

SESNA Board Meeting minutes, February 27, 2024 -- approved

Attendees: Chair Shannon Priem, Bill Smaldone, Jeff Leach, Seleste Liyanage, David Thompson, Dan Jursnick, Linda Nishioka, Sgt. Steve Galvin, Toni Kirk, Matt Engle, Andrew Hull (representing Tom Andersen), Elizabeth Thorley (City of Salem), Brian Banta (City of Salem), Dave MacMillan, Melanie Zermer.

6:45 - Social Time; 7:00 - Introductions
Approval of January 2024 minutes; unanimous.

Police Update: Sgt. Steve Galvin

The City is engaged with a community violence response initiative. There will be more community meetings to hear from neighbors around the city. The city has also been awarded federal funds for Vision Zero to better manage traffic safety in Salem (e.g., it is already provided a new kind of speed reader board that has more utility than the old ones).

Some neighbors are very concerned about speed and lack of stop signs on 19th and Mill. We will invite people from the Traffic Division to talk with us about mitigation.

The Police Department will soon hire some new officers (4-6). Six other positions were lost in the current budget crunch.

Pedestrian Safety Improved Crossings: Elizabeth Thorley and Brian Banta (City of Salem)

New Crosswalk at State and 21st (flashing light and striping, no island.)

New ADA-compliant curb ramps

Total cost of about \$500,000 for this project. Two others, not on State Street, will cost an additional \$900,000.

These improvements were recommended by the 2017 State Street study.

Ward 2 City Councilor: Linda Nishioka

Report on the Revenue Task Force. The City will be informing the RTF about how much it would take to go back to the pre-2008 level of service. The current budget deficit has resulted in serious cuts to personnel. In 2000, there for 5 city workers per 1,000 residents and now we are down to 4 workers per thousand. Overall services have been declining steadily even though more services are demanded, such as to address homelessness (which was not a part of the budget 25 years ago).

Councilor Nishioka noted the coming Block 50 project downtown and talked about the issue of how the city balances tax needs with subsidies for affordable housing. She also brought up the need for “workforce housing,” a category that needs more attention.

The City has applied for a grant to redevelop Front Street along the railroad tracks.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONCERNS:

Toni Kirk: Zoning issues related to Mill Creek restoration, Waller Dam, the Mill Race. Toni says that the City of Salem is sending grant application to NOA.

We will invite the City official (Jennifer Mingola) in charge of managing the riparian issues upstream by the prison to come to a SESNA meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Wesleyan Church Update: David Thompson. The food pantry is appealing for contributions of various kinds.

Richmond Park Playground Equipment is here!

CERT (next steps): on hold.

NEW BUSINESS

Letter of Support for Community First Solutions mental health facility – discussed; will invite developers to meeting.

Board voted to start future meetings at 6:30 p.m.

Committee Updates: Land Use, Beautification, Mill Creek Restoration (See neighborhood concerns)

Next Mtg. March 26 at 6:30 p.m. NOTE NEW TIME.

Adjourn