

WEST HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL  
MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF APRIL 9, 2019

ATTENDANCE

Neighbors: Walter Bible, George Bressler, Sherry Bressler, Johnna Calvert, Karen Carlberg (Chair), Rick Clapp (Vice-Chair), Kimberly Craigen, Brian Houle, Jessica Jackson, Sev Jones, Karen Jurasin (Communications Director), Mark Kieffer, Stephanie Klein, Gloria Kohn, Dave Marr, Susan Mensching, Julieann Morse, Lyle Morse, Rodney Redmond, Lisa Saddler (Ascenda Executive Director), Wes Sawyer, Brandon Swafford, Annetta Theademan, LaVerne Truman, Paula Truna, Nancy Westbrook

City staff: none

Guests: Jayne Kubasak (Ascenda Board of Directors), Kylie Nagle (Spokane Parks and Recreation), Tim Ottmar (Spokane Police), Barry Saddler (Ascenda Board of Directors), Steven Wilson (Finch Arboretum Community Garden)

MINUTES

Minutes were approved for the meeting of February 12, 2019.

NEIGHBORHOOD POLICE REPORT, Tim Ottmar, Spokane Police

Tim was asked to investigate whether Ascenda had been a source of crime since its founding in 2004. He said that he has been our neighborhood police officer for 8-9 yr and never has responded to Ascenda, or been aware of crime coming from Ascenda residents. He asked some of his fellow officers, and they were not aware of any crime at Ascenda.

He presented some crime statistics for his district, P7, the Southwest District. P7 includes areas of the city that generally are south of the Spokane River and west of Division, Grand, and Perry, but not including the downtown/Riverside area. This includes the southern 2/3 of the West Hills neighborhood, all of the Grandview-Thorpe, Latah/Hangman, Browne's Addition, and Peaceful Valley neighborhoods, and parts of Cliff/Cannon and Comstock. A map of crimes in P7 from March 31 to April 6, 2019, shows several various types of crime around the Motel 6 (near the intersection of Sunset Boulevard and S Rustle St), and nothing else in West Hills, Grandview-Thorpe, Latah/Hangman, Browne's Addition, or Peaceful Valley. A table of crimes in P7 shows numbers of violent crimes and property crimes for the last 7 days, 28 days, and year to date, without showing specifically where they were within the district. All of these are reported crimes, not arrests. These will be posted on Nextdoor.

Tim addressed homelessness in our neighborhood. If you see a camp, call 311. Current laws limit what the police can do. The priority is to direct homeless people to services where they can get help. If you have questions or concerns, email Tim at [tottmar@spokanepolice.org](mailto:tottmar@spokanepolice.org).

Tim was asked about mailbox theft. Apparently very few of these crimes have been reported to Spokane Police. It is more effective to report to Spokane Police (call Crime Check at 456-2233 or COPS Southwest at 755-2677) than to the post office. Cameras are the most effective tool (Ring and Wyze were recommended). Photos can be forwarded to Spokane Police, and if the perpetrator is familiar to them, they can act.

COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY REPORT, Paul Bundy, West Hills CA Representative

Paul was absent.

SUMMER PROGRAMS FROM SPOKANE PARKS AND RECREATION, Kylie Nagle, Spokane Parks and Recreation

Kylie told us about two free activities that will be available this summer. First, mobile rec vans will come to four city parks from June 17 to August 22, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. They will be at Grant Park on Mondays, Friendship Park on Tuesdays, A.M. Cannon Park on Wednesdays, and Cannon Hill Park on Thursdays. The vans will have a variety of sports and recreation equipment for children to use. All children and parents are welcome. Second, swimming is free for all children and adults at all city outdoor pools, which will be open the same dates as the mobile rec vans. Everyone needs a Splash Pass, which can be obtained for free at SpokaneRec.org, any city aquatic center, or by calling 311.

#### TRAFFIC CALMING FOR GOVERNMENT WAY, Susan Mensching, West Hills

Susan submitted a traffic calming proposal for Government Way last month. She requested several improvements to get drivers to slow down and to make it easier to cross the road. These include speed signs and crosswalks. She also requested two West Hills gateway signs. We will find out in a few months whether our request is funded.

#### NEIGHBORHOOD SIGN

Spokane Engineering Services proposed several variations of the neighborhood sign that we sent to them several months ago for installation on Sunset Boulevard. The sign will be in a landscaped area in the median of Sunset Boulevard somewhere around Assembly Street to Royal Street, visible to eastbound drivers.

We looked at five variations of the sign. Votes were 3, 16, 0, 0, 0. Our choice has a dark brown background, white lettering, and green and white trees. We will insist that the sun be changed from green to white. The winning sign will be posted on Nextdoor. (Note: Someone asked about resistance to graffiti. Karen C asked Rich Proszek, our city engineering contact, and he said that the sign will be made from wood, with a graffiti resistant coating.)

#### FINCH ARBORETUM COMMUNITY GARDEN, Nancy Westbrook and Steven Wilson

Nancy and Steve described the Community Garden at Finch Arboretum and invited anyone to participate. The garden is about 100 yards south of Woodland Center. It started in 2017 and has grown each year. This year there will be 14 plots assigned to individuals or families, as well as a community plot from which anyone can take produce. Leftover produce is donated to a worthy cause; last year about 500 pounds were donated. If you would like to apply for a plot for 2019, go to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/396273954067253>. The application fee is \$25.

#### ASCENDA, Lisa Saddler, Executive Director

Lisa told us about the history of AscendA, what is happening there these days, and what the future might hold.

History: The AscendA property previously belonged to John Coghlan. George Nossek bought the property from him in 2004. (George Nossek purchased the property and financed it with John Coghlan.) Initially George called the facility Christmas House, and used the property to house homeless people, but soon thereafter he transitioned it to a facility for sober living. Lisa joined the Board of Directors in 2006, then complained a lot about rules not being followed and poor supervision. New rules were implemented, and the name was changed to AscendA. Lisa was named Executive Director in about 2008. Also in 2008, John foreclosed on the property and took back ownership. He allowed AscendA to stay because he believed in its mission. John died recently, and now the property is owned by his heirs.

AscendA in 2019: There are 43 residents, including children. Several residents came to our meeting. Adults come to AscendA because they have been addicted, they are committed to

recovery and sober living, and they want a home that is safe and supportive for maintaining sobriety. Some people have lived there for several years. The residents become family for one another. Absolute sobriety and rigorous honesty are required. Urinalysis tests are done regularly, and if someone refuses, or fails, they must move out of the property immediately. Residents sign a contract when they move there, promising to follow the rules. Guests follow the same rules. Sex offenders are not allowed, partly because children live there. The children go to Spokane public schools. About 85% of the adults have full-time jobs. Everyone pays for rent and utilities. Rent funds the operating expenses for AscendA. There is a curfew, which is relaxed for people whose work schedule requires them to come and go at odd hours. A few residents told us about their successes in achieving sobriety, earning degrees, keeping stable jobs, earning awards at their jobs, and getting their children back. Empire Health Foundation, a Spokane philanthropic organization, provides much of the funding for AscendA.

Lisa and the residents want to be part of our neighborhood. Returning to a normal social life, and to community involvement, is part of the recovery process. All of us are welcome to attend their weekly meetings, Mondays at 5:00 p.m. They have a barbecue every summer, to which they invite the police, the nearby neighbors, and other community members; they will send us an invitation this summer. Karen J will send all Ascenda residents an invitation to join our Nextdoor.

Future: The goal is to purchase the property from the Coghlan heirs. Empire Health Foundation will partner with AscendA for the purchase and development of the property. The purchase has been complicated by changing demands from the heirs. This is the reason that the zoning change request was withdrawn in both 2018 and 2019 (Lisa was not involved in the zoning change requests). Once the property is owned by AscendA, the plan is to build four 8-plexes, with four residences on each of two floors. These should look like any normal neighborhood. More 8-plexes could be built in the future. Old buildings will be removed. (AscendA wants to offer the Department of Corrections office space to make it easier for the parole officers as well as the residents on parole.) AscendA also would like to buy the property at the northwest corner of Sunset Boulevard and Government Way, which is owned by a different owner, and currently is for sale.

See [ascendaspokane.com](http://ascendaspokane.com).

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