



NEN

NORTHEAST NEIGHBORS
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Minutes of Board Meeting, October 11, 2022

Board members present: Lynn Takata, Jenna Otto, Erin Grimm, Jeremy Mills, Ken Simila, Leslie Polson, Cindy Kimball, Jacqueline Schindele (by phone), Lainy Kruger, Delana Beaton

Meeting called to order on Zoom at 6:35 by chair **Lynn Takata**. Approximately twenty-three (23) participated.

Salem City **Councilor Vanessa Nordyke** gave an in-depth presentation about mobile crisis units, and the advantages and strengths they give to communities. She mentioned the savings and added quality of services mobile crisis units have afforded other cities in Oregon. Mobile crisis units, when funded and well-staffed, reduce pressure on police departments, local city and county jails, and hospital emergency rooms. For more information, contact Councilor Nordyke.

ACTION ITEM: **Delana Beaton** moved and **Erin Grimm** seconded a motion to send a letter from the NEN Board to Salem City Council voicing the strong NEN support for the concept of mobile crisis units. This carried unanimously by voice vote.

Cindy Kimball moved to approve minutes for September.

Councilor Virginia Stapleton had emailed to the NEN board an extensive report from City Council before this meeting. She now responded to questions and gave additional information. The text of Councilor Stapleton's written report follows:

Good evening all,

We've had a busy month at Council. Here are a few of the things on our plates.

Airport/URA- Council is looking at changing the boundaries of the Fairview Urban Renewal District so that it would include the airport. We have a couple airlines that are interested in running flights out of Salem. They would be direct flights to Las Vegas, San Francisco and the LA Basin. Right now it looks to be 8

flights a week so not too much of an increase in flights coming in and out. There would be an upfront cost in order to upgrade the airport terminal and security and the long-term employee costs but there would also be an increase in economic activity in the area. Lots to consider and we will do so tonight at Council.

Navigation Center funding – This is another topic on our agenda for tonight’s Council meeting. We have had an increase to the project costs and are needing to move more money so that we can get this project completed and open to the public. This and our micro-shelters are my top priority right now in our response to our unhoused crisis and we are looking for more money from the state to fully fund these projects.

Mobil Crisis Response Unit – At our last meeting we voted unanimously to support the MCRU idea in our area. This idea has been supported by the Council at every vote to date. The question to staff now is how to fund this project. It would cost \$700k a year to run two teams seven days a week. There is also the 988 project that is moving forward from the Federal, State and County level. That project has been in the works for several years and is making good progress. You can read more about it here: [Oregon Health Authority : Behavioral Health Crisis Response System and 988 : Behavioral Health Services : State of Oregon](#)

The Bond – This is where the majority of my work has been over the past month. We have been meeting with groups all over town to promote the Bond which will be on your November ballots. For those who are not aware, the City of Salem is going for a \$300 million dollar bond for critical infrastructure needs; streets and sidewalks, parks, seismic upgrade to the Civic Center, cyber security, fire equipment and two new stations, affordable housing and two branch libraries. You can find more information and a link to the project list here: [Yes for Salem \(voteeyesforsalem.com\)](#)

New City Manager – We officially welcomed the new City Manager at a community meet and greet last week. It was great to see many of you there. I’ve also been meeting with Keith every week since he started, taking him on tours of Ward 1 and getting to know each other better. I’m very excited to see what we can do together for Salem in the coming years.

Homelessness Response and Curfews – I have heard some questions from a few folks about my stance on curfews as it pertains to the micro-shelter location on Center St., and I wanted to take a moment to communicate openly with you. Personally, I feel very uncomfortable when we talk about restricting people's freedoms based on their housing status. When people ask me to change the curfews I hear them asking me to treat the very people we are trying to help as

less than, as people to be feared and therefore controlled. Those ideas go against my fundamental beliefs of dignity and respect for all.

I understand that this makes some people feel uncomfortable. I understand that some of you may feel that this will cause problems in and around the new micro-shelter site. Sadly, we do have folks in our community that are not interested in using the services that the city or our local non-profits are offering. They might not be at a place where they want to receive help or there might be mental or emotional challenges that are preventing them from accessing help at this time. Those are not the people that will be staying at the micro-shelter location. The folks that will be using these services are asking for help and are ready to receive help. This micro-shelter will not solve the current issues in the neighborhood, and I do not believe that it will add to the issues either, because the folks that are creating challenges around town are not the people using this service.

We are all struggling under the weight of this societal issue, and I want to validate the feelings of frustration and anger, of sadness and hopelessness, but after we spend the appropriate amount of time expressing and processing those feelings, I want us to move forward with a clear goal in mind.

My goals for addressing homelessness first focus on the immediate needs of those suffering, these include things like emergency sheltering, food, water, and personal safety. Sadly, we do not have the resources to serve all of our unsheltered residence in this way, at all times. Secondly, we need to focus on setting up resources like our micro-shelter villages, the Navigation Center and a Sobering Center which will be lifelines for those struggling. We also need to work with our partners at the County and State level to gain increased access to mental health services and drug treatment services. Next, would be focusing on renter protections and building more affordable housing across the city. That work begins with our housing needs analysis which is forthcoming. There is an immense amount of work to do on all fronts and I am committed to seeing this through.

Capitol St Bike Lanes – Since before I was on Council I have been working on finding ways to calm traffic on Capitol St. I even attended both Grant and NEN meetings and asked for support, I think that was four years ago now, it's hard to remember. Both NA's agreed that Capitol St is in need of traffic calming measures and Grant NA sent in a letter of support. Since that time I have been working on and off trying to get movement on this idea. A couple months ago now, Council voted to have staff design several ideas for a bike lane on the third, most easterly, lane from Center St to Market (or the block before Market). Staff wanted to gather more data (car count) before coming back to Council and last I

heard they were waiting until school was back in session. I hope to hear back from them soon and will keep you all up to date on the progress.

See you tomorrow night,

Virginia

Councilor Linda Nishioka also commented on major issues before Salem City Council. She also mentioned her support of several points made by Councilor Stapleton. Ms. Nishioka also spoke strongly in support of the municipal bond and Salem's need for the projects it would fund if passed.

Mark Wigg, a candidate for Marion County Commission, presented his platform and commented on issues central to his goals and message.

Lynn Takata and **Jeremy Mills** spoke in support of a wall mural in McRae Park. A wall painting at McRae Park has been approved by Parks and Community Development.

The NEN meeting in November will be the **Annual Meeting** and will include elections of new board members. **Ken Simila** mentioned that the second Tuesday in November is the 8th, election day. So, it was agreed that the November NEN meeting will be the following **Tuesday, November 15th**.

Announcements: Jeremy Mills announced the next road cleanup day.

Lynn Takata announced that the lead program for the December meeting will be the Salem transportation planners.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10. Next meeting will be November 15. **All are welcome!**

ADDENDUM number one: ACTION ITEM: Between October 20th and 26th the NEN board voted by email to support sending a letter of intent to the city for a SPIF grant to create a participatory wall painting in McRae Park. This vote was eleven (11) in favor, zero (0) opposed, and two (2) abstain.

ADDENDUM number two: As requested by the Board, a letter was sent to the mayor, city manager, and members of City Council in support of mobile crisis units. That letter was as follows:

November 8, 2022

Dear Mayor Hoy, City Manager Stahley, and all members of Salem City Council,

This letter is to inform you of a unanimous vote by the board members of Northeast Neighbors (NEN) Neighborhood Association taken during the meeting on October 11, 2022. This vote was in support of the concept of mobile crisis response units being established and funded to serve the Salem area.

Data from Cahoots, a well established mobile crisis program long serving Eugene, Oregon inform us of the high percentage of 911 calls successfully handled by Cahoots. This has dramatically reduced the demands on the police department and has freed the police to focus on more clearly criminal behavior. It has also reduced demands placed upon the hospital emergency room and space and staff there.

We believe that Salem would also benefit greatly from the services of a fully funded and staffed mobile crisis response team. It is our understanding that each mobile crisis response team includes a paramedic or person with medical training, a mental health specialist, and a social worker or outreach worker with navigation experience and knowledge of available programs. We further believe that a mobile crisis team would be most effective if it had available a community sobering center, staffed with trained personnel.

We understand that such a program would be expensive, so it would appear wise and prudent for Salem to seek and accept public funding when made available from county, state, or federal sources. Of course, costs would be offset to an extent by savings to budgets of Salem Police Department, Marion County jail, and Salem Hospital emergency room.

Thank you for your consideration.

Delana Beaton, NEN Secretary