

NESCA MEETING MINUTES

April 19, 2022

ZOOM Meeting

1. Welcome, Introductions, Announcements, Approval of Minutes: Marilyn Moritz, Vice Chair

Chair Mike Beringer was unable to attend this evening's meeting. The meeting was opened by Irma Dowd, City of Salem Neighborhood Services Coordinator, in his absence. Marilyn Moritz, Vice Chair ran the meeting. A motion was made and seconded to approve the March 15th meeting minutes as provided by email. The motion carried.

2. Salem Police Officer Report: Sgt. Grant Davis

- Homeless issues
 - Camp Clean-up team created with Public Works and Salem PD staff for unmanaged camps.
 - Gretchen Bennett, City of Salem, is leading the team looking to address livability in Salem.
 - <https://www.cityofsalem.net/Pages/report-concerns-about-homelessness.aspx>
- Community Engagement Section
 - A new unit to interact with the community in non-enforcement contact, started March 7th which includes the former downtown enforcement team, now called the Community Action Unit, and encompasses the entire city. The unit is to assist with community education, safety, and crime prevention. The unit is only in the beginning stages but is already taking actions to help with livability issues in the city.
- Transparency Portal and the Strategic Plan
 - Starting to put up information on the portal.
- Body Cams
 - Currently, testing of the second of the three body cams, is in process. Once all three of the cams have been tested, the next phase will be to determine which one best meets the department's needs.
- Questions for Sgt. Davis:
 - Marilyn Moritz asked if there were any crime information specific to NESCA. Sgt. Davis said that he did not have anything, but said that all stats for various areas of Salem are posted on the Community Crime Map (communitycrimemaps.com) in the Transparency Portal. The information is updated daily.
 - Regarding the recent shooting at 17th and Center, Sgt. Davis said that the Grand Jury has not provided a ruling, so he is unable to comment on the event.
 - Question regarding the loss of a graffiti abatement person, but we were told they were hiring. Was this position filled? Sgt. Davis does not know specifics about the Graffiti Abatement Team. He will check on this and let us know.
 - Sgt. Davis can be reached at: GKDavis@CityofSalem.net

3. City Councilor's Report: Chris Hoy

Chris said there was a very informative joint work session with Marion County Board of Commissioners, the Polk County Board of Commissioners, the Salem-Keizer School District Board of Commissioners, and the Cherriots Transit District Board. Meeting was regarding housing needs, impediments, and things that would help housing, etc. For those interested, the meeting is available on CC Media/YouTube.

- City Manager Position
 - The search for a new City Manager continues. A search firm has been hired and they are out seeking candidates for Council to consider. City Council will be meeting semi-finalists soon. It is currently a confidential process to allow Council to get as many names as possible. The names of those individuals selected as finalists will be made public at that time and public meetings will be held.
- Homeless Camps
 - Clean ups have been held at Clay Street, Salem Center Mall area, on Portland Road, and on Hawthorne. There are still more to do, but that is currently what has been done.
- Budget Committee
 - The first meeting of the Budget Committee will be held tomorrow.

- Climate Action Task Force
 - Chris is also a member of the Climate Action Sub Committee so he will be keeping us updated on this.

3. City Councilor's Report: Virginia Stapleton

- Bond
 - Committee forwarded a package as a unit to Council. There will be a work session on May 16th, hopefully a vote on May 23rd.
 - \$300m, to be phased in over a ten-year period and tax rates will not increase.
 - Roughly half for roads, bridges, sidewalks, etc.
 - Parks development
 - Affordable housing property purchases
 - Two branch libraries
 - New fire stations and equipment
 - City Hall cyber security upgrades
 - Civic Center seismic upgrades
- Climate Action Sub-Committee
 - Meeting on May 5th at 1:30 PM. Virginia is an alternate on that committee and will keep us updated on any information.
- Budget Committee,
 - Chris pointed out that Virginia did not toot her own horn, but she will be the Chair of the Budget Committee. Virginia is excited to be a part of this committee and is looking forward to it.
- Civilian Led Response Team
 - Voted to have Request for Qualifications and Proposals went out. This has been a popular idea within the community. The vote was the next step in the process to get it out and see how the city can help with the process to make it a reality.
- Questions:
 - Marilyn Moritz: Re budget for parks. Is this for purchasing land for new parks or for developing and upgrading existing parks? Per Chris: mostly for the development of parks already owned by the city. Virginia also pointed out that the city parks staff is at a bit of a breaking point, and they do not want to be adding on anything that requires more maintenance. The budget will provide some repairs, upgrades, new play equipment, etc. that will be beneficial but will not require more maintenance by staff.
 - Irma Dowd, City of Salem, provided a link regarding the bond measure that she felt may be of interest to everyone.
 - Check out the bond details here: <https://www.cityofsalem.net/Pages/infrastructure-bond-engagement-steering-committee.aspx>

4. Guest Speaker: Erious Johnson Jr., Marion County Circuit Court Judge

- Judge Johnson introduced himself and provided his background information. He received the appointment to the bench on February 2nd, was sworn in on February 14th (Oregon's birthday), and was on the bench on March 1st. Since that time, he has been going to City Council and neighborhood association meetings to introduce himself and learn more about the community, what issues he needs to be aware of, etc. Originally from New York, he has been in Oregon for 10 years, working with the Department of Justice and the Oregon Legislature. Prior to being appointed to the bench he was in private practice, doing civil rights and discrimination issues. He also worked as a court-appointed criminal defense attorney for the indigent.
- Judge Johnson invited anyone who is interested to attend proceedings in his courtroom, 4B.
- In response to the question of what attracted him to Marion County, he replied that it appealed to him because of the quaintness of the community compared to the craziness of New York. His wife is from Salem and her family has roots here.
 - erious.johnson@ojd.state.or.us

4. Other Guests:

- **Stacey Vieyra-Braendle, Ward 6 Candidate**

- Stacey said she will be doing a canvassing event on Saturday, April 23rd, with Kathleen Harder, meeting at Hoover Park. She will also be helping SEIU working for Chris Hoy. If anyone wants to help volunteer but is not comfortable doing in-person events, the postcard program would be a great way to get involved.

- **Spencer Todd, Marion County District Attorney Candidate**

- Spencer introduced himself and let everyone know that he is running for Marion County District Attorney. His main focus is public safety, homeless issues, and gun safety.
- He grew up in Salem, went to Willamette University Law School, and served as a public defender for eight years.
- His bid for the DA position is the first time in 38 years when there has been more than one name on the ballot for DA. He feels it is important for people to have options when voting.
- Question from Eli Brody: What are your thoughts on the crisis with public defenders?
 - Issues are complex, including money and how many cases should each defender take. The result of a recent study is that public defenders are required to take too many cases. This means they are often not doing a very good job on any of the cases because they cannot put enough time into the cases in front of them. It is not the most rewarding job at times as you cannot pick your own clients and the attorneys may not see eye-to-eye with the clients or may have difficulties in getting along with them. All of this, combined with the slowdown resulting from COVID, means there is currently a crisis of people in jail who have no lawyer. The solve is not easy. There are labor issues in this field just as with others, with courts currently struggling to fill open positions. The DA's office needs to do a better job in determining cases that can be resolved more quickly to move things along and not have such long wait times for trials.
- SpencerTodd4DA.com (website)
- info@SpencerTodd4DA.com (for email)

5. Committee Reports:

a. Land Use

Ian Johnson

- Darrin Brightman, DAS, sent an email with information about the RFQ (Request for Qualifications) process for the portions of the North Campus that are to be sold, which includes the Center Street property, the Dome Building, and the parking lot north of the Dome building. This is the first step in the sale process. The RFQ allows developers to look at the zoning and then put in their bid to describe why they should be allowed to bid. Developers need to show they have enough money, expertise, and access to financing to actually do the project. Once there are an acceptable number of responses, DAS will then narrow down from there, based on the ability of the applicants to proceed with the project based on financials, designs, etc. and then will they move to the proposal stage. The Dome Building property is an historic property, which requires special Historic Design Review when the RFQ and proposal phase goes forward. Remembering the length of time to get information regarding The Jory complex, it may take a couple of years before there is anything new.
- It is hoped they get a number of well-qualified candidates through the RFQ process. The more qualified applicants there are available, the more competitive it is, which usually provides better designs.
- A copy of the RFQ provided by Darrin will be included with distribution of the minutes.
- Ian suggested that NESCA will need to stay engaged with the proceedings as was done with the other areas of North Campus. Darrin is open to working with NESCA and our Nine Points and will continue to share information on what is happening when he has information available.
- Chris Hoy is also available to help with DAS in his capacity as Oregon State Representative if needed. He will be in that position through December.

b. Transportation: (no report) *Julie Redden*

c. Parks *Eli Brody*

- Eli thanked everyone who turned out for the Hawthorne Street clean up project last month.

- Eli sent out a link to the board regarding information from the City of Salem Parks Planning Department about what is going to happen and what has gone on so far with the D Street Park. While the information was informative, he is not exactly sure how our input would be received or what the process will be for us to provide that input.
- Eli will talk to Rob Romanek, Park Planner, to get a better understanding of the plans for the park.
- There are plans to put more trees INSIDE the sidewalk area on the perimeter of the park. There currently are five trees they are monitoring, with the new trees planned to be an offset to any trees that need to be removed.
- 2025/26 will be the beginning of the Master Plan for the D Street Park which means there are limitations as to what can be done at the park and nothing permanent can be added. Eli will be taking things slowly and in a cautious manner, wanting to keep a good relationship with the Parks Department. If anyone has thoughts on what they would like to see at the park, Eli asks they contact him because he would like to know and will keep these ideas for when it is time to begin discussions with the City.
- Ian suggested that some fill or some draining needs to be added to the east end of the park to provide more year-round use. Currently that end of the field floods with heavy rains, so much so that the geese and ducks actually swim there at times.
- After discussions with NESCA Board members, Marilyn Moritz talked to Rob Romanek and Jake Snell about adding an information kiosk to the D Street Park. A location on the corner of 25th and D was approved for the kiosk. Marilyn contacted Julio at Alternative Services for an estimate of the cost. He has said he will get back to her with the information in a couple of weeks at which time Marilyn will proceed with an application for a Salem Parks Foundation grant. The grant process opens May 1.
- Marilyn also mentioned that the benches for Geer Park (from a previous grant) are done, but the Parks Department staff has not had time to put them in. Marilyn continues to maintain contact with Parks to let them know we are still interested in having the benches installed.
- A request from the State Co-ed Softball League was received stating they are extremely interested in playing at the D Street field. Eli wrote them, telling them we would support them and hope to see them using the field, but he has not heard back as to what their intentions are. Ian stated he has information that they are planning to play there, even though they have not yet responded to Eli. Marilyn told Ian to remind those who are organizing the teams that there are two fields available for use.
- Marilyn used supplies from our recent litter patrol and picked up litter from the “rain garden” areas around The Jory. While doing this, she noticed that some of the old trees along Park Avenue are in bad shape, some with huge holes in the base. She wondered if there is any plan from replacing old trees. Ian suggested that Eli talk with the Urban Forester to see what plans, if any, are in place for these aging trees.

d. Hoover School

Teri Lupoli (no report)

e. Watershed

Gary Pullman

- Gary missed the tree committee meeting dealing with which trees can be cut down.
- New trees were planted in the Claggett Creek Watershed
 - 20 trees added to McKay Park
 - 30 trees added at Brown Road Park (city took out a grove of white poplar)
- Still working on Englewood Park improvements. More chips are needed.
- Monthly cleanup on/in Mill Creek.
 - Monthly clean-up is on the first Saturday of each month.

f. North Campus

No additional report

- Evan Sekulick, Neighborly Way/The Jory was unable to attend this evening due to computer issues. He will try to be with us next month. In the meantime, anyone who has any questions or concerns is free to contact him.

6. Other Business:

- Bylaws:
 - Ian said that the main purpose of working with the NESCA Bylaws was to do some clean-up of sentence structure and grammar, for example changing Chairman to Chair.
 - Changes:
 - As discussed and published in the March 16th NESCA Meeting Minutes.
 - Additional correction for ARTICLE VII: EXECUTIVE BOARD, Section 4D. Change the wording from “Any person who is unable or unwilling to state their name and how they meet criteria for inclusion in the General members in Article V (1) shall be asked to leave” is changed to ‘may be’ asked to leave.
 - A motion was made and seconded to approve the NESCA Bylaws as revised and corrected (including stated additional changes to Section 4D). Motion passed.
 - The proposed Bylaw changes will be included as an Agenda item for the next NESCA Meeting (May 17th) at which time the general membership will vote. If approved, they will then be sent to Irma Dowd for publication on the City of Salem website.

Website Information:

- To report homeless camping: <https://form.cityofsalem.net/s3/homeless-camping-complaint>
- To sign up for weekly updates regarding homeless: <https://www.cityofsalem.net/pages/tracking-progress-on-homelessness-efforts.aspx>
- To report graffiti: <https://www.cityofsalem.net/pages/report-graffiti.aspx>

There being no further business, Marilyn Moritz thanked everyone for their attendance. The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 PM. **The next scheduled NESCA meeting will be held via ZOOM on May 17th, beginning at 7:00 PM. The ZOOM meeting link will be provided to those on the NESCA email distribution list prior to the meeting.** The link is also available on the city website.

Submitted by: Teri Lupoli
NESCA Secretary/Treasurer

Attending:

Marilyn Moritz*, Teri Lupoli*, Lynn Cardiff*, Eli Brody*, Gary Pullman*, Ken Gettys*, Ian Johnson, Jim Lupoli, Sgt. Grant Davis Salem PD, Chris Hoy City Councilor, Virginia Stapleton City Councilor, Irma Dowd City of Salem, Stacey Vieyra-Braendle Ward 6 Councilor Candidate, Erious Johnson Jr. Marion County Circuit Court Judge, Spencer Todd Marion County District Attorney Candidate, Leslie Polson

*NESCA Board Members

Additional information received after the meeting regarding backstops at the D Street Park:

“You all know that I live one house away from the park. I made a statement at the meeting last night that I now know was not true. As I walked past the field this morning, there is only ONE backstop, and it is on 25th. When the other one was removed, I have no idea. But it is gone. I am sorry that I misinformed everyone last night. If four teams want to play ball on the same night, maybe the Parks Department has a portable backstop that could be used for the summer.”

~Marilyn Moritz, NESCA Vice Chair~