

WEST HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF JUNE 14, 2022

ATTENDANCE

Neighbors: Paul Bundy (Treasurer), Karen Carlberg (Chair), Dwight Emerson (Executive Committee), Michelle Griffith, William Hagy (Vice Chair), Joe Long, Susan Mensching (Community Assembly Representative), Julieann Morse (Executive Committee), David Paine
City staff: Mark Brownell (Spokane Police), Johnnie Perkins (City Administrator)

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF APRIL 12, 2022

William moved, and Susan seconded that the minutes for the meeting of April 12, 2022, be accepted without change. Yea 8, nay 0.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR: Johnnie Perkins

Prior to the meeting, Johnnie asked Karen C if there were any specific topics we want him to address.

Question: Has Catholic Charities decided how to use the property they purchased at Sunset Boulevard and Government Way? Since the mayor's announcement about moving the CC shelter out of downtown, the uncertainty has created significant angst within the neighborhood, as well as extra time, work, and turmoil for our neighborhood officers. Answer: A decision has not been made, but some sort of low-income housing is most likely. CC does want a new homeless shelter somewhere outside downtown, but a location has not been chosen. Wherever it goes, the neighborhood council will be engaged throughout the process. The Chief Garry Neighborhood Council was very involved in decisions about the new shelter on East Trent Avenue. Question: Susan asked when a decision will be made. Answer: They will get back to us.

Question: Most citizens know too little about homelessness. How can neighborhoods educate ourselves about such things as the social and economic contributors to homelessness, as well as the effectiveness of various approaches to moving out of it? Can the city help with this? How can citizens help? Answer: There are many charitable organizations that help homeless people. Citizens can volunteer or contribute money. Property crimes are not necessarily due to homelessness, but rather to problems such as drugs, mental health issues, trauma, or abuse. The mayor wants shelters to provide wrap around services, including mental health treatment, case management, and job training.

COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY: Susan Mensching, West Hills CA Representative

Susan reported on the May and June CA meetings. May minutes are available at <https://static.spokanecity.org/documents/neighborhoods/getinvolved/community->

assembly/agendas/2022/ca-agenda-2022-06-02.pdf (minutes are at bottom). Some things that are relevant to West Hills:

The mayor's state of the city is available at spokanecity.org. The city is working with the Police Chief to found a Task Force on Violent Crimes. The mayor has a priority to decentralize services for the homeless. City staff are cleaning up litter and graffiti, but there are not enough staff. Work on the Don Kardong bridge will start soon.

Councilman Bingle's report: ARPA funds will be used for mobile medical services intended for unhoused people, childcare, mental health services, and rental assistance.

Director of Planning Spencer Gardner: Working on accommodating density and infill development. Want community input.

Traffic calming workshops are beginning.

City Council President Breann Beggs' report: We need to worry about water levels in our aquifer. We may have some restrictions on water use. Public education will be important.

Three new speed cameras have been installed near schools in District 2. Revenue goes to the city (used for traffic calming) and to the state.

WASTE TO ENERGY PLANT: David Paine, Plant Manager, City of Spokane

Thanks to Josette Gates for inviting David Paine to tell us about the Waste to Energy Plant, which is in the West Hills neighborhood. Josette suggested four topics; David answered those, plus one more. David's presentation is at <https://tinyurl.com/bdfjv8ze>

The WTE (also called Energy From Waste) plant was built by the City of Spokane in the 1990s. Although the choice was controversial, a WTE plant was chosen over a new landfill because Spokane has a very clean aquifer which could be contaminated by a landfill. Additionally, a WTE plant has fewer greenhouse gas emissions than a landfill.

The WTE plant generates a significant amount of electricity for the City of Spokane. Combustion of waste releases the energy stored in the waste materials, and this energy is used to generate electricity.

More than 99.9% of emissions from the plant are normal components of air, including nitrogen, oxygen, and water vapor. The remaining components are highly regulated, and in Spokane are well below federally permitted thresholds.

There was one air violation in the past year. This was due to a super heater temperature; the requirement has been deemed outdated and will be removed during the next renewal process.

There are no new projects planned that would directly improve emissions. A couple of projects are ongoing or planned that will improve operational efficiency.

Debris is a problem along Sunset Boulevard and Geiger Boulevard. The city and county are trying to educate the public about the importance of securing loads to reduce litter, and they started assessing a fee for unsecured loads this year. Cleanup is done by either Geiger Correctional Facility people or city staff.

NEW NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCE OFFICER: MARK BROWNELL

Mark Brownell is the new neighborhood police officer for the seven neighborhood councils in southwestern Spokane. Previously he worked with the drug unit. He said the best way to contact him is by email, mbrownell@spokanepolice.org.

Asked about crime stats in West Hills, he said we have less crime than the average for Spokane neighborhoods. Most of the crime is in the business district along Highway 2. Crimes of opportunity are common, so keeping things locked is important.

Mark encouraged us to call 911 for crimes in progress or 311 for nonurgent reporting of crimes. Please report everything you see. The more tips the police have, the more likely they can find and apprehend offenders. Video is great.

FOOD PANTRY PROJECT: Julieann Morse, Dwight Emerson, West Hills

Julieann reported on the work that she, Dwight Emerson, and Mike Gifford have been doing with food pantries.

There is a food pantry in the Finch Arboretum neighborhood that was built by Girl Scouts. Our West Hills team has been keeping it filled using food from the Southwest Community Center in Browne's Addition. The neighborhood is using the food.

The team is looking for other locations for additional pantries, as well as someone to build and install them. Funding comes from Volunteers for America and some churches.

WEST HILLS UPDATES: Karen Carlberg and William Hagy

Karen C said that she and William submitted a proposal for a Community Engagement Grant, and the grant was approved. There is about \$800 to purchase another year of a Zoom subscription and materials for William to build two sandwich-type signs that can be used to publicize West Hills events.

William said that the Fish Lake Trailhead cleanup on June 11 was a great success. There was a good turn out and the trailhead looks much better now. Carl Strong, the Parks Department employee who oversees the Fish Lake Trail, will have new trail maps installed soon.

OPEN FORUM

Susan said graffiti was discussed at the last Community Assembly meeting. It is hard to hire people to clean it up, so they may organize a volunteer effort.

Susan will look into possible art grants that we might use to paint the light posts on the Latah Bridge.

APPROVED AUGUST 9, 2022