

Savanna Oaks Neighborhood Association Meeting

January 9, 2024

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by President Frank Carini at 7:04 p.m.

There were eleven SONA members present at the onset of the meeting and five additional members joined later online for a total of sixteen members present. This met the quorum requirement of a minimum of ten members to approve the SONA agenda and minutes. SONA's online meeting announcement and agenda were posted to the City of West Linn's website. SONA meeting signs were placed throughout the neighborhood and email reminders were sent to members.

Minutes:

Frank Carini called for any proposed corrections to the November 7, 2023 general meeting minutes. No changes were proposed to the minutes. The minutes were approved by consent.

Agenda:

President Carini called for any changes or additions to the agenda. No members requested changes so the agenda was approved by consent.

Treasurer's Report:

Treasurer Ed Schwarz reported that as of January 1, 2024 the balance in the SONA account was \$7,240.87. Since the last meeting on November 7th, total expenses have been two monthly invoices of \$13.59 each for Zoom.

New Business:

A. Presentation by Megan Big John, Director of Parks and Recreation, City of West Linn Followed by Questions and Answers.

Director of Parks and Recreation, Megan Big John, stated that she has been in her current City of West Linn position since November of 2023. Director Big John previously worked for the City of Lake Oswego and has earned a Degree in Horticulture and has a background in restoration work as it applies to areas of horticulture.

Currently, she is evaluating the various needs of the city's numerous parks, natural areas, and various existing facilities such as the West Linn's Adult Community Center and the historic City Hall. Big John's assessment will also include proposed projects which include a newly proposed community center. This evaluation would include developing a process to evaluate management/ maintenance requirements and maintenance schedules.

She also expressed interest increasing communication to the neighborhoods about the work that is being accomplished by the Parks and Recreation Department. Director Big John shared her desire to continue partnering with neighborhoods in accomplishing some of her department's goals.

Questions previously provided to Director Big John and those asked by SONA members in attendance were addressed. Big John provided answers to questions concerning the proposed community recreation center which is in the Phase I stage of assessing the feasibility of this project. The proposed recreation center would be approximately 55,000 square feet and an estimated cost to be determined (Big John stated she could provide the cost estimation to SONA later.)

City Council still needs to approve moving this project to the Phase II level which would require statistically valid polling, a traffic study, possible funding sources, plan for projected operational costs, facility renderings, and a site plan. Continued community outreach would be needed for input on all these factors.

Based on Phase II findings, the project could be placed on the November 2024 ballot as a funding measure for the recreation center. Possible timeline if project is approved would be a useable building by late 2026.

Other questions answered by director Big John included the street tree replacement program, the city's tree maintenance plan, and maintenance of paved trails which border or traverse neighborhoods. SONA issues as they apply to the White Oak Savanna were also addressed. Specifically discussed were efforts to partner with the neighborhood regarding park maintenance/restoration, future projects such as the natural play area, and the Firewise program as well as past volunteer efforts and projects organized by Ed and Roberta Schwarz.

B. 2024 SONA Budget and Request for Funding New Trail at White Oak Savanna Park –Frank Carini, Ed Schwarz, and Roberta Schwarz.

President Frank Carini opened budget summary by highlighting some of 2023's meeting discussions involving potential SONA project expenditures. During the PowerPoint presentation, Frank Carini recapped the following: finding ways to increase the visibility of SONA and the NA's purpose, costs for continuing online meetings or transitioning to in-person or hybrid meetings, sponsoring social/outreach events, improving social media presence, and continuing support of the White Oak Savanna park.

Frank Carini further recommended that a small budget committee be formed to determine SONA funding and proposed costs for some of these items. It was further suggested that the committee develop a working budget for proposed projects to be presented for discussion and a vote at one of the upcoming spring SONA meetings.

The discussion was turned over to Treasurer Ed Schwarz to present a PowerPoint slideshow that outlined a proposal for a trail extension to the Grandfather Grove located in the White Oak Savanna. Slides detailed the history of the Grandfather Grove and the bench designed with input from the Council of Elders of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde and donated by the Girl Scouts in 2017. An aerial drone video displaying the White Oak Savanna and the area for the proposed trail was highlighted. The video was created and produced by SONA member Ahsan Ahmed.

Ed and Roberta Schwarz further outlined some of the trail specifications for bids that they have obtained from four contractors. The trail would connect existing White Savanna Oak's trails to the Grandfather Grove. This proposed trail would also provide trail access to the proposed children's play area.

All contractors who provided estimates were licensed and bonded and have experience in building trails. Contractors have been instructed to use ¾ minus gravel just like the existing White Oak Savanna's main long trail. The recommendations also specified that the trail should be four inches deep and four feet wide. Costs thus far range from \$6,300 to \$8,500.

Roberta proposed that a \$6,000 source of funding be from SONA's NA bank funds. Roberta also stated that any additional funds could be comprised of individual's donations and Ed and Roberta's matching donations up to \$1,000.

Members in attendance discussed the project and funding sources. The following motion was made.

A motion was made by Ed Schwarz and seconded by Paul Blankenmeister to earmark up to \$6,000 from SONA's NA account to be used to pay for the proposed Grandfather Grove Trail extension in the White Oak Savanna park that was described in the PowerPoint presentation provided by Ed Schwarz at SONA's meeting on January 9, 2024 and it was further stipulated that other community contributions would first be applied to fund the construction of the trail extension before SONA earmarked funds were applied to cover final costs for the project.

Vote: 14 (Yes Votes) * 0 (No Votes) 0 (Abstaining Votes)

*Two members found it necessary to leave the meeting before the vote was taken.

C. Potential Speaker's List for 2024 SONA Meetings – Lori Carini

SONA Secretary Lori Carini briefly reviewed potential topics of interest to be featured at future meetings which could include the following: I-205 tolling (requesting updated presentations from local government officials or advocacy groups); emergency preparedness using presentations from the Red Cross, Clackamas County or OSU Extension; speakers addressing (possibly from the OSU Extension) landscaping with native plants; mason bees and backyard habitat improvements; review the Firewise Assessment for the Savanna Oaks Neighborhood; speakers addressing cybersecurity and AI security; and presentation/speakers from SOLVE Oregon.

Lori Carini proposed discussion on potential topics be held at next meeting in March.

Old Business:

A. Follow-up to December 18, 2023 West Linn City Council Presentation Regarding Middle Housing – Frank Carini

President Carini reported that he provided written and oral testimony at the December 18th City Council Work Session. The testimony covered the issues detailed in the discussion and motion in the November 7th SONA minutes. The testimony consisted of five issues surrounding SB 458 implementation. Increased housing density, access, traffic, livability concerns (such as tree removal and lack of parks), and infrastructure were all cited as being adversely affected by incentives provided by SB 458. The City Council acknowledged that SB 458 and companion legislation has limited regulation and changed the way developments are being approved and implemented.

B. 10th Street and Salamo Road Streetscape Improvements Update – Frank Carini

There are no new updates on the city website for the past few weeks during the holiday season. However, some paving and concrete curbing along Salamo has recently been installed with the activity taking place around the entrance to the future new city corporation yard.

C. The White Oak Savanna Park Update – Roberta Schwarz

The completed and comprehensive Firewise assessment supported mowing maintenance prior to the fire season in the White Oak Savanna park.

Community Comment:

Beth Carr attended the “No Tolls” meeting on January 6, 2024. Beth reported it was a well-attended meeting. During the comment period of the meeting, Mayor Rory Bialostosky expressed opposition to the tolls being proposed by the Department of Transportation. In addition, about forty people also spoke in opposition to tolling. Beth still has a “No Tolls” petition available for signatures. Also, Roberta Schwarz reported that in conjunction with West Linn, several other city councils are co-sponsoring a scientific poll regarding tolling. She felt that if the opposition to tolling was significant, then the results could be taken to the state legislature to limit or curtail tolling efforts.

Next Meeting:

President Frank Carini stated the next SONA meeting will be held on March 12, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. This will be a virtual meeting via Zoom.

President Frank Carini, seeing no further business, adjourned the meeting at 8:47 p.m.

Submitted by Lori Carini, SONA Secretary