

Southwest Hills Neighborhood Association (SHiNA) General Meeting
TOPIC – State of the City

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, January 20, 2025, 6:30-8:15PM @ Wayne Morse Family Farm

Attendees:

SHiNA Board Members:

Chris Jockheck, Chair
Clay Neal, Secretary
Deb Rogers
John Rogers
Bev McDonald
Rita Fiedler

Guests:

Eliza Kashinsky

Eugene City Council Ward 1

Mark Gissiner

Interim Independent Police Auditor

Neighbors:

Chris Versella
Sally Versella
Richard Sundt
Mary Leighton
Melissa Brown
George Brown
Larry Cox
Elly Stapleton
Svein Berg
Lamont Micheau
Kelli Ann Styles
Suzanne Clark
Ward Ricker
Alison Hassler

ONGOING BUSINESS

1. Call meeting to order – 6:36

2. Introduction of Board – 6:40

3. Guest Speakers – Interim Police Auditor Mark Gissiner

- a. Served as the IPA in 2009 (moved from Ohio) until 2021 when he retired.
- b. Structure of the office:
 - i. Works for City Council – not for the City Manager nor affiliated that way with the Police Department
 - ii. Alternatively, Chief of Police reports to the City Manager
- c. 4 staff people in the office.
 - i. Respond to complaints against employees of the police department (both internal and citizen complaints)
 - ii. Respond to incidents when the auditor's office sees something that seems awry in internal review of police incidents.
 1. Mostly involved in allegations of serious misconduct.

- iii. Primary complaints from the community:
 - 1. Police response time
 - 2. Burglary response time
 - a. The statistics that Mark has been tracking on burglaries is very similar to other communities across the US.
- iv. Has a concern about the long-term ability for the community to trust the Police Department primarily due to serious loss of trust that occurred with events in the early 2000's when there was serious misconduct uncovered in the Eugene Police Department (although things have vastly improved).
- v. With the powers that are afforded to police officers comes great responsibility as well.
- vi. Statistically, the police department is performing better overall by community standards now since 2009 (when the auditor's office was established).
- vii. Numbers of allegations of serious misconduct has dropped significantly since 2009. (from about 36 annually to 12 annually)
- viii. The Department has also worked to hire more women to the force to provide a broader problem-solving culture.
- ix. High percentage of police encounters are related to interactions with unhoused individuals and with people using fentanyl. Fentanyl is a really serious problem in this community right now.
- x. One recommendation from the Auditor – our country should revisit residential mental health facilities that incorporate involuntary residential treatment.
- d. Neighbor questions and comments:
 - i. Police did a great job today monitoring the MLK Jr. Day march.
 - ii. How many police officers does Eugene employ?
 - 1. Response: pushing to 200. But lucky to have 120 on the street across all shifts. There are times when there are 4-5 officers on the street at one time.
 - 2. These officers respond to about 600 calls a day that are either dispatched or initiated by police officers. Many of those calls are trespass.
 - iii. How many officers are on duty during the day generally?
 - 1. Gissiner suggests about 20-30 but that it would be worth asking the Police Department for more accurate numbers.
 - iv. What happens when you take a complaint from a community member?
 - 1. Internal Affairs (IA) in the Police Department does an investigation and the Police Auditor's office monitors the investigation.
 - 2. IA writes a report and then the chain of command within the Police Department considers outcomes from the investigation report.

3. Auditor's office also makes a recommendation to the Chief about outcomes.
4. Chief has the final decision based on investigation, chain of command, and Auditor's recommendations.
5. Civilian Review Board – reviews the whole process and gives a civilian perspective on the original allegations, the investigation, and the outcomes.
6. Any kind of allegation that is criminal goes to another agency for review
- v. What about Jail Beds? We have 11 jail beds – how does this pertain to the issues that the City is facing?
 1. Part of the problem is that the same people are showing up in jail over and over again and that cycle is the challenge to consider.
 2. There are literally 11 beds that the City of Eugene buys from the County jail to account for police holds.
- vi. One community member reported a really positive interaction with the police who responded within 5 minutes to a call for service after a neighbor heard a crash in the night.
- e. More information can be found on the Independent Police Auditor's website: <https://www.eugene-or.gov/1039/Police-Auditor>

4. City Councilor Eliza Kashinsky (Ward 1)

- a. City Mayor – Kaarin Knudson – delivered a state of the City last week – available online [here](#).
- b. Ward 1 includes downtown, Friendly, Jefferson Westside, and a portion of SHINA between Chambers and City View down to 29th
- c. Some challenges that the city is facing:
 - i. Fairly severe budget shortfall
 - ii. Drug use and the impact on people
 - iii. Homelessness including a housing shortage (which contributes to very expensive housing)
- d. Budget
 - i. Bulk of discretionary funding comes from property taxes. 30 years ago, ballot measures passed to restructure the way that Oregon's property taxes work. The assessed value of homes can only increase by 3% per year. This isn't keeping up with inflation and the required increased costs to services. Since 2020 and the explosion of inflation due to the covid pandemic, the problem has become severe.
 - ii. Funding has remained somewhat stagnant since the 1990s except for the 3% related to increased property values and inflation. But the organization has also grown to try to meet the desired community services.
 - iii. The gap is around \$10M. This size of gap would lead to cuts in services that people would really feel.

1. City Council is considering a lot of options:
 - a. Additional revenue?
 - b. Prioritizing some services like fire and police?
 - c. More across the board cuts?
- e. Neighbor Questions:
 - i. Police sweeps – the police department, the parks department, and community service organizations are at odds in specific places where the missions for safety, cleanliness, and serving homeless folks are coming to a head. There is a mission conflict here.
 1. Eliza – she is trying to get people together about this particular issue.
 - ii. Is there an opportunity for low-income housing in neighborhoods where there is surplus land.
 1. Yes – new land use allowance allow for additional development within our neighborhoods and City Council is supportive of new development.
 - iii. Affordable housing trust fund. How much is in it?
 1. Eliza – the funding varies. It is a pool of money that comes from the construction excise tax. And the City contributes to it annually from general fund. The fund is about several million dollars.
 - iv. The HUB development (student housing) received a MUPTE benefit and they are in the 10th year of that benefit. They committed to contributing \$1M to affordable housing as a community benefit. Did that happen?
 1. Eliza does not know but will look into it.
 - v. New properties that are being developed around downtown Eugene (particularly student housing), is there additional revenue that the City receives from property taxes?
 1. Almost all new develop does contribute property taxes to the City
 2. Also – historically housing that has been developed for students in Eugene has become affordable housing naturally over time. The hope is that the newly developed housing will come down in cost in the future (maybe 30 years from now) to accommodate more affordability in our community.
 - vi. Is there a way for City Council to address the housing affordability issues in our community across income levels? Are there zoning changes that have increased the opportunity for infill housing?
 1. We definitely need housing at all income levels and are supporting programs – like the Downtown Urban Renewal District, Affordable Housing Trust Fund, land banking, increased opportunity for small scale infill development – that help with housing affordability and access at all income levels.
 2. Accessory dwelling units are allowed on all residential lots as mandated by the state.

3. Many other types of infill housing are now allowed by right on Eugene properties.
- vii. Does the City have the opportunity to impact the fentanyl issue?
 1. The City looks at this from the policing side. The County works on this from a public health side.
- viii. Will the county behavioral health center have an impact?
 1. Yes, it will help. But the need is so great and the resources we have to meet that need are not great enough.
- ix. How is the City doing on its goals related to CAP 2.0
 1. There is a work session happening in the near future that is an update on CAP 2.0. Eliza's impression is that they are making good progress on some of the aspects of CAP 2.0 and not great on others. CAP 2.0 reports that we are 60% through the work plan.
- x. Recent wildfires have really put this neighborhood, which is on the urban-wildlands interface, on guard. What is the City able to do?
 1. This is on the minds of City Council. There is a big grant that the City received to address fire suppression with that grant in the urban-wildland interface.
 2. Neighbors are doing this as well, but don't have the ability to control individual property owners who are not taking steps to help protect the community.
- xi. Perhaps there is a way to engage students in the labor of fire mitigation in the same way that we have grown CTE programs to help build transitional housing for homeless individuals.
- xii. Are there conversations that pertain to the lack of health care services (particularly a hospital) that is close to residents particularly at the south fringe of the city?
 1. This is all about partnerships. The state delegation got a grant that went to Lane County and the City of Eugene to explore how to provide health care services without the development of a new hospital.
- xiii. Chair of SHiNA is part of a group putting together health care forum and fair (march 1, Saturday in the afternoon 2-4PM at Willamette Christian Center at 18th and Hawkins).
- xiv. Egan Warming Center – doesn't currently have enough volunteers to staff all of the warming centers

5. Adjourn – 8:15

NEXT MEETING PLANNING

Next Board Meeting – Tuesday, February 18th 6:30 PM – at Wayne Morse Family Farm