

WEST HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF AUGUST 10, 2021

ATTENDANCE

Neighbors: Steve Bieri, Karen Carlberg (Chair), Dwight Emerson, Kris Fiala, Josette Gates, Mike Gifford (Vice-Chair & Cleanup Coordinator), Ashley & Evan Hopkins, Annie Iishi, Karen Jurasin (Communications Director), Susan Mensching, Liz Mostad, Jordan & Megan Onley, Paula Swan, Lou Tately, Brandon & Veronica Wahl, Deondra Williams

City staff: none

Guests: Gib Brumback (Brumback, Inc.), Dwight Hume (Land Use Solutions and Entitlement), Jonathan Mallahan (Catholic Charities), Elizabeth Potter (Lands Council)

MINUTES

Minutes for the meeting of June 8, 2021, were approved.

COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY REPORT

The West Hills Community Assembly Representative, Paul Bundy, was unable to attend the meeting tonight. We will post summaries of the July and August CA meetings on Nextdoor.

FOOD PANTRIES

Dwight Emerson volunteered to work on food pantries for West Hills after hearing a presentation by John Edmondson, Director of Growing Neighbors, at the February 2021 West Hills meeting. He has talked with John, as well as with people at Second Harvest, and has explored food pantries in the Shadle Park neighborhood. He would like to set up food pantries in the West Hills neighborhood in places where people need help with food. The pantries can be in places like yards, common areas of multi-family housing, and parks. The food can come from Second Harvest, neighbors' gardens, or other sources. The program needs hosts to build and take care of the pantries. He will continue to work on this, and welcomes volunteers and ideas. Dwight's presentation is at

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1M6VJaCMIA_3hkjRhdezsLOp-Ms6H9x2n/view?usp=sharing

HEALTH RISKS OF TOXIC SUBSTANCES IN THE SPOKANE RIVER

Elizabeth (Zab) Potter is an intern with the Lands Council. She gave a presentation on what the Lands Council has been doing with regard to toxic substances in the Spokane River, along with other activities. The main toxics are PCBs (coming mainly from local industrial sources) and heavy metals (coming from past mining in the Silver Valley of Idaho). Each of these toxic substances has a long list of adverse health effects. The Lands Council has been doing outreach

to populations who frequently eat fish caught in the river (especially people with low income and immigrants from cultures who are used to fishing for their own food). They also are educating people who recreate in the river about the importance of washing their skin before eating or entering their homes. Zab's presentation is at

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1IRL8GLWjLJjLnyRnjy5pQnOqQIeYK3ju/edit?usp=sharing&oid=106798300008310924351&rtpof=true&sd=true>

ZONE CHANGE FOR PROPERTY AT NORTHWEST CORNER OF SUNSET BOULEVARD AND GOVERNMENT WAY

Gib Brumback is proposing to build an apartment building, with first floor retail, on the property he purchased recently at the northwest corner of Sunset Boulevard and Government Way. In order to build a five story building (rather than three stories, which would not be economically viable) he needs a zoning change from R35 to R55. He has hired Dwight Hume to help guide the zone change through the city's labyrinth. The meeting with our neighborhood council is a required step. Gib said that this zoning change needs only approval by the hearing examiner, rather than the full one year process, so it could be approved fairly quickly. A map and diagram are at

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dJFye0uWbe8OdNN5sx4luaSD0UHzL7kC/view?usp=sharing>

Gib described several of the apartment complexes and office buildings he has built or remodeled over his many years in Spokane. These include several projects in West Hills, such as the office building at 1717 S Rustle (across from U Haul) and several buildings on the West Plains. When asked to suggest one of his apartment projects that we could look at, he suggested Cedar Crossing in the Five Mile area.

He said this apartment building will attract higher income residents who work downtown, want space to keep a car, but want to use the quick bus ride into downtown. There will be an underground parking garage with enough parking for all residents. The garage and retail will open onto S Audubon St. There will be 80 apartments with decks (studios, one bedroom, two bedroom), workout rooms, and an outdoor patio.

The city requires a meeting for property owners within 400 feet of the site. This probably will be in September. A notice will be sent to West Hills.

Questions from neighbors (submitted to westhills99224@gmail.com before the meeting and to the chat during the meeting):

Will there be a traffic impact study? Gib is working with Eldon Brown, city engineer. There will be improvements to Audubon and W 7th Avenue. Audubon probably will open onto Sunset Boulevard, and 7th will open onto Government Way. Concern was expressed about drive-throughs on Audubon.

Will sidewalks be rebuilt? Yes.

Registered sex offenders allowed? No.

Will there be better street lighting? There are limits to what property owners are allowed to do.

Security cameras? Yes.

What kinds of retail? To be determined, but no drive-through businesses. Neighbors expressed a strong preference for restaurants; one neighbor suggested a brewery. Gib said that parking for visitors will be limited.

Landscaping: Save existing trees? None worth saving. (Some neighbors stated that one "magnificent" tree should be saved.) Low/no water landscaping? No answer. Trees to absorb pollution from trains and vehicles? Yes, trees will be planted. Need more "nature" along Sunset Boulevard.

A neighbor living on 7th requested landscaping that screens Audubon, the parking lot and lighting.

Will Brumback Inc. retain ownership? Yes.

Architect? Paul Matthews.

Can the bridge over Latah Creek handle the increased traffic? Gib checked this out before buying the property, and the answer was yes, and there are no plans to close the bridge, even when work is done on it.

Gib expressed interest in purchasing other properties around Sunset and Government Way and re-developing them.

POTENTIAL PURCHASE OF BOULEVARD MOTEL BY CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Jonathan Mallahan worked for the city's Office of Neighborhood Services for about 10 yr, so he understands how our neighborhood councils work. Some of us know him from that role. Now he is Vice-President for Housing, Catholic Charities (CC).

The city badly needs more shelter space for families with children, and when the Boulevard Motel was listed for sale recently, the city approached CC about purchasing the property. The motel is in good condition, would need little renovation, could be opened quickly (probably within 30 days of approval), is on a bus route, and is near the Fish Lake Trail. Fifteen units are there now; a few more can be added.

CC currently does not have all the money needed for the purchase. They have submitted an application for capital funding from the state, and expect an answer by September 5. The City Council voted to provide \$350 K in capital funds and a contract for a 3 yr operating subsidy.

This is a proposal for now. CC needs funds from the state and city to proceed.

An emergency family shelter is a place where parents and children can stay safely for up to 30 days until they can be placed in long-term housing. Usually these families were staying in places not meant for human habitation before arriving at a shelter. There will be a variety of services, including case managers, counseling, substance use treatment, employment services and access to early learning/parenting assistance. Residents of the emergency shelter will be required to participate in services and must maintain sobriety during their stay at the shelter.

There is a possibility that the building will be redeveloped into a longer-term facility, similar to Gonzaga Haven. This would involve substantially more renovation to the property.

Jonathan's presentation is at

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/15SERwf2o66LGujk7rblO6P5cMBs5sACr/view?usp=sharing>

Questions from neighbors (submitted to westhills99224@gmail.com before the meeting and to the chat during the meeting):

Are you aware of whether the city has a policy for locating homeless shelters in particular areas of the city? The city cannot legally regulate the locations of shelters or ban them from certain areas.

Clean & sober? Substances of abuse not allowed.

Registered sex offenders? Unlikely, but occasionally an exception is made for low-level offenders.

Are there requirements for such things as random testing for substances of abuse, involvement in programs, or curfews? Yes, residents of the emergency shelter will be required to access services and must not use alcohol or illegal drugs during their stay. But we cannot evict them.

Do you anticipate this shelter attracting other homeless people, and how will you deal with that? This is a shelter for families. Guests are not allowed and 24/7 staffing will be provided to monitor access and support residents.

The nearby West Wynn is known for drug crimes - is this a good location for displaced families?

General response for the previous three questions: The shelter will be staffed 24/7 with at least two people. They will manage access by non-residents.

The Fish Lake Trailhead, 1/4 block away, has too many car break-ins. Can you assure that your residents will not add to these problems? There are no guarantees, however, with 24/7 staffing, we will have sufficient resources to mitigate impacts on the surrounding neighborhood.

Will you request increased police patrols? We welcome police and want them here. But there is limited availability.

Will you provide better street lighting? We will improve outdoor lighting, but property owners are limited in what they are allowed to do.

Security cameras? There are some now, and more will be added. They will be connected to the internet and monitored remotely. In addition, perimeter fencing will be added.

What will be the traffic impact? Little. Many residents will not have cars, and there won't be many trips in and out.

Landscaping: Low/no water landscaping? Plant trees to absorb pollution from trains and motor vehicles? The city has an approved list of appropriate plants.

Does this project need a zoning change for this as well? No. Current zoning is appropriate.

What is going to happen to that coffee hut? CC would like to purchase the property.

Is this a full family emergency housing? Most families will have just mothers and children, but sometimes there will be fathers.

Will the housing be LGBTQ friendly? Yes. CC does not discriminate against any group of people.

How many families? Initially we would like about 20 units. This could grow to about 35 units.

Sorry there wasn't time for all questions in the chat. Questions can be sent to jonathan.mallahan@cceasternwa.org.

Approved October 12, 2021