

Northeast Neighbors (NeN)
Zoom Meeting ID: 209 481 2111

SUBJECT: Annual Meeting minutes

September 29, 2020

Attendance: 35 total; 5 Board (David, Kevin, Rick, Anne, John); 5 speakers.

Chairman David Martin opened the meeting with welcoming remarks and reviewed the agenda. In his opening remarks, he announced that fund raising events for the Creekside Park picnic shelter have netted \$23,500 over the past five or six years. The design has been approved and he shared a picture of the structure. It will be made out of wood with concrete pillars, and have two picnic tables. Bottles and pop cans are still being collected, and donations can be dropped off at Gilham Community Church. He anticipates breaking ground next month. Chairman Martin also gave an update on progress towards improvements on Gilham Road. The funding has been approved for upgrades from Ayers Road up to Ashbury with sidewalks on both sides of the road. There will only be a sidewalk on one side of Gilham Road north of Ashbury.

The minutes from the General Meeting on May 19, 2020 were reviewed for approval. A motion was made by Anne Millhollen to accept the minutes as written by Richard Edwards. The motion was seconded by David Martin and the minutes were accepted by unanimous acclimation.

NeN election: Vice Chairman Kevin Reed made an impassioned appeal for new volunteers to fill vacancies on the NeN Board. He emphasized the rewards of making a positive impact on the neighborhood, and welcomed new members with fresh ideas. After the Vice Chairman's remarks, Chairman David Martin asked for nominations from the floor, but there were no volunteers. To open the election, David Martin explained that his term was ending and he was stepping down as Chairman, but would continue to serve on the Board by running for Vice Chair. He then presented the rest of the slate of officers for the new term; Kevin Reed for Chairman, Anne Millhollen for Area East Representative, and Richard Edwards for Area West Representative. After presenting the slate of officers, he asked the Northeast Neighbors to indicate approval by a show of hands, and the vote was unanimous in favor of the new Board. The term of office for the new officers is effective immediately.

Presentations by Elected Officials:

Senator James I. Manning Jr.; State Senator. Senator Manning congratulated the newly elected officers and complimented the Northeast Neighbors for their outstanding organization. Then, he talked about suffering people are experiencing from the effects of the wildfires and how badly the smoke has affected air quality. He stated that as a member of the Joint Emergency Board, they have made 10 million dollars available. The challenge is that if funding given to people who have not yet qualified for aid from FEMA, money from the State of Oregon may count against their eligibility for Federal aid. He is a member of the Joint Task Force On Universal Health Care and talked about Senate Bill 770; Universal Healthcare for all Oregon. The task force is up and running, and looking at the best way to address costs. They are looking to rural communities for feedback because many residents may not have healthcare due to lost jobs. He wants to find the best healthcare for the least cost. He is also looking into preventative healthcare, telemedicine, and mental healthcare. As an example, he talked about a constituent with cancer who would benefit from telemedicine because his doctor is in Seattle. In his capacity as Co-Chair of the Joint Committee On Transparent Policing and Use of Force Reform, he is involved with law enforcement issues. He has consulted with Jason Myers, a retired Sheriff of Marion County, and Bob Morris, Chief of Police in Junction City. As a former police officer, Senator Manning talked about his experience getting out of his patrol car and the value of talking to people such as business owners. He also addressed the ongoing protests in Portland in support of Black Lives Matter, (BLM). Over the past weekend, he said the BLM protest in Portland was peaceful, and dispersed at 6:00pm on Sunday. Afterwards, there was a small break-away group that went to Vancouver, but was stopped and found to be transporting illegal items in their vehicles. He said he wants to make sure that our police officers have everything they need to be safe so that they can go home to their families. He also wants to make sure that they are mentally taken care of and also extend that care to all first responders. As Chairman of the Senate Interim Committee On Veterans and Emergency Preparedness, he announced that there are plans by the Department of Veterans Affairs to build a new mental health care center in Eugene. He welcomed the expansion but expressed a preference that local firms have an opportunity to submit bids for new construction. In conclusion, he emphasized that his primary focus is on public safety, improved healthcare, and safely reopening our local schools.

Representative Nancy Nathanson; State Representative. The photo in her background was a picture she took on a walk two blocks north of the church on Gilham Road. She congratulated NeN on the Picnic Shelter. She said that she is working on the revenue forecast, and unemployment insurance for her constituents. She also gave an update on the wild fire, and started by explaining that the information is current from sources as/of September 25. There are 9 deaths and 5 missing persons. There are 5,500 people who have registered for assistance and approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The number of buildings destroyed is 2,291 residences, and 1,503 other structures. There were 15 major fires with a million acres burned in Oregon this year. In Lane County there is one fatality but no-one missing, and 413 homes lost. Emergency communication is out but Verizon set up a temporary emergency communications center at Pocatee. Regarding the Covid 19 pandemic, she said that the State is not giving out specifics, but there is one county that has 22 cases associated with their colleges and universities. In another county, the contagion started with a prayer group. Another county had an outbreak that was traced back to a sewing group. The University of Oregon has developed a new saliva test and is testing every student before they enter a residence hall. At the UO, there was only 1 positive. The Aging and Disabilities Service had to assist with moving people out of 60 facilities. She is working with a retired military officer on Personal Protective Equipment and establishing a stockpile of testing supplies. The goal is to morph into a long-term resilient stockpile. Lane unemployment is now 7.5% which is down from 10.3%. Revenue is more than they expected but is still down. One of her constituents said she is only working part-time, and the sooner we develop a cure for the virus the better. She is also working on bills about private meetings, the profits that pharmacy prescriptions generate, and giving Oregon businesses a “leg up” by giving them more preference without violating any laws. She closed by asking everyone to sign up for her e-news.

Commissioner Pat Farr; Lane County Commissioner. During the County Commissioners meeting, he said that Commissioner Pete Sorenson made a motion to move back to Phase 1 in Covid response, but did not receive a second. Commissioner Farr spoke about his career in customer service at the Jerry’s Home Improvement store, but said nothing prepared him for the pandemic, social equity problems, and wild fire in 2020. He congratulated the Northeast Neighbors on securing improvements to Gilham Road but said it’s not everything they wanted, and he will not be satisfied until there is also lighting installed. Regarding the Holiday Farm Fire, Lane County is shifting priorities. Smoke is 55% contained, but there are over 500 households that do not know where they will live. The evacuation has been lifted and all areas are open, but not all roads are opened.

County roads are opened, but the Public is not allowed on Hwy 126. The Red Cross has 678 residents in temporary housing, and a Multi-agency Resource Center has been opened at the Lane County Fairgrounds. The Sheriff's Department has been at the forefront of managing the fire, and dedicated residential deputies to the McKenzie area. Covid 19 testing has entailed 66,000 tests and 1,239 cases. Small groups are still gathering because they think they are safe but if that continues, we will have more infections. Lane County has 11% of the State population, but one of the lowest rates of infection. There are plans to build an addiction TX center, two housing projects, and a parole and probation center on Hwy 99. Lane County bought the old VA clinic on River Avenue, and it is now used for a respite center.

Commissioner John Brown; Eugene Water & Electric Board Commissioner for Ward 4 & 5. He announced that there will not be an increase in water or electric rates this year. The caveat is that revenue is down 5%. If there is a need to do a watershed recovery to restore the McKenzie River, there may be a need to impose a surtax. There are now six emergency water sites available, and they were completed ahead of schedule. They are using FEMA grants to improve the power supply on high-frequency outage areas. Long-term construction plans are to build another plant on the McKenzie River, and they need to rebuild some of the aging reservoirs. There are also plans to move services out of their old building and consolidate all services at the Roosevelt Operations Center.

White Bird Clinic; Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets (Cahoots). Tim Black began his presentation by talking about the history of White Bird Clinic. When they opened in 1969, the clinic was located in what is now The Vintage restaurant. The founders looked to the Bay area to serve as a model for people suffering from addiction and mental health problems. When service calls started coming in, they realized that the situation required more than responding to people over the phone. By the 1980's they were seeing law enforcement bringing people in crisis to White Bird Clinic instead of an emergency room. On the 4th of July 1989, a team rolled out of White Bird Clinic with old police radios in a retired ambulance called Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets (CAHOOTS). Now, every CAHOOTS van has two personnel; one is a crisis worker, and the other is a medic. They are recruiting first responders to go thru 30 hours of classroom training followed by 500 hours of field training. The training involves verbal de-escalation techniques, and they pair candidates with experienced workers. In the face of traumatic events, White Bird Clinic provides resilience training for their workers. Funding comes from the City, but he cautioned that if the impulse to shift more requirements to CAHOOTS shouldn't come at the expense of other services that already exist in our community. In addition to

psychiatric help, CAHOOTS can conduct health and welfare checks on housebound invalids or elderly relatives. They have also been called upon to deliver emergency messages when a death occurs, and he explained that notifying relatives that a loved-one has passed away requires exceptional sensitivity. In accepting such a solemn responsibility, he said it allows them to be there when they are needed most, and it shows a high level of trust by our community. He highlighted the relationship that White Bird Clinic has with other community service providers, and the ability that it creates to refer people to other non-emergency medical services. They provide addiction, substance abuse resources, and hand out sleeping bags to people who are unsheltered. All calls come through the public safety line, and the non-emergency access line. If there is a person acting out in a loud and aggressive manor, a police officer may be dispatched. On the other hand, if they hear a call coming over dispatch that there is a non-violent person, they may intervene and offer to take the call. Out of 105,000 calls that came through the police side of dispatch last year, 18,000 were referred to CAHOOTS. Only 311 of those referrals escalated to a call for Police back-up. They estimate that 5-8% of the calls they responded to would have resulted in an arrest if CAHOOTS had not been dispatched, and probably would have ended with the individual going to jail. They also go to patient advocacy meetings to represent the underserved populations and advocate for housing. They helped the City of Olympia set up a crisis response team, and assisted in the creation of the Denver Star program. Locally, they assisted Portland in what Senator Wyden described as a constellation of services referred to as the Oregon solution. In closing, Mr. Black said that CAHOOTS is successful because of their good relationship with other community services.

Question & Answers; Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets (CAHOOTS).

Question: Kim Kelly suggested that the CAHOOTS model could be codified, and then asked if it was marketed to other communities, would that produce funding for CAHOOTS?

Answer: Tim said they aren't interested because franchising is not their philosophy, but they offer advice and consultations when asked. They have responded to approximately 400 different cities that inquired about CAHOOTS, and help them develop a program that fits their community.

Question: Kevin Reed asked if calls for service have to go thru the emergency call center, or can CAHOOTS be called directly?

Answer: The only way to get CAHOOTS service is to go through public safety dispatch.

Question: John Faville asked, if CAHOOTS got more money, how would you spend it?

Answer: There are a lot of different resources that need to be built up such as on-going treatment services that are tailored to the individual. More low-barrier shelters would make CAHOOTS responses easier because it would provide more places to take patients. They are a non-profit and for decades they have had to bid for the lowest contract. They also have employees who are civilians working in the public safety sector, but getting paid significantly less than police officers and firefighters. So they need to look at giving their professionals higher pay to improve retention. There are also times when calls are on hold for several hours so they could also provide more services with more funding. He also acknowledged that there is a need to provide mental health service to their own professionals.

Question: Un-named resident asked how many vans there are and how many people are working?

Answer: In Eugene, they have one van on duty during the daytime and two vans at night, but in Springfield, there is always one van operating 24 hours per day. So in the Eugene-Springfield area, there are always two or three vans in service. CAHOOTS is staffed by a total of 40, full and part-time personnel.

Question: Commissioner Farr said he attends a mental health summit attended by many providers, and they frequently talk about the need for a 24 hour crisis center. He said the County jail is the largest mental health facility in the County and taking a lot of people rather than going to the hospital.

Answer: When needs go unmet, it's a crisis. Ultimately, there is a need to respond but right now the hospital is the only destination. When someone is in a behavioral crisis and they go to a hospital, they are treated for the immediate problem, but then released. If there was a 24 hour crisis center with people who are trained to handle people in crisis, it would take the pressure off the emergency room. Ideally, a crisis center could also provide meals, personal hygiene, and a safe place to sleep.

Question: Penny asked what the percentage of recidivism is, and how is it managed?

Answer: First of all, they don't keep track recidivism in the traditional manner, because they don't want to discourage people from calling. However, he estimated that about a third of their callers contact CAHOOTS more than once a year. It's usually because services are not available for what they need or they are

having difficulty accessing other services. In conclusion, he said they want people to feel comfortable contacting CAHOOTS, and emphasized that they don't want to make people feel like they're being punished for calling back.

Comment: Councilor Clark thanked Tim Black for the services that White Bird Clinic provides. He said he gained an appreciation for what they do because he had a room-mate who was a medical student and worked for CAHOOTS.

Public Comment period:

A resident named David Bringer asked for traffic calming due to speeding on Holly Avenue, going west over to Norckenzie.

David Martin acknowledged the comment and asked City Councilor Mike Clark for comment.

Councilor Clark introduced himself and said the first step is to send him an e-mail with the details, and he will consult with Public Works. He estimated that traffic calming costs approximately \$10,000 for an average street, but cautioned that not all of the neighbors may want the same thing.

A resident named Penny made a comment that the presidential election is on November 3rd next month and implored everyone to please vote.

Senator Manning said he really appreciated the conversations and all the briefers. He counseled that in view of all the issues we are facing today, there is still hope. He emphasized that we are stronger together and we should all vote.

A resident named Amanda said she lives on Chad Drive south of COSTCO and asked about a green, left-turn signal from Coburg Road on to Chad Drive.

Councilor Clark said the first step is to send him an e-mail with the details. He also offered that when something such as the WINCO development is in progress, a traffic-impact analysis might be done.

David Martin offered her an alternative route by turning left on to Crescent Avenue from Coburg Road and then turn right on Suzanne Way which connects with Chad Drive.

The Annual Meeting was gaveled closed at 8:43pm.