

WEST HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL  
MINUTES FOR THE SPECIAL MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 25, 2019

The purpose of this meeting was to begin formal discussion of the possibilities of creating change around the intersection of Sunset Boulevard and Government Way.

ATTENDANCE

Neighbors: Paul Bundy (Community Assembly Representative), Karen Carlberg (Chair), Dwight Emerson, Colin Harris, Jim Maguire, Linda Maguire, Susan Mensching, Rodney Redmond, Barry Saddler, Lisa Saddler (Executive Director, Ascenda)

City staff: Colin Quinn-Hurst (Planning)

Guest: Tina Leurssen (Grandview/Thorpe)

INTRODUCTION

Karen C gave a brief introduction: About 12 yr ago, several West Hills neighbors invested considerable time and energy into creating changes around the intersection of Sunset Boulevard and Government Way. For a variety of reasons, no changes resulted. Before we try again, we need to consider what is realistic, what is legal, and what is ethical in terms of private property rights. We need to consider what would be beneficial both for the West Hills neighborhood and for the broader community. If anything is to occur, we need volunteers.

Karen C distributed a handout from the minutes of the June 11, 2019, West Hills meeting that showed a summary of the discussion we had about the intersection of Sunset and Government Way. Alex Mann, who was an Urban Designer with the City of Spokane (but no longer with the city) gave us lots of ideas. The minutes are available at <http://westhills.spokaneneighborhoods.org/documents/>.

CITY AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Colin Quinn-Hurst is a city planner and the current city liaison for West Hills. He presented a PowerPoint that included upcoming city projects that we could piggyback with, along with potential funding opportunities for small projects.

There are two upcoming projects that are within the West Hills neighborhood that we might partner with. First, a study of the Fish Lake Trail will begin this fall. A main goal is to create a connection between the FLT and the Sandifur Bridge (leading to the Centennial Trail). Second, the Sunset (Latah Creek) Bridge eventually will be upgraded, but there is no funding yet.

There are many foundations and other resources that are potential funding sources for small projects. Examples included in Colin's PowerPoint are AARP, Artists Lead, Our Town Grant of the National Endowment for the Arts, Heart of the Community grant from Southwest Airlines, People for Bikes, Street Plans Collaborative, and Tactical Urbanism.

Tina suggested that Cleaning from the Corridor is a city program that we could use for cleanup around the intersection.

#### ASCENDA PROPERTY

Lisa Saddler, Executive Director of Ascenda, gave us an update on the Ascenda property. At the April 9, 2019, West Hills meeting (<http://westhills.spokaneneighborhoods.org/documents/>) she told us about plans for Empire Health Foundation to purchase the property from the heirs of the previous owner and then fund redevelopment of the property. The property sale will close soon. Five new two-story buildings will be built, each with eight units ranging from studios to three bedroom apartments. Each building will look like a single family house, with a single entrance. Current residents will move into the new homes. Then the old buildings will be demolished and replaced with more new homes, similar to the first five. The new buildings will include space for a COPS Shop so that it is easy for residents, police, and staff to interact.

#### DISCUSSION

Discussion included ideas for improvements to the area and complaints about illegal or other undesirable behaviors that occur at some of the establishments around the intersection. (Ascenda's insurance rates were increased due to illegal activity and other problems at some of these places.)

It is best to start with small projects. Neighborhood involvement improves the likelihood of grant funding from some of the potential sources.

We need to know which properties are public and which are private. Colin Q will create a map and bring it to our next meeting.

We need to be careful, sensitive, transparent when talking with property owners.

Colin Q suggested that zoning could be changed to allow the area to become a mini-center. This would increase property values.

We need to think about increased traffic due to increased employment in the West Plains.

Colin H reminded us that the intersection of Division and Third was cleaned up and redesigned to discourage panhandling and improve esthetics. The intersection of Division and Third is a gateway from I-90 into our city. The intersection of Sunset Boulevard and Government Way is a gateway from the west into our city. Let's do something similar.

Rodney cleaned up the median around our new neighborhood sign at the west end of the Sunset Boulevard project. We could do more of this kind of thing.

The nearby churches could be involved.

Lisa suggested that inmates from Geiger prison, or non-incarcerated offenders required to do community service, can be enlisted to do cleanup. Karen C said that this resource was used with great success for cleaning around the Trolley Trail in the Grandview/Thorpe neighborhood.

Sunset Bridge: It could be beautified even if renovation cannot start soon. Lampposts with hanging baskets filled with flowers. Landscaping or other enhancements at the two ends of the bridge. A neighborhood sign. A better arrangement for bicycle transit.

Fish Lake Trail: Added signage. Larger parking lot.

Art: Murals on concrete walls and supports. Landscaping, gardens.

Transform bus stops into small community centers, more comfortable, more attractive.

Bike park for kids.

If any of these ideas are to be implemented, volunteers are needed.

Our next discussion will be from 6:00 to 6:30 at the October 8 West Hills meeting, instead of the usual social time.