

**North Lancaster Neighborhood Association Meeting
April 6, 2022 at 6:30 PM
Salem, Oregon & via Zoom**

1. Call to Order / Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 6:31PM, followed by introductions of all present (both in-person attendees and those on the Zoom call).

Board Member	Position	Attendance
Deanna Garcia	Chair	Present
Doug Rogers	Vice-Chair	Present
Pamela Blake	Treasurer	Present
Shirlene Gonzalez	Parks Chair	Present
Dennis Will	Land Use Chair	Present
Carl Engstrom	Member at large	Present
Sandi Drumm	Member at large	Absent without excuse
Denise Currey	Member at large	Present
Kim Currey	Member at large	Present

Attendees: Councilor Chris Hoy; Sergeant Mike Baskett; Judge Erious Johnson; Gretchen Bennett; Jim Scheppeke; Mike Pfenning; Liz Veysey

2. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the September 2021 meeting were ready for review. Kim motioned, Pamela seconded to approve both the September 2021 and the March 2022 meeting minutes as written. The Board voted unanimously to approve.

3. Police Report City - Sergeant Baskett from Salem Police Department

The topic of homelessness will be discussed in more detail with Gretchen Bennett. Salem Police Department (SPD) Community Action Unit will have two new officers dedicated for the unmanaged homeless encampments. This is part of the SPD strategic plan; to formalize a solid partnership with non-profit teams. To ensure the safety of their crews, that laws and ordinances are both followed and enforced when addressing unmanaged camps. Due diligence of informing campers of pending cleanup and having a presence during the cleanup process.

SPD's Downtown Unit continues with community engagement including bike patrols in the downtown core and the West Salem waterfront areas. The Community Action Unit will expand to address similar issues throughout the city and will no longer be limited to just the downtown area. There are some limitations currently, so implementation isn't 100 percent set. Once the team is fully available, they can address any issues that come up throughout the community.

SPD's transparency portal is up and active; however, it is still a work in progress. There are several tabs to view information and data relating to service delivery by the department. Access the [Transparency Portal HERE](#)

Several officers are actively wearing cameras right now. They are testing equipment from three different vendors to determine which will be the best fit for the departments needs. Implementation should begin by the end of summer.

Waterfront issue - Is there more going on there than what is happening with the homeless campers? The team spends quite a bit of time near the waterfront geographically.

How many officers in the community action unit? Increase of 2 solely for unmanaged camps, the unit has 7 or 8 officers and is fairly good-sized unit.

Inquiry about social media complaints from West Salem residents resulting in a denial of the placement of a managed camp. Concerns about city resources/focus on certain communities and not giving the same attention to NE Salem. The managed camp plan was scrapped due to the property not being suitable, as it was in a flood plain.

Additional comment about trailers not being tagged for towing. That is a code enforcement issue, not an SPD issue. The disbursement of the camps is constantly changing, SPD is called out where the crimes are occurring. Tagging and towing is handled by both code and parking enforcement departments.

Sergeant Baskett can be reached for additional questions or follow-up on anything discussed this evening by email: mbaskett@cityofsalem.net

4. Councilor Report: Chris Hoy

Council met recently to fill the ward 8 vacancy; Mickey Varney was appointed. A new City Librarian was hired and interviews will start in the next few weeks for a new City Manager. The West Salem branch library is reopening with expanded hours. Council recently authorized the City Manager to apply for grant funds through Oregon Parks & Recreation Department to fund the first phase of development at Brown Road Park. Council directed staff to develop a new process for speed bumps. Once written & adopted, it will make it easier for neighborhoods to request and have speed bumps installed.

Chris mentioned a bill from the recent legislative session which requires the state to allow the city to utilize unused land for microshelters or temporary camps.

Liz - Asked about Chris's campaign flyer referencing \$750k spent for trash & sanitation.

Created a team (including those 2 additional SPD officers) for a proactive approach for homeless encampments. It also is to create a jobs program for homeless individuals to work on cleaning camps.

Unused land for micro shelters - can i get an example? Only in the city, these are temporary uses like flat ground or parking lots, it does not include buildings. There is an 18-month limit on leases with option to renew.

Mike - When is enough enough? - why keep spending money on the homeless? The homeless people are not from Salem, are not here because of wildfires, not because of the pandemic, why are we catering to this population? Chris responded - these folks have been here. This is information coming from providers who work directly with the population. The funds used have been coming to us for the purpose of sheltering, the source and the decision on how these funds are appropriated come from state or federal levels. They fall under different eligibility guidelines. Gretchen also responded with the number of mental health issues that play a significant role in service delivery and that the main driver of homelessness is number of available units that are affordable.

Pam - Grocery bag fee - where is it going? Stores are saying they don't get it. It does not go to the city. City does not have an ordinance anymore, it was rescinded when the state ordinance went into effect.

Will there be any forums relating to Chris' campaign. There are a few. One will be put on by the Chamber of Commerce on Monday April 11th at the convention center. There are also some town halls with other candidates, more details available on his [campaign website](#). Several local neighborhood associations will be holding forums as well; [NEN](#) on April 12th, [SCAN](#) on April 13th and [Northgate](#) on April 21st. Click on the neighborhood association links for more details.

Doug - Inquiry about play equipment planned for Brown Road Park Detailed information was shared at the March NOLA meeting by Park Planner, Toni Whitler and documented in the meeting minutes.

Carl - question about pooling water during rain storms in the area of the park where they plan to install the play structure. Not sure if there will be grading or irrigation as part of the parks development plan.

5. Introduction - New Circuit Court Judge Judge Erious Johnson, Marion County

Appointed to & took the bench in March and wanted to introduce himself to the population he serves.

Shirlene - What is your stance on truancy? As a judge, he cannot take a stance, he must be impartial in his views.

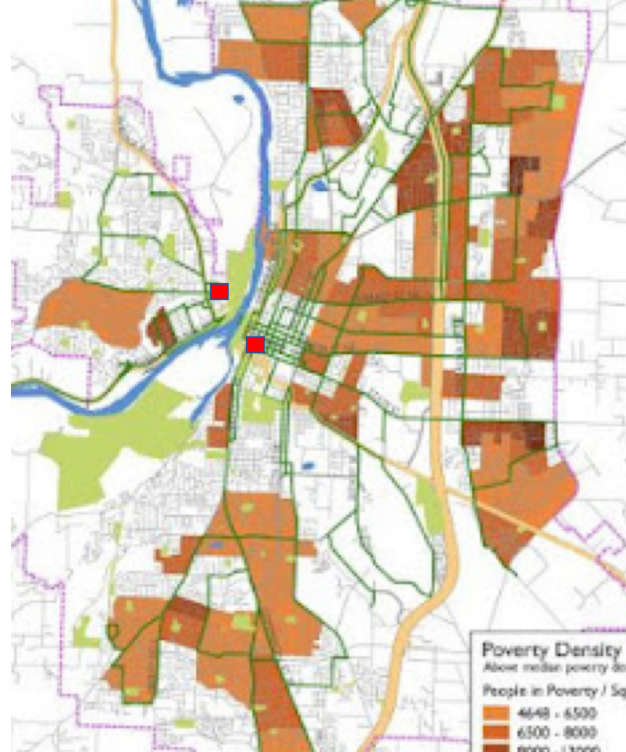
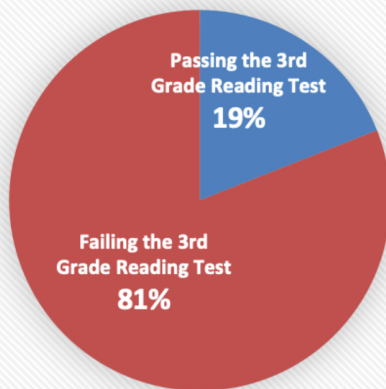
6. Branch Library Resolution in relation to 2022 Bond Measure Jim Scheppke, Vice-President, South Central Area Neighborhood (SCAN)

Jim was the state librarian for 20 years and has since retired, but continues to advocate for libraries. When he heard about the bond measure, he believes those bond funds could be put to use by building two branch libraries in Salem. In the Salem-Keizer school district, only 37% of students can pass 3rd grade reading test. At Scott School (located in NOLA), only 19% can pass this test. Research shows kids who can't pass the test will continue to struggle academically. The kids in NOLA are growing up without books, the main public library is 5 miles from the area. In Portland, there are 14 branch libraries and 55% of students can pass the same test Salem students struggle with. Libraries are a big part of the reason. Jim showed a map graphic which demonstrated the highest poverty areas are furthest away from available libraries which are located in downtown Salem and West Salem (red squares on map). Bend & Beaverton are smaller populations with branch libraries; we are falling behind. A library recently built in Cornelius combined the need for a library with the need for housing. The building housed the library on the first floor and has 45 one-bedroom low-income apartments on the 2nd floor. There is a local committee brainstorming and has considered a public/private partnership to build a similar project in NE Salem. If you support this, please talk to Councilor Hoy.

Doug - Would the Chemeketa Community College (CCC) library be an option to fit this need? Jim said this CCC option is not a good idea for this since the college's goal is to serve their student population.

Scott Elementary School, NE Salem

5.5 miles from a public library



Liz - What happened to the Bookmobiles? Would the existing Boys & Girls Club ((BGC) sites be options for branch locations? The BGC development on Lancaster was originally slated as a branch library. It's not a perfect solution. The distance for a branch location would be preferred over driving 5 or 6 miles. A branch should cater to all age readers and allow for community space which rules out the BGC sites & a mobile library option.

Liz - This bond measure of \$300m on the November ballot is to reinvest over the next 10 years allegedly by replacing retired bonds without increasing our taxes. If the retiring bonds can't cover it all the costs, what programs would cut? We need assurance that cuts will be made & we don't have to make up the difference.

Pam - There is a library located in every school in the district, 65 of them. Why can't a card be issued & books borrowed from the schools? This would be an issue during summer months and when school is not in session.

7. Update on Homelessness - Gretchen Bennett

Gretchen followed up on the inquiry on the previously planned managed camp in West Salem. The original plan was to utilize the paved lot upon discovery the city did not actually own the lot, but the grass area adjacent to it. Many residents from the area expressed concern about the seasonal flooding, a study was conducted and determined the property was indeed in a flood plain. Gretchen wants to know if things don't feel fair in regards to NE being treated differently than South or West Salem. She doesn't want it to seem biased when camps are dealt with or shelters are introduced/suggested. For example, several obstacles played into the process of removing the encampment located next to the DQ. It involved coordination of multiple agencies, companies and individuals, and her team was impacted by a Covid outbreak which further delayed the process. The hope is with the investment of the Community Action Team, there is quicker response to unmanaged camps before they are out of control.

Carl - Vehicles are tagged and removed 72 hours later along roadways in other parts of Marion County, why is this delayed in our area? There was issue with towing, tow yards are full & no where to remove the RV's/vehicles to.

Shirlene - What can be done about panhandling? Ordinances in some areas does not allow it. Perhaps an ordinance like this would help with the enabling. Salem's attorneys believe panhandling is protected speech under the 1st amendment. If an individual is positioned in a way that is impeding traffic or a safety issue, then contact law enforcement.

Question about where are all of the homeless coming from? They aren't all from here, some are foster care age outs, there are rumors of unaccompanied minors and others bussed in from southern regions and other communities. Gretchen stated majority of the homeless are from Salem or have roots in Salem.

Continue to report any problematic or illegal encampments on the city portal. **REPORT HERE**

8. Committee Reports & Board Business

a. Transit - Doug Rogers - No report

b. Traffic - Deanna Garcia - The city sent a notification letter sent to homeowners regarding crosswalk installation at Lancaster at Watson Avenue. Utility work in preparation for the upcoming construction has already begun on the north end of Hollywood. Be prepared for some delay with lane closures and slow down for flaggers. As we near better weather, more projects will begin. Upcoming NE Salem road construction projects can be found on the [Marion County Public Works page](#). Reminder that several main arterial streets in NE will be getting some upgrades or major overhauls starting in 2022. View upcoming projects [HERE](#)

Shirlene requested the Traffic chair write a letter to council regarding safety concerns around the proposed Neighborhood Hub rezone.

c. Land Use - Dennis Will -Swegle School will under go construction this summer which includes expanding their parking lot, 10 ft easements reduced to 5 ft easements along with additions/remodel of the school building.

Brief overview shared about NOLA's testimony at the most recent Planning Commission Meeting. Even the property owner requested the rezone of their probe removed from the Our Salem plan. The commission seemed dismissive on the topic and the public hearing is now closed. The next step is the Our Salem plan will be put before the City Council, who will hold their own public hearing period.

Shirlene requested the Land Use chair write a letter to council regarding safety concerns around the proposed Neighborhood Hub rezone.

d. Parks - Shirlene Gonzalez - As Parks chair, she will write a letter of concern regarding the safety hazards of a Neighborhood Hub being put next to a park. Shirlene asked for the Board's input for potential work at McKay Park to be completed with STIP funds, the board voted and unanimously agreed to include picnic tables & benches as part of that request.

8. Open Forum for any discussion

An email was received from the Women's League of Voters soliciting any questions NOLA may have for candidates running for local positions. Several Board members responded and those questions were shared.

Concerns about fireworks nuisance. Reports have come in from other neighbors, it was suggested to contact the police non-emergency line if it is a persistent issue.

7. Close of Meeting / Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Kim, seconded by Pam, unanimous agreement to close the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 8:21 PM.