

WEST HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF AUGUST 14, 2018

ATTENDANCE

Neighbors: Steve Bieri, George Bressler, Sherry Bressler, Paul Bundy, Karen Carlberg, Rick Clapp, Rory French, Sandra French, Mike Gifford, Karen Jurasin, Ron Kelling, Jim Maguire, Linda Maguire, Susan Mensching, Cindy Stackelford, LaVerne Truman
City staff: Katie Myers
Guests: Patrick Striker, Abby Walthall

MINUTES

Minutes were approved for the meeting of June 12, 2018.

COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY REPORT, Paul Bundy, WH CA Representative

Paul summarized some topics discussed at the last four Community Assembly meetings. There was nothing requiring action from WHNC. Topics included: There are lots of opportunities for membership on CA committees, particularly the Land Use Committee. Downtown parking survey. Spokane Matters. Homelessness, hunger. Bicycling in the city. CA core values. Rick asked if the CA took a stand on building heights on the south side of Riverfront Park. Paul said no, and there was no opportunity for feedback.

REORGANIZATION OF SPOKANE'S PLANNING AND NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES DEPARTMENTS, Katie Myers, Community Programs Coordinator, Office of Neighborhood Services

The Office of Neighborhood Services has been incorporated into the Planning Department. This is resulting in shifts in roles for some employees, but no change in the numbers of employees. Katie's job probably will change, and we are likely to get a new city staff liaison. Katie thanked us for being such a good neighborhood to work with.

CODE ENFORCEMENT, Katie Myers

Katie was asked to provide us with guidance on how to report problems and questions to the city. She met with the code enforcement specialists and distributed a handout that summarizes the kinds of complaints that can be submitted and the ways in which complaints can be submitted. Examples include solid waste, junk vehicles, fire hazards, abandoned buildings, right of way obstructions, and graffiti. Complaints can be submitted via email, mail, or fax to Code Enforcement; by calling 311; or by using the new online portal. All complaints and questions that do not qualify as Code Enforcement complaints can be submitted by calling 311.

GOVERNMENT WAY TRAFFIC CALMING, Susan Mensching, West Hills

At the June 12 WHNC meeting, neighbors living near Government Way complained about the difficulty of turning from their neighborhood onto Government Way due to traffic speed, a blind curve, and vegetation obstructing the view of oncoming vehicles. Walking across Government Way also is dangerous. Susan and her neighbors met with two city employees to explore solutions. They will submit a proposal in a few months for a traffic calming project.

Possible improvements include a crosswalk, flashing speed sign, or a mobile speed sign. It is likely to be at least a year before changes can be implemented.

C.O.P.S. SHOP, Patrick Striker, Executive Director, Spokane C.O.P.S.

The downtown C.O.P.S. Shop moved to Third and Cedar. Because it now is closer and more accessible to our neighborhood, it will be easier for us to get involved. It is open M-F 10:00-3:00. Our involvement can include volunteering to patrol the neighborhood and block watch. There will be an open house on Wednesday, September 19, starting at noon. Patrick distributed flyers for the C.O.P.S. Shop programs.

WEST HILLS SIGN

The city can install a West Hills Neighborhood sign as part of the Sunset Boulevard reconstruction project. Rory French's late mother designed a sign years ago, but it hasn't been used. Rory brought the template to the meeting. It was moved, seconded, and approved to use this design. The city engineers plan to install the sign in the new landscaped area that will be near the intersection of Royal and Sunset. It was moved, seconded, and approved to accept this location. It was suggested that we could request another sign near the west end of the Sunset Bridge when it is rebuilt.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMUNICATION

The WHNC officers have been working on improving communication within the neighborhood. The Sunset Hill Nextdoor has been renamed West Hills to reflect inclusion of all parts of the neighborhood. Karen J is working on extending the boundaries into the west plains area that was annexed by the city several years ago. We're also working on inclusion of the River Run development and areas north of it. Karen J has started a Facebook page for the neighborhood. Rick has started working on a new web site. Rick wants to store documents in a single repository which is searchable and is linked to the other communication methods. Kathy Lang has contributed good ideas. We asked everyone what communication methods work best for them. Each method has advantages and disadvantages, and each method is preferred by some people and not others.

OTHER BUSINESS, DISCUSSION, IDEAS

Mike asked if there is a way to change the covenants for the Finch Arboretum neighborhood. Katie will investigate.

Cindy described the fire that occurred next to the Sunset Boulevard construction and just below her house. Cindy and Linda both said that there is a lot of dead and diseased vegetation in the strip between Sunset Boulevard and Rosamond that is a fire danger. Cindy talked with City Councilman Breann Beggs, and Linda talked with Urban Forester Angel Spell, about this. Apparently, the area cannot be cleaned up until the north side of Sunset Boulevard is closed for construction later this season.

Cindy said that the neighbors along Rosamond would like a barrier built between Sunset Boulevard and their yards because people are using the area to smoke and drink. Breann said that might be possible in the future. Rick suggested that state funding could be sought because Sunset Boulevard is a state highway; this might need to involve our state legislators.

Maybe we should invite Tim Ottmar, our neighborhood police officer, to our next meeting. Current concerns are vehicles parked where they shouldn't be, as well as homeless campers.

Dry grass along Government Way has been cut in some areas but not others. Someone can call 311 to ask that the rest of it be cut. This is city property.

Mike suggested that it is useful to C.O.P.S. for people to keep journals of problems they see in the neighborhood.

Susan commented that she appreciates Spokane's neighborhood program. She has not seen this in other cities where she has lived.