

Northeast Neighbors (NeN)

General Meeting

May19, 2020

Attendee: 37, including 6 Board members and 6 presenters.

7:00 p.m. Chairman David Martin opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.

During his opening remarks, Chairman Martin began with an update of progress on the Creekside Park picnic shelter. Fund-raising efforts have successfully raised approximately \$23,300, so far, and they are continuing to take cans and bottles for donations. The project should be done by the end of the summer. The Chairman extended a sincere "Thank you" to the b2 Bar & Grill for their sponsorship of tonight's event, and gave a brief description of their location. He also announced that the Northeast Neighbors will be having elections later this year, and would like more neighbors to volunteer to serve on the Board.

The minutes from the General Meeting on November 12, 2019 were reviewed: A motion to accept the minutes as written was made by Richard Edwards and seconded by Bill Haynes. The motion was passed unanimously.

Chairman Martin welcomed our elected officials; Nancy Nathanson, State Representative, District 13, and James I. Manning, Jr., State Senator, District 7.

Representative Nathanson said she is in daily meetings and sends out e-news to 3,000 subscribers. Lane County is opening in accordance with the Governor's Phase I procedures. The Revenue Committee will be meeting to review the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy, and the meeting can be watched live on TV. She said the response from people in favor of reopening versus those opposed to reopening is running approximately 50/50. There is a non-emergency number to call if you think a business is not following guidelines. She cautioned everyone that there has been an increased incidence of criminal activity related to the COVID-19 pandemic such as identity theft, phishing scams, and fake charity appeals. Some of the scams have been able to use fake domain names to make the appeal appear legitimate. A decontamination site has been set up at the U of O to sanitize masks so that the masks can be re-used up to 20 times. The former VA

clinic off River Road has been temporarily converted to a Covid-19 rest center, where people who have tested positive can be isolated. The library has a resource to sign up for info about resources connected to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Senator Manning said the Joint Revenue session meets tomorrow and he is optimistic. He is a member of the Oregon Joint Emergency Board, and they convened for the second time last week during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Money was not dispersed properly so the board convened to make sure money is being distributed equitably. The farms that have migrant workers are not eligible for Unemployment Insurance. The Farm Bureau is lobbying on behalf of the migrant workers, and Senator Manning said he supports financial assistance for the unemployed workers. Money from the CARES Act is distributed to states but goes directly to any city with a population over 500,000. Every County in Oregon will get funds, so Lane County will receive funds but the money can only be used for Coronavirus issues. In closing, the Senator said that he has six e-mail accounts but considers any mail from a constituent his top priority.

QUESTION: Melissa Zimmer asked about the speed limit on Gilham.

ANSWER: The Senator stated that the speed limit on Gilham is controlled at the local level, but pointed out that the speed limit has just been reduced. Chairman Martin added that there is talk of lowering the speed limit further.

Chairman Martin introduced Sarai Johnson, Lane County and Eugene Joint Housing and Shelter strategist. Sarai Johnson stated that the current housing market is difficult, but there are near-term steps to address homelessness, and the creation of affordable and middle market housing. They are taking into consideration the impact of COVID 19. They are looking at guidelines around homeless camping, but currently are not enforcing camping restrictions. They need emergency shelter for people who are chronically homeless, and accessibility to services. The estimated need for affordable housing in the \$250,000 range per unit is approximately 350 units. There is money available from the CARES Act and they are also looking for other funding mechanisms.

QUESTION: Bill Haynes said there are about a half dozen tents against the fence between River Road and Zelda Street, but it does not appear to be safe and wanted to know if that issue was being addressed.

ANSWER: It is probably on their radar because of safety concerns, but she will follow up.

QUESTION: Unnamed attendee asked about the approach to camps and relocating?

ANSWER: Outreach includes services and there are two emergency shelters on the County level. At the City level, there is a car camp and designated tent camps. All shelters and camps are managed sites. Camping is not a good long-term solution, so the goal is to create safe spaces to sleep and alternatives such as pilot programs.

QUESTION: Unnamed attendee asked if occupants of the camps have to help.

ANSWER: Yes. "Carry it forward" looks for the natural leader and hires them to manage the camp.

QUESTION: Unnamed attendee asked, are we learning anything?

ANSWER: Yes, we learned that large living accommodations or gatherings are not tenable, and smaller shelters are better. Unemployment is now 14% so we are preparing for more homelessness. Sustainable housing is a priority and we need to increase the vacancy rate.

QUESTION: An unnamed attendee asked, what can we do?

ANSWER: As we are looking at sites, many people end up on HWY 99, so we are looking for other locations as an alternative. When we are looking at alternatives, we are asking if it's a good site, and can we support the homeless at those sites? We get complaints, so talking about the issues and understanding helps. If you want to be proactive, volunteer at organizations, make masks and take them to the County EOC. Contact her directly for other ideas to help.

QUESTION: David Martin asked, how many homeless people are drawn to Eugene?

ANSWER: Most homeless people are from Eugene, and many were already residents who have lost everything. Overall, 20% may be from outside Eugene, especially during the summer travel season.

In summary, Sarai Johnson said the homeless population is not a monolithic group and they have diverse challenges. Currently, 4,000 people in Lane County are homeless. People staying at Lane County Fairgrounds have food and showers, but will eventually be demobilized. They don't have a plan for demobilization yet, but are looking for other locations for them to sleep and get services.

Chairman Martin introduced Rob Inerfeld, Transportation Planning Manager, City of Eugene, and Chris Henry, Traffic Engineer, City of Eugene.

Chris Henry began his presentation by saying that the 4-way stop at Green Acres and Norkenzie intersection is being considered for a roundabout in the next 1 or 2 years. We are looking at possible roundabout implementation late 2020 or early 2021. We note the safety concerns for people walking there and will consider them as we evaluate a potential roundabout. In the short-term, City staff is evaluating whether the intersection meets the criteria for marked crossings. That criteria includes measures of how many people are crossing the street. In the current COVID-19 pandemic, fewer people are walking outdoors. We will need to wait until physical activity returns closer to normal before we can make those measurements. On Coburg Road, they are responding to the City's high-crash corridor. One effort is adding bright orange collars around traffic signals, and adjusting the timing on protected left-turn green arrows to allow more cars to turn left. Chad Drive will get a protected left turn green arrow. They are also deploying a better system of computerized communication between traffic signals, and updating the timing to accommodate changes in traffic flow for the different times of day and weekends. It will take significant effort but should be finished by the end of the calendar year.

SB 558 passed and allows a City to lower speed limits by 5 mph lower than the statutory speed on non-arterial streets, but the Bill does not provide County governments with the same authority. The City Staff could evaluate Collector streets by ordinance, but the cost and time will take approximately one year.

New ODOT rules state that speed limits will be set in most residential streets at 25mph. The City is also considering a campaign to slow down traffic similar to the "20 is plenty" program in Portland.

Rob Inerfeld began his presentation by discussing Northeast Livable Streets. The first step will be enhanced pedestrian crosswalks at two intersections; Crescent Avenue & Sarah Lane, and Chad Drive & Shadow View. A shared use neighborhood Greenway connecting Chad Drive with Gilham Elementary School is planned for 2020. The City is also considering a shared use neighborhood Greenway Path on the East side of North Delta Hwy.

QUESTION: An unnamed attendee asked if WINCO would be involved with any of the traffic improvements.

ANSWER: WINCO will not be required to address traffic problems.

QUESTION: An unnamed attendee asked for an update on Beltline Road.

ANSWER: The City has been drafting a plan for FY 2035 in partnership with the County and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). There is no specific design but it will be a concept. ODOT is finalizing an environmental review and it should be done by the end of this year. In the long term, there is a need to replace both bridges over the Willamette River, and add a bridge connecting Green Acres to River Ave. The estimated cost is over \$400 million.

QUESTION: Bill Haynes said developers are building over 200 new homes and apartments north of Ayers Road, but there is no bike lane north of Ayers Road and wanted to know if there was a plan for continuing the bike lane.

ANSWER: It might be possible to use the sidewalks.

QUESTION: An unnamed bicycle rider asked, would it help if they reconsidered a painted stripe or dotted line on the sidewalks?

COMMENT: David Martin interjected and also asked if the sidewalks could be widened on North Delta Hwy because the curve in the road forces vehicles into the bike lane, and suggested that the center divider could be made smaller.

ANSWER: They will consider it, but said path etiquette should only take a few seconds and could be resolved with a bell on bikes.

QUESTION: Bill Haynes said there is only one exit coming out of the Lakeridge of Eugene development onto North Delta Hwy, and it's difficult to turn left.

ANSWER: Analysis said there was adequate gaps to turn left, but if not, cars can turn right. They are also considering a roundabout at Ayers and North Delta Hwy.

QUESTION: An unnamed attendee asked, are speed bumps an option on Gilham Road north of Ayers Road?

ANSWER: Speed bumps are the option of last resort. There is a personal speed radar program that residents could try to reduce speeding. Once the County finishes their upgrades, Gilham Road will be transferred to the City.

QUESTION: An unnamed attendee asked, can the speed bumps in the old SHOPKO parking lot be smoothed out so that they aren't so steep?

ANSWER: The parking lot is private property, so if or when WINCO assumes responsibility for the location, it will be their decision.

QUESTION: David Martin said Gilham Road does not have sidewalks beyond Ashbury Street and wanted to know if there were plans to add sidewalks.

ANSWER: The City may consider a sidewalk infill plan, with the costs shared by the City and property owners.

QUESTION: David Martin stated that the South-bound lanes on Coburg Road need improved signals and asked if there were any plans to resolve the problem.

ANSWER: There are methods of detection that the signal can count vehicles to determine timing.

QUESTION: Can a “Keep intersection clear” sign be installed on Chad Drive for cars exiting and turning left on Coburg Road?

ANSWER: It probably won’t happen because it is a DMV rule not to enter and block an intersection, and the City would be required to maintain the signage.

Chairman Martin introduced Bill Haynes, Northeast Neighbors Board member. Bill Haynes presented an update on Emergency Preparedness. To redefine disaster preparation, we could experience an earthquake but there are other things that could happen to cause an emergency. Neighborhood mapping is a way to inventory your local community, and typically only involves 10-20 homes. The City of Eugene coordinator of Neighborhood mapping is Andy Davis, and he suggests dividing the Northeast neighborhood into units. The next step is for each subdivided unit to pick a team leader to go through Emergency Preparedness training. Bill Haynes said he is now contacting people who are already involved in neighborhood watch programs. In summary, he asked that any volunteers who are interested in Emergency Preparedness to contact him by e-mail or text.

Chairman Martin introduced John Faville, Northeast Neighbors Board member. John Faville gave an update on the WINCO application. He said that in 2019 WINCO submitted an application to modify the 1988 Site Review submitted by Shopko, in order to make the changes that would allow it to move into the building. WinCo argued that it was not changing the “use” of the building, therefore WINCO would not be required to address current standards. They withdrew that application and have a new application on file that only seeks two changes: adding a bottle drop, and relocating the loading dock.

QUESTION: An unnamed attendee asked, does WINCO have a planned date to open?

ANSWER: They are hoping to be operational soon but it depends on the approval of the City Planning Department.

Chairman Martin welcomed elected official, Mike Clark, City Councilor, Ward 5. Councilor Clark said the City Council will be addressing a supplemental budget, and they are relying on some additional Federal funding. The City Council is working on 2021 budget, and there may be a shortfalls, but the Riverfront project will probably move forward. The town square project will move forward because that project relies on previously established funds.

QUESTION: What are the central sources of funding?

ANSWER: Property taxes. There is a 97% collection rate, but if there are owners who can't make those payments, funding may be lower. Parking funds are lower.

Chairman Martin opened the meeting to public comments: There were none.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 8:59 p.m.