

DRAFT Minutes | NGNA General Meeting

April 4, 2022

- Call to order, 7:05 PM
- Introductions
- Guest Speakers
 - Emily Bower, Redevelopment Commission
 - She's working with the Urban Renewal District in the Gresham Redevelopment Commission, which manages the Gresham-Rockwood Urban Renewal Plan. This involves portions of North Gresham, Wilkes East, Rockwood and Centennial neighborhoods – about 1200 acres. It goes a little north of I-84, follows 181st on both sides of the road T-ing out around Burnside/Stark. The Human Solutions building at 181st & Burnside is the center of the district.
 - What is Urban Renewal? It's an economic development tool that's been used in cities all over the state. It allows the community to focus on upgrades throughout the area. It's often used to provide infrastructure and civic facilities to support economic development.
 - In 2003, voters passed the current Rockwood-W. Gresham Urban Renewal Plan. We're entering the end of the district period, which is 2023. The city council & the commission have proposed an amendment to the plan to extend it six years.
 - Some of the projects that have been funded so far include:
 - Downtown Rockwood Project
 - Little Wings childcare facility
 - Cultural marketplace that has incubator space for small retailers
 - Mixed income housing
 - Oregon Tradeswomen facility
 - We've assisted 40 new businesses to relocate to the area, which added 700 jobs.
 - Construction of the Rockwood Public Safety Facility
 - Increased community services that historically didn't exist
 - They brought about \$80 million to the district
 - What would the city do with an extension?
 - It would allow the city to invest in additional borrowing capacity of \$37 million that can go back into the district.
 - It would be focused on transportation, housing, jobs, supporting small businesses and potentially Parks & Recreation.
 - A yes vote will not increase taxes.
 - A no vote means the mentioned projects won't be funded.
 - Where does the money come from, if it's not a new tax?
 - Redistribution of funds. You pay taxes into a fund, and the county redistributes the taxes and places a portion of it into the Urban Renewal District.
 - If Urban Renewal didn't exist the money would go back to the taxing districts.
 - Called "Tax Increment Financing."
 - When will the vote be? May 17th, 2022.

Gresham as a whole, or individual neighborhoods. They're gathering input from people during community events, surveys, in-person meetups, and really any place where they can get feedback.

- Over the course of a couple of months they've received feedback from over 33,000 people. They're now launching a second phase to make sure they've captured what people have said they want. If you go to greshamoregon.gov/imagine-gresham, you'll see a link to a survey that highlights areas that they believe people want to see improved. The survey will then drill down to help define specifics. What does "community safety" look like, for example? Does that mean more streetlights? More sidewalks? More police presence?
 - They'll take that information and present it to City Council and ask how we make that happen. Michael said we need to dream big, and have a roadmap – where do we need to go, and how do we get there? For example, if we want to get to take a family trip to Disneyland, we have to figure out what car to take, how many people will fit in the car, how much tickets cost, where are we going to stay? Etc.... Imagine Gresham is similar. They've set a goal, and need to plan all the pieces they need to have in place to accomplish that.
 - They hope to have all the ideas together and ready to present by June. They'll look at the report and figure out how to make it work.
 - Michael also mentioned the Neighborhood Matching Grant, which is about \$10,000 that neighborhoods can tap into for special projects. Some of the Kirk Park funding came from that. They do ask for "sweat equity" of about \$25/hour and that the requesters bring in some matching funds. It's something they've budgeted for and continue to budget for, because they understand it's important.
 - There's also a Metro "Community Enhancement Grant," a kickback based on the amount of weight that goes through the transfer facility in Gresham. They open that up in the autumn for proposals as well, and generally it's a much larger pot (around \$60,000 last year).
 - Q&A:
 - Q: Why was Kirk Park picked for the wellhead?
A: Michael wasn't entirely sure but Mike Elston was able to fill in the blanks. He explained that they're tapping into a very deep, very clean aquifer. He explained that Bull Run has to put in a filtration system that'll cost \$500,000, which we'll have to pay for as long as we're contracting with Portland for water. Michael added that we'll be saving ratepayers a lot of money going this route.
 - Q: When is the next step going to begin?
A: Not sure, but there will be a concrete pump house in the park
 - Q: What's going on with the Kirk Park project?
A: The playground structure is done. You can't see it well from the street.
- Chief of Police Travis Gullberg
 - A bit of background. Chief Gullberg grew up at 190th & Glisan – so he's a Rockwood kid – and then his family moved to East Portland, off 148th & Lincoln. They moved to

the beach and returned in the 80s, and he graduated from Centennial High School in 1987. He went to Mt. Hood Community College and Warner Pacific College – so all his roots are here in East County. He was hired as Police Chief in August, and has been in the business for 26 years (23 years with the Sherriff's office). While he no longer lives in Gresham, his father still resides here.

- He realizes East County, and Gresham in particular, is underrepresented and underserved in many ways. As Michel mentioned, they're struggling with resources, staffing and budgeting.
- He's never seen anything like the current situation. They've lost a lot of staff. There are many reasons for this, but one of the main ones was that there was a need to have a community conversation about how policing is done in the 21st century. There were a number of highly publicized incidents that weren't so good, including the murder of George Floyd (and yes, he does feel it was a murder). But in dealing with and confronting the limitations and constraints, they didn't support their staff in his opinion, and many people decided they didn't want to be part of policing any longer. On top of that are the issues all industries are facing due to COVID.
- They decided they didn't have enough staff to cover even the basic services. They pulled back the Neighborhood Enforcement Team, transit police, traffic enforcement – and that's just the first phase. They reached 20 people down at one point; they usually run a 4-7% vacancy rate 20 is somewhere around 18% - which is pretty much unheard of. They don't even go to traffic accidents any more unless there's a high impact or injuries.
- The issue has everything to do with staffing. Chief Gullberg said they have lots of support from elected officials and city leadership. There haven't been funding cuts so it's not a matter of funding. He'd like to say that they can hire 20 people tomorrow, but that just can't happen. HR is at 50% capacity, IT at 25%, and on top of that it takes time to get a new hire on the street. It used to take about a year to get someone up to speed. Now, they just hired a person last month who can't get in to the Police Academy until August. It used to take 30-60 days to get someone in, now it's 4-6 months.
- So yes, he feels Gresham Police are way behind in the game right now. Yes, certain crimes are on the rise. Violence is for sure; shootings are too – they're at 200% now. Stolen cars are up about 65%.
- There is a Safe Gresham initiative going on that's part of Imagine Gresham in an attempt to reduce the problems neighborhoods are seeing. There's a lot of opportunity there, and he encourages people to get involved and engage with them.
- He doesn't sleep well knowing the gun violence is so high. Shootings broke records last year, and we're on track to break them again. That's not a good sign for a community. Residents will start considering living elsewhere, and he doesn't want that.
- They're going through a comprehensive operation assessment right now – a real deep dive into what the police department looks like now and how it moves forward. He's expecting a lot of recommendations, some of which they've already received and are working on implementing. They're expecting a full report in June. But they really need to hear from the community, too.
- There are referral bonuses right now - \$12,000 per lateral transfer plus the referrer gets \$1000 for any hire (lateral, new hire, etc.).

▪ Q&A:

- Q: The chief was asked about Gresham police's boundaries, as she sees Portland Police, too.

A: There's some cross-over, and the departments support each other. We're only down 20, but Portland is down hundreds of officers, especially the east side.

- Q: Is there anything we citizens can do to assist/help support the police?

A: He would encourage people to interact with all the initiatives. They did have a volunteer program that was shut down during COVID. He'd encourage participating in a Neighborhood Watch program, and to do things to protect your family at home, but don't get involved directly. They do have a cadet program for kids 14-21 that allows them to see if they'd like to become officers.

- Q: Will the NET team be coming back? They were doing great work and it would be wonderful to see that back. The person also mentioned how bad 911 service is right now. The last time he called – someone broke into his car so she could sleep in it - he was on hold 20 minutes, then got a call back 15 minutes later.

A: The chief mentioned someone spent 75 minutes on hold waiting to report a shooting, which was completely unacceptable. Regarding the NET team, they had to pull back on that to staff basic services. They're taking a look at a different model that may focus more on early intervention and less on traditional policing and patrolling. They're hoping to bring NET back once things improve. Re 911, Gresham and Portland are customers; Gresham and Portland pay BOEC for the service. They constantly go to bat for the community saying it's not good service... but BOEC is facing staff shortages as well. They're testing a 311 service to try to draw some of low-priority calls away from 911. But right now he agrees it's a disaster and isn't serving the community well – in fact, it's making the community less safe.

Mike Elson mentioned directing homeless issues to Kevin Dahlgren. His homeless service team has added three people this year. They've done remarkable work.

- Q: The speed limit in the area is 25 MPH, but many times there have been cars driving through at 75 MPH. She expressed concerned about the new bikeway – that someone's going to get hit.

A: The chief again said that Gresham had a robust traffic unit, but that's another area where they had to pull back. He said it's no secret that people think they can get away with a lot because they know they won't be prosecuted – for example, there aren't enough defense attorneys, so cases are being dropped and criminals are released back into the community.

- Q: As citizens, what can we do to diminish the speeding in our neighborhoods?

A: There's not a lot you can do, and they wouldn't want you to get involved with that. If you've heard about the "adopt a cop" program, that helped a lot – it really raised spirits. They also expect to come to the community for more money in the future, and they need it. So if you see it on the ballot it's important to approve it.

- Q: Will the CVIPs be back?

A: Yes – They'd like to reinstitute the program.

Q: Weren't they responsible for the radar trailers?we

A: Yes, but not sure they'll be able to do that in the future. They're going to be prohibited from stopping people for "fix-it" tickets. So they'll have to send letters, going old-school.

- Q: What's the good in investing in parks if we don't have a way to keep park users safe? Maybe it would be better to reallocate the money back to safety.

A: Chief Gullberg encouraged the audience to look for those surveys online and provide feedback at every opportunity. It'll help them have those conversations. But he'd never say to take one over the over; the discussion will be more about the realities of what can be accomplished with available resources.

Emily added that budget season is coming up, and public participation is key. She also mentioned that certain funding can only be used for certain projects – for example, the Metro fund can be used for parks but not police. We have to continue conversations about what can be changed and what can't.

Mike added that the Park wasn't funded by taxes, but by private and corporate donations. Because more people are using the park, the crime there is actually coming down.

- Other Business

- We have two vacant board positions (Vice President and Member-At-Large). If you're interested, please talk to one of use.
- Next elections will be Monday, October 3
- National Night Out will be the first Tuesday in August. Not only will it be a community celebration, but we're planning to have the playground dedication at that time to thank the people who helped get it installed, and to celebrate the fact that we were able to achieve this.
- Mike encouraged getting to know one's neighbors. That's one way to help with the crime levels. And if you see something, say something.
- Kim also recommended using the MyGresham app to report non-emergency issues.

- Meeting adjourned 8:40

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Next general meeting [tentative]: Monday, 3, 2022, 7:00 – 8:45 PM, Eastrose Fellowship Unitarian Universalist Church, 1133 NE 181st Ave., Portland, OR 97230. NGNA Board Meetings are held the third Monday of each month at 6:00 PM over Zoom. Please e-mail ngreshamna@gmail.com for the link.