

WEST HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF OCTOBER 12, 2021

ATTENDANCE

Neighbors: Steve Bieri, Paul Bundy (Community Assembly Representative), Karen Carlberg (Chair), Rick Clapp (Treasurer), Dwight Emerson, Josette Gates, Mike Gifford (Vice-Chair & Cleanup Coordinator), William Hagy, Bill & Judy Heaton, Karen Jurasin (Communications Director), Susan Mensching, Liz Mostad

City staff: Annica Eagle (Community Programs Coordinator, Office of Neighborhood Services, City of Spokane)

Guests: Matthew Antush (Candidate for Spokane Municipal Court Judge), Ann Farnsworth (Grandview/Thorpe), Mike Lish (Candidate for City Council), Gloria Ochoa-Bruck (Candidate for Spokane Municipal Court Judge), Nikki Pippenger (Adviser to Matthew Antush), Betsy Wilkerson (Candidate for City Council), Zack Zappone (Candidate for City Council)

SECOND HARVEST: Eric Williams, Community Partnerships Director, Second Harvest

Eric was unable to give his presentation due to internet problems. His presentation will be rescheduled for our December meeting.

AUGUST MINUTES

Minutes for the meeting of August 10, 2021, were approved.

COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY REPORT

Paul Bundy (West Hills Community Assembly Representative) summarized the September and October 2021 Community Assembly meetings, focusing on topics relevant to West Hills.

September: 1) A representative of Greater Spokane Inc. spoke about Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). This needs to be updated every 5 yr for a city to qualify for federal economic development assistance. One purpose is to inspire city leaders to better serve their communities. 2) Some CA Reps were concerned that the City Council made changes to rules about housing density without sufficient input from the CA or the neighborhoods. The CA will communicate further with the City Council about this. 3) There will be a new CA liaison to the Spokane Park Board.

October: 1) The CA Budget Committee still has money left to give \$200 to neighborhoods for promoting neighbor involvement in neighborhood councils (West Hills already received a grant for 2021). 2) There will be tree plantings on October 9 at Audubon and Comstock Parks. 3) Johnnie Perkins, the new City of Spokane Administrator, discussed the city's homelessness response. Activities will include community cleanup, towing abandoned vehicles, and

monitoring illegal activity at parks. The Cannon shelter now is open during the day and year round.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF WEST HILLS ELECTION

West Hills officers serve two-year terms. Current terms end December 31, 2021. We will elect officers for 2022-2023 at our December 14 meeting. Please volunteer! Offices are Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Community Assembly Representative, CA Rep alternate, and Communications Director. Lists of duties are in the West Hills Bylaws, <https://westhills.spokaneneighborhoods.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Bylaws.WestHills.2016-Final.pdf>

CANDIDATES FOR SPOKANE MUNICIPAL COURT JUDGE

Matthew Antush is the incumbent and Gloria Ochoa-Bruck is the challenger for Position 3 (Positions 1 and 2 also are on the ballot with just an incumbent). Matt described what a municipal court judge does in Spokane. Matt and Gloria each described their backgrounds and experiences, as well as what they can bring to the position. Prior to the meeting neighbors were invited to submit questions to the neighborhood email account. There was time for the candidates to answer questions about the revolving doors of the jail system, the pros and cons of jail vs release, encouraging vs requiring treatment for what ails the perpetrators, and handling of repeat offenders.

CANDIDATES FOR CITY COUNCIL

City Council District 2 includes the southern part of West Hills (south of the cemeteries) and District 3 includes the northern part of West Hills. All three candidates were present: Betsy Wilkerson, the incumbent, is running unopposed in District 2, and Mike Lish and Zack Zappone are running for the District 3 position. Each candidate briefly listed their priorities. Then they answered questions submitted by neighbors concerning homelessness, property crime, revolving doors of the jail system, and paving unpaved streets.

CLOSURE OF ROSAMOND BRIDGE: William Hagy, West Hills

Our neighbor William Hagy did some research about the closure of the Rosamond bridge and summarized the article about it that was published yesterday in Spokesman-Review. The bridge was closed in April because WSDOT engineers concluded that it was unsafe for vehicles. The WSDOT engineer in charge of the bridge said that repair will cost \$2.9 M. He doesn't know where the money will come from, but they might have some money next spring. Closure of the bridge is a problem for our neighborhood for several reasons: increased time for entering and leaving the neighborhood, fewer routes for emergency vehicles to enter the neighborhood, and fewer routes for neighborhood evacuation if that becomes necessary.

It seems like there have been more homeless camps around W 13th Avenue, between the bridge and S Lindeke St, since the bridge was closed, because there no longer is vehicle traffic there. There is more trash, dumping, human waste, and vandalism. Some neighbors have reported more prowling, break-ins, and thefts nearby. Some neighbors have reported aggressive behavior. Garden Springs Creek, which is next to W 13th Avenue, may be endangered. The alternate Fish Lake Trailhead is at the intersection of S Lindeke St and W 13th Avenue, so it may more unsafe for trail users. All of this has been reported to the police multiple times, and they, or other city staff, have come to move the homeless people out and to clean up. West Hills neighbors also have done cleanup.

Karen C has exchanged a couple of emails with the engineer in charge of the bridge, so he is very aware of all our concerns.

Betsy Wilkerson said that she and the City Council can lean on the state legislature for funding. She said that WSDOT should be responsible for cleanup. She said that the land around the creek and Fish Lake Trail is owned by the Spokane Parks Department, so they should be involved.

Susan M said that concrete blocks have been used to block the road at High Bridge Park; maybe that could be done on W 13th Avenue. William said that the barricades at the north end of the Rosamond bridge were pushed away.

Better lighting would increase safety in that area. Karen C said that the Susie Stephens Trail will go across the Rosamond bridge, going between Finch Arboretum and the alternate Fish Lake Trailhead at W 13th Avenue and S Lindeke Street.

OPEN FORUM

Betsy Wilkerson said that the 2020 census will necessitate drawing new boundaries for the city's three City Council districts. Volunteers are needed to serve on the redistricting committee. It's possible that West Hills will land entirely within District 3.

Rick said that we need another mobile speed sign on Government Way. He said there was another crash into the rock wall, killing a motorcyclist. Betsy said that we can ask the city council or mayor for money to make improvements around the rock wall. She said that a guardrail was added to Altamont Boulevard, and maybe this could be a solution on Government Way. Annica said that the city is working on getting the traffic calming program going again, so our Government Way project may be implemented in the next few months. Karen C said that changes to Government Way also depend on a decision about the route for the Fish Lake Trail to Centennial Trail Connector Trail, which might use Government Way. Susan M said that the Government Way curve would be more visible at night with something reflective and with better lighting.

Liz thanked William for all he does for the neighborhood.

Approved December 14, 2021