

City of Beaverton
Neighborhood Association Committee
Meeting Minutes

NAC: Denney Whitford / Raleigh West

Date: January 28, 2010

Board members present:

Chair: Ray Bowman
 Vice Chair: Andrew Bynum
 BCCI Rep: Jim Yasutome

Treasurer: Julia Sathler
 Recorder: Tracy Thornton
(*substitute*)

Quorum present? Yes No

Meeting start time: 7:00 pm

Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue Report: Lt. Miller reported that the new fire station is coming along. It is due to be finished in mid-April, and he felt there was a good chance the building would be completed by that date. The Whitford School site will be returned to what it was before the construction of their temporary station, according to an agreement with the school.

In our area, there were no fires this month, just the typical medical calls and car accidents. Lt. Miller said that TVF&R can provide seasonal advice regarding heating equipment, how to handle or prevent freezing pipes, preventing slips and falls, and so on.

Community Policing Report: Officer Nate Wallbaum noted that for the third year in a row, Beaverton has been named the safest city in the Northwest. We are also the 47th safest city in the country for cities with a population above 75,000. One resident asked whether the trend over those three years has been toward Beaverton being less safe or more safe, but Officer Wallbaum did not know the answer to that.

Officer Wallbaum explained a couple of new laws that are now in effect. There is a new "move over" law, which stipulates that when an emergency vehicle or police car is behind you, you should move as far to the right as possible. When an emergency vehicle or police car is on the right side of the road (such as along Hwy 217), drivers are required to move as far to the left as possible. The fine for these issues is now \$720 (an increase). He noted that it is important for emergency vehicles to be able to get places quickly and safely so that we don't have accidents.

The new cellphone law states that cellphones cannot be used at all for drivers under the age of 18. Drivers over 18 may initiate calls and end cellphone calls while driving as long as a hands-free device (like Bluetooth) is used. Police officers may use cellphones, but the policy of the Beaverton Police Department is to set a good example and avoid using them. The law does allow for exceptions in the case of emergencies, but if you have a passenger, please have the passenger make the call.

The BPD is enforcing the law. If someone is seen talking on a cellphone, it is a good reason for a stop. Officer Wallbaum said that most officers would stop and chat with the driver, but may or not issue a citation; citing the driver is at the officer's discretion. There is a link to the actual text

of the law on the State of Oregon website:

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/09reg/asures/hb2300.dir/hb2377.en.html>.

Neighborhood Issues / Concerns:

Officers Barrowcliff and Patrick from BPD gave a presentation regarding the transient encampment that was discovered in the Fanno Creek area behind Rollingwood Drive. Officer Barrowcliff started by noting that he feels for the transients in our community; they have to go somewhere, and we are losing social services that used to be available to them due to budget cuts. So what do we do? There were 65 known transient camps in the Beaverton last year. They are most commonly found near Highways 26 and 217, and near the Max line. This is because there are enclosed, wooded areas there where no one is coming and going regularly. For example, there used to be several camps in the Nature Park, but that park is now full of bike trails. Since the creation of the bike trails about eight years ago, there have been no camps found in that area. Officer Barrowcliff noted that transients go where there is brush for shelter and privacy. He showed pictures of many camps, and demonstrated that a fairly elaborate camp can be very well hidden behind shrubs and trees that are overgrown.

Police have several issues with arresting transients. For example, the police department becomes responsible for a transient's property when one is arrested, because that property is their home and all of their belongings. The City has some civil liability in these cases, even though the transient may be trespassing or littering. Search and seizure laws apply even if it's a transient's tent. In downtown Portland, for example, where the City decided to fence off certain areas where transients were living had to hold all the stuff found in those locations for 90 days in case someone came to claim it, and that can be very costly for the City.

To get around these difficulties, the police practice a "cite and release" method. They then pressure the transients to clean up the messes they have made in their camp areas. They also encourage property owners to cut back all the brush that allowed the transient to hide. Once a transient camp is exposed, those living there will usually pack up and leave. Neighbors are encouraged not to explore the camps or take pictures themselves, as some of these transient individuals could be very dangerous.

Beaverton residents have consistently said that livability issues are important, and we don't want Beaverton turned into Portland. Officer Barrowcliff noted that 99% of all the sign holders we see on the side of the road are not from Beaverton; many of them ride into Beaverton on Max, because they can make better money here. They then commit crimes and go back into Portland. Some of them come to Beaverton to make money, stay for 2-4 weeks, sometimes up to three months, and then disappear.

Ray, the transient found near Fanno Creek, was a sex offender with 7 admitted victims (5 known, 2 unknown). Sex offenders must register a residence, but that residence can be a park bench or a tent somewhere. Ray had previously been registered at a camp in the Barnes Road/Cedar Hills Blvd. area, where there have been many transient camps. Ray is a registered sex offender, but his camp was less than 200 feet from a day care center. This was allowed because as a "sex offender," he only needed to have no contact with children. If he had been deemed a "predatory sex offender," he would not have been allowed to locate in that area. (The distinction, the officers explained, is based on the gender of the victims: if a sex offenders victims are all male, the person is called a "predatory sex offender." If the victims are all female, the person is a "sex offender.")

In September, the police made contact with Ray at his camp in the Barnes Road/Cedar Hills area. He was cited for trespassing, offensive littering, and disorderly conduct. He was asked to clean up his camp, and he did so. He packed out all of his garbage, which saved the City thousands of dollars in clean up costs. The trash found at transient camps is a big problem. At one camp, Washington County work crews worked two 10-hour days hauling garbage out of the area, filling a 40-yard dumpster.

Why did Ray end up at Fanno Creek? Officer Barrowcliff said frankly that the police pushed him there. These people are moved from their camps, but they don't have anywhere else to go, so they are forced into new areas. Ray had been at the Fanno Creek camp since September. He moved from there after his camp was discovered around New Year's Day, and is now registered at a location in Hillsboro. A resident asked how many transients are also sex offenders. The officers were unable to give an answer, since the transient population comes and goes and does not stay anywhere permanently. Another resident asked how many times the police would cite and release the same person--is there a "three strikes and you're out" rule? No; the officers acknowledged that it's a shell game: transients are arrested on petty charges, then lodged in jail. They're out the next day. However, in Beaverton, the judges and City Attorneys do get annoyed when they see there is a long list of charges, and they may lengthen the jail sentences for some of these people. Officer Barrowcliff noted that unemployment in the City was 4.9% a year ago, and it's now 9%, so there are more people struggling economically. The officers concluded by saying that Beaverton is a safe city, but it's important for all of us to pay attention to our surroundings, and report unusual activity.

There was some discussion about how the discovery of the camp at Fanno Creek could have been communicated better or more quickly, and with more accurate information. Some residents were concerned that they didn't know about the incident until a couple of days after it was discovered, but Officer Barrowcliff noted that the transient was gone within a couple of days. Also, the holidays made it difficult to reach certain people. Ray (Bowman) took the action item of working with the NAC Board to come up with a structure for a neighborhood watch-type arrangement.

The NAC will try to invite Officers Barrowcliff and Patrick back sometime in the future to continue this discussion.

Other issues:

No follow up with George Fetzer in Code Enforcement about the house on 102nd.

Land use issues:

Daimler-Chrysler is asking for a 2-lot partition, with the understanding that THPRD will purchase the lot closest to Fanno Creek. Ray noted that two other business properties have been partitioned for areas where the Fanno Creek trail will be built.

The City is proposing to increase the maximum height for buildings in the Regional Center / Old Town zoning district from 30 feet to 75 feet.

The improvements to Camille Park are scheduled to start in-house in 2010, to be completed in late 2012. Julia noted that she heard that the improvements would be completed in 2011. The improvements include enhancing natural areas, more natural play equipment, and a walking trail around the park.

We missed the deadline for the Metro Nature in Neighborhoods grant.

The Beaverton School District reports a growing number of homeless students. In the first 50 days of the school year, the School District documented 831 homeless students, or 17 students per day. This is another indicator of the difficult economic times.

Business Meeting:

Approval of minutes from previous meeting: A motion to approve the minutes from the October NAC meeting as written was accepted and seconded.

Treasurer's report: Julia reported that the NAC Board voted to give \$100 to the Tualatin Valley Gleaners for a Christmas toy give away. The current balance is \$3899.22. A \$50 charge will be coming through soon for a corporate registration fee.

BCCI report: Jim reported that there are three City Council seats open for the next election. Only one person has filed thus far. The Mayor will be giving a State of the City presentation at the Beaverton City Library auditorium on Tuesday, February 23rd at 6:30 pm. Attendees must RSVP by registering at www.beavertonoregon.gov/now and clicking on the online registration link, or by calling 503-526-2379. The Mayor will also be visiting our NAC meeting in March.

The Providence Health System is planning to locate an Elder Care facility in Beaverton. A feasibility study will be done first; no specific site has been identified yet.

The Planning and Design Review Boards have now been merged into one group. This will streamline the process by allowing people a "one stop shop" for planning issues.

A Neighborhood Environmental Summit is planned for Saturday, April 10. A Voters' Forum is planned for May 4.

Ray Bowman is now the chair of the BCCI (Beaverton Committee for Citizen Involvement). Jim noted that the BCCI Representative is our direct connection to City Hall. City Council members may be asked to attend BCCI meetings, and they do listen. Ray said that he wants to make sure that issues that come to the BCCI get responses and feedback gets back to the NACs.

A slate of new officers for 2010 was proposed: Chair, Ernie Conway; Vice Chair, Andrew Bynum; Recorder, Tracy Thornton; Treasurer, Martha Schaffler; BCCI Rep, Julia Sathler. A nomination to accept the entire slate of nominations was accepted and seconded.

Old Business: None.

New Business:

Julia presented Ray and Jim each a certificate and gift certificate thanking them for their service to the NAC.

Meeting end time: 8:40 pm