

Rockwood Neighborhood Council Meeting

June 6, 2017

Hutton Elementary School Multipurpose Room

Call to Order: 7:00 pm

Chair: Dave Lucas

Quorum: Yes.

Total neighbors: 20 Voting residents: 14 Non-voting residents: 6 Visitors: 11
In attendance: Katie Myers and Melissa Wittstruck from Office of Neighborhood Services, and Jake Fraley, assistant to CM Kinnear.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the May meeting were reviewed. Motion to accept as presented carried.

Treasurer Report: Kurt Helgerson

We received a \$10 donation at the neighborhood cleanup event. This was added to the bank account. This month Kurt will file the annual state non-profit documentation with a \$10 fee.

Executive Board Actions

There was no meeting in May.

City Council Representatives:

Council Member Lori Kinnear unable to attend.

Council Member Breean Beggs:

Full funding for 24/7 shelter for homeless people was no longer available starting in May, but has been restored with help from City monies. Work is underway for a more comprehensive, area-wide plan by 2019. The long term goal is permanent housing for all who want it by 2021.

The Bluff restoration is almost complete but the legal process is ongoing.

Traffic calming is a continuing topic for the City Council. There may be additional funding from school speed radar fees.

Road construction projects are being reviewed, prioritizing roads with existing damage and accelerating other projects using funds from the street levy. Neighborhood priorities include 17th and Freya, and in front of Lewis and Clark.

Responses to questions:

A proposal regarding sidewalk improvement funding is being developed by the PeTT committee. This is a long term project, currently at the conversation stage, assessing public interest and response. A ballot measure will not be any time soon. The funding would focus on areas with the most traffic, e.g. around schools and arterials. Each district would set its own priorities.

Traffic flow is a concern for our neighborhood. The City is looking at the North/South corridors, thinking that speeding is an enforcement issue rather than an engineering issue. Emphasis patrols (the preferred term for speed trap) are placed based on accident reports. There used to be 9 patrols but that has been reduced to 5. Additional future funding may come from the school speed radar program.

To report animals killed in the road, people may call MySpokane Customer Service at 311.

Spokane Police Department: Detective Ty Snyder

Det. Snyder distributed maps of the neighborhood for each of the two previous months showing crime incidents. There were 18 reports in the most recent month, 13 the prior month. This is consistent with warmer weather bringing more incidents. There have been increased patrols at Manito Park due to recent crimes.

Presentation:

Avista Utilities: Larry Lee, Vegetation Management and Dalila Sheehan, Customer Service
Avista will be trimming trees in our neighborhood later this year. This pruning occurs every 5 years to open up space around the power lines. Asplundh and CN Utility are the two contractors doing the work, and each tree crew includes a certified arborist. Postcards will go out ahead of the trimming but otherwise the homeowners will not be contacted unless a tree needs to be removed. Branches will be chipped and taken away but pieces that will not fit in the chipper will be left. When in the neighborhood, Avista will deliver rough woodchips to other residents for free, good for mulch or weed control.

Avista has specific programs for free replacement of trees under power lines, and for free shade trees. The goal is to have the best trees for each location, low trees under the utility lines and taller trees protecting the home.

More information is at avistautilities.com/vegetation, or at Customer Service.

Avista Customer Service has 157 employees. They handle an average of 60,000 calls per month. Avista's service goal is to work with homeowners.

In response to questions:

Instances where tree branches block street lights should be reported to Customer Service at 800-227-9187.

There are other services with utility poles and lines in neighborhoods such as communication and fiber optics; not all lines are Avista. Most new developments have underground service lines, but in existing neighborhoods these are expensive to install and may compromise tree roots.

Presentation: Bob Turner, City of Spokane Traffic Engineer

The neighborhood traffic calming project from last year is now in place with the two permanent speed feedback signs on the southern portion of Rockwood Blvd. There is documentation that feedback signs are effective in reducing speeds. In contrast, stop signs and traffic circles on residential streets actually increase speeds as drivers try to make up time. Strips that light up with speeding were tried in the county, but were ruined within 6 months and found not sustainable in our 4 season climate.

The traffic volumes on the South Hill have changed dramatically in the last 20 years as commuting patterns have changed. One example is traffic on Garfield which is 75% greater than in the 1990s as more children are driven to school rather than walking. Even now there is a 30-35% difference in volume when school is not in session.

The handicap cutouts at the island at 10th and Rockwood suggest there is a crosswalk there, but that is not true. Ways to increase safety at that intersection are being considered.

The biggest traffic concern in the Rockwood Neighborhood is speeding. This is more of an enforcement issue than an engineering issue. The average speed on Grand at Manito Park is 23 mph. Mr. Turner shares data from speed monitors with the Police Dept. to consider where to put emphasis patrols. Do you cut through the neighborhood because the arterial connectivity is not safe or convenient? 29th is the only East/West arterial and truck route across the South Hill. Grand and Ray are the only extensive North/South arterials/truck routes. Efforts at arterial traffic calming, such as reducing lanes or adding stop lights will bring more traffic onto side streets as drivers attempt to avoid slowdowns at peak times.

Mr. Turner is very willing to come to a neighborhood to look at concerns about a specific location. His office can be reached through MySpokane Customer Service, 311.

Summer neighborhood activity: Dave Lucas

Outdoor movie night! Hutton Elementary, Saturday August 19!

More information will come via email and Nextdoor later in the summer.

Traffic Calming Projects: Ann Fennessy

Enforcement is the key to traffic calming. This comes not only from the Police Dept. but from society's expectations and examples....."Practice what you preach." Ann shared yard signs she was given, "Drive as if your kids were playing on this street".

Committee Reports

Community Assembly: Julie Banks

The City is working with the Community Assembly to promote attendance at neighborhood council meetings.

Land Use Committee: Margaret Jones, unable to attend.

PeTT (Pedestrian, Transportation, Traffic) Committee: No representative.

South Hill Coalition: Ann Fennessy

More maps showing South Hill connectivity and safe streets will be available in the fall.

Plan Commission: Greg Francis, unable to attend.

Neighborhood Cleanup: Carol Cunningham

Dump pass distribution will be June 24.

Dave offered thanks to Carol for coordinating the neighborhood dumpster cleanup in May.

New Business:

None

Open Topics:

This time is available for any neighbor to raise an issue for open discourse. Individual time to speak may be limited to time available.

A staff member from Spokane Public Library distributed fliers about summer reading programs. This year there are prizes for adult readers as well as children. The library offers many events such as movies, hikes and genealogy. See spokanelibrary.org.

Announcements and other items:

There will be no meetings in July or August. Neighborhood council will still be active and updates will be sent out electronically as needed.

Topic for next meeting:

To be announced.

Meeting adjourned: 8:55 pm

Minutes submitted by Mary Terhaar

Next meeting:

Tuesday September 5, 7 pm