

SOUTHWEST NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION MEETING

Thursday, April 21, 2022

7:00 PM - 8:45 PM

[Click here for Zoom Recording of Meeting](#)

13 Participants

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Call to Order – Gail
2. Approval of January 20, 2022 Minutes – Approved as Written
3. Treasurer’s Report – Dana - \$488.40 (same as it has been for awhile)
4. Speaker: Pat McAbery, Gresham Firefighter and Paramedic Protecting Yourself Against a Catastrophic Fire Emergency How to Stay Informed, Documents, Radios, Cell Phones etc.
 - a. Used to be very rare for Multnomah County to be involved, but since 2017 have had more involvement in fire events
 - b. Have a plan, get out ahead of others
 - c. Don’t expect cell phones to be reliable at this time. Texts might be more reliable
 - d. Have a plan ahead of time of where to meet and how to be in touch
 - e. City has an AM radio station (1610 AM) is used for emergency management; public alert apps; sign up for reverse 911 to be alerted to events; Nextdoor will alert you; city’s Twitter account will also notify of events.
 - f. Roads tie up quickly; be ahead of the curve
 - g. Our resources are limited, but we are better prepared than others. One fire engine can protect up to 3 homes; Gresham has 6 fire engines on duty; they get used up quickly
 - h. Paradise Fire showed how quickly services can be overwhelmed.

How to prepare your house

- a. Firewise.org - a national program with ideas of how to get your property in shape
- b. A good house has space all around it; wide driveways; no junk and garbage around house; no cars parked around the house; no firewood around house; arborvitaes are very flammable
- c. If you know something is coming firewise, get anything burnable - that an ember can land on - out of the open
- d. Gutters should be clear and clean
- e. Roofs make a big difference - metal are best
- f. In the end, it can be unpredictable
- g. If the driveway is too narrow or difficult to maneuver, fire trucks may not be able to come in.
- h. Keep landscape green but using sprinklers during an event can also use up water supply
- i. Have important items well marked so you know what to grab in case of an event.

Question: New developments have dead ends. How are these approved by the fire department?

Answer: A lot of political pressure goes into these developments. We try to keep our rigs a manageable size. Don’t have a great answer. Also a problem: one lane roads can be hard to get around traffic, such as the new developments on Division.

Question: Why doesn't the fire department question the city council about this?

Answer: We often keep to ourselves. Fire departments mostly battle budget issues. The Fire Marshall does work on these issues.

Question: Have city councilors done ride alongs to see these issues?

In May, there will be hands-on training for the city councilors. This will give insight into what we are doing. Media may also be involved. The Firemen's Union is funding this.

When a fire has gone through, what to keep an eye on?

- a. Trees that have been weakened.
- b. Watch for stumps that are still burning.
- c. Watch for rocks and logs that had been held in place by plants.
- d. There are protocols for fire events, but the most important is to keep calm, make a decision and go with it.

Questions and Discussion

Question: What do you do with those who don't want to leave because they are afraid their homes are going to be looted?

A: There is coordination between fire and police and we communicate what we can.

Question: What is being done with those shooting off fireworks?

A: This is a resource issue. There are not enough people to follow through; Also, the district attorney does not like to prosecute for this. Other issues - Barkdust can be very flammable; water doesn't put it out; you need to dig it up and get it completely out. Arborvarties and junipers are most flammable; other plants can also be a problem but not as bad as those. 5-10' between house and plants is preferable.

Question: Do fire retardants work?

A: Not aware of a product but it could be good. Need cost/benefit analysis.

Question: Do insurance companies provide some retardant work?

A: There are places where this happens.

Q: Illegal campsites: From time to time there are campfires on Gresham or Powell Butte. How do illegal burns get treated?

A: Fire Marshall spends a lot of time tracking these down. Cooking fires can have different rules than other fires. Politics involved regarding fires for warmth or cooking. Gresham has more options than Portland. However, if it is a dangerous time of year there is more latitude on enforcement.

Q: Will EMTs continue to ride along?

A: Yes, with some changes.

Q: What about speed bumps?

A: Need gaps so they can be fire truck friendly, but these fire truck-friendly speed bumps are rare in Gresham.

5. Speaker: Emily Bower, Director of Urban Renewal Rockwood and the Surrounding Urban Renewal District

May 6-7 - Grand Opening for Downtown Rockwood. Some of the improvements include Workforce Development, unemployment center, medical center, restaurant, market hall,

and outdoor plaza. The purpose and goals are to create a thriving Rockwood downtown.

The Urban Renewal District was approved in 2003 for 20 years. What this did was freeze the tax revenue for the designated area of about 1,211 acres at the 2003 level. All increases in taxes (due to rises in property value or other tax increases) were placed in this renewal fund for various improvements on upgrades like infrastructure. This fund helped bring in businesses, jobs, affordable housing, and public buildings.

The original measure for this renewal district - which allowed for \$92 million of these funds - expires in 2023. However, all of that amount has not been collected and spent. The district would like another 6 years to fulfill the original spending total, which would give them 6 more years to invest the remaining \$37 million on Rockwood. The funds would be used to invest in transportation, parks and recreation.

This requires citizens to vote on this Urban Renewal Measure 26-223

A YES vote does not raise taxes, but keeps those designated funds from going where they would have gone otherwise.

A NO would not lower taxes, but it WOULD disperse those funds to entities that have not been receiving those funds for 20 years: City of Gresham General Fund, Multnomah County Library, Reynolds School District and Centennial School District, and Port of Portland.

For more information go to this link: <https://greshamoregon.gov/Urban-Renewal>

April 26 - Q & A with Mayor Stovall

April 27 - State of the City 5:00 pm at GHS auditorium

Q: How does this work?

In 2003 they forecasted a 3% increase of taxes over the life of the original 20 year designation, or \$92 million. However, only \$52 million has been spent; we have 37 million more to go. It's called "borrowing capacity" - borrowing against the projected tax revenue. The Urban Renewal Fund cannot borrow beyond what is approved - that \$92 million.

Q: Is our increased water fee making up for the money not coming from Rockwood Urban Renewal District?

A: Not known for sure.

Q: Is the rest of Gresham making up the difference for what is not being provided by the Urban Renewal District?

A: Yes.

6. Land Use: Kathy

a. Lot Line Adjustment: Butler Creek Park City of Gresham and Marpol Ridge HOA

Background: For several years, the Marpol Ridge HOA has wanted to transfer ownership to the city of a large section of the greenspace by Marpol Ridge HOA. There are water and sewer pipes under the creek. The city will now manage that area rather than the neighborhood association.

- a. Apartment Construction 3411 SW 36th : Three story apartments to be built. There will be 12-18 apartments on 36th and Pleasantview Drive

Background: Land next to Butler Creek School was originally meant to be a middle school, but because of a road issue, the school cannot be built. The school district has sold that land for development.

- a. Butler Creek School Land Division divided a parcel into two sections: Butler Subdivision 120 lot subdivision and Butler Rd extension. This is due to the Middle Housing Code changes.
 1. Lot sizes have been approved for 5,000 sq feet, but recent Oregon legislation that takes effect on June 16 has changed that to 4,000 sq feet. Therefore, the developer is seeking approval to change the number of houses in this 18.1 acre area from 90 lots of 5,000 sq feet to 120 lots of 4,000 sq feet.
 2. While development does not include parks, there is Charles Becker Park which is 3 blocks away.

Note: This is not a done deal; they have 3 consecutive approval meetings for this approval on May 11.

7. July Meeting-Butler Creek Park BBQ/Block Party - Brandon
6:30-8:30 Picnic and Information Fair at Butler Creek Park on July 21

Planning for 250 - 300 people; will need funds for event insurance (\$226)

Dana made a motion to approve a matching grant application of \$600 for funds including up to \$300 for insurance. Motion was seconded and approved.

Brandon is overseeing sending out invitations to get information booths. There will also be a BBQ, but we need volunteers and helpers to be a part of this.

8. New Business

- a. Charter review committee has been meeting since January 2022. See below for committee update read by SWNA President Gail on behalf of Committee Vice Chair Jack Ardner
- b. Also, see below links for emergency and food supply sources.
- c. Karen Blythe voiced a continued concern from area residents about the need for traffic control on Butler Road because of ongoing speeding. What would be the next step for solving this public safety issue? For example, could a roundabout be installed?
 1. A first step discussed was contacting Chris Strong, Gresham Transportation Manager as a citizen inquiry on traffic safety and potential mitigation at a trouble spot. He would be the one who could inform us as to the steps needed to create a formal request for a study based on accident volume.
 2. This would be a good time to interject as project development approval is upcoming.

9. Adjourned at 9:10

Update on the Charter Review Committee.

The Gresham Charter Review Committee (CRC) has been meeting since January 10, 2022, On March 9th, the CRC commissioned a Subcommittee of members to conduct public involvement and to make recommendation(s) on the election issues that the City Council defined in Resolution No. 3478. Here are the applicable parts:

"The CRC shall consider and make a recommendation whether to place a ward/districting system measure on the ballot. The recommendation shall include, but not be limited to,

information regarding the preferred type of ward/districting system, if any (i.e., number of wards/districts, number of councilors from each ward/district, and/or a combination of ward/district and at-large positions), the potential drawbacks and benefits of each ward/districting system considered and the City's current at-large system, and information deemed necessary to successfully transition to a ward/district election system (i.e., preferred method(s) in drawing ward/district boundaries and other related issues). Notwithstanding Section 1, the CRC may choose to submit its recommendation to the Council upon completion. The Council may thereafter, in its discretion, consider placing the CRC's recommendation on the November 2022 ballot."

The CRC prioritized the work of the Subcommittee so that it can make recommendation(s) to the CRC by June 29th, if possible. This is necessary so that the CRC as a whole can make recommendation(s) to the City Council. The Council will then decide whether they want to put one or more Measures on the General Election ballot on November 8, 2022.

The CRC Subcommittee has met by Zoom session, each Wednesday at 3:00 p.m. since March 24th. The members are following a dual track of reaching out to the residents on election issues and acquiring new information on voting process options.

- Members are working with the City staff and a facilitator to reach out to the public and to underserved groups to determine their thoughts on the election process for City Councilors.
- Members are receiving information from different groups on potential changes to the election process.

These meetings will continue as necessary, each week until June 1st, when the Subcommittee will determine if it has or will have sufficient information to make recommendation(s) to the CRC as a whole.

All of the meetings of the CRC and the Subcommittee are recorded Zoom sessions and are available on the City website at: <https://greshamoregon.gov/City-Charter/>. I urge you to review some of these sessions or at least follow the progress of this effort. One way to get a quick overview, is to listen to the Subcommittee report to the CRC as a whole, each month.

I invite you as residents to make either written or oral testimony, at any of these meetings. Further, I invite the Neighborhood Association to make comments/suggestion/recommendations to the Subcommittee on any aspect of elections in Gresham.

The success of this effort will be in hearing the thoughts and needs of residents so that we can apply them to the elections tools available today. The goal is to identify and recommend the best possible solutions to the CRC and the City Council.

Yours,

Jack Ardner
Vice Chair, CRC and Subcommittee

Emergency and Food Supplies Sources, Planning for Emergencies Sources:

www.4Patriots.com (solar generators, radios, equipment, etc.)

www.thrivelife.com, www.ultimateprep.net (freeze dried food)

www.muirheadcanning.com (canned fruit, applesauce, tomatoes)

www.costco.com (Mountain House Freeze Dried Food)

www.redcross.org (emergency planning, supplies)

www.GreshamOregon.gov/EmergencyManagement

(Booklet: Connection Is Protection. Get Ready. Neighborhood Ready.)

<https://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/map/> (hourly updates around the world)