

June 2, 2020 Meeting – Fircrest Park
Southwest Association of Neighbors (SWAN)

Attendees

Board Members - Jeanine Stice, Allison Houck, Connie Jones, Ron Eachus, Ted Burney, Carol Grimwood, Pat Norman, Becky Miner. John Lattimer and Leonard Nelson were excused.

Neighbors - Jennifer Carley, Evan White, Dan Scott, Karen and Ken Freeman, April Branden-Locke,

Meeting called to order by Jeanine Stice at approximately 6:35pm

Minutes Approval and Bylaw Changes Approval

February and March minutes approved and seconded.

No meeting was held in April due to the Covid shelter-at-home statute in effect.

Jeanine discussed updates and changes made to the bylaws pertaining to Board member absenteeism, email communication and geographic representation along with other revisions. The draft was sent to Irma for input and will then be distributed to Board members for approval before going out to all SWAN membership for a 14 day period of review.

City Council Update – Councilor Nordyke

Homelessness:

Covid necessitated temporary emergency action to relocate the homeless from downtown to approved camping sites at Wallace Marine and Cascade Gateway parks. A “Cash for Trash” program was tested at Cascade Gateway Park which rewards trash pickup at the campsites by the homeless with a \$10 gift certificate to Walmart and seems to be working as witnessed by Councilor Nordyke during a recent visit.

The Sit Lie Ordinance is waiting out the pandemic for enforcement allowing more time to find beds and shelters with restrooms required by the ordinance. A request to the Legislature seeking funding for homelessness did not come about due to the shutdown. However, a current request of 4M for a Navigation Center with provisions for low barrier housing is currently under review with the city Budget committee.

Pioneer Cemetery – An “information only” report from the TSP staff will be presented to City Council on June 22 in response to a motion that was approved at the last council meeting for a study to be conducted on a connector path between Hoyt and Rural potentially going through Pioneer Cemetery. Neighbors are encouraged to present comments at any time to the City or Councilor Nordyke concerning this matter.

Curfew – Protests over the past 3 consecutive nights have led to curfews and daily reports are monitoring injuries and any violent activity. Police initially met protestors with force but reversed their strategy to cooperation, including kneeling in solidarity after meeting with protest leaders and NAACP. Protests have continued peacefully and no injuries have been reported.

Ted inquired where/who to call if you want to volunteer for the homeless – Councilor Nordyke suggested Arches and/or calling the police non-emergency line.

Ron asked if the city budget has been impacted by recent events and a potential economic downturn. Councilor Nordyke stated that Salem as a whole has not been adversely impacted because it relies

primarily on property tax revenues for funding, but that the revenues from the Transit Occupancy Tax and the Downtown Parking District took a hit.”

Councilor Nordyke requested that the next item on the agenda be Pioneer Cemetery rather than Land Use, which is a conflict of interest for Councilors, so that she would not have to leave and come back. All present agreed.

Pioneer Cemetery Connecting Community – Pat Norman

A historical tour for Board members took place earlier in the day with Elizabeth Potter, Friends of Pioneer Cemetery historian. Pat Norman, Parks Chair and Friends of Pioneer Cemetery member and volunteer, recapped her presentation as Elizabeth was unable to attend the SWAN meeting.

Pat shared the history of Pioneer cemetery which was originally established as the Odd Fellows Community in 1854 and renamed Pioneer Cemetery in 1949. The cemetery encompasses 16 acres containing monuments and vaults commemorating some of Salem’s earliest pioneers and leaders including Tabitha Brown, Oregon’s Pioneer Mother; Asabel Bush, publisher and banker; Thomas Kay, wool manufacturer among others. “Friends of the Pioneer Cemetery” was formed to preserve and maintain the cemetery in conjunction with the City of Salem who acquired the property in 1985. It was designated as an Area of Special Interest and listed in the National Registry of Historical Places in 2013. A fence and lighting was placed around the cemetery to preserve and protect it from vandalism. Most recently it had been utilized as a dog park prompting a “No Dogs” ordinance 3 years ago.

Today it remains a notable outdoor museum visited yearly by a gathering of Chinese families, after an excavation revealed a Chinese burial site, as well as school groups from Willamette and other schools and of course the public. All of the plots are privately owned and no longer available unless related to the families who are already buried there.

There is concern with a recent motion approved by the city to study a connector path between Hoyt and Rural that it could run through the cemetery and contribute to vandalism and crime as the cemetery currently has only one entrance and exit. Pat mentioned that another gate or fence could be a risk and that the current fence is not meant as a barrier but rather protection. She also mentioned that volunteers are always welcome and for more information please contact

www.salempioneercemetery.org.

Board members Ron and Allison who attended the historical tour with Elizabeth earlier in the day commented on how much they learned from the tour and gained a better understanding and appreciation for its historical context and significance.

Ted, Land Use Chair, also commented on the value of the tour and indicated that in doing some research concerning a connector path though Pioneer Cemetery, there may be a pedestrian easement in the vicinity which may offer a compromise for transportation and preservation of Pioneer Cemetery.

Land Use Report and Update – Ted Burney

United Gospel Mission update - 222 new beds will be made available at the new location. The building will have 3 floors of which the top floor will be apartments for those transitioning out.

The period between January and April of this year recorded the largest dollar volume of permits ever issued in Salem’s history representing \$221M in value of which 1000 were housing permits for single family dwellings.

Allison noted that many road contracts were not negatively impacted by Covid guidelines which restricted other commerce.

Committee Updates

Emergency Preparedness – Jennifer Carley, committee member, spoke on behalf of Becky who was not able to attend. She reiterated the need to know our neighbors particularly during a crisis and that there is a “Map your Neighborhood” program being initiated whereby a designated volunteer collects relevant information in their neighborhood for emergency preparedness purposes.

Meeting adjourned approximately at 8:00pm