

**Morningside Neighborhood Association
November 13, 2019 Board Meeting
MINUTES**

Call to Order – 6:32 P.M. by Chair Pamela Schmidling

Introductions – All present introduced themselves; an attendance “sign-in” sheet was passed around; 17 people were present, including 10 MNA Board members (enough for a quorum.)

Approval of Minutes – October 9 meeting minutes were approved with corrections, including: the addition of memo to Pamela from Richard Reed regarding discussion about what to have on next meeting’s agenda; Geoffrey James’ regarding Land Use report on 125 unit housing development off Reed Road at Battle Creek not yet approved – but actually “in process”; Correction offered by Muriel Meyer on one part referring to a street location or address – should be “Commercial.”

Police Report – SPD Officer Zach Juhasz – Began with seasonal warning about not starting and “warming-up” unattended car – ripe for auto theft; also recommended we use outside lighting around our residences to discourage burglary, etc. Officer J. reported that SPD Chief Moore announced his retirement – will be staying on to help with recruiting of his replacement. Officer J. asked for any questions of concerns: Not other than Pamela S. with mention of late night activity at Clark Park. He closed his report with mention of social media sites such as: Crimereports.com which provides map showing locations of crimes occurring during the month (one month delay); Alan M. mentioned the Ring doorbell camera, which is helping to identify suspicious persons and activities at residences and share via social media such as Next-door Morningside. He mentioned recent discussions about the increased number of people seen checking car doors (likely to gain entry and steal valuables.)

Code Compliance Officer Report – Officer ill and unable to attend – will report at next meeting.

City Council Report – City Councilor Tom Andersen – Gave a brief report – needing to also attend SESNA’s meeting this evening. He wanted to talk about two major issues:

- 1) Downtown Homelessness - “Sit & Lie” ordinance – Councilor Andersen said he voted against the original proposal as he is opposed to the concept of “status crime.” He added that he has not yet decide on the newer version – recognizing mixed concerns for (security of) local citizens and businesses to feel secure; and compassion for homeless citizens. He said he needs to be convinced that the new ordinance will encourage new and progressive ways to address the problem including such things as providing secure storage for their belongings. He mentioned there is a Downtown Homelessness Task Force working on the issue. He said that City needs to provide more low cost housing – citing 170 new units in existence or on way to completion – all in face of a massive homelessness problem.

2) Revenue – Two things happening –

- a.) Council passed a new employee-based payroll tax (which will go before voters for approval before enactment.) The tax would be about 0.37 percent of the employee’s earnings, and is aimed to collect some city revenue from the many that work in Salem – but do not live in the city (e.g. employees of State and other agencies which by law do not pay property taxes.) Councilor Andersen said that the revenue collected will be dedicated to Public Safety (police, fire, etc.)
- b.) Operating Fee – to be collected with utility billings – an \$8 per month fee for single family residences and \$38.50 per month for commercial businesses. He said there was some deliberation regarding the proportion; but this is closely proportional to the spread for Street Light fees.

Special Presentation

City Manager, Steve Powers – along with his new assistant Robert Barron were present on invitation from MNA to discuss communications and action lapses by some City departments which have frustrated MNA in recent years.

Mr. Powers expressed praise and appreciation for the work of Councilors Andersen and Nanke. He said that he will provide to Chair Pamela S. a copy of a City report on topics about which MNA expressed its concern.

Janet Bubl opened the discussion with Mr. Powers with her specific concern about low or no response from several departments – saying that communications and service (from City) have deteriorated over her past 30 years of her experience with MNA – this for both MNA and for personal interaction with City (cited unacceptable requirements of homeowners to wait for necessary City approvals of certain home improvements – such as wood stove installation.) Mr. Powers expressed understanding of the problem, and said that if we are frustrated by inaction or service shortfalls by City departments, we should call his office or the Mayor’s office, and they can provide more immediate action on all issues except policy (which requires more-lengthy process.)

Geoffrey James – expressed his concern that City was ignoring MNA’s Neighborhood plan (which it officially adopted) – citing shortfalls in action plans for the intersection of Kuebler Blvd and 27th Street – ignoring MNA call for pedestrian bridge to provide connectivity between neighborhoods, and round-about to move traffic and reduce vehicle carbon emissions (“total lack of interest from Public Works as indicated by lack of response explaining why our ideas won’t work . . .”) He cited other Cities he has worked with that do respond to neighborhoods’ input, and expressed concern that City of Salem’s lag in communications is “dragging us down” (assuming both as organization and citizen.) Mr. Powers encouraged participation in the current “Our Salem” program now in process. Geoffrey J. said that he is involved in it – but that the program meetings needs to be more than just a “sticker exercise” and needs to include other NA’s as well.

City Manager (continued)

Muriel Meyer – expressed frustration with City’s delay or lack of action on park improvement projects which were funded by grant application which she secured on behalf of MNA, and has struggled for information from City on status. She cited two of the applications:

- 1) Morningside Park bench for multi-use play court – grant expired with no action (extended by grant source – but still no action or communication of project status from city.)
- 2) Clark Creek Park – grants secured for play court and playground area hazard abatement (boulder removal.) Grant was secured in 2018 will expire in April 2020 – yet nothing has happened.

Pamela S. – who lives next door to the park – added “It is looking like they (City) don’t care. Also, she said she was told she cannot talk to City employees about the issue; City is letting neighborhoods down!

Discussion progressed to Fall leaf removal issues – City not enforcing ordinance forbidding residents from putting leaves in the streets for City to clean up. Also – regarding the annual leaf haul - is now more difficult for citizens to haul bagged leaves to collection site at Brown Island instead of multiple sites around city as in past. Mr. Powers said that enforcement of the leaf ordinance is difficult, because the officers (police and code compliance) must witness the action – hard to prosecute on citizen’s accusation.

Bennie Yows – informed Mr. Powers about his and his neighbors’ issue with Public Works concerning installation of a speed bump on Albert Drive. He said the installation was approved, but asked “where is it on City’s priority list? Mr. Powers said that – due to budgetary constraints - he thinks such items fall fairly-low on the list. Mr. Powers mentioned that pedestrian crossing safety is currently a higher priority – citing recent flashing light crossing signals following fatal accidents on Portland Road and S. Commercial. Bennie Y. said he learned – after the approval – that City would allow him (and neighbors) to have speed-bump installed (under City supervision) at their own expense of about \$10,000. (Pamela S. added: That is an example of the communication issue with City – not being told up-front they would have to pay for the speed-bump – similar to sidewalk responsibility.)

Richard Reid – MNA Communications Committee Chair) asked Mr. Powers to give his recommendations are to improve communications. Powers’ suggestions were:

- 1) He will provide to Pamela a reference list of City contacts for issues in question
- 2) He will provide an email list of communications he responded to
- 3) He said that there is more reliance now on Social Media
- 4) He said that City departments do respond to phone calls
- 5) He will continue to share our concerns with the City department heads

He added “Many of the complaints involve budget changes.” Muriel M. cited Brad N.’s efforts in putting-forth our concerns – without response from City. There was

some discussion inability of City staff to address policy issues (such as Sidewalk “Sit and Lie.

Dan Suhr – resident of Pringle Creek Community and frequent attendee at MNA meetings – commented that there is something “fundamentally wrong” with City’s inability to act on something as simple as the park bench (on which MNA has expended a lot of time and effort.); and suggested “don’t offer the grant if City can’t conform.” Mr. Powers agreed – there is a disconnection; it looks like we are discouraged from requesting (things from City.) He said, however, he had a little push-back to this in citing the results from a recent survey of City citizens showing 80% are satisfied with city’s performance. But, he still agrees there is disconnect between parts of the process.

Janet B. asked Mr. Powers what is his vision of what City staffers should do? Mr. Powers cited City policy . . . logo “At Your Service” – and said they are very serious about it.

Alan Meyer (on a positive note) cited the good response from the City planning staffer Kevin Hottmann on the recent Fairview Woods development issue. Mr. Powers acknowledged there are differences in levels of response among the departments; as for Planning – planners should respond. Pamela S. added the question “If we do send City an item to comment on, who (from City) is going to say the got our letter?)

Pamela S. asked Mr. Powers and Mr. Barron to make sure that City’s May Annual Budget meetings do not conflict with MNA’s Annual Meeting – we would like to have as many City representatives there to meet with neighbors and answer questions.

Geoffrey J. asked Mr. Powers: Who do we contact if a street lamp is out – such as one on 12th street Cut-off at Ibsen? Mr. Powers acknowledged it is a problem to address because some lights are maintained by PGE and others now by City.

Richard R. asked about the electronic file document he got from City and tried to forward to MNA board. (No answer – possibly discussed after meeting.)

In closing, Mr. Powers said that he wants to come back and follow-up on our items of concern.

Committee Reports –

Traffic – Alan Meyer – mentioned the impending problem for traffic crossing at intersection of Forsyth and Battle Creek Road and how it will be worsened by new developments in Fairview and along Reed Road. Visitor Noel Magee – resident and HOA representative said it is a big issue for him and his neighbors in that area. Former MNA board member has sent a letter to City in that regard.

Pamela S. interjected Committee Reports with an announcement related to Code Compliance: Derelict Building update – only one house (4940 South Hampton) not in compliance – unfinished construction. Apparently it was in foreclosure, and new owners are now resuming work on the structure.

Land Use - Geoffrey James – Only two applications filed – nothing controversial. They are in Fairview Industrial (Commerce) – one lot being divided into two; another has an application to City for development.

Pamela S. said she got a copy of a notice about a proposed development for Sunnyside Road (outside MNA – but near boundary.) She also received notices regarding a proposed amendment to the Transportation System plan affecting Green Crest Ct. NE.; one in Morningside (51,000 sq. ft. building in Fairview Industrial Way area (Geoffrey J. identified it as same project as mentioned above.)

Richard Reid mentioned something he noticed regarding Land Use Code change, affecting 47 parts of the code - further discussion revealed the changes were for Multi-family housing design required by House Bill 2001.

Parks – Muriel Meyer – announced she had sent the letter of intent to apply for grant to fund Clark Creek Park playground stone removal.

Communications – Richard Reid – no further comments, since topic was center of discussion earlier in the meeting.

Pringle Creek Watershed Council – Pamela Schmidling – PCWC is no-longer active.

C.E.R.T. – Pamela Schmidling – announced that several people in MNA are among some 40 who have completed training. She said that persons need 15 hours of training in two-year period to keep certification

Liquor Licenses – Pamela S. – said there were no new applications to report.

Transit – No report.

Other Business –

City Council Recognition by MNA – Pamela Schmidling – proposed that we (and other neighborhood associations find ways to recognize our City Council for the voluntary service they provide. If we do so, we need to do it by next month. Several options for recognition were suggested, including but not limited to: providing coffee and/or snacks; gift cards; simple cards or letters signed by Board. Bennie Y. said that any gives cannot be greater than \$24.99 in value, and cash gift might not be appropriate. Group – by majority vote with one “*opposed*”- approved using Certificate(s) of

Appreciation for this purpose, and gave general support of the concept of recognizing Councilors' service.

Announcements –

Seeking Council Seat - MNA Board Member Trevor Phillips announced he will be running for the City council seat soon-to-be vacated by other MNA Board Member Brad Nanke.

Possible New Board Member(s) – Noel Magee – partly in response to requests from past Board vice Chair Scott Schaeffer – announced he would be interested in joining the Board. Noel M. gave a brief summary of his background in work and in the Nottingham HOA, and of his interest in the neighborhood. Spouse Amy Magee said she would need time decide whether or not she wanted to be on the board. Pamela S. said that as of “now” three positions were open. Motion was made and seconded to accept Noel Magee to the Board. Motion passed unanimously.

Concerns –

Noel and/or Amy M. - said they and neighbors are waiting for a new park in their part of the Morningside Neighborhood.

Someone moved the Board endorse Trevor Phillips' run for City Council Seat. Motion was seconded by Sue Reid. Motion passed unanimously.

Good of the Order – No further business.

Adjourn – There being no further business to discuss, Chair Pamela Schmidling adjourned the meeting at 8:12 P.M.