

2023/10.19 **OSW Community Meeting MINUTES**

Social Hosts: Elizabeth and Michael Shasberger

Facilitator: Mary Anne Mather

Board attendees: Mary Anne Mather, Lynn Speno, Richard Normand, Simon Wolf, Cara Becker, Annmarie Drake

Absent: Terry McGuire (V-P), David Jeavons (treasurer), Julie Mugford, Elaine Fleck

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS: (10 min Terry)

- Thank you Elizabeth & Michael Shasberger for hosting tonight’s refreshments.

Volunteer Hosts for 11/16/2023: **Please see Mary Anne Mather**

- **UPCOMING OSW EVENTS:** Online Calendar is live at oldsouthwest.org/events
–**LGBTQ+ Historic Walking Tour**, Sunday, 10/22, 2pm. FREE. Meet Highland Park Fountain.
More info: <http://lgbthistory.pages.roanoke.edu/walking-tour/>

–**OSW Parlor Tour:** Dec 2, 5-9pm & Dec 3, 1-5pm
(**DISCOUNTED online ticket sales now until 12/1: oldsouthwest.org \$25 after 12/1.**)

–10/26 Wed. 6PM **Spooktacular Plawking** in OSW: FINAL Meet-up of the year! Costumes encouraged but not required. Meet at Golden Cactus or

– 11/11, 9am-noon: **Tree Planting** with Roanoke Tree Stewards. Meet-up Mountain & 4th St.

PRESENTER: Trevor Shannon, Battalion Chief, Roanoke Emergency Management

trevor.shannon@roanokeva.gov

Trevor shared:

- Info about safety during local emergencies of all kinds & importance of shelter-in-place & evacuation kits. Resource: ready.gov re: checklists for personal/family 72-hour preparedness kits (put in a 5-gallon bucket)
- How to sign up for Star City Alerts – Roanoke’s official emergency notification system.
- Status of city planning for urban safety related to derailments/railroad emergencies: how Roanoke is working with the railroad to prevent and prepare for disasters like East Palestine, PA.

Presentation Points:

Roanoke now has a deputy coordinator to allow Trevor to do more outreach to the community. They coordinate with police department. NOTE: People can report location of homeless individuals to him. They will check on the people and provide them with resources. Their department deals with/resolves hazmat issues (full hazmat team can be available from Salem to Roanoke within 10 minutes).

They monitor special events for safety. In Roanoke: 1000 people moving or walking is considered a special event. Events of this size require a permit and a special emergency plan in place.

They address 5 phases of emergency handling—from planning through recovery (including future mitigation). In Roanoke, mitigation has helped lessen Roanoke River flooding.

Top Roanoke hazards: flooding, storms, high winds or other special circumstances (like COVID) They are equipped with boats, dry suits, etc. (major funding through FEMA).

Embracing preparedness starts AT HOME: Be prepared with food, etc. for loss of power for at least 3 days. Other needs: flashlights, batteries, oil lamps, candles, water (1 gallon per person per day).

IMPORTANT: Do not drive through standing water. Swift water rescue is very dangerous (more so than fire).

Encouraged people to sign up for Star City alerts for evacuations, etc.

He provided brochures & emergency lists at the meeting and offered more of anything if OSW needs them for distribution.

OSW BUSINESS

1. Board Elections Overview

--CONTEXT:

- OSW, Inc. elections take place in November. Bylaws state: 7-11 board members (4 officers and 3 - 7 at large members). Must live in OSW as a home owner or renter to serve on the Board.
- Current board members interested in running: T Simon Wolf (President), Terry McGuire (V-P), David Jeavons (treasurer), Mary Anne Mather (secretary), Richard Normand, Bill Dandridge, Cara Becker, Annemarie Drake. Three positions are still open.
- The secretary gave an overview of OSW committees and encouraged participation. Interested people outside of OSW are also eligible to participate on committees.

Alexander-Gish House Maintenance & Rentals

Communications

Fundraising

Community Outreach/ Membership

Neighborhood Safety

Environmental Preservation, Parks & Greenspace

Historic Preservation

Events

- Neighbors were asked to consider offering support to OSW, Inc. committees, especially in these areas: planning/organizing social events & activities, fundraising, historic preservation, neighborhood safety, OSW webmaster or content help/social media, support for historic Gish House (maintenance/landscaping/property maintenance/misc maintenance skills), etc.

--PROCESS:

- Board nominations accepted until 11/2. Email maryanne.mather@gmail.com

(Interest in committee participation also requested & encouraged.)

- Vote 11/16 at OSW Community Meeting. All OSW property owners and renters eligible to vote. Outreach/membership committee prepares ballot.
- At November Community Meeting, each applicant introduces themselves and their interests related to OSW.

Board and committee participation builds community and benefits our Old Southwest neighborhood. The current board members encourage and invite people to consider contributing to our neighborhood in this way.

2. OSW Neighborhood Safety (Cara Becker)

--Prior to the meeting, Officer Underwood our OSW Resource Officer noted that he had 3 updates to share, but he did not attend.

--There was a general call for safety concerns to elevate to Officer Underwood.

Questions arose about what constitutes reportable safety issues. Mentioned: homeless encampments, people living in deserted properties, repeated drinking/loitering/littering in specific problem locations. It was call to our attention that people have called and sent email to Officer Underwood, but no response was received. Cara Becker made a note to mention this to Officer Underwood. If people have issues, report them via OSW website form, and the OSW secretary will forward to proper channels and also report them directly to Underwood. Letting OSW Inc. know your concerns, as well as Officer Underwood, helps us to stay on top of local concerns. Cara hopes to get Underwood's cards to distribute.

3. Isabel Thornton from Restoration Housing made a brief presentation about their pending project in Old Southwest.

--Gave attendees an overview of the non-profit & their mission, mentioned a few examples in the city (currently have 7 properties). Dual mission: historic preservation and affordable housing.

--Provided an overview of proposed adaptive reuse project: proposed 15 "affordable" senior housing (55+), one-bedroom units at Trinity Church (Mountain Ave SW) in the educational/fellowship wing. The project requires rezoning approval from the city to rezone from institutional to residential. They have a purchase agreement with the church. The building needs capital improvements (building most likely will be left vacant if this project does not move forward).

--"Affordable" rent formula is 30% - 80% of median income. Project is targeted for over 55 with fixed incomes. Restoration Housing hopes to offer secure, stable, reliable, safe housing options @\$803 per month. Plan on having a resident in-house manager.

--Sale includes parking lot that provides adequate parking for the project. The lot will be combined with the current church property as one deed.

--Church sanctuary will not be used for apartments. It will become a gathering space (worship space, and other events). 3rd St Coffee House will remain housed in the building. Restoration Housing's mission is to be good community stewards and retain ownership of their properties in perpetuity.

4. RAM House Updates: Tony Neuron, RAM House Board Member

Current property on Campbell in OSW is being rehabbed. Moving to Elm Avenue next to the former Trust House properties. RAM House offers therapy and homeless assistance resources, provides family assistance, and provides a space for unhoused people to rest, do laundry, have lunch, etc. during the day. OSW residents were offered discount tickets to RAM House's upcoming fundraiser celebrating their 50th anniversary (at the Jefferson Center).

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS (attendees directed to see details in minutes online)

<http://oldsouthwest.org/minutes>

ADJOURN by 8PM

COMMITTEE REPORTS in minutes

A. Environmental Protection, Parks, Greenspace (Go Green)

- 11/11, 9am-noon: Tree Planting with Roanoke Tree Stewards. Meet-up spot near Elm/4th TBA.
- Day Ave Pocket Park Update:
 - Water reactivated first week of October. Thank you Sarah Baumgardner, WVWA.
 - 10/7 Successful Native-Plant Garden & Hedgerow Installation (Volunteers: OSW neighbors, Garden Vitals, City Garden Club, Town & Country Garden Club, Andrew Campbell/landscaper)
 - Free mulch delivered: Bartlett Tree Service (Adam Braaten)
 - The new Star City Garden Club adopted Day Avenue PP as their 2024 Community Project!
 - Action Items: Develop Maintenance/Watering Plans, solicit donated bulbs for Nov planting

B. Community Outreach

- OSW Welcome Table process established. Need sustainability plan (shared staffing at events).
- Welcome Table in place at June Neighborhood Appreciation Event, summer and fall OSW Block Parties
- On average, 5 new names added to newsletter list after each event. Five names added after 10/11/2023 Fall Block Party on Day Avenue. About 60 attendees.
- New Neighbor Welcome Process in place:
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Mmr9RpLQQI3kxvO8553qvD8KBcQflrqI1N35I9kiunU/edit?usp=drivesdk>
- "Welcome to OSW" letter created: So far, 9 delivered to new homeowners. This letter includes an alert about consulting the Architectural Review Board (ARB) before making external updates/repairs to properties.
- Board members & all neighbors encouraged to share alerts/addresses when new neighbors move onto your blocks.

C. Gish House

- Event Rentals: 10 to date (plus one pro bono to Chris's Coffee & Custard). Two more pending in 2023. Goal: 12 rentals.
- Landscaping at property currently in order. Annual maintenance plan still needed—in process by Shirley Poss.

--Social media promotion has attracted more rentals this year.

D. Parlor Tour

--Reduced tickets (\$20) available online (oldsouthwest.org) until 12/1. \$25 night of event.

E. Historic Preservation

--In process: research into status of non-producing properties in OSW (Shirley Poss/Lisette Stone). Action items: create spreadsheet, torn-around strategies/plan including January presentation to City Council.

F. Safety (see OSW business, Officer Underwood updates)