

# SUNNYSIDE

## Neighborhood News

### April 2024

SUNNYSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION  
SunnysidePortland.org board@sunnysideportland.org

#### News from the President

By Chris Waldmann, SNA President

Hi Sunnyside! How are you doing? As I write this, it is one of the first truly gorgeous days of spring (in March) and I find myself starting to dream of the dizzying array of colors and scents that April flowers will bring, the first fresh produce of spring at the farmer's market, and cool evenings spent on the porch chatting with neighbors. Future me is a happier Sunnysider in April!

Onto the news...The SNA's March meeting focused on the proposal from Portland: Neighbors Welcome that would add language to the Housing Bureau Strategic Plan (HBSP) for increased density in inner eastside neighborhoods. The HBSP guides zoning and development decisions and sets development priorities. An update is due this summer. The proposal, called *Inner Eastside For All*, would allow for what they call "four floors and corner stores" to be built anywhere between approximately SE 12th and SE 60th and SE Powell and NE Fremont. We had a nice turnout for the presentation and there were a lot of new faces, which I'm always happy to see! Opinions were varied. Many welcomed the effort to increase housing availability and hopefully make rent more affordable, but there were worries about how this development would actually occur. Would it be small groups of people building community together through creating shared living spaces in small apartment buildings? Or would it be developers slowly buying up lots and leaving them vacant while they seek to put together large enough parcels to make it profitable? What would the effect be on longtime residents of our neighborhoods? How about the recent Residential Infill Project that already allows for the expansion of ADUs and small multiplexes? You can learn more about the

proposal at [portlandneighborswelcome.org/inner-eastside-for-all](http://portlandneighborswelcome.org/inner-eastside-for-all).

This summer we are planning on repainting the beloved Sunnyside Piazza at 33rd and Yamhill. The piazza is one of the oldest intersection art installations in Portland and it needs a refresh! We set up a Piazza Working Group to help manage and facilitate the project. If you are interested in helping out, please contact us at [board@sunnysideportland.org](mailto:board@sunnysideportland.org).

Finally, as mentioned below, our annual Board elections will be held on May 9th. I can say from personal experience how rewarding it is to be an active part of the SNA Board. You get to meet new people from all over the neighborhood and hopefully make a small difference for all of Sunnyside! Please reach out if you are thinking of joining the Board and want to learn more. You can reach me directly at [president@sunnysideportland.org](mailto:president@sunnysideportland.org).

That's it for now. At our April 11th Board meeting we will be hearing from the CEI Hub Task Force, which is building awareness around the dangers to all of Portland posed by the Critical Energy Infrastructure Hub, the bulk fuel storage facility between the Willamette and Hwy 30 in North Portland. See you there, in May for our annual elections, or out on the porch swing!

#### Upcoming Elections: Calling All Candidates

By Eric Miller, SNA Secretary

Want to become more involved and help your community? The Sunnyside Neighborhood Association, a volunteer organization, will hold elections at its May meeting. Nominations are open for five positions (of nine total), including

#### Upcoming Meetings

Check [sunnysideportland.org](http://sunnysideportland.org) for location details and agenda.

##### April

April 4th: 6:30pm SNACC Meeting

April 11th: 7:00pm Board Meeting;

No General Meeting

April 25th: 7:00pm LUTC Meeting

##### May

May 9th: 7:00pm Annual Meeting for Board Elections

SES FOUNDATION'S 2024  
**AUCTION & GALA**

Let's Glow: An electric night benefiting Sunnyside Environmental School & the Fund for PPS

Online Auction: April 2-12  
Gala & Live Auction: April 12, 5:30-9 PM  
Revolution Hall

Seeking donated items for our Auction!  
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President, Secretary and three General Board positions. The Board engages the community and sets the agenda for monthly Board and bi-monthly General meetings. You can find details on the duties of individual positions in the Bylaws section of the website at [SunnysidePortland.org](http://SunnysidePortland.org). If you are interested in being on the Board or know someone who is, please contact [board@sunnysideportland.org](mailto:board@sunnysideportland.org). Remember, Portland is what we make it!



*Oregon Poet Laureate and Sunnyside resident Anis Mogjani reading poetry on Yamhill*

## Getting to Know Your Neighbors

By Lydia Kiesling, SNA Member

### Q&A with Anis Mogjani

If you've ever walked by the Sunnyside playground and seen a crowd gathered in front of one of the buildings lining Yamhill, you might have wandered into "Poems at Sunset out a Window," an impromptu event hosted by Anis Mogjani, the Poet Laureate of Oregon. Anis is also a visual artist, currently finishing the art for his forthcoming children's book *Lifespans of a Rock*. He has been Poet Laureate since 2020, a gig that takes him from Medford to Enterprise to nurture poetry in our state.

Raised in New Orleans, Anis first moved to Portland in 2004. After a brief stint in Austin from 2011-2015, he came back because, as he puts it, Portland held "the largest contingent of people who I love, and people who love me." For years he has lived in a house off Hawthorne called "The Pointy House" with a group of friends, and he runs into a friend wherever he goes in Sunnyside. We sat down at Stumptown on Belmont to talk poetry and Portland.

### When did you get your studio on Yamhill?

**Anis:** I got that space in February of '22. At that time, I had an office in conjunction with the Poet Laureate appointment in Southwest over at the shipyard, which was really rad, but it wasn't conducive to visual

stuff, and I really wanted someplace close to the house.

My friend Liliith has a ceramic studio in that building [on Yamhill]. It's basically three buildings connected, and she and somebody else were in one of the other buildings. The building that my studio is in was completely empty at the time. Kevin, the guy who had just bought it, was planning at that time to either knock it down or gut it. And so, I was like, 'Hey, Kevin, can I use one of these empty rooms?' And he's like, 'Here are the keys, I'll probably have to kick you out in six months to gut it.' But his plans changed, and so, after six, eight, 10 months, I just started paying rent, and other folks moved into the building.

### And you do events there.

**Anis:** I started doing these readings where I just read poems out of the window. We started doing that in March of '22, and it has always been very loose—a little intentional looseness. I'll make a poster to put up on my Instagram one to three days before the night of the reading. It's pretty much always been at sunset, and most of them have been on Fridays. Folks just show up.

This past year when we did it, there were 250 to 300 folks just sitting in the street. Cars can't easily drive down the street because it's between the back fence of Sunnyside [Environmental School] and the building. It's people sitting there, standing, and we hang out for an hour, and then we go off into the night and that's that. The first one came about as a result of my friend,

Jenn coming by to hang out, and we ended up just hanging out via the window, just me in the window, and her on the street, and us talking. And it was just so nice. It felt very neighborhoody, and we were like, 'This was super fun. We should do this with more people.'

It wasn't anything that was like, right, let's find a space and let's do this thing. It was just sort of like, all right, hey, we did this thing, and this was fun, and folks enjoyed it, so we kept doing it. It's something that started revealing its intent and purpose, which felt really in line with how to explore and expand what we all might envision as being a show, a performance. What's the relationship between artists and audiences? What are the ways in which too much of our day-to-day world is one that requires us to engage in a transaction? What are the ways to build a space that doesn't ask someone anything, just allows them to just be with others?

Cities are always changing, and I think whoever is sitting at the top of the ladder in cities, is usually moving those cities towards things that probably the majority of the people in the city aren't asking for. It's felt in these recent years that Portland is very much in a place like that. And so, the window I think, allows me as an individual to create something that leans toward a city that I want, and the city that I want to see. And hopefully by way of that it also invites other people to think about what a city means.

I think often we think about cities as being something that is constructed and legislated, and that's part of it. But, cities are also a person saying poems out of a window, or putting a mural on this wall, or organizing a food drive, or setting up a food pantry, or whatever it might be. And so, what are the ways that any of us might be called to think, 'I'll build this little part of the city'? The poetry window allows me to engage with the political activism that is important to me but also fits with me.

### Can you tell me about the Poet Laureate program?

**Anis:** I'm in the last chunk of my second term. The terms are generally two years with the possibility of being renewed for a second term. I started on May 4th of 2020. I'll conclude in May of this year. In the fall, [the organizers] open it up to the Oregon-wide community to nominate someone who they feel would be good in the role. Then they contact nominees and ask them to send applications if they're interested. They apply, and a committee of artists and organizations go through a committee selection process. They make a selection, send it to the governor, and the governor says yes (or no). The only really tangible tactile responsibility is to do 20 public engagements over the course of those two years. It comes with a \$15,000 stipend each year, and each year there's \$10,000 allotted for budgetary expenses for travel and whatnot.

For me, it's about having a position, having a support system to introduce, deliver, foster, allow, and support poetry to and for the people of Oregon, however that might look.

### What do you hope to see in Portland in the coming year or years?

**Anis:** Oh, man. What I would love to see for Portland is a city that really seeks to take care of all of its residents. Yes, of course, the many folks that are living without anything, and also just all of us. I think that's the thing that's been really frustrating over these last several years. It almost feels as if the city doesn't know how to take care of anyone.

In the last three years it feels like the city's like, 'What does the Portland Business Alliance want? Be quiet, everyone else. They're the people who we've got to save first.' I want to see steps towards a lot of inclusivity for the people who live here. And also just to see action taken. It's my understanding that the level of money and resources specifically devoted

towards houselessness services has just disappeared at the end of the year, and nothing has happened. I want action. Even if it's like, ah, this reveals itself to not have been the right decision. It's like, just try something.

I also think about different plans and ideas that have surfaced over the years I've been in Portland that just haven't come to fruition. One idea was basically a very green, lush, shiny bike highway that was envisioned for connecting both sides of the river. Seeing something like that would be amazing. What are the ways in which development in the city can happen that serves the city not just five people's bank accounts?

It's a city that is, I think, rich in creativity, rich in the arts, rich in cultural events, and cultural affairs. What are the ways that we might capitalize on this, for lack of a better word, and support these things?

*To learn about the next Poems at Sunset out a Window, follow Anis on Instagram at @Thepianofarm*

*Lydia Kiesling is a writer who lives in Sunnyside. Her latest novel, Mobility, came out in August.*

### Attend Climate Candidates' Forum for U.S. House District 3 on April 18th

*By Francine Chinitz, SNA Member*

With the retirement of U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer, voters in Oregon District 3 will elect a new Congressional Representative to send to Washington D.C. On April 18th, the Portland chapter of Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL) will host a climate-themed candidates' forum for this open seat at Taborspace (5441 SE Belmont St). At press time, both Susheela Jayapal and Maxine Dexter had confirmed their attendance.

Local volunteer climate advocates will host the forum which will be moderated by KGW meteorologist Matt Zaffino. Questions will be focused on climate change and climate-related issues at the Federal level. All candidates will answer the same questions and will be given equal time to do so. Members of the media are welcome to attend and space will be provided for them to set up audio and/or video recording of the event.

There may be time for presubmitted audience questions after the prepared questions.

Portland Citizens' Climate Lobby is a nonpartisan organization which does not endorse or support individual candidates or political parties. All candidates running for District 3 were invited to attend.

This will be a great opportunity for the public to learn about candidates' climate positions and make sure that climate legislation will be a priority. Doors open at 6 pm with time to meet and greet local climate groups. The Forum will start at 7 pm. Registration is not required but encouraged. Registration: <https://lu.ma/2r17rlpv>. For questions contact: Dylan Hinson at [climate.dylan@gmail.com](mailto:climate.dylan@gmail.com). To learn more about our work, visit [citizensclimatelobby.org](http://citizensclimatelobby.org).

The Sunnyside Neighborhood News is published monthly by the Sunnyside Neighborhood Association.

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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](mailto:newsletter@sunnysideportland.org). Deadlines are the 15th of the month prior.** Many wonderful volunteer Sunnyside residents distribute the Neighborhood News.

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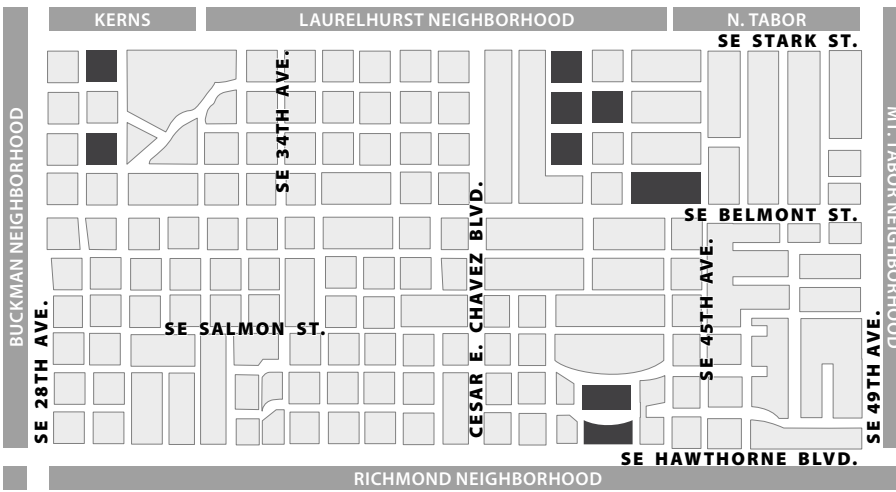




# Sunnyside Neighborhood 'Gap Map'

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