

OSW Community Meeting Minutes

7/21/2022

Prepared by: Clay Trinkle (co-secretary)

6:00-6:30 Social

David Jeavons (Treasurer) Chaired the evening.

6:30-7:30 Speakers

Focus on long-standing safety & nuisance issues in OSW—particularly in the area of Fifth St/Elm Avenue/Mountain (area of Southwest Market). NOTE: OSW, Inc. supports neighbors with issues like this by bringing the right resource people together to hear complaints and offer ideas to help abutters take action.

Existing issues include:

Loitering, littering, consumption of alcohol on the property, drunkenness, possible drug use/dealing, profane language, taunting passers-by, fights, defecating and urinating in the alleyway, disruption of other businesses and abutting properties, theft/porch thefts, derelict houses, homelessness/squatting on vacant properties.

Action to date: Abutters have logged 72 calls to law enforcement. A business owner/abutter has offered to purchase the Southwest Market property to clean it up or remove it entirely. ABC was made aware that the liquor license at Sunnyside Market was revoked at some time in the past for many of the same complaints. He is going to research this and address it in relation to Southwest Market. These problems were raised at OSW meetings several months ago. This resulted in the development of a safety brochure distributed in the neighborhood.

Action items/suggestions based on conversations at the meeting:

ABC can look into liquor license violations. Neighbors need to carefully document occurrences—dates, times, etc. Notify police, ABC rep, code enforcement -- depending on the issues observed. ABC rep intends to talk to the owner of the Southwest Market Business.

The following representatives were contacted by OSW and were part of the conversation to hear the issues, explain their responsibilities and services, and offer resources/suggestions.

City Representatives

- Councilman Joe Cobb
- Councilwomen Stephanie Moon
- Elaine ?: Representative from Sam Rasoul's office
- Clarence Grier (Bob Cowell City Manager)
 - Public works
 - Engineering
 - Environmental management
- Matt Crookshank – Oversees homeless outreach

Housing plans

Connect with resource: homeless@roanokeva.gov

Housed 85 people since January 2022 and reduced homelessness by 60% since 2012
Increase in substance use and untreated mental health issues has increased homeless visibility (not in shelters)

Moving to OSW (just offices, not housing people there)

Walk in services: 5 days a week 8am-noon

--Daria Erich, Code enforcement officer for OSW

Property management/degrading: Especially imp. to OSW to conserve architecture

Rental inspections: Rental properties need to be certified and inspected every 4 years

Q-alert system (Anonymous site to leave code and property issue complaints with city/uses GIS)

Works with ARB (Architectural Review Board) to stop non-permitted projects in OSW.

Must have approval from ARB to get a building permit

Focus is "safety, preservation, and health"

Derelict houses

If owner stops complying/will not fix up, goes to court.

30 days to do repairs, must have some movement towards repairs.

EXAMPLE: 522 Day Ave. – boarded up for years; owner does not live in Roanoke

Looking at new codes to fix the issue of absentee owners

Virginia ABC Licensing: Austin McClure (austin.mcclure@virginiaabc.com)

Responsible for holding alcohol license holders accountable

Wide scope of alcohol laws that are covered

Roanoke City Police: Sergeant Hodges (ronnie.hodges@roanokeva.gov)

Send addresses that we are having issues with!

Wants to establish communication with community again

Working patrol now

Police Department is 70 officers short

Not because of funding: Pay is high/signing bonuses

People still saying no to working in the city (going to county and Botetourt)

Only 1 drug enforcement officer

Mental Health is a big deal in the community

Any help from mental health advocates in the community?

To report incidents: Call 911 – they will prioritize. Calls are logged.

Noted missing the (former) monthly community meetings, where they can hear complaints and know what is happening (Staffing issue)

Will provide help rather than jail, when offenders can and are willing.
Change in laws have hampered ability to police the city
Panhandling is covered under the Constitution: Stop paying, to eventually stop asking
Citizens Police Academy
Reserve Police Officers, Retired officers

5th Street OSW corridor issues & discussion: Property damage, loitering, littering, consumption of alcohol on the Southwest Market property, drunkenness, possible drug use/dealing, profane language, taunting passers-by, fights, defecating and urinating in the alleyway, disruption of other businesses and abutting properties, theft/porch thefts, derelict houses, running stop signs, homelessness/squatting on vacant properties.

- ABC input:
 - Loitering is against regulation
 - Education is first step (of property owners, managers, customers)
 - Can do investigation
 - Pull ABC license only real power they have if violations, like public consumption (Southwest Market license does not allow consumption on property)
 - ABC responds after the fact, not first responders
 - Email Austin McClure (austin.mcclure@virginiaabc.com) with details of violations
- Drugs are an issue as well
- Problem: Judges not holding property owners accountable with complying with laws.
- Police try to respond, but are short-staffed and need to prioritize calls.

Business meeting called to order

Board present: David Jeavons (Treasurer), Terry McGuire, Clay Trinkle, Elaine Fleck

Board absent: Mark Hostetter (president), Erica Danko (V-P), Grace Johnston (co-secretary) At Large: Julie Gale, Mary Jo Gale, Phillip Morgan, Mary Anne Mather, Julie Mugford

Neighbor attendees: xx neighbors, 3 police officers & 2 presenters.

Reviewed minutes from the June 2022 meeting: Approved

COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Safety committee—Police Calls 6/21-7/17

ALL OTHER LARCENY	22-068481	600 BLOCK SW 8TH ST	Roanoke Police	7/17/2022 10:00
THEFT FROM MOTOR VEHICLE	22-065676	700 BLOCK SW 1ST ST	Roanoke Police	7/10/2022 20:40
SIMPLE ASSAULT	22-065238	100 BLOCK SW ALBEMARLE AVE	Roanoke Police	7/9/2022 15:50
SIMPLE ASSAULT	22-064873	500 BLOCK SW 3RD ST	Roanoke Police	7/8/2022 16:35
SIMPLE ASSAULT	22-064860	300 BLOCK SE ELM AVE	Roanoke Police	7/8/2022 15:53
ALL OTHER LARCENY	22-063869	400 BLOCK SW ELM AVE	Roanoke Police	7/5/2022 0:00
BURGLARY (RESIDENTIAL)	22-063051	600 BLOCK SW WALNUT AVE	Roanoke Police	7/3/2022 21:30
SIMPLE ASSAULT	22-062721	400 BLOCK SW ALBEMARLE AVE	Roanoke Police	7/3/2022 11:45
DESTRUCTION/DAMAGE/VANDALISM OF PROPERTY	22-062312	900 BLOCK SW MARSHALL AVE	Roanoke Police	7/2/2022 13:00
MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT	22-061475	400 BLOCK SW KING GEORGE AVE	Roanoke Police	6/29/2022 21:00
ALL OTHER LARCENY	22-060584	1300 BLOCK SW MAPLE AVE	Roanoke Police	6/28/2022 7:45
SIMPLE ASSAULT	22-060037	SW 200 BLOCK ELM AVE SW	Roanoke Police	6/26/2022 17:00
THEFT FROM MOTOR VEHICLE	22-059998	500 BLOCK SW JEFFERSON ST	Roanoke Police	6/26/2022 14:15
DISORDERLY CONDUCT	22-059964	500 BLOCK SW LUCK AVE	Roanoke Police	6/26/2022 12:50
SIMPLE ASSAULT	22-063640	300 BLOCK SW KING GEORGE AVE	Roanoke Police	6/26/2022 12:00
THEFT FROM MOTOR VEHICLE	22-059723	600 BLOCK SW WALNUT AVE	Roanoke Police	6/25/2022 19:30
BURGLARY (RESIDENTIAL)	22-061434	500 BLOCK SW WALNUT AVE	Roanoke Police	6/25/2022 12:00
THEFT FROM MOTOR VEHICLE	22-057991	500 BLOCK SW 6TH ST	Roanoke Police	6/21/2022 8:01
DESTRUCTION/DAMAGE/VANDALISM OF PROPERTY	22-057953	100 BLOCK SW ELM AVE	Roanoke Police	6/21/2022 1:50

2. Events

• National Night Out

OSW event, Tuesday, August 2, 6-9pm, Alexander Gish House

Purpose: Meet your neighbors

Show appreciation for First Responders

Jan Keister is the lead. Jan handed out fliers. Everyone was asked to mark their calendars and spread the word. OSW promotion will be through our email list (Mark Hostetter), our social media (Mary Anne Mather), and word of mouth. We should each try to recruit 3-5 people who might not otherwise join. Terry McGuire offered to arrive early to help with set up.

• Parlor Tour

Long standing (40+ years) OSW fundraiser -- funds underwrite upkeep of the Gish House and support neighborhood activities and projects). Gish house is a city-owned property. OSW rents for \$1/year (and has responsibility for its upkeep).

Parlor Tour dates: December 3 & 4, 2022

Tickets \$20 to visit selected houses in OSW decorated for the holidays.

• Block parties

Would like to do another (Day Ave possible in early Oct or Woods Ave expressed interest via NextDoor)

Need volunteers

3. Preservation, Parks and Green Space Committee

- **OSW gateway signs (there are 3)**

Franklin St. and Day Ave: in process of replacement after it disappeared (covered by insurance)

Franklin and King George (was repaired and is already up)

- **Partnership with Tree Stewards and Trees Roanoke**

They will provide free trees and planting assistance on public property (curb strips, parks, etc.)

If interested in a tree in a curb strip near our property, sign up with Terry McGuire (3 people signed up to explore a tree planting in their curb strips).

Note: If neighbors sponsor a tree, they need to be watered regularly for minimum 3 years

- **Lots owned by OSW**

- Corner 8th Street and Day Ave**

Need Volunteers for a fall clean-up, removing invasives, and November tree planting

- Woods Ave**

This area floods, people camping there and dumping trash.

Would like to clean up, longer term (and remove invasive growth).

Use: Serves as a natural filter (keeps trash from running into Roanoke River)

Evergreen planting in the future?

Terry McGuire is leading cleanup: 14 people signed up to help with trash clean-up and invasives removal at the Woods and Day lots.

- **Misc.**

Keep a list of maintenance needs for Highland Park

Roanoke City Parks Foundations

- Offsetting deferred maintenance

- Cooperate help

NEW BUSINESS/open comments

1. Highland Park garden beds

OSW was approached by Shawn Jadrnicek for input on establishing raised vegetable garden beds in Highland Park in conjunction with activities at Highland Park Elementary School.

“ Shawn of VT's extension service (and neighborhood resident!) has a gardening educational program in collaboration with Roanoke City Schools, and he would like to build a series of raised beds in Highland Park to serve the Elementary School, since the confines of the school property do not allow for garden construction on site. With the need for an open area with water access and direct sun close to the school, the most feasible site is adjacent to the fountain near the eastern edge of the Park. Before moving forward we'd like to hear from the

neighborhood, so let us know the preferred method for sharing the schematic and gathering feedback from residents on the proposal.”

- Need community permission
- Proposed location right next to fountain site for best sunlight and access to water
- Community would have access during off season
- Using modern techniques
 - No weeding, no watering
 - Low maintenance
 - 5 beds (5' x 40')
- shawnj@vt.edu
- Community support through volunteering?
- Proposed schedule for creating the garden area
 - Install beds and irrigation system and amend soil (first week August)
 - Cover beds with light blocking woven poly landscape fabric for 6 weeks during growing season to kill existing vegetation (must be covered by second week in August to kill wiregrass or vegetable planting will need to be postponed until fall 2023)
 - Remove fabric and plant a cover crop of crimson clover (mid-September)
 - Mow cover crop and reapply light blocking fabric (last week in January)
 - Plant vegetables (March-April)

2. Request for guest speaker suggestions for future meetings. Possible sources: VT Animal Cancer Research Institute, Historical Society of Western Virginia & Director of the O. Winston Link Museum, talk about the Tetero Indian sites within OSW. No discussion or decisions.

Adjourned 8:14PM