

West Hills Neighborhood Council Meeting Minutes

9/13/24

Start 6:06pm

Leadership Present: Rob, Joy, Ryan, Paul, Michael (*Secretary Brynn McNabb absent, so Vice Chair Oelrich filling in on recording of minutes*)

Council Reps: Jenny Ramos (Rep Dillon) & Andres Grageda (Rep Navarrete)

Number of Attendees: 12 (plus 4 special guests with Spokane Fire Dept)

1. Introductions: Name, Location, Skill Brought
2. Chair Robert Thompson provided review of past meeting and the agenda.
3. Ginny Ramos, LA for CM Dillon who was not in attendance, shared the crossing beacon request is being reviewed.
4. Andreas Grageda, LA for CM Navarrete who was not in attendance, updated on a change in parking requirements for construction to allow for more flexibility. Updated group on “Homelessness Bill of Rights” ordinance which he shared intends to prevent discrimination due to housing status.
5. Annie Deasy, Neighborhood Council Liaison for the City, provided the following updates: Disposal passes have been distributed to neighborhood councils. Newest parking study trailers are being deployed. Checkout city neighborhood newsletter for more information.
6. Vice Chair Oelrich welcomed special guest, Jamie McIntyre, of the Spokane Fire Dept. who provided a 30 minute presentation which covered: wild fires have increased in intensity and frequency. Fires have always been a natural part of forests. Wildfires are wind driven events. McIntyre provided the following recommendations for neighbors:
 - Tips for hardening structures. “Ready, set, go” Provided packet for preparing for fire, hardening structures, evacuation strategies.
 - Maintain 5ft barrier around your home. Keep wood piles 30ft away from home.
 - Create a wildfire ready neighborhood. Fire Dept. has a wildfire planner who can assess homes and neighborhoods for fire safety and readiness. Free service provided by fire department.
 - Two of the top five illegal fire locations are along the river by West Hills neighborhood.
 - Burn restrictions put into effect during fire risk conditions.
 - If concerns over neighbor fires, call clean air or 911.
 - Even if burn restriction is in place, fires to cook food are allowed. There is some discretion depending on the details on scene.
 - Assure you have a spark arrester on fire pits.
 - Evacuations: Make sure you’re enrolled in Alert Spokane which is the official communication method for Spokane region. Uses geo-fencing to alert residents in specific areas. An unofficial option is “Watch Spokane”.

-When it comes to evacuation, give yourself extra time.

-Consider talking to Sarah Ness about specific evacuation routes. If your neighborhood only has one way in and out, consider evacuating on “SET” in the “ready, set, go” preparation.

-Consider fire-resistant landscaping.

-What to do about brush or neighboring lots with fire risks. Call zone enforcement.

-What to do about insurers dropping home insurance due to fire risk? ...do your best to create a fire aware and prepared community that minimizes risk.

7. Additionally, three area Spokane Fire Fighters stopped in to meet neighbors and answer questions. They reminded participants not to throw away batteries but to place them in a separate bag for collection. Neighborhood thanked fire department for recent work combatting fires in the neighborhood.

8. Jan Arkill shared that in honor of Jack Arkill (Jan’s husband) they’ve planted 5 new trees in Whittier Park. 50 trees donated to Arboretum in honor of Suzie Stephens and money donated to connect fish lake trail to Arboretum.

9. Michael stated disposal passes are available for neighbors. See him after to collect a pass.

10. Chair Thompson notified participants of the next meeting in October and closed meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:34pm. Minutes respectfully submitted by Ryan Oelrich, Vice Chair.