

MINUTES: OSW COMMUNITY Meeting, February 15, 2024 (6-8:00)

6-6:30 Social

Facilitator/President: Simon Wolf

Secretary: Mary Anne Mather

Board attendees: Simon Mitchell-Wolf (president), Mary Anne Mather (secretary), David Jeavons (treasurer), Richard Normand, Annmarie Drake, Shirley Poss, Bill Dandridge
Absent: Terry McGuire (V-P), Cara Becker

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

• **Thank You:** Shirley Poss & Barbara Brottman for tonight's refreshment hosts!
March host is Kat Kline with assistance from Julie Mugford. Neighbors are asked to take a turn.

• **Next OSW Community Meeting 3/21:** 6PM Social, Meeting 6:30-8PM
Anticipated Presentation: All about the new Art Space Roanoke project
Neighbors were asked to host a social by contacting maryanne.mather@gmail.com or fill out the form on the oldsouthwest.org website

• **OSW Needs YOU!** What's important to you? Historic preservation, social activities, safety, environmental protection, Gish House? Share thoughts/questions <http://oldsouthwest.org>
Neighbors were asked to consider getting involved as a committee member or as a volunteer for a specific activity. Contact maryanne.mather for more information or complete the form on the OSW website.

• **ARTS Connect Roanoke:** Catalogs in entry. Review & Suggest!

• **Mark Your Calendars**

4/1 Main St Bridge detours posted (4/22 bridge demo begins)
4/13 Daisy Arts Parade downtown & Bridge Demo Party in Wasena
4/20 Evans Spring Public Hearing, City Council, 7PM

PRESENTATION: Improving Our Homes and Buildings

PRESENTERS: OSW Neighbors Monica Rokicki & Danielle Cohen, Better Building Works
Better Building Works reps are experts in the science of healthy and efficient buildings.
--Presented Alexander-Gish House pro bono energy audit results & prioritized recommendations.
--Shared ideas about cost effective improvements (and rebates) for homeowners
--Offered a special opportunity for OSW neighbors.

NOTES:

Better Building Works has been in Roanoke since 2011. Owner, Monica Rocicki is an OSW neighbor who lives on Day Ave. SW. Danielle rents in OSW.
Our old houses are tricky. Don't want to harm old buildings: pragmatic and long term.

Recommendations have an asset-based model to predict savings. Priorities for action are: health, safety durability.

Audit looks at indoor air quality, building enclosure, systems.

Showed titles of a typical energy audit. "Build it tight. Ventilate right.

Real energy audits include blower door tests, infrared tests and others.

Regardless of a building's usage (residence or commercial), the audit is the same. Only difference is where credits and funding come from.

Rebates currently \$3900 annually.

Doing the energy audit itself earns \$150 tax credit.

IRA tax credits available to non-profits. Direct pay.

Showed use analysis for Gish House Audit:

Showed high heating bills, but low AC use. Report contains recommendations. Code requires that fixes can't make it worse. But when considering fixes, it's only "up" for the Gish House!

Priority: Focus first on building enclosure, including basement (partial dirt floor) & upgrading with more energy-efficient systems (equipment) when current systems fail. Heating and cooling systems will need replacing within the next 5 years. Ductwork in basement is very leaky and needs attention. Moisture is finding a home in the insulation. She dubbed Gish as having "the best 'worst' duct system in basement. Basement needs a good vapor barrier. Ducts need cleaning and new insulation. A structure of this age is meant to leak through floor boards.

Gish is not a candidate for solar – too shady. Insulation will save 25-30% energy costs and improve co2 levels. Loosing energy and air @25 (normal efficient house = 5). Suggesting an energy efficiency ventilator (ERV). Delivers fresh air from outside as it takes air out. Monica described how this works mechanically. Suggested removing bushes close to the house to the right of the porch and grade away from the house.

Other notes for Gish House based on energy audit:

Closed cell spray foam. Seal dirt floor. Sealing the bands. Currently no insulation under kitchen. Attic is functionally part of the whole space. Cold or hot roof assembly. Roof is currently 1990s roof (will need replacement in near future). Cold roof assembly with rock wool (pest and fire resistant). Suggested eventual Investment in an energy recovery ventilator (brings in fresh air and exchanges it)

Special Old Southwest Resident Offer:

Normally \$695 charge for energy audit and comprehensive written report for a medium size home (more for larger). OSW resident cost \$595, regardless of building size. Plus \$150 tax credit, since BBW is a certified auditing company.

NEXT STEPS: Get official Gish House energy audit written report from Monica. Use the report to seek grants and to negotiate our new lease contract with the city.

OSW BUSINESS

Approve 1/18/2024 Community Meeting Minutes (find OSW 2024 Priority Goals in these minutes) APPROVED

1. 2025 is Year of the Arts & Artists in Roanoke:

--Introduced Amy McGinnis representing Art Space Roanoke made an announcement and appeal:

Please complete their survey: roanokearts.org/artspace March 15 deadline.

“Arts Commission seeks 600 responses from creative community members.”

55 around the nation: we are hoping this will be the first in VA. They sponsor live, work spaces for artists. Roanoke has been moved to Phase II consideration after a site visit by Market Study (minimum wage to \$18 an hour working full time). Non-profit developer. Might include galleries, etc. Stage III is pre development phase (architectural drawings, funding). Riverdale – redevelopment of old Viscose Plant. Lynn Hunt asked Ame to speak at a meeting of 88 Roanoke artists. Amy will be back at the March meeting to present more about this project and the overall development of Riverdale.

--Arts Connect catalogs available in entry: asked neighbors to take copies and suggest activities for OSW. Community asked to review & suggest requests for artists in OSW. Share your ideas by contacting maryanne.mather@gmail.com

--Daisy Arts Parade, April 13 AM (downtown). Some neighborhoods (SE and SoRo) are creating large images to represent their communities in the parade.

2. OSW Annual Budget: Presentation, discussion, approval (Treasurer, David Jeavons)
Jan suggested applying for a property tax abatement. Vote to approve the budget with \$1500 budgeted for special events and an increase Gish maintenance to balance budget

Action Item: Treasurer presents amended budget to Board and upload to google drive.

3. What’s happening in Roanoke Quick Updates:

A. City of Roanoke proposed zoning amendments are open for comment & public hearings.

–Current proposal puts emphasis on increasing density (which could negatively impact OSW, which already has high density)

–Potential impact on OSW: we have more mid-level housing than single family

Action Items:

–Neighbors encouraged to read, attend, get informed. A larger constituency of community voices need to be heard to have any impact on the city plans.

<https://planroanoke.org/zoning/>

--Jan Keister shared some information and is following the process. OSW board members will attend informational meetings and present a letter to City Council with suggestions for tweaking the proposal.



Zoning Reform for Complete Neighborhoods

City staff will be hosting seven, community-wide open houses on Zoning Reform as follows:

Belmont Library | Wednesday, February 7th, 4 - 6 PM

Melrose Library | Thursday, February 8th, 4-6 PM

Virtual Meeting | Tuesday, February 13th, 6-7 PM

Gainsboro Library | Thursday, February 15th, 4-6 PM

Main Library | Wednesday, February 21st, 4-6 PM

Williamson Road Library | Wednesday, February 28th, 6-8 PM

Raleigh Court Library | Thursday, February 29th, 4-6 PM



Scan the QR code to learn more or
head to planroanoke.org



B. Overview: Evans Spring preservation initiative

--OSW Action: letter supporting Friends of Evans Spring presented at Planning Commission & City Council. OSW expressed concern that the city is not "hearing" the neighborhood communities adjacent to Evans Spring. No attempt was made by the City to investigate purchase and preservation from the current owners at the fair market value under current zoning restrictions.

--Current status: Planning Commission has approved current plan for residential/commercial.

--Next step: City Council or approval & rezoning. Neighbors encouraged to attend City Council Meeting, Feb 20, 7PM. **UPDATE:** City Council approved Planning Commission's plan for

development of Evans Spring into the City development plan. Rezoning will need to be considered and approved.

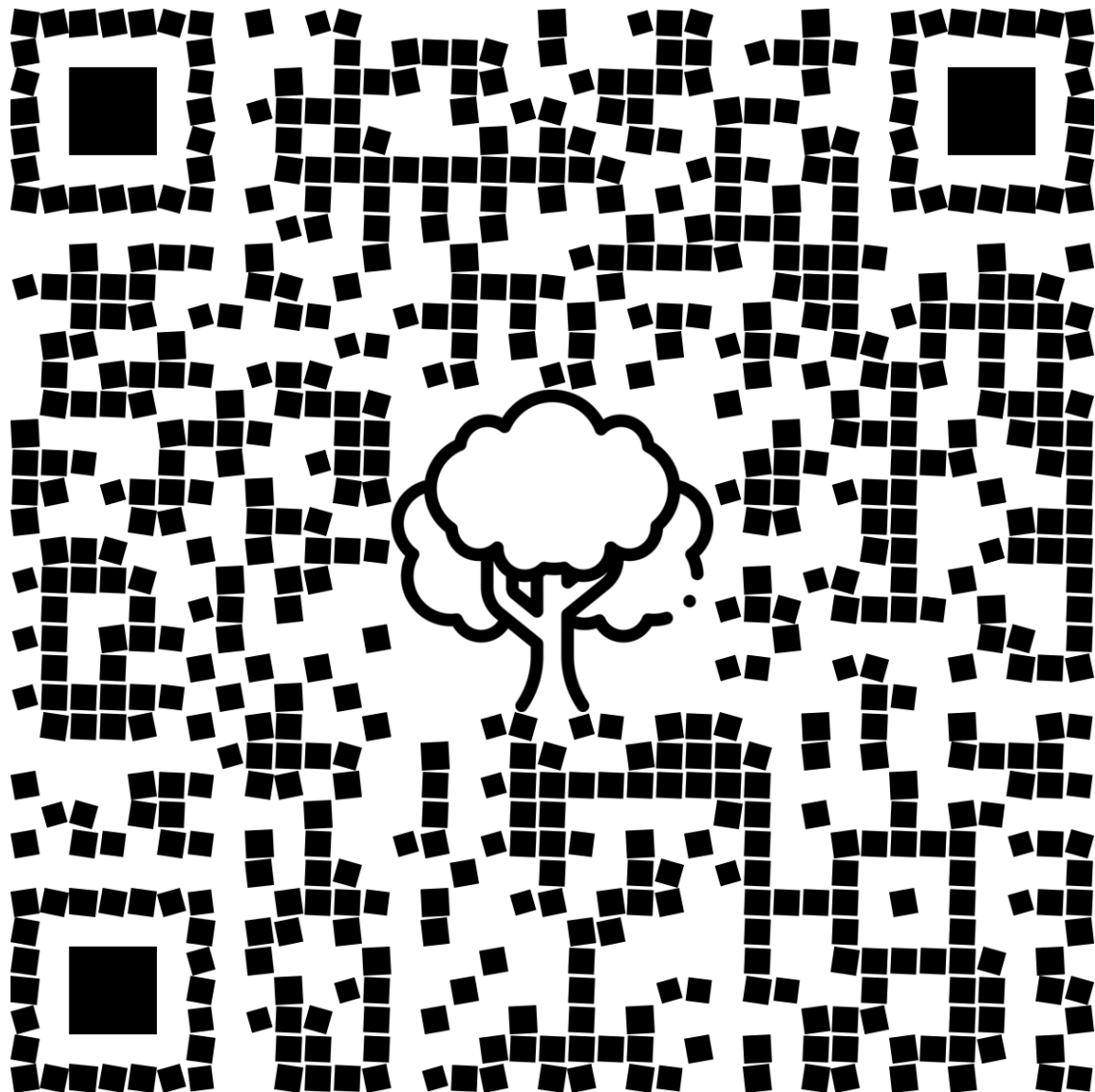
C. Day Avenue Pocket Park

--Development continues: Steering Committee Meeting Upcoming

--Quarterly Plawking Dates with collaboration with Mountainview in process.

--Considering a spring Tree Planting in OSW: Date TBA

Sign up NOW for a tree in your curb strip via QR code.



4. OSW Needs Your Help: Standing Committees Review (interest survey?)

Share your skills. Have a hand in making OSW the best place to live, work, play!

CONTACT: maryanne.mather@gmail.com OR Complete form at: oldsouthwest.org/contact-us

- Communications (social media, OSW list maintenance, OSW email updates, website)
- Events (select & coordinate activities/social events)
- Community Outreach/Membership
- Alexander-Gish House Maintenance & Rentals
- Fundraising
- Neighborhood Safety
- Historical Preservation Committee
- Environmental Preservation, Parks & Greenspace

4. Other Business? Any neighborhood safety concerns? none

Adjourn 8PM

2/2024 Old Southwest Committee Reports

Environmental Preservation, Parks & Greenspace (Green Committee)

1. Day Avenue Pocket Park

• Star City Garden Club pledged support for the development and maintenance of the Pocket Park for its 2024 community engagement project. Details:

--Club decided to "adopt a month" and schedule a work session (suggested dates: May 18 or 19 (3-hour session TBA). Seeking loan of a deep edger for the work date. Members unable to attend on selected date will attend as convenient during the Year. Terry McGuire will keep members apprised of other work sessions during the year, and those people can show up as convenient

--Cody Jo Statler, a graphic artist & club member, is designing park sign and t-shirt (complete before Jun1/Neighborhood Appreciation event). Club members will be welcomed at this event.

--Other potential support during the year includes sharing native plants from personal gardens, bulb donations in the fall.

2. Green Committee Fundraiser

Mid-September fundraiser with music (Roanoke Baroque—financially supported by Arts Connect Neighborhoods Program). Star City Garden Club Members expressed support. Current concept: evening at the historic Gish House with wine, craft beer, refreshments, music, etc. Proposed ticket price \$25pp. Star City members said, said it "sounds like fun."

3. Grants

- Investigated Xerces Society Plant Grant for a pollinator plant kit for side garden. Roanoke not in their support area.
- Two grant reports upcoming
- Will pursue another \$1000 grant through Star City garden club for irrigation and signage.

4. Upcoming Green Committee Meeting Date TBD

Steering committee will meet to firm-up maintenance plan for Pocket Park, adding irrigation (Andrew Campbell will give an estimate), proposed projects with the City to improve Highland Park, and possibility of adding red buds in curb strip along Pocket Park at 8th street through Roanoke Tree Stewards.

Historic Preservation Committee

- Non-performing property update: Abandoned blue house at 543 Elm St. SW has just submitted for tax auction—result of many issues and neighbor calls to city for over two years.
- ARB Guidelines update: Committee is following. Parviz Mousavi to present at March community meeting.

Events Committee

- No Update

Parlor Tour Committee

- No update (meeting cancelled due to family matters). Planning is on track.

OSW Special Projects (presented by OSW neighbor, Lynn Hunt to Board Member, Cara Becker)

--OSW Coloring Book

Cara and Lynn met regarding the development of an OSW Coloring book project. Lynn completed an application at the end of January for a City grant to cover seed money for the OSW Coloring Book. Decision pending.

--Book Club

Lynn asked that Cara present an additional idea to the Board. OSW Resident and author Amanda Cockrell has a new book, "Coyote Weather." She has agreed to offer copies and discussion. Lynn thinks there could be neighborhood interest in a Book Club and having Amanda talk at one of the meetings (possibly one of the more "Social" format meetings) and offer a follow-up Book Club event at Gish for those who read the book and want to discuss. Cara supports the idea, but wouldn't be interested in leading the Book Club. If anyone else is, suggest working with Lynn on details. Amanda Cockrell was the founding director of the children's literature Graduate program at Hollins. Also, just an FYI, she's married to Tony Neuron of RAM House. *Please let me know if we want to invite Amanda to speak at a future meeting and I'll follow up with her. Decision pending.