

**Coalition of Gresham Neighborhood Associations
June 13, 2023 – Remotely Held (Zoom)
Meeting Minutes**

NEIGHBORHOOD	ATTENDEES	NEIGHBORHOOD	ATTENDEES
Centennial		North Central	Mary Gossett
Central City	INACTIVE	Northeast	INACTIVE
Gresham Butte	Jim Buck, Theresa Tschirky, Stephen Estes	North Gresham	INACTIVE
Gresham Pleasant Valley	INACTIVE	Northwest	Kat Todd
Historic Southeast	INACTIVE	Powell Valley	
Hogan Cedars		Rockwood	Catherine Nicewood, Deanna Stewart
Hollybrook		Southwest	Dana Duval
Kelly Creek	Carol Rulla	Wilkes-East	
Staff & Guests	Michael Gonzales, Neighborhood Services Division; Nina Vetter, Gresham City Manager; April Avery; Chloe Balderson; Thomas Stanley, Janet Unruh		

The meeting opened at 7:01 p.m., Jim Buck, Coalition Co-President presiding.

1. Minutes for May 9, 2023 meeting: After a short delay in establishing quorum, the minutes were approved as presented.

2. Discussion of City Budget/Revenue Following Safety Levy Defeat, Gresham City Manager, Nina Vetter.

a. The next step after the defeat of the Safety Levy has two pieces: 1) How to balance the budget for the next fiscal year which begins on July 1 and 2) What do we do about the failed levy, the existing need for additional critical staff in our safety departments, and the need to get us on a path for voter-approved initiatives that will provide better service for our community.

b. Direction for next year’s budget: Fortunately, there was a “back-up” plan to address the \$8 million shortfall if the levy did not pass. There have been some trust concerns expressed with the levy not passing and the City still being able to address the budget shortfall. The “back-up” plan uses 3 tools to balance the budget and focuses on keeping the personnel and services we currently have: 1) American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. These funds cannot be used to simply balance the budget, there are restrictions on how the funds can be used so only a portion of those funds can be used to address certain shortfalls. 2) Extension of the \$15 Police/Fire/Parks Fee for one more year. 3) Some service reductions. No lay-offs are being recommended but the planned expansion to the mental health program and hiring a community safety specialist in the Police Department will not happen now. Other things that were planned

with the passing of the Safety Levy, such bringing back the NET team, traffic enforcement, proactive safety inspections of our schools also will not happen now.

c. Next steps: Council has asked to hire a local campaign specialist to provide an analysis of why the levy did not pass, to conduct some public opinion research (format not yet determined), and to provide some feedback on what may be good timing for a future levy. Council has some options: go back out with the same levy or go out with something different. Also, whether to add the levy to the ballot in November of this year or May of next year or push the ballot levy back to November of 2024. Pushing a ballot levy to November of 2024 means that funding for the 2024-2025 fiscal year would be a challenge.

d. Future tax reform possibilities: While Gresham has been affected by the restrictive state tax structure for some time, other large communities are starting to experience some of the same issues. Nothing is currently in the works to review this issue at the state level but as more and more communities voice these issues to our legislators, possible reforms will have a greater chance.

e. Discussion regarding Multnomah County providing funding for programs. Gresham's share of the business tax revenue collected by the County is currently about \$10 million. The County also provides money in the form of a grant for some of our homeless services programs which covers a significant portion of our costs but as our program has expanded, the grant has not expanded, causing the gap that would have been addressed had the Safety Levy passed. Recently, the County ended its "move-in" program to provide rent-free housing to people that qualified (having a job, being on a path to independence, etc.). This program was highly used and very successful in Gresham. Good news: Gresham requested and received funding to start our own "move-in" program.

5. Neighborhood and City News and Reports:

a. Neighborhood Services Division Report. Michael Gonzales:

1) All neighborhood matching grant requests were fully funded at the amount of the requests. Currently working on getting the contracts in place so checks can go out shortly after July 1 (the beginning of the fiscal year). Because some of the scheduled events are in early July, some neighborhoods may have problems with deposits, etc., that may be needed for the event. Since the funding is there and approved, the NSD is willing to provide a promissory note for the neighborhoods to use prior to receiving their grant funds.

2) Volunteer Appreciation Picnic has been rescheduled to June 23rd at 5:30 p.m.

3) National Night Out will be at the Arts Plaza on August 1st. There will be free root beer floats and the Police, Fire and Council will attend.

4) Trip to El Paso Neighborhood USA Conference: At the conference they discussed the concept of asset-based mapping which is to identify what is in the neighborhood that is an asset rather than what is needed or wanted, then taking the asset and building on that strength.

b. Co-President Report.

1) Carol Rulla: Currently do not have anything on the Coalition Agenda for July. If nothing critical comes up, the July meeting may be cancelled.

c. NA Reports and Concerns. No reports.

Meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Dana Duval – Coalition Secretary-Treasurer

Next meeting: **Tuesday, August 8** (July meeting expected to be cancelled)