



SESNA Board Meeting, May 23, 2023

Submitted by Bill Smaldone

Attendance: Board members - Shannon Priem (Chair), Bill Smaldone, Arnaud Verstuyf, Seleste Liyanage, Jeff Leach, Dave Tompkins. Neighbors: Melanie Zermer, Toni Kirk, Jennifer Jopp, Burt Eikelberry, Jim Scheppke (SCAN), Jeremy Payne, Sheila Murphy; City councilor Linda Nishioka; city staff/engineer reps Scott Munger, Jamie VanAgtsmael, Trevor Smith, Wil Kuenzi; Sgt. Steve Galvin.

7:00 – Introductions; Minutes of April 25, 2023: Approved unanimously. The Board also unanimously approved the reimbursement of Shannon Priem for covering recent web site and Zoom renewal costs, about \$50 and \$150 respectively.

Guests:

Sgt. Steve Galvin (Salem Police): No being news to report. The neighborhood is quiet. As the summer draws near and people stay out late, they should use common sense caution.

Will Kuenzi (City Engineering Project Manager)

McGilchrist Street project. The Street is a major arteriole and is a mile long. It is generally grim at the moment with no sidewalks or bike lanes. It is too narrow to handle the volume of truck and industrial traffic. There are many accidents and runoff/flooding is a problem. The city has been working on the planning for this street for many years. Funding was the problem and we now have secured a federal grant and local money to buy right of way and do the work.

About 75% of the street will get a type of boulevard treatment with protected sidewalks, bike lanes and planter strip. Culverts will be replaced with fish friendly facilities. There will be measures for storm water mitigation. Five new traffic signals will be included as well turn lanes. The RR crossing near 16th will be improved. Cherriots is also considering putting in a bus stop by the Social Security Office depending on funding.

The development community did not wish to invest in this area due to its poor condition. This major improvement may change that situation. It should also slow the traffic down and increase safety.

Phase I (2023-24)

Seeking bids with construction beginning

Phase 2 (2025)

Completion of improvements from 22nd-25th

Phase 3 (2026-27)

Completion of the street from 12th to 22nd

There was a spirited discussion of why production costs have risen from \$28 million to \$50 million in just a few years. Some people suggested reengineering the project to reduce costs. There were a number of issues. One problem is that if you reduce the number of safety improvements, e.g., having bike lanes on one side only rather than two, you would reduce our score for federal funding and we'd lose the grant.

Arnaud Verstuyf (Airport Update)

Increase of new complaints in April

Arnaud provided an overview of the schedule of the planned return of Commercial passenger flight. Commercial flights forecast to grow 11.2% per years. Such growth would require move investments in the terminal that might close \$10-20 million dollars.

The FAA will no longer fund upgrades to the secondary runway. Closing it would save money and provide more land for development.

If you keep it, you increase capacity, helps operations for small planes in windy conditions, etc.

Linda Nishioka (City Councilor and member of Airport Advisory Committee)

Salem's Revenue Problem: The City will begin to soon run big deficits because costs of general fund services are outpacing the ability of the Property Tax to keep pace. The city is considering various taxes and fees. There is no more that can be cut after 15 years of cutting and we need more revenue to maintain our bond rating. Our ability to raise property taxes is limited by Measures 45 and 50 from the early 1990s. Compression is becoming a major issue.

One new tax being considered is a payroll tax (\$25 million) on all people who work in the city (including 69,000 people who don't live in Salem but work here). This includes self-employed people. Another tax being discussed is an operations fee (\$6 million), which would be used to preserve bond rating.

Without these taxes many key services would be cut or closed including the library, homeless services, and much more. The increased payroll tax and operations fee would cover the city's basic needs.

These proposals could be passed by the Council or a vote of the people. If it was supported by the Council, there would be a vote of the people after five years.

Commercial Airport Service: Linda also talked about how the city will spend \$650,000-800,000 dollars for personnel to work at the airport for the first five years of operation.

Housing in Salem: Councilor Nishioka would like to educate people better about city subsidy programs promoting housing.

Fire Protection: The City is planning to do a public campaign about how to better protect your home from fire.

Neighborhood Concerns.

- The wooden sidewalk along the Mill Race is rotting and getting more dangerous.
- There is a homeless man defecating in the mini-park on Ferry Street.
- The curbs where parking should not be allowed need to be painted (e.g., the corner of 19th and Mill

Due to the length of the meeting, we have deferred the Old/New Business to an on line discussion.

9:00 meeting adjourned.