

Minutes of the Fairmount Neighbors General Meeting
Feb 16, 2016, 7 pm,
Room 202 Ford Alumni Center

Present: 21 neighbors (including 5 board members) and 11 guests

Co-chair Steven Asbury brought the meeting to order at 7:04 and introduced four candidates for Mayor: Stefan Strek, Lucy Vinis, Bob Cassidy, Mike Clark. Each had five minutes for introductory remarks.

Stefan Strek. Born in Massachusetts, and moved here from Georgia. There is more potential here for pursuit of happiness than any other place. Has visited all over the world. Eugene has things that nowhere else in the world has. Has ideas to show world what we have and invite them to spend money here. There are a lot of administrative policies that don't give interest to homeowners, including parking issues. Would bring a Texas program called Front Steps to work with homeless, house them, and care for their animals. There are a lot of problems with roads—potholes all over the place and no one seems to be doing anything. Willing to hear whatever people want to say to improve their neighborhoods. People come from all over the world, would like it here.

Lucy Vinis. Arrived in Eugene in 1991 with husband and 2-year-old son in an RV. Moved from DC, traveled around the country for year looking for place to live. Wanted to live in a place where kids could grow up. Background is in agriculture and natural resources. Wanted to engage in community at many levels. Kids started school just as measure five started to be felt. Concern about school funding prompted starting an arts nonprofit. Worked as independent contractor on natural resources and agricultural interests. Worked with business and environmental groups. Husband passed away and she has worked at Shelter Care for past seven years. Concerned about opportunities for young people. Concerned about rate of poverty and homelessness. Concerned about dual challenges of climate change and population growth. Has been a progressive all her life and all working life has been in nonprofit world. Experience in being accountable to public and donors is perfect preparation for public work. Work has been to communicate issues, solutions, and opportunities for engagement. Mayor is like orchestra conductor—not playing music, but sees whole picture and when instruments come in. It's a public process. Who needs to come in at what point. Look forward to bringing those skills to bear.

Bob Cassidy. Background is education, sociology, and social work. Raised in Montana. Worked in rural credit union. In Eugene ran a deli downtown. Been in Eugene 40 years, involved in community activities and political activities. Worked with Habitat for Humanity, Lane Shelter Care, NAACP, Amazon Neighbors, City Club, Bernie Sanders supporter. Involved in health care for all. Active in vote by mail and Oregon Toxics. Served on EWEB board. Two to three years ago, felt that Kitty wasn't going to run again. Could tell that she wasn't going to run. Committed to finding

people who might be interested. Kitty broke down polarization in council at that time. Council doesn't dialog with each other. Can talk to staff—have three minutes.

Mike Clark. Asked for show of hands about South Willamette proposal. Example of why experience matters. Staff goals were worthy, but process didn't necessarily lead to best result. Often have similar goals, but different ways to get there. Experience is an important tool for evaluating who you think should be next mayor. Record of accomplishment by being innovative. E.g. worked with Councilor Brown to do things more neighborhood centered. First job is to protect peoples rights, and neighborhood livability is important. Came to UO in 1983 and never left. Stayed and raised family, with kids still in 4J schools. Have run a business here and served a decade in council.

Three things we need to do well in next few years: Create an environment for people to live; work on UGB and EWEB property, and grow local economy.

Steven presented two questions from the board. Each candidate was given two minutes to respond to each question.

Q: The expansion of the University of Oregon has changed the economics of homeownership in Fairmount and surrounding neighborhoods. When five unrelated tenants are paying rent in a single dwelling, single-family homebuyers can't compete with out-of-area investors seeking to exploit the neighborhood for rental properties. The problems with high-renter-occupied neighborhoods are well documented, and the University has telegraphed an intention to continue to expand enrollment. What solutions would you propose to remedy this and ensure our neighborhood is sustainable and friendly to single-family owners in the long term?

Stefan Strek: Home ownership nationwide is in downward trend. In Eugene homeowners are being pushed out because of MUPTE. If a person wants to subdivide a home, has to pay \$10K fee. Money could have gone towards fixing parks, maintaining streets. Parking is affecting everyone. City should stop selling off parking for this neighborhood.

Lucy Vinis: Have spent two weekend afternoons canvassing this neighborhood. Have heard from neighbors about issues. One has to do with density and nuisance. You are in line for special area plan. You could reduce the number of unrelated residents for a house, and number of vehicles per residence. On nuisance side, has to do with maintenance and condition of buildings as well as constant annual changing of student tenants. Is considering possibility of students as emissaries to neighborhoods.

Bob Cassidy: Been an officer of Amazon Neighbors for 15-20 years. Facing same problem. Would say see your councilor. Mayor is not going to be able to do that as well as council. Should have more control of what they are doing. What we have is a council that deals with staff in a manner that is frustrating. Should be involved in setting agenda, determining how much time staff should have. President should run the meeting and power should be shifted to council.

Mike Clark: Mayor does have ability to set agenda. The sorts of remedies Lucy mentioned are for entire city. Part of problem is increase in amount of students. Rate of increase will probably slow. Because of way city has dealt with housing, what was available to students pushed them into the neighborhoods. One of ways they solved was to encourage building of student housing in areas where students would rather live. Social host ordinance will help.

Q: The last parks bond had a directive to be used to acquire land for parks but no money was allocated for maintenance. This has had a result of adding a substantial amount of acreage to the city's inventory of parkland with no money to maintain them.

What solutions would you propose to this problem?

Mike Clark: It's also worse than that. System development charges are supposed to be helping to pay, and we're getting through the 20 years. Third reason why important to run for mayor. Part of livability is taking better care of parks. Proposed solution to work more closely with UO and Parks foundation.

Bob Cassidy: Don't have enough money to take care of parks. Raising sewer fees. We have a piece of property in center of town filled with turkeys, waiting for development. We have a free building in middle of town that we paid for. Could be looked at instead of new city hall.

Lucy Vinis: Volunteered quite a few times at Hendricks Park, which has suffered from lack of maintenance. Council did make important strategic decision to buy land while it was available as community grows. Would be a tragedy if couldn't improve or maintain. System Development charges not being used adequately to fund parks. Need to take temperature of public about bond. Parks and recreation did assessment. The public loves our parks. Perhaps enough public will support a bond. Costs \$250K to clean up illegal campsites. Parks should be able to spend that money maintaining parks and homeless should have legal places to live.

Stefan Strek. It's important to maintain parks. Security issue too. Huge homeless problem, and some are dangerous. Some across alley from my residence were dealing heroin. Need to control, keep clean, and supervise. Community service is a great way to get people to help clean up.

Steven invited questions from the audience.

Q: What is your vision for the built environment going forward? A lot forces will cause more need for housing. Downtown and Kesey square, waterfront, what Obie trying to do. What does that look like?

Bob Cassidy. Refer to planning commission. Developing city is complex. It's a long big question.

Q: What is your personal vision?

Mike Clark. With Envision Eugene process, projected to have 34K people here within next 20 years. I think it's going to be a lot more. Climate refugees will be a real issue. Going to build out 17 acres, EWEB has good master plan. Not going to add new land with UGB for residential. Will begin process after that called urban reserves. Dealing in shorter frequencies instead of every 7 years.

Lucy Vinis. Believe strongly in value as we grow in finding ways where we can have compact development. We have a city here, not a rural town. Will be dynamic, a paradigm shift. Will be exciting. Kesey square is important. How walk through that process will help us know how to proceed. Transit corridors preserve neighborhoods behind them.

Stefan Strek. Negligence from current administration. In the 15th and High area there is a large lot larger than Kesey square. City won't tell prospective buyers who owns it. Lot near KIVA also could be renovated. If these people were doing their jobs, we wouldn't have these problems.

Q: A few have mentioned homeless problem, which is an issue around the country. What would your approach to addressing the issue.

Stefan Strek. Have to have a firm hand to give a helping hand. Got to be assertive. Would bring Front Steps program to Eugene.

Lucy Vinis. Issue close to my heart coming from Shelter Care. Many are not going to recover without help. City is critical partner in building support systems. Need to distinguish between homeless who need services and travelers who are not looking for programs. Instead of paying law enforcement, would like to pay more supports like Cahoots. City should promote housing first program. Could do more with public private partnership.

Mike Clark. Lucy's suggestions are a lot like what Mike has advocated. Housing first model is important. Then provide services. Smart approach. City ought to act as center for information and organizer for engaging the community. We have a compassionate community where people care about each other. Asked for creation of database at city level to look where folks could camp on private property. Difference between have not, cannot, and will not. People who "will not" need to be treated fundamentally differently. Need to have full conversation about who serving and how.

Bob Cassidy. Lane Shelter Care has been wrong on this for 20 years. No one solution fits all except for housing first. A group of people is still living in tents and being moved around. City has cooperated with private organizations and faith communities piecemeal, not a pace that should be going on.

Sunday Streets

Steven introduced Emily Farthing who described herself as a UO student, new Fairmount Neighbor, and coordinator of Eugene Sunday Streets. Sunday Streets are neighborhood celebrations. The first will be on July 31 downtown, and the second September 25, starting in SUNA and coming up to Fairmount. She hopes to get input on what worked in 2012 and what could be improved. From noon to 4, streets will close down so people can walk, bike and enjoy streets—24th to Agate to 19th, connecting with activity centers celebrating parks. They are encouraging people to come to lead physical activity. Takes about 100 volunteers to put on. Follow on Twitter at #Eugenessundaystreets

Hayward Field

Karen Hyatt remarked that Sunday Streets will be the day before the beginning of UO fall term.

Hayward Field information can now be found on UO Foundation website. Go to uofoundation.org. That's where communication tool will be. Hayward is still in design and development phase. Construction goes from August 2016 to May 2017, then resume in July and finish in October. There won't be a regular track season. UO Foundation and campus partners working with impacted groups to stay in loop. Goal is to limit disruption. Aware of ongoing concerns relating to traffic, parking, noise.

Q: Are there any street closures related to construction?

A: Not aware of that, but will ask.

Q: If legislature doesn't pass the tax, is this still funded?

A: Not sure.

Q: Why are lights on all night.

A: It's not always Hayward, but also the rec fields. Students are there day and night.

Residence hall construction at 17th and Moss is starting soon. Fences will be up in early March. Replacement parking getting moved to Moss Street and Romania lot, hopefully done by mid March.

Central kitchen and woodshop are almost done. Issue: Make sure trucks don't come through neighborhood.

Renovating Agate Hall for American English Institute. Construction vehicles will be in alley.

Jane Saunders stadium is almost done and opening game is March 25.

Q: Why is Villard closed between Franklin and 15th after events. Need a discussion because of CUP.

Q: Sign on 19th at Moss says no event parking. For Paisley, worked well. However business district people not seeing that it's signed. Restaurant patrons didn't see sign.

Q: Appears that one-hour change has actually done what it tried to do.

The meeting adjourned at 9 pm.

Minutes submitted by Camilla Bayliss

