

## 2023-6-20 Old Southwest Community Meeting MINUTES

**Board Attending:** Bill Dandridge (Pres), Mary Anne Mather (Sec), Annmarie Drake, Elaine Fleck  
**Absent:** Terry McGuire (family vacation), David Jeavons (Treas), Richard Normand, Lynn Speno (vacation), Julie Mugford

**Submitted by Secretary:** Mary Anne Mather

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**6-6:30 Social (Hosts: Betsy Nixon & Katherine Prescott)**

**Meeting facilitated by OSW President, Bill Dandridge**

**6:30 Welcome & Who's New** (Welcome 2 newcomers (Lindsay/David off Elm). 22 attendees.)

**SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT** (Diane Hailey)

**July OSW Community Meeting: Field Trip For Arts in Roanoke!**

Thursday, July 20, 6:30 - 8pm. Diane Hailey's backyard. 539 Day Ave. SW

### AGENDA

- Unveiling of a new Toobz Muir mural
- Chat with Toobz & learn about the Roanoke mural craze
- Meighan Sharp, City Chair for the Arts, explains Roanoke's Year of the Artist
- Artists-in-residence may be on-hand to talk about their work

Light refreshments & community fellowship.

Parking: Alley behind 539 Day for those unable to walk a great distance.

Overflow parking on Day Ave. or Food Fanatics parking lot on Marshall.

Bike parking also available!

Mark Kary who, used to own the Phoenix building on 5<sup>th</sup>, spoke briefly re: murals in Roanoke.

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### ANNOUNCEMENTS REVIEW (president)

• TY social host(s): Betsy Nixon, Katherine Prescott. Hosts: July-Diane Hailey August-Cara Becker

• **UPCOMING OSW EVENTS:** *Online Calendar is live at [oldsouthwest.org/events](https://oldsouthwest.org/events)*

--7/1 **OSW Summer Neighborhood Block Party**, 3-8pm, Argonne Circle/King George Ave. Contact Terry McGuire ([stephen.terry.mcguire@gmail.com](mailto:stephen.terry.mcguire@gmail.com)) BYOB & dish to share.

--8/1: **National Night Out:** Plawking (5pm): Collaboration with SE (Sunni Purviance), SoRo & Officer Underwood. Social afterward at a fire station

--September: Pocket Park Fundraiser, Gish House. Tentative 9/23.

--10/7 **POCKET PARK WORKSHOP & BLOCK PARTY:** Native Perennials Workshop, 9-noon, 653 Day Ave & 8<sup>th</sup> St. Contact [stephen.terry.mcguire@gmail.com](mailto:stephen.terry.mcguire@gmail.com). Followed by OSW Fall Block Party, 12:30-4:30. 500 block of Day Ave. BYOB & dish to share.

--**OSW Plawking:** monthly events. 6/12 ended with a social at Roanoke Boutique Hotel. July OSW community meeting will be at this site. Contact [stephenbendele1@gmail.com](mailto:stephenbendele1@gmail.com) or watch social media

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**6:45-7:05** (Introductions: Bill Dandridge. TY Terry McGuire for arranging.)

**SPEAKER:** LEAP: Local Environmental Agricultural Project ([leapforlocalfood.org](http://leapforlocalfood.org))

Christina Nifong, Director of Marketing and Communications

540.632.1657; [christina@leapforlocalfood.org](mailto:christina@leapforlocalfood.org)

Highlights about how LEAP works toward building a robust local urban foodshed network and why that's important to our Roanoke community. We learned about LEAP programs, projects, and how people can get involved, e.g., shopping at the mobile market, community gardening, volunteer opportunities. They have a new location! Main Work:

--support farmers

--create access to local food

They help communities work together to provide these things.

- 2009 Started Grandin Village Market with the Co-op (b/c no room in the downtown market).
- 2010 Started West End weekly farmers' market (10 vendors). Purpose: Bring local food to less advantaged neighborhood or to those with less ability to drive to a farmers' market. Also have a mobile market. Willing to source specialty foods for various cultures.
- Accept EBT, SNAP, medicaid, WIC cards and double the dollars on the cards.
- Market Bucks & Harvest Bucks Program: purchased by support organizations/distributed to their clients. LEAP brings a mobile market to their sites.
- Farm share program: 200 weekly subscriptions (customizable)
- 2015 Opened LEAP certified/licensed kitchen (supports start-up food businesses)
- 3 community gardens (educational, community/socializing, events, volunteer nights). Many other organizations have community gardens.
- Works with 50+ food & farming vendors
- Roanoke Foodshed Network: working groups meet & share
- New building: West End at 1027 Paterson Ave. Solar powered. Electronic vehicle.
- Retail store opening in 2024.

**7:05-7:15 Q & A**

- Question about food sources. Are they all local? Farm share "Good Food. Good People" started with Floyd farmers. Taken over by LEAP. Now an aggregated farm share from close and farther out. Sources sell wholesale to LEAP who does the curating of the share. Not all grown within 100 miles, further out as needed to meet the size and needs of the farm share clients. This is made transparent on a whiteboard & email (mentions where produce comes from). All the other programs source within 50 miles.
- Question about educational opportunities & future. Provide recipes for healthy prep. Do not have a nutritionist. Partner with VA Tech for programs. Past partnerships: master gardeners, YMCA, etc. New building opens opportunities for cooking classes. Tours available at the building. School field trips.

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**OSW BUSINESS**

Approval of minutes from 5/15/2023

*Announce: 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. Gish House/Neighborhood Safety** Officer Underwood, OSW community resource officer (CRO) for southside (OSW, SE, SoRo) attended. New community resource team is now active! Nine years of experience. Asked for community concerns: homelessness & derelict homes. He requested that citizens EMAIL him with house numbers of derelict houses, drug houses, etc. He can advocate with code enforcement--can get on owners who fail to act/respond. "No Trespassing" signs must be posted to take initial action. Letters delivered directly to owner. (5 days to fix issue, 21 days later officer can take action). They are able to close down blighted properties like is being done in Lynchburg. Houses can be sold by city. Officer Underwood brought business cards and encouraged community to work with him.

He addressed some of the voiced concerns:

Homeless: Officer Underwood visits each homeless encampment regularly and ask if people want help. Those who want help attend a 45-minute meeting. One resource is the Rescue Mission (their requirements: leave at 5AM, come back for lunch, stay sober & out of trouble for 6 hours, attend a religious service OR meditate on their own). Takes 15-30 days to find shelter and work for individuals who want this. Park and Rec installed porta-johns in areas where there are homeless. Question about whether this is a good idea. Open issue. Our officer is aware of the encampment behind the dog park in Highland Park and has visited it. Also collaborating with Norfolk & Southern RR to find solutions.

- Southwest Market: OSW President alerted Officer Stokes. Officer Underwood is very aware of situation and working on it. He will talk to officers on the beat to increase surveillance.
- Neighbor brought up -- VA Harm Reduction Coalition Center for people who use drugs (Walnut Ave). Home owners were not notified because zoning permits health facilities. Further discussion is needed about this.

**2. OSW Non-Profit News:** Peter Volosin, Roanoke Diversity Center Board. Awareness of local LGBTQIA June Pride events, the Diversity Center's work & Gayborhood Tours (Sports teams; Alanon, AA, parents of trans kids groups.) <https://www.roanokediversitycenter.com/>  
6/20 Pride picnic in Wasena Park  
6/29 Pride Night at Salem Red Sox  
6/25 Pride walking tour

### **3. OSW Updated Budget**

Present updated budget & rationale for necessary reductions (expenses were greater than earnings to date). Encouraged promo of Gish House rentals to increase funding for maintenance & OSW projects. Voted to accept updated budget. PASSED

### **4. Committee Updates:**

**A. Environmental Protection, Parks, Greenspace (Green Committee)** (MA Mather)

- *Father's Day & Juneteenth Workdays: Sun, 6/18, 10-noon and Mon, 6/19, 10-noon.*

OSW Woods Ave lots (640 Woods Ave SW)

Continue invasives (English ivy, privet hedge, honeysuckle bush+) removal at lots OSW, Inc. owns at western terminus of Woods Ave. **PURPOSE:** ecological restoration (planting and protecting natives, picking up trash) and improving community access and safety. Our ultimate goal is a raised wooden ADA-compliant walkway that connects Woods and Allison Avenues, giving neighbors an opportunity to enjoy nature on their community walk while also deterring illegal activity and on-site drug use. We will also be helping neighbor Stephen Bendele with some maintenance at a vacant lot he has been working on. This will include freeing a very ancient oak tree from English ivy. The tree is absolutely massive and the Tree Stewards are interested in coming out to measure it to see if it's a record holder for the city, state, or possibly even the country! But first we have to try and save it from the ivy, which has almost totally overtaken it and will kill the tree if quick action isn't taken. RSVP ([stephen.terry.mcquire@gmail.com](mailto:stephen.terry.mcquire@gmail.com)).

• **Argonne Circle Pre-Block Party Park Prep & Workshop**

Sun, 6/25, 9-noon. Meet in Argonne Circle Park (near King George Ave.)

To prepare for our July 1st neighborhood block party and increase in foot traffic at Argonne Circle Park, we will lead another [lasagna composting](#) workshop as we mulch around trees in the park. If we have time and enough volunteers, we'll lasagna mulch around some of the area trees on King George and Janette recently planted through our OSW, Inc. partnership with the Tree Stewards. RSVP by emailing Terry McGuire ([stephen.terry.mcquire@gmail.com](mailto:stephen.terry.mcquire@gmail.com)).

• **Awarded!** 2 grants submitted to support Pocket Park development: Neighborhood Development Grant (\$4750) & Spark Plug Grant (\$1000) for water/plant installation, occultation workshop event. Mark Kary, former OSW resident and neighborhood liaison, announced.

**B. Gish House**

Promotional rack cards available & encouraged awareness of Gish event rentals.

**C. OSW Events Line-up:** (Mary Anne Mather)

All are invited & encouraged to get involved!

-Summer Block Party: 4/1, 3-8, Argonne Circle/339 King George Ave.

-National Night Out: 8/1. Plawking (5pm) in collaboration with SE (Sunni Purviance), SoRo, and Officer Underwood. Social afterward at a fire station. Details TBA. Leads: Cara Becker & Sunni Purviance.

-Pocket Park Fundraiser Gala: Tentative date Sept 23. On Roanoke Baroque calendar.

-Fall Block Party: 10/7, 12:30-4:30, 500 block Day Ave. May include live music!  
(after 9-noon work party at Pocket Park)

-Parlor Tour: first weekend Dec

**D. Historic Preservation** no report

**E. Community Outreach** no report

**F. Safety** no report

**Adjourn 8PM**