

# 072020 West Salem Neighborhood Association Meeting

Monday, July 20, 2020 7:00 PM

## VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING

**Meeting Room ID: 882 0820 0916**  
**Password: 078694**

Chair—Kevin Chambers (chambers.kevin@outlook) (503)586-8188  
Vice-Chair—Mark Coutis (mark.coutis@gmail.com) (503)991-8431  
Secretary—Tammy Goad (txenia70@gmail.com) (559)909-9941

Attendees: See recorded meeting

### AGENDA

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Introductions**

**Additions to agenda from the body**

**Approval of minutes - 6/15/20 Meeting**

**Chair Announcement - Kevin Chambers - not present**

**Vice Chair Announcement - Mark Coutis - not present**

**Secretary Announcement - Tammy Goad - Meeting chair for 7/20/20**

### New Facebook configuration:

1 - Site is private vs. public. This prevents access to search on the web and post comments without agreeing to rules and validating membership. While anyone can join the Facebook page, members are required to provide information regarding property/residency/business affiliation in W Salem and to agree to the rules. This regulation was discussed/confirmed with the City and approved by the Board. Posts are monitored and those not conforming to the rules are removed.

Anyone who does not wish to establish a Facebook account and join the page/agree to the rules, can sign up for email updates from the City at <http://cityofsalem.us1.list-manage1.com/subscribe?u=9c5337ef0aeb7914e4fe4f6d5c&id=450b7fe44b>

2 -During the upcoming weeks, we will be requesting documentation from members to validate qualification to vote in future meetings. Kevin will be accepting volunteers to help with this process.

Members must be one or more of the following and provide documentation to validate:

Resident (owner or renter)  
Property owner (residence or business)  
Employee in W Salem

### PRESENTATIONS

**Brian Ganfors - Curbside Shoe Drive, Soles4Souls**

Motion to move inclusion committee statement review to top of reports. Motioned by J. Staats and seconded by Sara Fillier.

Majority passes.

### Reports:

- **Ethics Committee - resolution/recommendation - per WSNA bylaws, the recommendation of the committee is final.**

See recommendation and report below.

- **Inclusion Committee presents statement for feedback/vote from body - Jason Staats**

### **Equity Statement**

The WSNA (West Salem Neighborhood Association) is committed to reducing equity gaps, increasing access for all, and creating a safe community for everyone.

Safety and belonging for all West Salem residents is vital. We must be inclusive in conducting business and promoting policies that protect age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion, and other individual identities.

The association commits to integrating equity into the fabric of our association and the delivery of public services in pursuit of equal, fair, and just outcomes for all.

Post on City, WSNA site and on any WSNA documentation. See statement below.

**Motion: Jason Staats**

**Second: Paula Fordham**

**Voted yea by XX members, 1 nay and 1 abstain**

- Salem Police

No reports

- City Councilors

Councilor Lewis will not be attending this evening

- Land Use - Steve Anderson

Only issue outstanding is the 6th street partition - comments due tomorrow by SPM; only WSNA concerns about set back

- Homeless Committee - Fay DeMoyer

No present

- Parks - Micki Varney

No meeting this month for advisory board.

Eagle's view park - draft master plan scheduled for City council vote on 7/27

Some items discussed regarding Phase 2 Covid restrictions as they relate to parks access; all amenities open except splash pads

- Traffic and Infrastructure Transit

Nick provided comment at Cheerlots board meeting on 6/26 per previous WSNA meeting.

Due to pandemic, there will be some changes with biking and walking; we want to work with transit to work with these changes (telecommuting); talked to Pollack on the 29th. Things are in a lull, but he advised that with a major State workforce in the area, there is an opportunity to work on supporting telecommuting for state workers. Also looking at other crossings, but other avenues available to pursue this.

- West Salem Business Association

No representation

- Edgewater - Steven Anderson

Farmer's market Thursday 10 - 11; Councilor Lewis will be there for you to share your ideas; also every Thursday now through September, The Hub is coming in to do free bicycle repair funded by Cheerlots!

Just started drive with stickers that say "I support a West Salem business". Ask for a sticker.

- Glen-Gibson Watershed - EM Easterly

Council now has a Zoom gathering; cutting blackberries at OH; main project is to attempt to identify Japanese knockweed in W Salem - there is a plan to eradicate; let the GG Watershed team know. Next meeting 8/11 @ Salemtowne breezeway

- Bridge Committee - no update

- State Representative

- State Senator

**New Business**

**Old Business**

Bylaws: <http://www.cityofsalem.net/CityDocuments/west-salem-neighborhood-association-bylaws.pdf>

WSNA Email Signup Link: <http://cityofsalem.us1.list-manage1.com/subscribe?u=9c537ef0aeb7914e4fe4f6d5c&id=450b7fe44b>



**Ethics Committee Findings 072020**

Chairman Chambers and Members of the West Salem Neighborhood Association (WSNA),

On June 16, 2020, Irma O. Dowd, City of Salem Neighborhood Services Coordinator, spoke with WSNA Chairman Kevin Chambers in regards to information she had acquired regarding a potential violation of the Salem Revised Code (SRC). The WSNA Bylaws, ARTICLE X.

ETHICS, Section 1 state:

Section 1. All officers and committee members shall abide by Salem Revised Code Chapter 12 as described at:

<http://www.cityofsalem.net/code/salem-revised-code-012-ethics-for-public-officials.pdf>.

For purposes of this Section, the term Public Official, includes officers and committee members of the West Salem Neighborhood Association, and their agents, irrespective of whether the person is compensated for such services.

On June 17th, the City of Salem received a series of emails from a WSNA member voicing concerns about "...very unprofessional comments posted by West Salem Vice Chair, Mark Coutis, on the West Salem Neighborhood Association Facebook page". On June 18th, Chairman Chambers, in accordance with the WSNA Bylaws, ARTICLE X. Section 3, appointed an Ethics Committee "...to investigate the entirety of any and all the comments/interactions...." as potential violations by Mr. Coutis, and to report back to the WSNA Chairman and Membership its findings and recommendations.

The Ethics Committee reached out to the individual whom Chairman Chambers identified as the formal complainant in the matter; that individual acknowledged receipt of the Committee's request but has not provided a statement with the specific details of the ethics complaint against the WSNA Vice Chairman. Therefore, absent a detailed formal email complaint, our

committee's review of complaints focused primarily on the words and condemnations published on the West Salem Neighborhood Association Facebook page and Mr. Coutis' behavior at the June 15<sup>th</sup> monthly WSNA meeting.

The airing of real and deep concerns regarding the words and behavior of Mr. Coutis in his position as WSNA vice-chair were expressed in Facebook postings. There were also the personal accusations and truncated screenshot evidence posted on the WNSA Facebook page against Mr. Coutis by Jacob Townsend, a previous employee of Mr. Coutis. Mr. Townsend, from all evidence we have seen, is not an eligible member of the WSNA. However, he posted on the WSNA Facebook page an inflammatory statement that Mr. Coutis had made on a personal FB page in response to recent BLM protester activities that said "They need to get their asses tied to a tree and whipped!!" This particular statement flamed the fires of discontent that were already burning on the WSNA Facebook page as a result of the comments and Mr. Coutis's gestures at the WSNA monthly meeting. Mr. Coutis's comments and actions did not make others feel welcomed or comfortable in stating their perspectives. A community leader asking someone if they were "that clueless," when the individual spoke up voicing an opposing perspective to a statement Mr. Coutis had made, is offensive. No one should be personally attacked for voicing their opinion; especially when the attacker is an individual in a leadership position.

The individual members of the ethics committee did not come to unanimous consensus in our individual interpretations of the language in the Salem Revised Code Chapter 12. The Ethics Committee is guided by the following obligation: West Salem Neighborhood Association

officers are required to “observe in their official acts the highest standards of morality, and that their conduct in both their official and private affairs should be above reproach.”(SRC, Chapter 12) The question that needs to be answered is whether Mr. Coutis’s actions constituted an ethics violation as defined by SRC. If so, his actions would warrant taking action per Article X in the WSNA Bylaws. We on our committee are not lawyers and should not be acting as such.

Because the comments, complaints, examples of perceived harassment, threats received and perceived by multiple individuals as evidenced from the assemblage of WSNA Facebook postings following the June 15 virtual WSNA Zoom meeting, our committee has determined that this investigation and the interpretation of SRC Chapter 12 are beyond the scope of the Ethics Committee.

We recommend that our WSNA Chairman, Kevin Chambers, draft and submit a letter to the City of Salem requesting that staff, including their legal team, do a substantive and thorough investigation into the potential ethics violations, determine what action, if any, should take place in accordance with Salem revised code and the West Salem Neighborhood Association Bylaws and report back to the WSNA. We also recommend that the conflict resolution organization Neighbor-to-neighbor <http://n2nmediation.org/> be contacted for additional training and conflict resolution for the WSNA body and executive committee.

The West Salem Neighborhood Association 2020 Ethics Committee moves that the WSNA Chairman Kevin Chambers draft and submit a letter to the City of Salem requesting the City, including the legal department, investigate potential ethics violations regarding the language and

behavior of Mark Coutis, Vice Chairman of the West Salem Neighborhood Association. This request invites City officials to determine whether an ethics violation by a public official did occur, and what action should be taken in accordance with Salem revised code and the West Salem Neighborhood Association Bylaws?