

2023-4-20 Old Southwest Community Meeting MINUTES

Board Attending: Terry McGuire (VP), Mary Anne Mather (Secretary), Julie Mugford, Bill Dandridge, Lynn Speno, Annmarie Drake (meeting set up only)

Absent: David Jeavons (Treasurer), Elaine Fleck, Richard Normand

Submitted by Secretary: Mary Anne Mather

(Meeting facilitated by OSW V-P, Terry McGuire)

Welcome & Who's New

Approve minutes from March 16, 2023 PASSED

ANNOUNCEMENTS REVIEW

- **SOCIAL:** Thank you Stephanie Bilbrey for hosting tonight's refreshments. April volunteers: The Spenos.

- **POSTPONED: 4/29 Classical Music Under the Stars & Food with Friends Potluck.** Music by OSW neighbors: Roanoke Baroque.

- **FREE! Neighborhood Appreciation Month Family Festival:** Sun, 5/7, 1-5pm. LIVE music. Games & activities. Gish Open-house. Grilled foods, water, lemonade provided. BYOB, chair, dish to share. Rain date: 5/21 (asked people to promo with small flyers)

- **OSW Plawking:** events most months. Contact stephenbendele1@gmail.com

- **OSW "Go Green" Days:** April 29, 9-noon. Woods Ave. lots invasives cleanup. POCKET PARK Occultation Workshop mid-May. Volunteers meet: Day Ave SW at 8th St. Contact Terry McGuire (stephen.terry.mcguire@gmail.com) (Tabled until committee reports.)

GUEST SPEAKER 6:45-7:05

Blue Ridge Land Conservancy

Dave Perry Executive Director & Emily Bender, Assistant Director

<http://www.blueridgelandconservancy.org/>

Blue Ridge Land Conservancy works with local landowners and conservation supporters to save farms, forests, waterways & rural landscapes that make western Virginia a beautiful place to live and visit. Tonight, Dave and Emily will touch on why land conservation is more important than ever and how you can support their work.

BRLC is our neighbors with new offices on Maple Ave SW.

7:05-7:15 Q & A

- Focal point is land conservation. Rural landscapes/undeveloped. Locally, have conserved two in Roanoke, including, Mill Mountain (about 6000 acres) & Carvin's Cove (13,000 acres = largest easement).

- Perpetual easement agreements that transfer with the property. Considered a donation & owner gets tax credits. Smallest easements conserved ~15 acres (generally 50+ acres). Easements indicate limits (e.g., number of houses, square-footed, timbering practices, size of subdivisions, only 1% can be under a roof or impervious surfaces. Rural agricultural activities are allowed (BnB's, pumpkin patch enterprises, etc.)
- Near Bedford County they currently are working on 6 properties where individual owners have reached out to Conservancy to protect all of their properties.
- In the process of creating a strategic plan. Funded by donations & grants.
- Sinkhole ponds are only in Shenandoah Valley and parts of Missouri (spring fed). They currently are protecting one in the area.
- Prefer urban fillers, rather than urban sprawl.
- Visit each property annually and use drones to monitor.
- Original donor gives the tax credit, but future owners are locked into lower tax rates. Often used for estate planning to lower taxation & also make owning rural land affordable.
- Offices were on Church Ave. (across from Bread Craft for 2 years free). Purchased 1927 House in OSW 3/21: 1305 Maple Ave. (House named for Lemon Family—donated paying off the mortgage.) Have sponsored pollinator gardens (take photos). All changes have been through ARB. Half of first floor is a community room. Community groups that need meeting spaces can use the facility. Cappuccino machine available!
- Converting grass to natural plantings on site.

OSW BUSINESS (7:15-8:00)

Approval of 3/16/2023 Community Meeting minutes: Completed before speaker
Announced: 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. OSW Neighborhood Appreciation Month Festival

- Sun, 5/7, 1-5PM, Gish House & grounds in Highland Park.
- Family-friendly chance to meet neighbors and learn about OSW Inc. initiatives.
- **LIVE music by LEGZ.** Games & activities. Gish Open-house.
PROVIDED: Grilled foods, water, lemonade. BYOB, chair, dish to share.
- Please come & pass it on. Rain date: 5/21
- Thank you to Beth Dimun, On the Edge Hair Salon (5th St.) for party-planning!!

2. Committee Updates as needed/available:

A. Environmental Protection, Parks, Greenspace (Green Committee) (Terry McGuire)

--In partnership with Roanoke Tree Stewards, on Sat 4/8 we planted 13 native trees around the neighborhood – red maples & redbuds. Trees Roanoke replaced 2 redbuds that didn't survive the Dec. arctic blast.

--Work at Day & 8th Pocket Park work is ongoing. --Prep for fall garden planting. Interested in learning about "occultation"? This will occur at the new Pocket Park mid-May. Call for more volunteers. Other initiatives: OSW curb strip tree planting,

- 4/29 next workday: invasives removal at the end of Woods Ave.
- Exciting News: Park & Rec has agreed to pilot “organic” approach to park maintenance in Argonne Circle. Roanoke is a designated (qualifies for Home Depot Veteran’s gift certificate)
- Our neighbor, Simon Wood is helping to create a google form for people to request trees planted in curb strips near their houses.
- Garden Prep and workdays throughout the summer. Stay tuned for volunteer opportunities.

B. Gish House (Julie Mugford)

Announcement: Did you know the Gish rental available? Info on OSW website. Gish Open House, May 7 (1-5PM) during OSW Neighborhood Appreciation Festival.

C. OSW Events Line-up:

All are invited & encouraged to get involved! (Mary Anne Mather)

- **POSTPONED:** Classical Music Under the Stars & Food With Friends Food with Friends. Music by OSW neighbors: Roanoke Baroque.
- 5/7, 1-5pm **OSW Neighborhood Appreciation Month Festival**
- Summer Block Party: July 1, 3-8pm, Argonne Circle
- National Night Out: August 1. Details TBA.
- Pocket Park Fundraiser Gala: Sept Date TBD
- Fall Block Party: Oct. 7, Day Ave. May include live music & contra dance!
- TBD: Thanksgiving Potluck Dinner, Thanksgiving Day, Gish House
- TBD: Holiday Social in place of December Meeting, Gish House
- IN THE WORKS: OSW Speaker Series hosted by Historic Preservation Committee

D. Historic Preservation (Lynn Speno)

Committee attends monthly Architectural Review Board (ARB) meetings to stay informed. Plans pro-active work to review/improve ARB guidelines for our historic district.

E. Community Outreach (Stephanie Bilbrey) Mentioned she is working on an electronic OSW event calendar and a welcome table that travels to all events. Stephanie will be greeting people at the May 7 neighborhood event.

F. Safety

Attendees were asked: any safety concerns/news?

- Need street lights repaired in some areas (city asked for a list of repairs needed)
- Crossing lines at Day & Fifth and other areas.
- Speeding on Fifth St.
- Betsy Nixon is on a Pedestrian Regional Committee (near misses can be reported on an app). Betsy will share info and put in next OSW email and social media.
- Beth Dimun brought up about the impact on the neighborhood once the Main Street bridge project begins. Neighbors will need to be attentive about traffic flow.
- Overall suggestion was to make priority lists and submit to city, rather than reporting single requests.
- Volunteers were welcome to join this committee.

3. Other business: One woman asked about the annual OSW yard sale. She likes to attend. She was asked if she would like to volunteer to organize it for this year, since Phillip, who usually does this, is not available. Otherwise, it was suggested that the idea be revisited for 2024, if there is interest and a lead.

ADJOURN 8PM

Original Details of POSTPONED Event

Classical Music Under the Stars & Food With Friends Pot Luck. Gish House Gazebo; BYOB dish to share. COVER CHARGE: \$10pp (or \$5 & a 2 non-perishable items for the Soup for Seniors LOA program). Music by OSW neighbors: Roanoque Baroque. Considering having them play for the Pocket Park Fundraiser, mid-September.