

SUNNYSIDE

Neighborhood News

March 2022

SUNNYSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

SunnysidePortland.org

board@sunnysideportland.org

Last Month's News.

This Month's Plans.

By Ash Hester, SNA President

During February's Sunnyside Neighborhood Association meeting we discussed advertising updates for the newsletter. Thank you to the folks who have donated. Your support is greatly appreciated. We'll keep the website donation link live so folks can contribute at any time (sunnysideportland.org/donate-to-our-newsletter).

We hosted Josh Roll from PBOT's Pedestrian Advisory Committee. He spoke about the revised endorsement letter on reinstating the traffic calming program within neighborhoods. The SNA voted to endorse revisions that did not include installing speed bumps, but instead allows neighborhoods to initiate projects to build community and offer additional tools to meet safety, climate, and livability goals.

The Board finalized the SNA Public Endorsement Policy and Procedure form that will be on the SNA website. This process outlines how the SNA will consider future endorsements from organizations and the general public. We discussed developing a Community Agreement – a recommendation from the DEIA Committee – which will guide SNA on best practices for communications and interactions between each other.

The Board is extending the General meeting for an additional half hour – now running from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. This time will allow Committee and Officer reports to be shared during the General meeting. A lot of important information is shared during those reports and we want to ensure transparency and awareness with the entire Sunnyside community.

The SNA has two roles that are seeking interested individuals – Land Use & Transportation Chair as well as Newsletter Communications & Advertising Coordinator. To learn more about either of these opportunities, please reach out to the board@sunnysideportland.org.

At the March meeting we will host Erik Dorsett from TVA Architects (tvaarchitects.com) to discuss their development project at 4406 SE Belmont St. Erik will provide an in-depth presentation of TVA Architects' development plans. We will hold a Q&A session after the presentation.

Thank you to the new attendees that showed up at February's SNA meeting. It was great to have your input and see fresh faces. We look forward to seeing more folks at our upcoming March meeting on Thursday the 10th. Meeting details and the agenda will be posted on the SNA website (sunnysideportland.org) on Tuesday the 8th. The General meeting is held 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. with the Board meeting to follow directly after from 8:30- 9:00 pm.

The SNA Board is curious about how we can build a stronger community for local

residents, business owners, and members of local worship. We encourage you to participate in local civic service and join us in making Sunnyside and Southeast Portland a thriving community.

Sunnyside Neighborhood Community Cares (SNACC) Committee Updates

By Emily McCadden, SNACC Co-Chair, SNA Board Member

The SNACC committee began our February meeting picking up where the SNA Board meeting left off – with community agreements. We generated a list of community needs for increased engagement, as well as our own list of agreements to consider adopting in addition to the ones shared at the last meeting (which were adapted from Southeast Uplift). The notes from that activity are available in the SNACC February Update (sunnysideportland.org/category/snacc). We then shared updates for the shower, outreach, and trash programs. In our March meeting we will continue conversations about budgeting, as we recently received generous donations that will allow us to be more responsive to the needs of the community that we serve. Our first priority is investigating a hot water heater for the shower that is within our budget. We will also look at the results of the community needs assessment to decide how to use funds after we have stocked the shower project with plenty of the high-demand supplies.

We encourage anyone who is interested in these efforts to attend our next SNACC meeting on Thursday, March 17th at 6:30 p.m. Meeting details will be posted on the SNA website Monday, March 14th.

Upcoming Meetings

*Meetings are being held virtually.
Check sunnysideportland.org
in advance for a Zoom link & agenda.*

SNA Board and General Meeting

Second Thursday of the month
General Meeting: 7:00pm - 8:30pm
Board Meeting: 8:30pm - 9:00pm
(March 10th, April 14)

SNACC Meeting

Third Thursday of the month
6:30pm - 7:30pm
(March 17th, April 21)

Upcoming City Council Candidates Forum

By Matt Lembo, SNA Board Member

The SNA is working on hosting a candidates forum for City Council Seat #3 featuring Jo Ann Hardesty, Vadim Mozysky and Rene Gonzales. Please join us at our March meeting on Thursday, March 10th at 7:00 p.m. to help us formulate discussion topics or feel free to contribute questions or suggestions directly to us by emailing board@sunnysideportland.org. Watch out for details regarding date, time and location in our next issue and on our website. You can learn more about the candidates and their campaigns by visiting joannforportland.com, votevadim.com and renewforportland.com.

Becoming a kinder neighbor and fostering a sense of community*

By Jan S Molinaro, Co-Chair, Sunnyside Prepared!

Do you know your neighbors? Like, really know them? Their first names, the types of cars they drive, what holidays they celebrate? If you ever get locked out of your house, could you go to your neighbors to borrow a spare key?

There's a sense of comfort and safety that can come from knowing them. Building a safe and caring community is a valuable way to stay connected to the place you live. It's also a major component of being prepared for any disaster that might come our way.

I could offer many tips, but I have offered them generously in the past. So, figure out what works for you and do what you can to become connected to your community, where you live, work, etc. In my regular yoga practice a community, or sangha, is formed whenever we get together to practice, online or in the studio. It's always the same, becoming part of a greater whole and feeling safer and more rooted.

Already a part of your community? Great, and thanks for all that you do.

Need to do more to feel part of your block and/or the Sunnyside neighborhood? Do that work now...it's always a great time to begin. Find a buddy or partner to do the work with you.

Want to meet with me and figure out your next step(s)? That can be arranged too. Email me: jan@sunnysideprepared.com.
** with generous help from an NPR "Life Kit" article published December 3, 2021*

Sunnyside Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Committee Update

By Ash Hester, SNA President

For folks who might have missed February's newsletter, the DEIA Committee will now be applying their work directly in the General SNA meetings and no longer meeting separately on the first Tuesday of each month. The committee felt that this work was important enough that a DEIA lens should be applied in all of our neighborhood association's efforts. The Board is currently working on building a Community Agreement document that will help guide our practices and communication with each other. SNA's goal is to create a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible environment for the community to participate in and be a part of.

Sunnyside Neighborhood Getting to Know Your Neighbors

By Devin Boone, SNA member at large

Q&A with Officer Matt Jacobsen

If you've called the Central Precinct anytime over the past few years, you may have spoken to Officer Matt Jacobsen. A familiar figure around Sunnyside, Jacobsen is on the Neighborhood Response Team (portlandoregon.gov/police/article/668128), a program that addresses more deeply rooted and complex problems related to crime, nuisance, and livability issues. As such, he's forged relationships not only with houseless members of the community but also with nonprofits such as Beacon PDX (beaconvillagepdx.org) and the navigation team at Transition Projects (tprojects.org) who work directly with people living on the street. "I think that seeing everybody as human is really important," Jacobsen says.

How long have you been working in Sunnyside?

I've been a police officer for nearly 13 years. I've been in Portland since 2015, and on the Neighborhood Response team since 2017.

How has Sunnyside changed in the time you've been working here?

One of the things I witnessed was a pretty significant mobilization of the community in Sunnyside—which is really impressive—whether it be the Neighborhood Association working

closely with Beacon PDX, or the shower project. The community has rallied around some of the issues and has generally been very positive in dealing with them. But we've also seen an increase in livability issues. The camping concerns definitely remain.

Were there as many people camping here before the pandemic as there are now?

There's been a pretty steady group of folks that have moved between Sunnyside, Laurelhurst Park and Sewallcrest Park for quite some time.

When you started in 2017, how many officers were on the Neighborhood Response Team?

We had seven officers and a Sergeant. Two of those were assigned full-time as a homeless outreach car. They did nothing but engage with our homeless community, identify our chronically homeless, and try to get those people into some sort of shelter or housing. Now, I have four full-time officers and a Sergeant. So we went from eight people to five.

Why did that happen?

We've had staffing difficulties. The homeless outreach car was cut for that reason in 2020. So it's not as simple as "there was a budget cut." We had to change how we did things, not just related to the civil unrest we've seen, but also related to the pandemic.

What has suffered now that you have fewer officers?

The amount of work didn't change, but the depth at which we're able to work has changed. We are still the investigative unit for the precinct. That outreach car was really instrumental in being out and having a lot of face time with our community. We've lost that, which is frustrating. We've done our best to try to make up for that, but it's the old story of doing the same with less.

How do you build relationships with people who live here—both housed and unhoused, especially people who may not have had the best experiences with police in the past?

You nailed it on the head. Oftentimes the only contact that people have with the police is negative—somebody's getting a ticket or getting arrested. So when we're able to have those positive, or even



just neutral, conversations with people to show that every time the police are engaging with folks it's not going to be bad, we're able to build some trust. We can build rapport.

Will you share an anecdote that maybe demonstrates what's possible when you have these kinds of relationships?

We had a subject at Laurelhurst Park that was resistant to going to housing or other services. But we know him really well. And so once when he was angry about something and said, "You're going to have to arrest me," we were able to work that and have a conversation and ultimately, get him into a shelter and get him a new bike.

I know that occasionally, when you're interacting with someone, you have to call other outreach folks to help because you can sense that someone's been traumatized by the police. How do you know when you're not the right person, as a police officer, to help?

After doing this awhile it's pretty clear when people get sketched out. But again, it's those relationships with non-governmental organizations, having the ability to just make one phone call and get somebody to help you that allows us to approach the situation in the least traumatic, and the least enforcement-minded, way.

There is a lot of conversation in Portland around changing the way police officers are trained. What trainings have you been through that have been particularly helpful?

I've been lucky to go through our Enhanced Crisis Intervention training as well as ongoing training on our Crisis (Hostage) Negotiation Team. Most of the "training," though, is dealing with folks on the street and learning best practices. I cannot stress enough how important being out in the field and building relationships is.

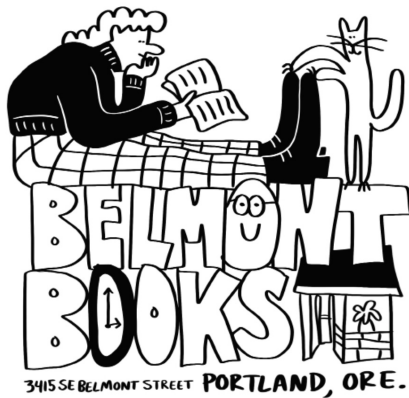
There are signs all over Sunnyside to abolish and/or defund the police. What's your response to this? Do any officers on your team ever say, "Forget it! I don't want to help these people—they don't even think I should have a job"? Have you had to address morale at all?

I have, but I think the officers on my team are pretty motivated. You're not on this team unless you're looking to make a difference. I was born and raised in Portland. I chose to come back here to be a police officer and be part of the community. I'm invested in the success of the community. Often, the worst situations get publicized in the media and the good outcomes, or even the neutral outcomes, don't get much publicity.

Some Sunnyside residents have shared that when they've reported crimes, they either don't receive a response or that there's nothing the police can do, which is disappointing. Why should people keep reporting crime? If there are enough reports made, will more officers, maybe, be assigned to this precinct?

Calls may be canceled or responses delayed if we are experiencing a high call volume or the incident doesn't appear criminal. (Or it's reported that the behavior has stopped.) Generally we'd expect that the original caller be contacted and notified, though there are times that may not happen. Regardless, the last thing I want to hear is that people don't feel we're here when needed. The reality is that with increased call volume and fewer officers, we aren't as immediately responsive as we've been in the past. There is no question that "reporting fatigue" has set in throughout our community.

Reporting is hugely important for the reason you alluded to. It not only helps us frame a truer crime rate, which allows us to then better forecast how many officers are actually needed in Portland, but it also helps me (and our precinct) have a better idea of where to allocate the resources we do have.



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Any opinions expressed, unless specified, are not necessarily those of the Sunnyside Neighborhood Association or its board. **Sunnyside residents are welcome to submit articles for consideration that concern neighborhood issues, by emailing newsletter@sunnysideportland.org.** Many wonderful volunteer Sunnyside residents distribute the Neighborhood News.



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Sunnyside Neighborhood 'Gap Map'

Live near any of the blocks marked in black below? We need your help!
Contact dianadeumling@gmail.com to volunteer for our delivery service.

**Delivery help
needed here**

