

MINUTES: OSW COMMUNITY Meeting, November 16, 2023 (6-8:00)

6-6:30 Social

Facilitator: Mary Anne Mather

Secretary: Simon Mitchell-Wolf

Board attendees: Mary Anne Mather (secretary), David Jeavons (treasurer), Elaine Fleck, Lynn Speno, Richard Normand, Simon Mitchell-Wolf, Annmarie Drake

Absent: Terry McGuire (V-P), Julie Mugford, Cara Becker

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Thank you, Jeff Landsdown, for hosting tonight's refreshments.

• No OSW Community meeting in December. Next meeting 1/18, 6PM.

- **UPCOMING OSW EVENTS:** Online Calendar is live at oldsouthwest.org/events

–**OSW Parlor Tour:** Dec 2, 5-9pm & Dec 3, 1-5pm

DISCOUNTED online ticket sales available until 12/1 (\$20) at oldsouthwest.org

\$25 day of event. PLEASE support this essential annual fundraiser!

- Successful Recent Events

–10/26 **Spooktacular Plawking** in OSW: In costume with social at Golden Cactus Brewery

– 11/11, **OSW Tree Planting** with Roanoke Tree Stewards. 11 new trees!!

TOPIC: RAM House Moving to a New Venue in Old Southwest

PRESENTERS:

Melissa Woodson, MBA: RAM House Executive Director

Ali Hamed-Moore, MPA: RAM House Board of Directors, Secretary of the Board

Lauren Canary, MPH, 4th Year Medical Student: RAM House Board Member

--Overview of Roanoke Area Ministries (RAM House), an interfaith nonprofit that advocates for those facing or threatened by homelessness and hunger. Founded in 1971, doors are open for those needing care coordination, day shelter services, meals, and financial assistance.

--Share Plan About Their Relocation: RAM is currently located in OSW on Campbell Avenue and is moving to 410 Elm Avenue.

--Context: Ali Hamed-Moore lives in OSW on King George Avenue (since 2016) with her wife and three children (two teenagers and one first grader at Highland Park Elementary). She also works at Anderson Treatment as the Chief Compliance Officer. Her office is located in their facility at 404 Elm Avenue, SW, where they serve people who have substance use disorder and other co-occurring medical and behavioral health conditions. Ali says, "I love the OSW neighborhood and especially appreciate raising my children in a place with economic diversity and social services that take care of our neighbors."

NOTES about RAM House Operation:

- RAM House in business 53years
- Serves about 200 lunches daily (mostly to seniors who pick up to take home) and 45 clients for other services
- Open 8-4, then closed – very strict about clients hanging around after closing
- Financial aid program that is primarily privately funded
- This year, RAM has taken 54 people out of rehab and put them into the structure of Oxford House
- Last year, RAM helped housed 145 people (inc. 30 children)
- 77% increase of “emergency sheltered people” in the last year
- Roanoke needs to set things up now to avoid crises like we’ve seen in other cities
- Current location has some problems:
 - High ceilings are an environmental issue with noise/echoing/privacy
 - No room for real showers forcing clients to take bird baths
 - No on-site clinical services to allow providers to come to RAM and their clients
- OSW has existing problems with folks sleeping outside – RAM wants to provide services to *reduce homelessness in OSW*
- Current substance abuse issue is a different beast from times previous
 - Many folks are profoundly affected beyond a 12-step program
 - RAM provides an important first step of protection for people able to get help
- Transportation is a primary issue to enable people to get to lodging, medical, food, and support all over town
 - RAM is providing bus passes to address this need
- RAM has a strong precedent of maintaining a controlled environment in the immediately surrounding neighborhood

QUESTIONS:

- Q: I firmly believe in this work. Bringing a few things concerns: Average property price is north of \$450k. These are houses that represent many neighbors’ primary financial resource and plans for retirement. Concerned about mismanagement that might affect property values. It’s very important the clients are provided with transportation to get back to where they are being housed to discourage after-hours loitering. Will there be adequate staff to have crowd and queue control, considering the near-zero front lot line in the new location?
 - A: This is managed at the current location. There is no outside queue. People enter the building to get meals (at the back door on the alley), and many people pick up their food and take it home.
- Q: Where will people park with the little existing parking nearby?
 - A: Parking on the street is very temporary as people grab food and go. The new location also has two parking lots off the alley near 4th Street.
- Q: Concerns about bringing additional panhandling and issues in the area.
 - A: Statistically, opening a well-run shelter in an area, decreases crime and similar concerns

- **Q: Further concerns around crowd control. What resources will RAM provide to support clients getting back to where they need to be? There needs to be a holistic plan. NOTE: this was taken under advisement. Currently they provide bus passes on the city buses, but looking into a shuttle and other solutions.**
- **Q: The important thing is that these are our community members. We're opening a dialog to work together in the future.**
- **A: 200+ people who come for lunch are senior citizens, low income who are hungry (children). Day client count is only about 45.**
- **The "wrap-around services" the RAM team is discussing is key to a successful enterprise.**

OSW BUSINESS

1. Board Elections

--Brief Overview

- 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.
- OSW, Inc. elections take place annually 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.
- Current board members running for officer positions: Simon Mitchell-Wolf (president), Terry McGuire (V-P), David Jeavons (treasurer), Mary Anne Mather (secretary). Current board members running at-large: Richard Normand, Bill Dandridge, Cara Becker, Annemarie Drake. Shirley Poss running as a new member. Two positions still open. Must be an OSW homeowner or renter to serve on the Board. A call for interested volunteers. No volunteers.
- Another way to support the OSW Neighborhood: Join a committee: Review of OSW Standing Committees and encouraged participation (for more info/questions, contact maryanne.mather@gmail.com or complete the form on the OSW website). Interested people outside of OSW are eligible to participate on committees.

Communications (social media, OSW list maintenance, OSW email updates)

Events (selection & coordination of activities and social events)

Community Outreach/Membership

Alexander-Gish House Maintenance & Rentals

Fundraising

Neighborhood Safety

Environmental Preservation, Parks & Greenspace

--Election PROCESS:

- Each applicant introduces themselves and their interests related to OSW. (suspended for time)

- Open call for two additional Board candidates. All OSW home owners and renters eligible to run. No volunteers came forward.
- Call for a vote to accept the slate of Board officer and members as presented. All OSW home owners and renters eligible to vote.
 - **Stephanie Bilbery – Move to accept the slate of officers and at-large board members as presented.**
 - **Elaine Fleck – Seconded**
 - **Uncontested slate unanimously approved as written**

2. **Community Reports** were entered into then minutes.

Adjourn 8PM

Committee Reports

1. Green Committee

- Successful tree planting on 11/11 with Roanoke Tree Stewards. We planted 11 trees on the 500 block of Mountain Ave and around the intersection of 4th Street and Elm Ave. (A total of about 75 trees total in the Old Southwest neighborhood as part of this collaboration).
- Stay tuned for a GC planning meeting in December. Items to be discussed include Pocket Park 2024 maintenance plan, spring planting with Tree Stewards, workdays at the Woods Ave lots.
- Also stay tuned for a bulb planting day at the Pocket Park sometime in December, part of a collaboration with area garden clubs.

2. Fundraising: Parlor Tour

- Advance Ticket Sales as of Monday morning - 12 supporters, total of \$400 received.
- Sponsor/Donor Totals as of Monday morning - 4 supporters, total of \$750 received.
- Promotion
 - Jim Haynes put up banners on both ends of Elm this weekend.
 - Large posters have been distributed throughout OSW, Grandin and a wide variety of other locations. **Small flyers are available to distribute.**
 - Event is listed with Roanoke Times and was included in The Roanoker Magazine event listing with a large photo from last year's Tour.
 - WFXR has scheduled a TV interview with us the week of the Tour. Will continue to work on media outreach in the coming weeks.
 - Social media announcements have been posted on Instagram, FB and Nextdoor. The "Hello Roanoke" social media account shared our post and is attending the tour Saturday to promote. Their account has over 30k followers.
- Participants - 6 Homeowners
 - All received gift bags this week with a printed Tour-weekend schedule, 4 complimentary advance tickets, flameless votives, garland scented candle and ribbon to use for marking off rooms not to be included on Tour.
 - Electronic invites sent for Friday night Preview Party and Sunday breakfast hosted by Lynn Hunt.
 - Mary Jo Gale has completed the paintings of each house that will be presented to the homeowners as thank you gifts.

- Gish House
 - Jan Keister has been preparing refreshment plans, no additional info at this time.
 - Annemarie Drake is coordinating LinDor Arts, Nutcracker cast member attendance, possibly music as well, no additional info at this time.
 - Julie Mugford and Cara Becker (Parlor Tour chairs) will decorate the weekend before with decorations loaned from Diane Hailey.
- Materials
 - Printed Advance Tickets have been delivered to Sunnyside Market, Queenpin Family Wellness and On the Edge and are being used for Sponsors and complimentary tickets for homeowners.
 - Name tags and holders are ready for PT homeowners and chair people, will make additional for Docents and volunteers.
 - Brochure design will be completed this week and sent for printing. Julie has completed research and brochure text for houses.
- Logistics
 - Commonwealth Coach & Trolley is confirming with their board if the bus service can be provided on a donation basis/free of charge to OSW.
 - Queenpin Acupuncture and On the Edge Salon will offer restroom stops and refreshment both tour days.
 - David Jeavons has confirmed he can help with ticket sales both tour days. Looking into a free WiFi Hotspot rental from the library to help boost card reader connectivity at the ticket tent.
 - Need some help gathering info on the tent/table set up for ticket sales. I think Jim helped with the setup last year- does he have the tent and tables, or where do we need to get those?
- Volunteers
 - In need of assistance with volunteer recruitment, assignments/time slots.
 - 3 homeowners need volunteer docents for both tour days. We need a minimum of 1 docent per house both days, but 2 or more would be ideal. Docents are needed to help with foot traffic in the homes, answering questions, directing flow, covering for homeowners if they need a restroom break. Their help keeping people from walking out with priceless heirlooms, using the restroom, bringing in snacks or strollers, etc. also very appreciated.
 - Ticket Sales volunteers will help with delivering brochures and wristbands, taking payment for day of tickets.
 - Docents and ticket sales volunteers can work whole 4 hour time blocks, or 2 hour (Sat 5-7, 7-9; Sun 1-3, 3-5).
 - One person needed before Tour to set out a sign in each PT homeowner's yard and luminaries on Saturday night (should be complete by 4:30 Sat).