

Old Southwest Community Meeting MINUTES
Thursday 2/16/2023 Submitted by Mary Anne Mather

6:00-6:30 Social

Board Attending: Mark Hostetter (president), David Jeavons (treasurer), Mary Anne Mather (secretary), Terry McGuire, Julie Mugford, AnneMarie Drake, Bill Dandridge, Phillip Morgan, Lynn Speno (new board member). Absent: Richard Normand, Elaine Fleck

~25 total attendance. Several new neighbors attended and also City reps:

--Tasha Andrews, new Roanoke codes enforcement officer

--Parviz Moosavi, ARB Historic Preservation Planner (Architectural Review Board). Lives in OSW at 655 Elm Ave.

Welcome & Who's New (Mark Hostetter, President)

President invited neighbors to take curb signs to promote OSW meetings (Commitment: place out on Sunday prior to meetings and pick up after the meeting).

ANNOUNCEMENTS REVIEW

- TY social host Lynn Cothorn. Need March volunteers! (AnneMarie Drake and Joan identified)

- **WORKSHOP:** Expert Boxwood Trimming, Sat. 2/18 @9:30AM (openings still available)

- **OSW COMMUNITY FUN!** Neighborhood Appreciation Month Family Food & Frolic: Sun, 4/23. Time TBA. Music. Games. Gish House Open-house. And more. Grilled dogs/burgers provided. BYOB & a dish to share. (Date may be moved to mid-May.)

- **POCKET PARK:** Mid-March & April work days, Day Ave & 8th St. Interested in this or having a tree planted in your curb strip? Contact Terry McGuire (stephen.terry.mcguire@gmail.com)

- **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:** Highland Park Elementary School chess club and hiking club. Contact Julie Mugford (jmugford01@gmail.com)

6:45-7:05 SPEAKER How do you get local news?

Henri Gendreau, editor of The Roanoke Rambler & previously a reporter at The Roanoke Times presents on the decline of investigative & print news journalism, what that loss means for local communities like ours & how small/online local publications like The Rambler are popping up to fill this void. Henri is our neighbor—he's been a resident of OSW since 2019.

In the past, local papers were owned by people who cared about getting the news out. Today they are owned by conglomerates in other states. Surveys show this has led to broad decline in civic engagement, political polarization, lower voter turnout. Smaller enterprises are trying to fill in the gaps, like The Roanoke Rambler. About Roanoke Rambler: Online weekly news source, Wednesdays. Hyper local focus: environment, business, culinary events, social justice issues, literary element. Need financial support to operate: \$100yr/\$10mo subscription. Trying to reestablish mindset of paying for news, like getting a local paper. Henri is sole employee (earns \$600 per week), plus freelancers. Offered free 3-week subscription. Announced: June in-person event planned, details TBA. Contact:

editor@roanokerambler.com **7:05-7:15 Q&A Answers:**

--How he gets news: Attends city council & smaller committee meetings; follows legislative agendas and laws city asks to be repealed (these must be approved in Richmond, since VA is a "Dillon Rule" state. As interesting news emerges, Henri follows up.

--Why Roanoke? Henri chose Roanoke because he saw a need and has a good community.

--Is there a focus on neighborhood organizations? Rambler writes about neighborhood issues.

--What sets Rambler apart? Hyper local focus. Other sources report broader news.

OSW BUSINESS

Approval of minutes from 1/19/2023 PASSED

Interested in what OSW has been doing on behalf of our neighborhood? All Community Meeting minutes are available at: <https://oldsouthwest.org/osw-minutes>

1. Budget: End of year report & updates (David Jeavons, Treasurer)

Anderson and Reid Associates provides pro bono OSW tax prep. Encouraged supporting them. Annual accounting was presented. Shortfall \$1949.19 FY ending 1/31/2023 (see doc)

2. Committee Updates as needed/available

A. Historic Preservation (LynnSpeno)

Committee is tracking ARB meetings. Parvis Moosavi, ARB Historic Preservation Planner attended the meeting & will meet with Lynn. OSW architect and committee member, Lisette Brown, will attend monthly ARB meetings. Laurie Platt will assist with neighborhood historic tidbits to post on social media. Parvis updated on 716 Marshall (brick building). Rear of building needs to be fixed before it collapses. Suggested: write a letter to code enforcement to levy fines for offenders. Need to get the word out that non-compliance will cost and is not tolerated. One opening on ARB. They would like someone from a historic district like OSW.

B. Environmental Protection, Parks, Greenspace (Terry McGuire)

Prep for fall planting includes non-poison weed eradication. Interested in learning about "occultation"? Invited 1) interest in curb strip tree planting near your homes, more volunteers for OSW environmental initiatives. Mentioned OSW Plawking (Picking up Litter While Walking): 3/1, meet at AFOG 6PM. Good way to walk together and get to know your neighbors.

C. Gish House (Julie Mugford)

Announcement: Did you know Gish House can be rented? Info on OSW website. In process: creating flyers & other promotional strategies. NOTE: rentals are essential to supporting OSW, Inc. expenses to maintain the house, non-profit biz expenses, OSW activities.

D. Events

--Neighborhood Appreciation Family Food & Frolic: Sunday, April 23 (Mary Anne Mather)

Explanation/Purpose: April (or May) is Neighborhood Appreciation Month. Celebrate OSW neighborhood, get to know one another, promote Gish House rentals, grow membership, identify volunteers, promote OSW activities & projects.

Chair: Beth Dimun, On the Edge Salon, OSW business (led this event pre-COVID, 100+ attended)

Features: Music (live?). Games & activities (may link into a national trend "Playful Learning Landscapes"). Possible Home Depot-sponsored bird house building workshop for kids. Gish Open-house. Grilled dogs (Sunnyside Mkt)/burgers (On the Edge), water, lemonade, paper products (OSW) provided. BYOB & a dish to share. Volunteers encouraged. All welcome to attend! More info TBA on social media

& OSW mailing list. Discussed creating/distributing small flyers. Agreed this & neighborhood signs are effective to get the word out.

--Future Events Heads-up (open to all): **(Mark Hostetter)**

- Block Party: July, Argonne Circle (Terry McGuire)
- National Night Out: August (would like to make it more kid friendly)
- Block Party: October, Day Ave.
- Thanksgiving Pot Luck Dinner, Thanksgiving Day, Gish House (Mark Hostetter)
- Holiday Social in place of December OSW Meeting
- IN THE WORKS:
 - OSW Speaker Series hosted by OSW Historic Preservation Committee
Topic: Rehab wood windows. ARB process. Annual historic home upkeep, etc.
 - possible 1-2 other events (Mark Hostetter)

E. Community Outreach **(Stephanie Bilbry)**

--Creating an easy way for neighbors to interact with OSW.

--In process: welcome letters (includes a heads up about required ARB approvals), info for new neighbors, systems to achieve networking

D. Safety

--**Southwest Market Safety Issues Update (Mark Hostetter)**

ABC/Liquor Licensing Agent report postponed. OSW working behind the scenes to speak to the Southwest Market property owner and other area business owners of our concerns. Also working with various city departments on these issues and ways to improve Southwest Market's impact on the community.

--**Other safety concerns?**

Neighbor on 909 Marshall spoke: recent concerns about homeless living under Main St. bridge/RR property, recent shooting/murder, needles & litter in area—including on her property. Concerned about safety for her child. It was noted that there are several reasons causing the problems, including closing of homeless shelter options. Suggested: Mary Alice Mouk & Lianna King will draft letter for OSW to send to council stating issues & suggesting support for solutions like open public/affordable housing, etc. It was noted that Roanoke has a Homeless Assistance Team. Tasha Anderson (code enforcement officer) responded to a complaint about the conditions under the Main St. bridge and had railroad clean it 2 weeks ago. Neighbor asked if we are allowed to "Plawk" under bridge--not allowed on RR property. Cary Blakenship was told by a police officer to report to police, just to log numerous official records.

3. Other Business

--Announced: ARB opening (interested in someone from a historic district)

--April 1 Block Pride (Green Valley selects date)

ADJOURN 7:53PM