

Northeast Neighbors (NeN) Eugene, Oregon

SUBJECT: General Meeting minutes

December 8, 2020

Attendance:

Elected officials: 5

Board members: 5

Guest speakers: 3

Attendees: 47

Total: 59

Opening remarks: Chairman Kevin Reed opened the meeting with welcoming remarks and reviewed the agenda with the guest speakers.

Approval of minutes: General Meeting on November 11, 2020. The Chairman stated that the minutes from the previous General Meeting were taken by Richard Edwards and posted on the website. A motion was made to accept the minutes as written. The motion was seconded and the minutes were approved by unanimous acclimation.

Introduction of elected officials: Richard Edwards welcomed and introduced the elected officials.

Senator James I. Manning Jr., District 7 of the Oregon State Senate

Councilor Jennifer Yeh, Ward 4 of the Eugene City Council

Councilor Mike Clark, Ward 5 of the Eugene City Council

Commissioner John Brown, representing Wards 4 and 5 on the Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB)

Jim Torrey representing the 4J School Board

Presentation by Elected Officials:

Senator James I. Manning Jr. Senator Manning began by expressing his appreciation for the invitation, and complimented the Northeast Neighbors for having such a large number of attendees at the meeting. He announced that he had just been elected President Pro Tem of the Senate. As Co-Chair of the Joint Committee on Transparent Policing and Use of Force Reform, he is involved in working on police policy. He said that his goal is to protect the public but he wants to insure that policies protect police officers too. He is also on the Joint Emergency Board and there is only a 4 million dollar balance left, so if there is an emergency session, they will bring in the full Ways and Means committee to consider bringing in more funds. He said that Governor Brown is considering calling for a special session of the State legislature, and December 21st is a possible date. If there is a special session, they will need a quorum. If it's a catastrophic session, it will only deal with one issue. He said that one of the issues that is high on the agenda for a special session is rental funding. He is also looking into funding for rural fire districts because they are now involved in search and rescue. There is a bill before the Senate on Friday regarding Fire & Rescue.

Question: Councilor Mike Clark asked Senator Manning about the moratorium on evictions.

Answer: Senator Manning said that one of the issues is reimbursement for landlords because that funding has run out. One possibility is to reimburse up to 80% which is not all of what is wanted but they are on a shoestring budget.

Guest speakers:

Senior Planner Becky Taylor: The Chairman welcomed and introduced Becky Taylor, the Senior Planner for the Lane County Transportation Planning Department. Ms. Taylor began by complimenting the Northeast Neighbors on their organization and advocating for safety. She acknowledged that the Northeast Neighbors have advocated for improvements on Gilham Road for a long time. She announced that there is Federal Grant money available and the grant funds will be available in 2022. The Federal grant will allow them to put sidewalks on both sides of Gilham Road north of Ayers Road to Ashbury, and then on the west side of Gilham Road from Ashbury to Sterling Park Place. She also said that since the funding is a Federal Grant, the abutting property owners will not be billed for the construction. They will need approximately 7 feet of abutting properties for the sidewalks, so they will be contacting the property owners to begin the planning process. Her phone number is: 541-255-5761.

Question: Will there be speed reduction to 25 mph?

Answer: She acknowledged the high speeds and stated that posted speeds are governed by ODOT. They have applied to reduce the speed to 25 and it was denied, but they were able to get it reduced from 35 to 30.

Question: Will there be any crosswalks?

Answer: She said there were no crosswalks in the conceptual design, but she will raise that issue with the engineers.

Question: Resident Lefty Dundee said there is a new bicycle lane on 13th Avenue, but at the intersection with Lincoln there is a speed bump that is too high.

Answer: Chairman Reed interjected that the bicycle lane on 13th Avenue is outside the focus of the Northeast neighborhood, and explained that Ms. Taylor had been invited only to discuss Gilham Road.

There were no further questions, so Chairman Reed introduced the next guest speaker.

Jim Stephens, Evergreen Housing Development. Mr. Stephens gave a presentation on a development called the “Cottages at River Ridge”. The project will be located at the north end of Delta Highway and will add 612 dwelling units in duplexes, townhomes, and flats. He said their mission is to provide affordable housing because there is such a high need for housing in Eugene. He said that at the last public meeting, someone asked about rental vacancy rates so he did some research and found out that there is only a 2% vacancy rate in Eugene. They have only submitted a pre-application, but promised to keep Chairman Reed informed. In conclusion, he said they expect to break ground in the late spring of 2022.

Comment: Chairman Reed thanked Mr. Stephens for his remarks and made a suggestion that if the land South of Ayers Road was more accessible, it could be used for park space.

Response: Mr. Stephens said he was willing to consider it but there were challenges with land outside the urban growth boundary.

Question: There was a question in the chat about bike paths.

Answer: Bike path extensions would be a significant undertaking south of Ayers Road.

Q: There was a question in the chat about the trees.

A: Mr. Stephens said the project encompasses 70 acres, and they are trying to cluster the buildings in 40 acres so that will leave a lot of greenspace, primarily along the river.

Q: Will the remaining 30 acres be protected space?

A: Mr. Stephens answered that there is nothing in the plans to designate the remaining 30 acres as anything other than a central green.

Q: There was a question in the chat about traffic.

A: The traffic analysis in the pre-application was based on the 2035 Transportation System Plan and a new traffic study by Evergreen. They also did a study of N Delta and Ayers. The four-way stop was satisfactory.

Q: Can you confirm the location of the "Cottages at River Ridge"?

A: The "Cottages at River Ridge" will be north of the apartments and on the west side of Delta Hwy.

Q: Are there any plans for retail at the "Cottages at River Ridge"?

A: No.

Q: What will the central green look like?

A: The central green will have some green space, a playground, lawn for games such as Bocce Ball, and a basketball half court.

Q: Will there be a round-a-bout at the intersection of North Delta Highway and Ayers Road?

A: There has been some discussion about a round-a-bout and they did a traffic study, but it's not required. In testing during the study, the four-way stop didn't fail during high traffic hours, so a round-a-bout wouldn't improve traffic flow.

Q: Are there any plans to improve the bike path on Delta Hwy between Ayers Road and Crescent Avenue?

A: There are plans to improve the east side but not on the west side of Delta Hwy.
Comment: John Faville added that the improvements on the East side are to make the path multi-directional to compensate for the West side.

Phil Spears, Sheppard Motors: Mr. Spears spoke about the Electric Vehicle dealership planned for North Game Farm Road. He said that Sheppard Motors is a family owned business and they have been in Eugene for 70 years. They were one of the candidates that were considered by Audi and offered a franchise. The land was originally zoned E-1 and he worked with the City of Eugene to get the site re-zoned to E-2. He worked with ODOT, Northwest Pipeline and EWEB to deal with the challenges of gas pipes, water and electric lines. They also did a traffic study for due diligence for encroachments. The dealership will create 25 to 30 jobs and they hope to break ground sometime next year. He thanked both of our City Councilors for helping for their assistance while working with the City staff. He also thanked the Northeast Neighbors and said he has lived in this neighborhood for 20 years. He announced that Audi is committed to making 30% of their products electric, and build more infrastructure for recharging. As more details come in he will keep us informed.

Question: Where will the dealership be located on Game Farm Road?

Answer: It's just under the I-5 Bridge in Eugene near the intersection of Game Farm and Chad Drive.

Q: When will the new dealership open?

A: In 2022.

Creekside Park: David Martin stated that over \$24,000 has been raised for the park and they are expecting to break ground on the new picnic shelter next year. He also announced that he will be moving away to accept a new job and thanked everyone for their contributions.

Chairman Reed thanked David for his years of service and said that the Northeast Neighbors would not be where we are today without his hard work.

Public Comment period: None.

The Chairman gaveled the meeting closed at 8:08pm