



## NESCA MEETING MINUTES

March 21, 2023

### 1. Welcome, Introductions, Announcements, Approval of Minutes:

NESCA Chair Mike Beringer welcomed those in attendance and opened the meeting at 7 PM. A motion was made and seconded to approve the February 21st meeting minutes as submitted. The motion passed.

**2. Salem Police Officer Report:** No report this evening.

### 3. City Councilors' Report:

#### Linda Nishioka:

- Mayor Hoy's State of the City address will be at the Salem Convention Center tomorrow. (Also available on YouTube)
- Yaquina Hall Open House on April 5.
- National Library Week April 23rd-29<sup>th</sup>
- Navigation Center Open House April 24<sup>th</sup>

#### Virginia Stapleton:

- Updates:
  - Virginia is Chair of the Rules Committee this year. This committee has not had a meeting for years, so it was felt it was time to do so. A lot of things have been happening and it's time to make updates. For example, Virginia said there are no current rules in place for Social Media!
  - Ability to "call up" items: When the Planning Commission goes through its process, it will come to council in an "information" report. At that time, the council can "call it up" which brings it to a public hearing. By doing this, they are taking a process for which there are rules and committees and making it political, by using their muscle to sway the process or get concessions. Council will begin conversations about whether they want to keep that ability or simply let the planning system work in the way it was designed to do. Virginia feels this may be one of the biggest issues they will tackle this year.
  - Bond Steering Committee has been meeting recently. Virginia will update on all of this when more begins to happen. We will be having overlay pavement repairs around town this summer and a lot more planning and things happening behind the scenes on some of the other initiatives. Fire trucks have been purchased and will be here in about 2 years.
    - Question from Marilyn Moritz regarding which streets are slated to be repaired. She sent a request for information to Public Works awhile back and has not heard from them. Her specific question is if Center Street is on the list. Virginia said that the items she is talking about are those covered by the Bond which are legally required to be done rather than through the Capital Improvements Plan which is a whole different funding source. Virginia did say she thinks that the section of Center Street from 12<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> is included in the Bond.
- City Charter.
  - Mayor Hoy wants to update the City Charter as it has not been done for a very long time. Examples of items that will be considered are:

- Having two meetings a month.
- The fact that councilors are not paid a stipend.
- Should the Mayor be a 2-year or 4-year term.
  - They will hire a consultant to review and provide information about needed changes.
- Election Reform
  - To limit the amount of money that can be spent on campaigns for council.
- Any changes will need to go to the voters, earliest in May 2024.

**Linda Nishioka:**

- Linda is on Boards and Commissions and several people have been appointed to various committees. She is also on the Hospital Facility Board (meeting in April) and is also an alternate on the Finance Committee, and on the Legislative Bond Steering and Public Works Operations. Linda feels fortunate to have been able to step into the Finance Committee and Legislative Steering Committee when another councilor was unable to attend.
  - There is a huge need in the budget. It is not known at this time if there might be a levy of some kind or a payroll tax. When the decision is made, it will be sent to the voters in November.

Comments from Ian Johnson: While very much in favor of “housekeeping” and how council looks at land use cases, he would ask that City Council consider very carefully before changing Land Use. The example given was the Costco project where a lot of time and money was spent when trying to change the outcome. With Oregon’s Land Use laws, even with a lot of public involvement, it is a “get to yes” system and builders are usually going to win any challenges. Oregon is a pro-property rights state in the way Land Use laws are set up so that when a property owner has a right to build, it means they have a right to build. Ian also mentioned a part of the City Charter regarding our method of professional governance, favoring our current structure. He suggested Council look to the North to see the ramifications of changing our city governing system from a weak Mayor/strong City Manager form of government.

- Follow-up comments from Virginia:
  - After the Meyers Farm process, most councilors were a bit worn down and do not want to go through that again. There are processes in place to deal with situations like that and the councilors really shouldn’t be involved. The outcome on Meyers Farm was basically good, a few more trees were saved, but it sure beat up the councilors.
- Follow up comments from Linda:
  - Linda wanted to thank Ian for his comments, mentioning that she had a bit of a rough month in February due to situations with short-term rentals. She felt she had received good advice, but has received a backlash indicating that she should have gone with public opinion or with a few loud voices. She said she needed a bit of support and Ian’s comments really helped her.

Comments regarding Salem General Hospital Property:

- NESCA was invited to a special meeting of the North East Neighbors (NEN) neighborhood association regarding the old Salem General Hospital property between 23<sup>rd</sup> and Medical Center Drive. Mike was wondering if either of the councilors were at the meeting. Virginia said she was driving so could only join by voice and since she was not sure where the process was in the system, she decided she probably needed to end her participation. She has since learned that the project is still in very early stages and so Council can discuss it. Mike mentioned the great work that was done in relationship building during the North Campus project with Neighborly Ventures and that with this new project, it seems like there are a lot of unanswered questions and a lot of negative feelings. It didn’t appear the developer and NEN have forged the kind of positive relationship NESCA had with Neighborly Ventures. Mike is wondering what Virginia might be able to share with us about the project. She said that the meeting was the first time she had heard about the project! Even with that, she is a bit excited about it. She believes the property is a great area to develop, but generally excited about any type of housing to help with the crisis we are experiencing. She does think that particular piece of property is a great one for redevelopment because it’s close to schools, parks, and transit. In a meeting with Linda, Virginia, and Community Action, there is a feeling it might be a bit of a long-shot to get the property built due to funding issues.

- Ian commented that in the meeting there was a lot of feelings from attendees that it was a great of “greenspace” and would be a great loss to the NEN and NESCA neighborhoods. He mentioned that so much of the land has been filled and has a lot of rock/gravel, etc. that it really cannot be classified as greenspace. It is “open” space, but not green. It is his opinion that it is the exact type of space needed for housing.
- The project is in very early stages and there will be much to come on this. It did not appear to be well received by NEN as many openly expressed opinions that were against any type of development there. It is hoped that the developer will work with them in the manner of cooperation that NESCA was provided by Neighborly Ventures during the planning of The Jory.

#### 4. Guest Speaker: Kevin Hottmann, City of Salem Traffic Engineer

- This evening’s discussion was for the purpose of addressing the need for safety improvements along D Street NE and Park Avenue NE, specifically crosswalks. With the addition of The Jory complex and the individual homes and all the new sidewalks, there are a many more people walking to and from work, walking for enjoyment, and children going to school, all needing to cross streets without crosswalks. NESCA is asking for at least painted walkways.
- The City does have concerns for pedestrian safety and has a couple of programs for Safer Crossings and Traffic Management that is being worked on. The Safer Crossings program is new and is being developed and giving the city a chance to prioritize. Kevin isn’t currently aware of any specific requests for “safer crossing” actions on D Street. This will give him a chance to understand where crossings are needed. This program helps staff prioritize.

Question from Kevin: Where on D Street does NESCA feel improved crossings are needed?

- There is a need for crosswalks leading to and from the D Street Park at 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, and at around Evergreen (or Icel) where the public pathway through The Jory ends. This area could lead pedestrians to have a false sense of safety due to the ADA cutout that is at the end of the path. All the new sidewalks on D Street have cutouts at all locations that align with residential streets on the north side. The increased population with The Jory and private homes, the opening of Yaquina Hall, and the potential for additional 200 or so apartments on the Salem Health property all lead us to know that there a greater than ever need for safer crossings on D Street.
  - Regarding comments about “paint” only, Kevin said that the City is required to add signage and arrows and that just painting usually doesn’t work as it is not easily seen from a distance. The objective is to make drivers more aware of pedestrian crossings. Rapid flashing beacons have shown a 20% improvement in pedestrian safety and center medians with rapid flashing beacons a 50% improvement.
  - It was pointed out that neither D nor Park Avenue are wide enough streets to consider medians. Also, at one time the only streets that were allowed to have rapid flashing beacons were 4-lane roadways. It was not made clear if that restriction has been eased.
  - Market Street issues were discussed and there are plans for median and rapid-flashing beacon in the Lansing area at Market. This project is still pending due to funding.
  - The Safer Crossing program encompasses the entire city. But Kevin needs to know about the concerns so they can be added to the list for consideration. The streets will then be looked at for priority on the list, but he does want to add D and Park concerns.

The other issue that is of great concern is the amount of speeding on both streets.

- The issue of speeding was discussed with a lot of conversation about the problem on Park Avenue NE between Center and D Streets. With The Jory main entrance directly in line with Knox Ave NE, many people walk from the neighborhood to cross Park Avenue NE to get to the sidewalk on the North Campus area. School buses stop at the corner, both northbound and southbound. There are also problems with cars passing stopped buses. The question was asked if it might be possible to make that an All-Way stop. If drivers knew it was an All-Way stop they might not be as tempted to pass the stopped school buses and it would be a safer environment for pedestrians.
  - Kevin has to follow national standards with regard to stop signs, but they are working on ways he can use them which may not follow standards but would work for assisting with safety (not necessarily speeding).

- Councilor Stapleton mentioned that the issue of streets and speeding really disturbs her a great deal. Streets are built wide and fast, designed for speed, which invites people to speed. She questions if there perhaps is a better way? Virginia said that there's been discussion here about building out curb extensions, but when she drives down D Street, she know those curbs from 23<sup>rd</sup> to Park were just built. If we know that streets are built wide and fast and then we have parks, high-density housing, low-income housing, etc. why weren't curb extensions and crosswalks built originally? Crosswalks should have been given more priority when this project was approved and curb extensions built. The curbs were cut, and they lead pedestrians to where they should go, but it leads them right into the busy wide and fast street with nothing to help them get across. Virginia feels that we do have the fairly inexpensive ability to help, even if it's "only" 5% fewer crossing deaths, which is better than 0% fewer.
  - **Virginia also asks that everyone take the SKAT (Salem Keizer Area Transportation) survey. The questions are in line with all the concerns mentioned here tonight.**
    - <https://bit.ly/mtsap-oo1>

Kevin said that he also dislikes speeding a great deal and that he is a bit frustrated at some of the lack of safety concerns with builders but when there are no "requirements", they usually don't do anything extra as it costs money. He said he even has problems at times getting builders to put in streetlights. He feels that his hands are tied on many things, especially how to deal with issues with builders. Having to deal with issues of safety after projects are built is a problem.

- Possible Code Amendment. Mike proposed Council look at amending codes so that builders must take more responsibility for neighborhood safety concerns when they put in projects. Virginia will talk further with Kevin and the Mayor about changing codes so builders will have to include safer crossings for pedestrians.
- Flashing lights at pedestrian crossings are a plus in helping safety. Kevin said he thinks there are about 12-15 locations around Salem.
- Ken Gettys made a comment about an issue that seems to be happening: not requiring off-street parking in developments, forcing parking on city streets. He asked Kevin if this is, in fact, reality. Kevin said that the state is looking at having no requirements for off-street parking.
- Stacey Vieyra-Braendle made the comment that a lot of this issue seems to be more of an equity issue, especially in our neighborhood.
- Ian mentioned that when the Lansing/NESCA neighborhood plan was being worked on, Eunice Kim was surprised at how many people in our neighborhood do walk. Ian told her that most of it is out of necessity to get to bus transportation, as well as kids walking to school.
- Ian added a comment for Councilor Stapleton that he is aware that since there are not enough police to monitor traffic, but other cities and states use traffic cameras for speeders quite effectively and feels this might be an option to pursue. He mentioned that he used to live in Arizona where it was found to be simple and cost-effective method to help with the problem. Virginia said the legislature is working on this issue and is hoping it will pass.

Kevin ended his evening with us by saying that the safety of people is the top priority and the City wants to be proactive to prevent deaths and injury rather than reactive to those situations.

## 5. Committee Reports:

### a. Land Use

*Ian Johnson*

- Ian has been in contact with Robert Underwood, DAS, regarding the Center Street section of the North Campus. Robert has said there is nothing happening currently. DAS is the "owner" of all the surplus State property and, because of the Governor's Executive Order, all state surplus property must be examined for the possibility of being converted into housing. At this time, however, it is unknown if the zoning for the Center Street property will be changed from commercial to residential to allow for development.
- Robert still doesn't seem interested in coming to a NESCA meeting as he says he doesn't have any real news. Ian is trying to encourage him to join us, if only to meet everyone.

### b. Transportation:

- No Report. Julie Redden has asked to be removed as Chair of this committee as she is still dealing with issues from the accident. There is a need for someone to take responsibility for this committee.

c. Parks

*Eli Brody*

- No Report. Eli was not in attendance for tonight's meeting.

d. Hoover School

*Teri Lupoli*

- Teachers and students are getting ready for Spring Break (next week).
- School Snacks program, through a grant to the Salem Assistance League, will be coming in April.
  - Marilyn mentioned that she's really disappointed that the legislature ended funding of the "no charge" for school lunches. Relying on donations from the public seems the wrong way to help our children.

e. Watershed

*Gary Pullman*

- Gary has mainly been working at Englewood Park, Mill Creek, and Bush Park, mostly in other neighborhoods.

f. North Campus

- Jessica Blakely, Salem Housing Authority, invited NESCA to a preview of Yaquina Hall ahead of the official Open House on 4/5. We will be able to join her on April 4 at 1 PM to take a tour.

**6. Other Business:**

- Salem Parks Foundation: we have been notified it's time to apply for a grant for any of our parks – a bench, picnic tables, or ?.
- Mike mentioned that we do have some wood that has been set aside for us, thanks to Milan Davis, at the Marion County Alternative Programs. There is a large load of hardwood that we might be able to utilize along with the grant request. Mike is considering volunteering his time, working with Julio Gallardo and the kids at the woodworking center. Perhaps there is a way we can collaborate on some of those projects.
- Street cleaning on Saturday, 3/25. Meet at 8:30 AM at the north end of the Park and Ride at the corner of Market and Hawthorne Streets.

There being no further business, Mike thanked everyone for their attendance. The meeting was adjourned at 8:17PM. **The next scheduled NESCA meeting will be held via ZOOM on April 18th 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 will also be available on the city website.

Submitted by: Teri Lupoli  
NESCA Secretary/Treasurer

Attending:

Mike Beringer\*, Marilyn Moritz\*, Teri Lupoli\*, Lynn Cardiff\*, Ken Gettys\*, Stacey Vieyra-Braendle\*, Robert Braendle\*, Gary Pullman\*, Linda Nishioka Salem City Council, Virginia Stapleton Salem City Council, Julie Hoy Salem City Council, Kevin Hottman Salem City Traffic Engineer, Lucy Beringer, Jim Lupoli, Ian Johnson

\*NESCA Board Members

• **Other Website Information:**

- To report homeless camping: <https://form.cityofsalem.net/s3/homeless-camping-complaint>
- To report homeless concerns: <https://www.cityofsalem.net/pages/report-concerns-about-homeslessness.aspx>
- To sign up for weekly updates regarding homeless: <https://www.cityofsalem.net/pages/tracking-progress-on-homeslessness-efforts.aspx>
- To report graffiti: <https://www.cityofsalem.net/pages/report-graffiti.aspx>
  - [503-371-4262 Graffiti Response team](https://www.cityofsalem.net/pages/report-graffiti.aspx)
- The link for the crime statistics: [www.cityofsalem.net/crime-stats](http://www.cityofsalem.net/crime-stats)

