

# 121919 West Salem Neighborhood Association Meeting Minutes

Monday, December 16, 2019 7:00 PM

Attendees: Kevin Chambers (Chairman), Tammy Goad (Secretary), Mark Coutis (Vice Chairman), see sign in sheets for remaining attendees included 39 additional signed in, and more that did not sign in.

Meeting Called to Order by Kevin Chambers at 7:01 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Introductions

Additions to agenda from the body - no additions

Approval of minutes - all in favor

## **Post minutes 2 times per month**

### Vote to approve/oppose traffic remediation recommendations from 11/18 meeting

1. Open Musgrave Street - Motion to not approve/Paul Petersen seconded -  
Tim Clark - asked if traffic talked about traffic driving through park to Glen Creek. Very narrow at bridge trestle; will not work for trucks  
Mark Coutis advised large trucks would be prohibited  
Jim Musgrave - said this might be good if we can control traffic  
Paul Petersen - when traffic study was done in 80s, it was probably considered that there is the blind corner that presents safety issue and this is possibly why the road was shut off  
Vote: Majority voted to NOT support opening Musgrave Street
2. Allow use of park parking to walk to DT/park (paving and lighting as well)- No Motion  
Discussion - opening parking for all day could inhibit visitors from using the lot and walking to the park  
Connie suggested paving the lot would save time/money in having to regravell the lot from drivers tearing up the lot  
There is also an alignment issue

### Vote to approve/oppose use of West Salem parks as official designated locations for homeless camping

Motion by Mark Coutis to prohibit camping in West Salem Parks/seconded

Results will be a letter to City

Kevin received a lot of feedback regarding using Salem parks as homeless camps

Attendee asked where homeless go if they have no other place to go. There will be presentation next month to discuss the other options

Another attendee said that waiting is not advisable

Carrie Zoner - there are a population of people who migrate up the hill to Kingwood area (empty nuisance properties); agrees we have a time frame issue to ensure this problem doesn't get worse

Another attendee thinks this puts the onus back on the city to come up with real solutions for the drug use, etc.; is Assoc allow this, the lawlessness may continue

Brush College Park used to allow homeless to camp right across from school; attendee does not want this again

Vote: Majority voted to oppose using parks as homeless camp

## PRESENTATIONS

### Chief Mike Niblock, Fiscal Update

There is a structural imbalance in general fund account which supports a lot of public services  
There is not enough revenue coming in to support all services  
City looked at ways to increase revenue

Option 1 - Operations Fee which will go on utility bill - this was approved by council earlier this year; will show on utility bill in February \$8/month for general residence, lower amounts for different consumers; this will help balance the budget and ensure continued services

City has always had a utility relief program for those that can't afford their rates - Chief provided a flyer

Option 2 - Recommended an employee payroll tax

This tax would tax everyone who is employed in Salem (those who work here but don't live here); this would apply to commuters and residence

This would help support rising demand for public safety services

Increasing call volume is overwhelming service providers; not providing emergency services responses @ required 5.5 minutes 85% of the time (only providing 69% of the time)

Tax is .39% on income earned in Salem (=\$195/year for someone making \$50K); minimum wage earners are exempt; lower rate for wage earners up to \$15/hr

This is being referred to voters in May 2020

Don't forget to water your Christmas trees! :-)

Why are we voting only for 1 of these? As elected body, the council could vote for one as an immediate need.

These funds will not go to new police station - this was funded by bond

Steve requested that emergency manager can work with WSNA on Paul Evans' bill to provided emergency equipment staging in W Salem (Spire grants)

Are any of these funds designated for anything specifically, or just general? Utility fee will go to general fund; the payroll tax would be for public safety (also in general fund)

### Jean Love, The Thoughts and Gifts Project

Opened doors 6/5/19 - original location in Monmouth/Independence

Mission is to serve value and importance of underserved youth and seniors to celebrate birthdays (0-18 and 65+)

Serves people eligible for public assistance, want to make sure person is recognized. Provide cards, age appropriate books, and have a birthday party once a month for all recipients

Do not request proof; just provide help - for seniors

For youth, parent must submit application to avoid conflict with legal family matters (some exceptions made for emancipated/almost emancipated minors); seniors can self-apply

Serve Polk County

Jean provided rack cards for distribution; please display, post on social media, etc.

100% volunteer organization

Funded through donations (monetary and goods); can donate items (new/packaged) - do not accept stuffed animals, weapons, clothes, clothing accessories

Recently received first grant for building awareness and community engagement  
[www.thoughtsandgifts.org](http://www.thoughtsandgifts.org)

Troy Thompson, City of Salem Public Works

Improvement project coming up on Rosemont Avenue; sidewalk on East side is currently closed due to weather related car slip conditions

Roadway has been surveyed and it was determined retaining wall is failing.

Project will remove the retaining wall and build a new one

Plan to perform work this summer

Trees will be taken down to rebuild the wall (large willows, maples and Douglas firs); arborist has reviewed the trees and provided feedback on what can stay/what needs to be removed - these will be taken down before March 1, 2020

There will be a road closure during this time; detour routes are fairly long - will have to detour to Wallace Road

(Troy will send us a .pdf of the project site and planned detour - see repair project fact sheet for other details)

Additional catch basin will be built

Road will not be widened as part of this project

Adding a 9" curb on the east side/non-mantleable

Where is funding coming from - \$1.5M - Keep Salem Moving! 2008 Streets and Bridges Bond Savings

How are residents being protected below with trees being removed? SUVs can get over a 9" curb

Troy advised another location has helped prevent this issue; there will be a 7' sidewalk behind the curb and a standard fence to protect pedestrians

**Reports:**

Salem Police; Officer Silva

Promises to deliver feedback to top

Please ensure when shopping and returning home not to leave gifts or packages in the car, either at home or at the mall/in public

South Side Salem seeing increased vehicle thefts from drivers leaving cars running in the AM (to heat up); there has been an increase in car theft (not so much in W Salem)

In Portland, people have been damaging Christmas decorations; please report any damage to decorations; this is not a bother to report to the police department

Homeless issues have been discussed - this is delicate situation; as of today, the camping on the streets will be a violation and legal action will be taken against violators

Also the camps proposed to house the homeless has been shut down; understood how this affects the community and trying to balance sensitivity to homeless and impact to the community

Steve Anderson - auto rates have gone up in the area due to more accidents; there have been more speeding issues in West Salem; understand there are issues by Glen Creek (fire station)

Mark asked about car thefts in West Salem recently reported on Next Door. Officer Silva advised these are random, and not clustered in a single area. These are typically crimes of opportunity, where prowlers watch to see if drivers lock cars, etc. This is why it's important to always lock the doors, car, home, etc.

There is only one active duty officer in W Salem; Officer Silva is that officer

There are more officers around during the day; other officers will answer to calls

Mark Coutis stated more presence is needed

## City Councilor - Councilor Lewis

At last city council meeting (12/9), banned bag ban  
Council debated identifying "public space"; this discussion ended when Arches confirmed that a couple of churches would open about 140 beds for \$213Kvs. Original plan of opening 40-something beds for over \$1M

Police are notifying homeless that they need to find another place to go (no public sidewalks, medians, etc.)

This is an extremely sensitive issue

Private property owners can evict campers; but private property owners can allow camping on their property

Will take at least 30 days for the churches to open the additional beds

City continues to encourage the homeless to take advantages of services to ultimately resolve the homeless situation

Revenue funds - need is real for both utility fee and employee tax for city to continue to serve growing population

One reason to pass utility fee w/out vote from public was that if it did not pass, a reduction in services was imminent in about 2 months

Vote on employee tax - how much is the State of OR willing to work with us, and how long will it take them to get organized? No guarantee with the state of OR (very slow).

Immediate need of funds is real

Council meets again in the 2nd Monday in January 2020

Has there been any discussion for using the Hillcrest property for homeless housing? City has looked at this and decided to pass on this. City turned it down due to building inefficiency and cost to make it safe

Councilman asked about NW corner of Doaks/Orchard Heights rezoning; there is a multiple layer zone; planning would review any application to change zoning

NA can present feedback on any changes, but planning department has authority to make decision

Can find applications on City web site and residents living in certain distance are also notified

Asked about Hemp Farm up the hill; believe what kept developer from hemp far is water;

Will State of OR pay City of Salem for real estate property tax? No, they do not pay any real estate taxes

## Land Use - Application for Orchard Heights by W Salem High School

Talked to city about 4PM today - application has been filed to develop 110 lots on the NW corner of Doaks/Orchard Heights

In process of putting in tree mitigation plan, traffic plan, etc. At that time, a notice will be sent to Land Use Committee Chair and WSNA Chair

SE property - nothing on record with City as of today

See maps for details

## Parks - Mickey Varney

We submitted a SPIF application and has been reviewed by the committee for letter of intent; proposal for Chandler Park by end of Jan

Eagle's View Park - next meeting in second week of January

Before parks are approved, citizens are notified and invited to provide feedback of what they would like to see in the park

There will be a workshop at Roth's at the Founders Room at 630 PM January 15

Patricia Farrell with Parks is willing to come out to meeting in January

Wallace Park - January 11 another tree planting starting at 9 AM

Please go to Park website for more information

### Traffic and Infrastructure

7th Avenue by Walker - concern regarding traffic and speeding mentioned last WSNA meeting

Heard back from Vice Principal; no concerns

Submitted some suggestions to City for pedestrian signs and other speed controls around this area

Attendee on Kingwood/Crescent - school buses now turning left off Glen Creek here and creating a 10 minute traffic delay every morning; very dangerous turn and drivers are speeding through here; also parked cars on street preventing LOS

### Transit - Chi Nguyen

Still continuing to get news out about Saturday service

After holiday break, it will be less than 100 days until Sunday service starts

Utilized House Bill 2017

Cheerios local routes - 5% increase; huge uptick in past 4 years - highest peak at 11000 rides/month in September - jumped to 13,000 when Saturday service was reinstated

30 day pass usage has gone up 10%

Reduced rates 30 day pass has gone down by 2.9% (may be due to youth fare rate)

Youth fare passes gone up 190%!

White and Blue bikes - being managed out of Trip Choice/Alternate Ride Program; logged more than 80 rides averaging more than 80 minutes; age of users - 39% 18-24, 30% 25-34; 19% 45-65+ age groups

West Salem Business Association - none

### Edgewater - Steve and Duane

Talking in February for ideas of upcoming summer's market on Edgewater

Once a month do a walking cruise

Partner with dream center - start on Christmas morning at 330 AM; every home gets a bag of cookies

Glen-Gibson Watershed - none

### Chair Announcements

Bridge committee first meeting 1/4 @ 9 AM- please come if you are interested

Residential use approved for well; commercial was not for Hemp Farm

### State Representative Report - Evan Sorce; Mike Evans' Chief of Staff

Legislative session starting February 3 - March 8

Priorities are expansion of Spire grant (\$5M of bonding authority) - for areas of high need (coastal to valley)

Salem not on the list; neither was Monmouth/Independence

Other areas got power generators for emergency water pumps

Hopefully City will apply for some of these grants

Tourism in OR has put a strain on emergency services; met with recreational community and sheriff's associations; putting together proposal for expansion of search and rescue - for now will be a voluntary fund for those who participate in this type of recreation

Another priority is reorganization of emergency service system; OR emergency management department is under military; we are only 1 of 7 states under this system

We need to pull emergency management system in OR back to OR to ensure prioritization  
Discussion regarding repair of Center Street Bridge; received written commitment from ODOT that they will cover the extra cost

Will start between 2023 and 2025 to get retrofit constructed

Another proposal to take out sidewalk and add a bike lane

Bridge will be retrofitted, but entrance/exit not to be retrofitted

Have a couple of community coffees coming up

Friday, January 17 10:30 - 11:30 at Brew Coffee and Tap House (1320 Edgewater)

January 30 6:00 - 8:00 PM Emergency preparedness forum January 30

Encourage residents to chat with local and state leaders regarding real tax for corporations vs. residents

New Business - None

Adjournment at 9:00 PM