

WEST HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF DECEMBER 11, 2018

ATTENDANCE

Neighbors: Steve Bieri, Karen Carlberg (Chair), Barbara Clapp, Rick Clapp (Vice-Chair), Dwight Emerson (Sitting in a Chair), Brian Houle, Karen Jurasin (Communications Director), Stephanie Klein, Kathy Lang, Peter Rossing, LaVerne Truman

City staff: Nathan Gwinn

Guests: Ben Stuckart (City Council President)

MINUTES

Minutes were approved for the meeting of October 9, 2018.

COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY REPORT, Paul Bundy, West Hills CA Representative

Paul was absent. Kathy reviewed briefly the purpose of the Community Assembly. It includes one representative from each neighborhood and meets monthly. They discuss issues pertinent to all or most neighborhoods.

PUBLIC SAFETY STAFFING PROPOSAL FOR FIRE AND POLICE, Ben Stuckart, City Council President

Last night the City Council approved a ballot measure on which we will vote in February. If approved, \$0.30 per \$1000 of assessed value will be added to our property tax. It will pay to hire additional police officers and to keep 30 of the 40 firefighters who were hired with the SAFER Grant, which expires in 2019. Hiring more police will allow the city to have more property crime detectives, more neighborhood resource officers, more police in the downtown core, more homeless outreach, and more major crimes and targeted crime unit detectives. Police will be able to respond to more calls, respond more quickly, and follow up more effectively. Even though the city has been adding more police over recent years, Ben thinks we need 20 more. Keeping the new firefighters will allow more of the fire department's medical calls (which are the majority) to be answered by smaller trucks with crews of two, rather than the big firetrucks, and to respond to the growing number of wildfires.

UNPAVED STREETS

Brian started a conversation with Ben about unpaved streets. There is a gravel/dirt street, D Street between 8th and Substitute, near Brian's home, that is very steep. Sometimes it becomes deeply rutted, hazardous, and nearly impassable. Brian worries about a firetruck being able to access the area, especially since this is right next to a railroad track. Brian has done some work on the street himself, and has reported problems to the street department, with good response. A city engineer told Brian that it would cost about \$30,000 to pave this block. Ben said that the City Council approved funds for paving unpaved streets at its meeting last night, but this is enough for paving just a small fraction of the unpaved streets. Unfortunately the city never has had a plan for paving unpaved streets. Paving unpaved streets is much more expensive than repaving paved streets, and the city prioritizes arterials because of their importance to commerce. Kathy suggested that neighborhood councils can help with getting unpaved streets paved. We can discuss this at a future West Hills meeting, with Breean Beggs or Ben Stuckart present.

SNOW REMOVAL, Nathan Gwinn, City of Spokane

Nate described snow removal procedures for this winter (see <https://my.spokanecity.org/streets/maintenance/snow-removal>). Highlights: Snow season is Nov 15 - Mar 15. During this time cars must be parked only on the odd side of the street and recreational vehicles, boats, etc must be parked elsewhere. Plowing will be done more quickly and more thoroughly. There is new equipment to minimize driveway berms.

ZONE CHANGE FOR NEW APARTMENTS AT 3004 W 8TH AVENUE, Dwight Hume, Land Use Solutions and Entitlement

Dwight Hume was absent. Someone (we don't know who) would like to change the zoning at this location so that an apartment building can be built. A required early step in this process is to

inform the neighborhood council about the proposal. Dwight is representing the builder for this step. Several weeks ago Karen C emailed several questions to Dwight for him to answer at the meeting tonight. This morning Dwight emailed Karen C saying that he could not attend the meeting; he answered some, but not all, of the questions. He is requesting a map amendment change from R 4-10 to R 15-30 and a zone change from RSF to RMF. The property is 2.2 acres, and the building would have about 66 apartments. A long discussion ensued. Many questions arose and could not be answered. We have five major concerns: 1) We do not know building height or number of stories. If the building is very tall, it could block the views of homes along several blocks to the west, including the home of two neighbors at this meeting. It also could cast shadows to the north, affecting light availability and gardening. 2) We do not know the plan for parking. If sufficient parking is not provided for apartment residents, then their vehicles could become a problem for neighbors to the north. 3) Additional traffic could create congestion as far north as W Hartson Avenue. 4) The streets surrounding the property are unpaved. We do not know if there is a plan to pave them. If they remain unpaved, dust and worsening condition could be a problem for neighbors to the north. 5) The intersection of Sunset Boulevard and Government Way already is busy. Most traffic going to and from this apartment building would go through this intersection, increasing congestion further. In summary, we do not feel that we have been informed adequately to assess potential impacts of this apartment building on our neighbors. We have substantial concerns about effects on quality of life and property values. We will follow up with city officials.

GOVERNMENT WAY IMPROVEMENTS, Susan Mensching, West Hills

Susan was absent. Karen C briefly summarized Susan's efforts to improve safety at the intersections of W 5th and 6th Avenues with Government Way.

FOLLOW-UP ON DISCUSSION OF HOMELESS CAMPS: What can we do to help?

Karen C reminded everyone about two ways that neighbors can help the homeless, both described recently on Nextdoor. 1) There is a long list of needed items that neighbors can purchase and donate, either delivering them to one of the sites listed, or ordering them through Amazon with Amazon delivering them. (<https://my.spokanecity.org/news/stories/2018/11/27/happy-giving-tuesday>) 2) Volunteers are needed to count homeless people, and collect information from them, on January 24. Volunteers also are needed to sort the donated items and prepare them for delivery to homeless people. (https://nextdoor.com/news_feed/?post=96944409)

OPEN FORUM:

Kathy learned recently that apartment construction may start sometime soon on the south side of Fort George Wright Dr. This possibility was discussed previously as part of our many discussions about the redesign of FGW. At that time, several concerns were expressed repeatedly about the effects of multistory buildings on drivers along FGW, as well as on the River Run residents below. Stephanie and Kathy described some impacts on River Run residents.

Stephanie asked if the plan for the Fort George Wright Corridor might be changed now that we know there will be increased traffic from the new Amazon facility. Nathan said the FGW study probably will be updated.

Kathy asked if West Hills has a neighborhood document, as some neighborhoods do. None of us are aware that we do. We can work on this.

ADJOURN

These minutes were approved at the February 12, 2019, meeting of the West Hills Neighborhood Council.