

**Highland Neighborhood Association
Annual Meeting Minutes
September 12, 2019**

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Geoff Darling at 7:00 p.m. with a quorum of Board of Directors present. Introductions were made by all and there were 12 neighbors in attendance.

Meeting Minutes Approval – Approved of June 2019 minutes by acclimation with no changes.

Police Officer Report – Officer Hodges was present and stated that the POP (Problem Oriented Police) Team is made up of 2 officers and one Sargent for long term solutions to neighborhood issues and that they have been very successful. Anytime he receives a call he forwards the information to the POP team and if they feel it is something that they can help with then they proceed to take actions. They deal with squatters, problem properties, transient camps and look for long-term solutions. The POP team can gain access to who owns a property, can get a TLC (Trespass Letter of Consent) from owners so that will enable them to take enforcement action without having to contact owners twenty-four hours a day. Officer Hodges stated never hesitate to call in a neighborhood issue as this helps the city determine if additional resources need to be allocated to a specific area of town.

As to the problem house that was a Hazardous Material scenario, he stated there is no immediate danger to the residents in the area.

As for issues with homeless people being at or on the railroad tracks, if they are on the easement, the railroad is a 24-7 business and they aggressively pursue trespass charges. Call those in as they are easy to enforce and are considered a high-level trespass situation.

A board member asked if crime is up in our area and he stated that according to the crime statistics and crime map that it is average for this time of year and there is no need for alarm.

City Councilor Comments – Councilors Cara Kaser and Matt Ausec–. Councilor Ausec was not in attendance however Councilor Kaser was. Councilor Kaser advised of all the happenings with the city council over the past several months. She stated that recently the city has filled two Graffiti Abatement positions and complaints are getting quicker responses.

Councilor Kaser also wanted to clear up a budget clarification issue about an article that was published in the paper recently that stated the new police facility was over budget. The bond was approved by voters and the city sold the bond and made about \$5 million on the interest which this money was then put into the police facility budget. As the facility has been being built construction costs have gone up. The cost of steel is more spendy, the construction industry is booming, and contractors are picking and choosing which projects they will work on. Some things have been cut from the budget such as using a lower quality of carpets and other minor costs.

Revenue to Fund Essential Services – the council discussed and considered the following types of revenue:

1) Employee paid payroll tax – based on a percent of total wages paid, an employee-paid payroll tax would be paid by all employees in Salem’s private and public sectors. All members of the community, including those who commute to Salem for work, enjoy the benefit of services provided by the City. Residents share in some of the cost to provide services with property taxes; the more than 60,000 commuters who work in Salem do not. By including commuters, the cost of providing service would be shared by everyone who works in Salem. As our economy grows and more jobs are available in Salem, revenue from the source will also grow. On August 12th, the Salem City Council held a public hearing to consider the payroll tax and referred this option, to fund public safety, to the voters for the May 2020 ballot.

2) Operating fee proposal – A City operating fee is a separate fee to support City Services. In Oregon, 50 cities use an operating fee to help pay for city services. The operating fee could be based on the type of use (a single-family home could pay a different rate from an apartment building, for example). The operating fee is not based on the property value. The fee could average from \$6.40 per month to \$38.56 per month. On September 23, 2019, the council will be considering the operating fee.

Sidewalk Behavior Ordinance – City Council will be addressing the impacts of behaviors in the public right-of-way citywide, including sidewalks and parking strips, by restricting lying on the sidewalk throughout Salem between the hours of 7 a.m. and 9 p.m., when parks, service providers dayrooms, and other spaces and resources are available. The new rule aims to ensure all of Salem remains welcoming to all visitors by keeping sidewalks and public spaces clean and provides another avenue to contact those in need and help direct them to the appropriate shelters or service. This ordinance will apply citywide and not just downtown. It would restrict erecting structures such as tents or tarps in the right of way all day and all night. This ordinance would also allow for medical emergencies, seating for persons with physical disabilities, strollers, sidewalk cafes, attending a parade or other special event, sitting in a chair or bench, waiting for the bus, or other City-permitted activity.

What are the restrictions: 1) No sleeping or lying on the sidewalk during the day, from the hours of 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. (2) Erecting “campsites” on the sidewalk all day or all night (3) Leaving personal property unattended on the sidewalk all day or night for more than 24 hours.

There will be three forums on this, one has already passed and the next one will be on September 13th and the third one does not yet have a scheduled date. This ordinance is not targeting people’s status but their behavior. The city now has an agreement with ODOT and ODOT will now be more active with homeless issues, camps, etc.

Oregon School for the Deaf – Sharla Jones – Sharla Jones is the current Director at the Oregon School for the Deaf and was invited to talk with the neighbors about what is happening at the facility as well as some concerns about the Halloween Factory. She gave a brief history of the school and stated that because they are a state funded school, any police issues they might have are handled by Oregon State Police. The students all range from the age of kindergarten to 21 and come from all over the State of Oregon. They currently house 125 students and have 19 teachers. The students live on site from Sunday through Thursday and then go home on Friday through the weekend.

One of our board members that lives closest to the school was also representing several other neighbors that were unable to attend. There is a concern regarding the amount of noise and traffic after the hours of 10 p.m. and it was asked if they would be willing to change their hours of operation to close at 10 p.m. rather than at 11 p.m. In the past there had also been issues with garbage being thrown about all over the area and those issues were resolved several years ago. She stated that the Nightmare Factory is run by the students and that she would talk to the committee and let us know.

Currently there is a lot of construction happening on the grounds such as new roofs on several buildings as well as the addition of a new updated locker room.

Neighbor Concerns and Announcements – Issues not on agenda or previously discussed –

There are two derelict properties within Highland: one at 2250 4th St, and the other at 1922 Commercial St.

The City has received a Land Use Request from Harneck Dohte for the address at 2710 Broadway St. N.E. The request is to establish a convenience store and auto parts store in the vacant building and develop a parking area. Although the time passed for Highland Neighborhood to submit a response, Mary Simmons did respond and cited that it would be a negligent and irresponsible proposition to establish this store in a school zone at the end of a residential cul-de-sac. She also stated that there would be problems with additional pedestrian traffic, there are already two convenience stores located within one block of the proposed area but that also police are called repeatedly for the area and she as a resident does not want to have these problems.

The City of Salem has recently taken over the Salem Parks Improvement Fund Grant Program and the intent is to provide an opportunity for Salem Neighborhood Associations to partner with the City to help make local park improvements. The NA identifies a project and then submits a proposal to the committee. First a submittal of a letter of intent needs to be sent and the second part is a formal application. Neighbors are encouraged to give suggestions to the HNA and then in turn it will be discussed at an upcoming meeting, the deadline to file the intent is October 31, 2019 and to submit a formal application no later than January 31, 2020. For more information, contact Jennifer Kellar at 503-588-6336 or 503-871-5881 or email jkellar@cityofsalem.net.

The 2020 Census is currently looking for census takers and for more information, go to 2020census.gov.

Debrief of National Night Out 2019 – The planning of the National Night Out had a late start and next year we will be starting the planning process a lot earlier. We would like to improve on the attendance and get the word out sooner. It was estimated there was an attendance of 130. We had great support from the church and the community. Mary Harp was able to successfully get Mayor Chuck Bennett, the Chief of Police to attend. They brought with them the new SWAT vehicle called “The Bear”. The kids enjoyed NNO and there were lots of games and activities, but we would like to see more next year. It was also suggested that maybe we could partner up with another group doing NNO for 2020. It was also stated that board members need to be more involved next year and on an ongoing basis to get out and encourage more people to attend our monthly meetings.

We did receive cash donations from Capitol Chevrolet for \$ 200.00 and Benjamin Clapa for \$100.00. These donations will be matched by the City of Salem.

The City of Salem presented the board with a certificate for their outstanding contribution to NNO 2019.

Reimbursement of Expenses – Mary Harp and Geoff Darling both submitted expense reports for reimbursement. A motion was made as follows:

“Motion made that the Highland Neighborhood Association Board accept the receipts of \$ 132.85 for Mary Harp and \$ 52.75 for Geoff Darling be reimbursed from the NA fund.” Rick Kokel seconded it and motion was approved and carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m. and minutes were written by Mary Harp.

Next Neighborhood Association Meeting: October 10, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.