. Carol also said the city attorney said there would be no public comment in Type 3 appeal hearings. She was surprised at hearing this. Only the applicant and appellant could speak at the Arts Plaza housing appeal hearing. She said a community member's concern for parking and his pictures weren't able to be added to the record. Carol said for the Albertina Kerr project she asked that the record remain open for comments or input at the initial hearing. Carol said as a matter of guidance for land use chairs you need to ask in hearings before the Design Commission or Planning Commission that the record be left open if you have more information you want to provide.

Carol said there are many upcoming meetings that have been announced on our Nextdoor group. She also said Projects in Progress weren't being updated last year. The online portal doesn't give the preapplication meeting date any more. She asked staff how they were tracking the projects then. City staff is now updating active Projects in Projects so you can check which projects are now current, and staff will be adding the preapplication meeting date in future updates. She said if there is more on the document that would be helpful to let her know and she'll share that with city staff.

Carol reminded Coalition members that staff agreed to collect comments for a limited time after our wireless communication facilities process was updated under federal regulations that required applications to be expedited. Now there have been 50 installations with comments but not much submitted and the installations are not that obtrusive.

Jim Buck shared that the Gresham Butte NA was hold a meeting about homelessness on Wednesday, Jan. 12 at 7:00 p.m. He had sent through Carol a link to other NA officers so that could be shared with their members. He wanted to advocate for joint NA meetings on topics of general interest to avoid overtaxing public officials and city staff having to replicate meetings.

John Bildsoe said Belle Vista Park has a water run off problem. It flooded the new subdivision on Powell and washed out some landscaping. Carol asked if this was raised in public comments. John said he thought he typically did ask, but he wasn't sure on this site in particular. Jim Buck asked if removal of trees by the developer aggravated the runoff. Kat Todd said this is difficult to tell but changes in park trails also affected the water flow. A series of things have exacerbated the situation. John thinks the natural area absorbed the water but now is entering city storm system. Kat said a number of trees were removed in the park as well to prevent damage to pathways and that affects water flow.

Meeting adjourned at 8:48 PM.

Minutes prepared by Jim Buck, Coalition Secretary-Treasurer

Next meeting: **Tuesday, February 8** – Remote via Zoom