

MNA Board Meeting 8/9/2023

Minutes

Meeting called to order at 6:34pm

Chair Pamela Schmidling presiding

Meeting at Morningside Park

Board members present: Pamela Schmidling, Alan Meyer, Muriel Meyer, Bennie Yows, Geoffrey James, Jenny Hiatt, Mark Olson, Nathan Soltz; Sue Reid, Janet Bubl and Liz Backer are excused

Quorum present

Approval of minutes; June minutes – Alan Meyer asks that we confirm/correct those board members who were reelected based on when terms expire. **July minutes approved unanimously.**

City Councilor report

- Trevor Phillips: Council discussion on land use pushed out to end of August; tracking signature gathering drive on payroll tax, terrified of what happens if we don't help find ways to address revenue shortfall; reports that Mayor Hoy spoke about his trip to New York, part of a leadership group of mayors that met up in New York; reports that half-triathlon committed to Salem for another 5 years; Salem and Keizer councilors and mayors were at the half-triathlon
- Councilor Linda Nishioka present tonight, Councilor Nishioka only has about six houses in the Morningside Neighborhood, we are grateful that she's joining us again
- Alan asks if Salem Electric pays Contribution in Lieu of Taxes (CILT) to city, Councilors say they don't know, but they will get an answer; Councilor Phillips says he does support a CILT, there is about \$2 billion in untaxed state property in Salem, a loss of about \$6-7 million annually in property tax revenue; police are just doing 911, major crimes and bare bones patrol, similar with fire response; did raise some new revenue with operations fee, but not enough to be sustainable – as Mayor Hoy says, if the payroll tax is not successful, that doesn't change the need; Councilor Phillips says there would just be cuts that will be dangerous
- Councilor Nishioka: very concerned, but still possibility tax will pass, have heard folks who don't love it, but understand need and will vote for it, she is still hopeful; other concern with revenue situation is \$300 million infrastructure bond and if the city's budget doesn't look good, that will affect our bonding capability, currently at the second-best rating; grateful for Josh and finance team at the city; with funding, Salem Housing Authority can purchase Orchard Park in NE, 224 units for individuals and families, permanent supportive housing for 60 years; we're going to be working with UO Sustainable Cities Year Program, graduate students who will help with various areas to support the city
- Councilor Phillips: councilors also serve on Urban Renewal Districts and as Housing Commissioners, 11-14 housing projects, about 1100 units; also concerned if we get downgraded on credit, things will cost significantly more
- Bennie says he's concerned that the payroll tax affects working people the most, but wealthy retired property-owners don't have to pay the tax; Councilor Phillips said they looked at many options, had to especially consider staff capacity, Eugene system much more complicated, more expensive to implement and Salem doesn't have capacity; Councilor Nishioka says she

understands and has heard that question before, why employee tax was brought up is there are 70,000 people who work in the city but don't provide anything in taxes to the city; this happens in Eugene too with UO, since city doesn't get property tax from UO, they tax the employees who go to Eugene to work there; Councilor Nishioka appreciates the concern, but if the employee payroll tax fails, they're going to have to decide what's going to be cut and what other mechanisms there might be to raise the necessary revenue, but there are a lot of reasons why the employee payroll tax seemed to be the best choice; Councilor Phillips adds that if you are making minimum wage, you do not have to pay the tax, it was really the only option to raise revenue; he would have preferred to have a more equitable tax, have higher income bar, but doesn't believe there were the votes on council to approve a different system; he adds that this is complicated, really have to recognize the 30-year issue with property tax due to Measure 5, even Governor has recognized the problem; just trying to find some path forward that is less terrible than the alternative; when funding runs out next summer, there will be 300-400 people who will be put back on the streets, which is just one example of the problem; all the progress we have made will be undone and there will be new shortfalls too; if services seem sparse, it's because there aren't the funds to have better services; still have same city staff levels as in 2007, but population has grown over 30,000 since then

- Alan Meyer asks if petition has enough signatures, Trevor says the news has reported they have about 10,000 signatures, which would be enough, but unsure yet, especially since only registered voters in the Salem city limits are valid, though only need about 4000 signatures; Councilor Nishioka says many of the signature-gatherers were paid and weren't asking the questions they needed to ask to ensure that the signature would be valid; it will cost the city \$220,000 for putting this on the ballot; it's not a perfect tax, but it's better than the alternative of it failing

Committee reports:

Traffic – Alan Meyer – nothing to report

Land Use – Geoffrey James – no new activity, MNA did appeal a property line adjustment of Meyer Farm, city staff refused to take appeal because they said it was a minor administrative case, but said we could appeal to LUBA, today Friends of Meyer Farm appealed to LUBA and attorney says have strong case

- Guest (Alex B.): Before remarks from the guest, the Councilors say it is complicated with land use appeals whether they can be present for conversations, but since there's no application, they are confident based on city attorney guidance that they are good to remain
- Concern from Alex that new development in neighborhood is going to cut off the view to the east, heard that Candalaria has a view easement
- Geoff says MNA does not have anything like that, but there are covenants and restrictions on certain private properties, says it may be premature to discuss this and if there is an application, MNA will get the application as will the neighbors
- The location is the Bluff property, which has been mentioned before

Parks – Muriel Meyer – good news: Fairview Park, found trail wasn't really being maintained, found a lot of tires and dumped items all over the park, sent email to the city asking them to clean it up, city staff said they would clean it up and found a way to keep the park clean and maintained; had 25 people report that they are not happy with the bark trail in Morningside Park, think it's ugly and don't like the

bark surface; report from Matt (appended to last month's minutes) explain why the trail is the way it is; staff says there is a possibility in the future that it could go into a capital improvement fund, but Muriel does think in general people are happy with it; Jenny said the one complaint she heard was safety/wheel chair access, she referred them to Matt's report, the issues with roots and maintenance of the trail; in any case, it's here to stay, sees it as a pacifier and will last us well until/unless there's money for a hard surface trail; Muriel notes that there is another hard surface trail in the park already

- Geoff asks Rick Hartwig (guest), with the Salem Parks Board, if he could come back in October to give a presentation, Rick says that the board/staff have put together a presentation that he has done with other Neighborhood Associations; if he can come back in October, they will put together a new one for our Association; Alan Meyer asks about the "90 Parks in 90 Days" initiative – Mayor to view all the parks – and the Mayor is; Rick says we're becoming a big city, need to keep up with livability, and no better way to do that than through parks; Rick is available to take any concerns to the Parks Board and will bring them up; even though Parks Department is horribly understaffed, they do a great job with what they have

CERT: Pamela – heard nothing from new CERT staff; Trevor asks if she has specific questions, Pamela says just wants to know when they're going to meet, supposed to meet every month but hasn't even heard from him

Liquor License – none

Transit – nothing, Bob Krebs not present

Hours: Muriel Meyer – 20; Jenny Hiatt – 10; Nathan Soltz – 4; Pamela Schmidling – 8

Communications – Jenny Hiatt: have Instagram account now, in the process of getting Facebook and Instagram linked, challenging since Facebook page is a business account; thanks to Trevor for sharing meeting, which expands audience; Jenny went to two National Night Out parties to advertise MNA; Pamela says for future reference, Angie in Police Department will share who all was having an NNO party; Zoom account: talked to Irma, \$149 for Zoom for a year; **Alan Meyer moves that we purchase Zoom account for a year, Geoffrey James seconds; motion passes unanimously.** Jenny would like to get someone to go to Grant NA meetings on Thursdays to see how they do the hybrid Zoom meetings; need content for September newsletter, Alan suggests about the new facility going in by the apartments in the Grove, first business in that area, might be good to mention; Salem Reporter contacted Pamela, they are looking at doing some kind of communication with neighborhoods if we want, will do the first one in September; sent it to Jenny; it is a big change as they don't usually report on neighborhood associations; Irma emailed that the MNA's Gmail account is ready

Announcements:

Alan Meyer – did put one of the new signs at the entrance to Morningside Park; Alan says recognition for outstanding citizens is coming up, Alan would like to nominate Pamela, Pamela says MNA already nominated Jenny, Liz is working on nomination letter

Geoffrey James – thanking councilors for all their volunteer work, Geoff watches all the meetings; Jenny asks about if we can do anything to help councilors get paid; Trevor says would take a ballot measure and a charter change; councilors work dozens of hours per week unpaid; MNA members expressed their

support for such a change and recognize the challenges of expecting these positions to be volunteer, especially how it affects who is able to serve

Adjourned at 7:35pm

Respectfully submitted,

Nathan Soltz

Board Secretary, Morningside Neighborhood Association

APPROVED