



Building An Inclusive Neighborhood Starts With Antiracism

The more we learn, the more we have in common

Sarah Jacobson, Board Member

The recent deaths of Breonna Taylor, Ahmad Arbery and George Floyd, along with weeks of subsequent protests, have shined a national spotlight on racism in America. It has left a lot of us wondering "What is my role and responsibility in perpetuating or dismantling racism? How can I help? How can I reduce harm?"

If you are asking yourself these questions, you are not alone. Acknowledging racism exists is easy, but dismantling it is hard. Racism is more than individual prejudices but a society wide dynamic that occurs, often unintentionally, at a group level. There is no easy or quick fix here. It will take a lot of work to remove the systems of oppression that we have created over centuries and be able to heal and move forward as a country. This work begins at home.

Whether you are an activist with a robust plan to address racial equity or someone who is just coming to terms with the true extent of racism in our country, there is an opportunity to create a more inclusive neighborhood right here. Everyone deserves the right to feel safe in their home and their community, but the reality is, not everyone does. So, what can we do to change that? Below are three sugges-



tions to start creating a more inclusive neighborhood.

Know Your Neighbor

If you have attended a local Race Talks, led by retired PPS teacher and administrator Donna Maxey, you already know one of the best ways to create inclusion in your neighborhood is to know your neighbors. Not just know their name but KNOW them. Maxey recommends starting with the three neighbors on either side of you and on both sides of the street. That is approximately 12 neighbors!

While I talk to my neighbors pretty regularly, the recent COVID-19 lockdown made me realize I had very few of their phone numbers. This was a wake-up call for me that I didn't know my neighbors as well as I would like. Of course, we are currently facing the added challenge of ongoing social distancing, but try to get out and connect with neighbors while maintaining healthy boundaries.

See **ANTIRACISM** Page 4

Nature-Deficit Disorder

Heather Newcomb, Neighbor

I visit Columbia View Park every day. I walk the four blocks with my two toddlers and large dog to the park for our daily dose of nature. Every few months, we visit the closer Pat Pfeifer for the playground or go to Nadaka to play in the sand, but Columbia View offers a unique setting that I choose over the others. This park is more special because it provides an immersive nature experience. With Columbia View's expansive sight lines, my neighbors and I are able to enjoy the park simultaneously whilst keeping quietly to ourselves as we wish. Here we calm our minds, explore the trees that look like forts to my children, listen to the birds, and pick flowers. We walk large loops and rest under the trees. The thick canopy provides shade from the sun in the summer and a dry area from the rain in the winter. This park is our third place —

— our second home.

Two hours a week — In a 2019 study of 20,000 people, the European Centre for Environment & Human Health at the University of Exeter found that those who spent two hours a week in nature were substantially more likely to report good health and psychological well being. Those two hours could come in one dose or over several, but there were no benefits to the participants who did not meet the minimum of two hours.

See **DEFICIT** Page 3

Mark Your Calendar! Wilkes East Neighborhood

**Summer Meeting
August 10th • 7PM**

Online meeting via Zoom
Visit wilkeeastna.org

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Input on Columbia View Neighborhood Park's Concept Plan

Tina Osterink, City of Gresham

In the spring of 2019, the City of Gresham began a process initiated by the City Council to identify potential recreation improvements for six undeveloped parks throughout the city. The parks identified for future improvements were two community parks and four neighborhood parks, including Columbia View Neighborhood Park.

This exploration of future improvements was initiated by the city to understand community desires for each park, capital costs for potential improvements, and maintenance needs if developed. Community feedback will help prioritize which park improvements will be implemented as funding becomes available.

Staff and a consultant team conducted on-site meetings, surveys and an open house throughout 2019. Community feedback was used to develop high level concept plans for all six undeveloped parks. The plans include a range of design and facility options for each park, including Columbia View Neighborhood Park.

Based on analysis of Columbia View's unique existing conditions and feedback during public engagement meetings, the following concept plan was developed.

Community feedback throughout 2019 noted opportunities for the park may include play structures for kids, designated off-leash dog areas, improved accessibility for all ages and abilities, education displays, and picnic areas. Constraints include maintenance, safety concerns, a lack of trash receptacles, and concerns with attracting too many people to neighborhood park.

See **PARK** Page 4

Download this newsletter with active links at wilkeeastna.org/newsletter.htm

Did you know? Gresham's average August high temp is 82°F

Wilkes East Neighborhood Association Newsletter

Published three times a year. Over 1500 copies distributed throughout Wilkes East.

The Wilkes East Neighborhood Association (WENA) is a non-profit organization in Gresham, Oregon. Deadline for submission is the 10th of the month prior to publication. WENA reserves all rights, and all copy may be edited for clarity and length. Download a PDF of this newsletter online at: wilkeseastna.org/newsletter.htm.

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BOARD MEETINGS

Meetings are held on the second Monday of each month at 6:30PM. See wilkeseastna.org for details.

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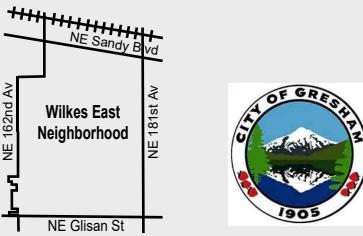
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VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Get involved. Let us know how you'd like to help.
Email info@wilkeseastna.org for details.

SPECIAL THANKS

- The newsletter is funded in part through a generous grant from the [City of Gresham](#).
- Printing by [Print Results Inc.](#) 503-287-9566
- Meeting at [Albertina Kerr](#), 722 NE 162nd Av, Training Bldg (center north on campus)



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Dear Neighbors • a message from your WENA President

First, I hope this issue finds you well & safe? Life has been "upside down" since our last issue. I feel like Alice falling Down The Rabbit Hole. When will it end, or at least come to a point where we can feel a little more normal?

Good news! Our matching grant was approved by the City of Gresham. Without your volunteerism as well as volunteer time put forth by others receiving grants of this kind would not be possible. THANK YOU - One and All!

Sarah Jacobson & Dimitrios Zourkos, our two new Board members, have articles in this issue. Please take time to read them & make comments via e-mail or phone. Sarah has put forth suggestions on how to be a better neighbor. Dimitrios has taken on how to deal with today's issues & concerns of COVID-19.

Greg Hartung's column highlights current Land-Use issues including the most recent plan presented for the Albertina-Kerr project. Land-Use issues are ongoing, so by the time this goes to press there may be more items than mentioned here.

Our August Public meeting will be a virtual online meeting via Zoom. Please visit our website wilkeseastna.org on Monday Aug 10th for a link to the meeting. Speakers for this meeting will be: the [Gresham NET Team](#) to bring us up to date on recent events & how they effect our Police Dept; Tina Osterink, Resource Planner City of Gresham to talk about Columbia View park; Carol Rulla, Chair of [Coalition of Gresham Neighborhood Associations](#) to discuss changes at City Hall; Lee Dayfield, park activist, speaking about the future of Gresham parks.

How about a personal article from you to include in our next newsletter? All it takes is 450-500 words, or even less. Send your material "print ready" to our editor at rgrundbom@aol.com. Include the subject line "[wena] newsletter".

Wilkes East is a better community because of you!

Hope to see you on the 10th of August!
Your Neighbor,

Kristen Freiermuth

How is the Pandemic and Stay at Home Order Affecting you?

Dimitrios Zourkos, Board Member

The recent COVID-19 Health Pandemic has affected each and every one of us in some way or another! People have reported increased issues in mental health, financial stability, and overall motivation. As we begin to navigate ourselves back to normalcy here are some helpful tips to combat these issues in our neighborhood:

*Note that Medical Professionals have reported a spike in depression during the stay at home order. The most likely culprit for this increase is due to isolation and lack of social outlets.

What you can do

- Increase and encourage interactions with safe channels: social media, phone calls, and Zoom!
- Encourage and promote social interactions when out in the community or on walks. Saying hello to your neighbors is fine and encouraged! Just be sure to wear a mask and stay 6 feet apart.

Important safety Measures

- Wash your hands frequently and for a minimum of 20 seconds with antibacterial soap.
- Wear a face mask when in the community.
- Limit interactions with people and encourage 6 feet distance when able.
- Avoid touching germ hotspots such as door knobs.

Note: The WENA Board would also like to remind our neighbors that food assistance is available for those who have experienced financial hardships during the pandemic. Please Google "[gresham food pantry](#)" or visit: yellowpages.com/gresham-or/food-banks



Greetings Neighbors!

My name is Dimitrios Zourkos. I moved to the Wilkes East Neighborhood about 4 years ago. I grew up in Bellingham Washington where I also attended Western Washington University and graduated with a degree in Communication and Anthropology. I currently serve as the Executive Director of a non-profit organization; [passpdx.com](#), which serves as an alternative to employment for adults with developmental disabilities and mental health diagnoses. I also serve as an appointed member of the [Gresham Redevelopment Advisory Committee](#) and Vice-Chair for the [Gresham Redevelopment Commission Budget Committee](#), helping to oversee important redevelopment projects like the Downtown Rockwood Project.

I am an avid traveler and enjoy spending time working in my garden! Talk to me about anything to do with travel and you will have my undivided attention. :)

I am thrilled and honored to help the neighborhood and serve each and everyone of you as a board member. Please feel free to express any concerns, ask any questions, or just simply introduce yourself and say hello!

Cheers,
Dimitrios Zourkos ■

Get involved! Start your own Neighborhood Watch. For more information please visit: greshamoregon.gov/Neighborhood-Ready

Importance of Our Parks & Some Suggestions

Lee Dayfield, Neighbor & Parks Activist

It's a fact that people who live closer to parks report better mental health even if they don't actually exercise there. This is particularly true for parks with a lot of trees, grass and other natural features, as studies show that exposure to nature can reduce stress and promote relaxation. The Wilkes East neighborhood is fortunate to have two such wonderful parks, Nadaka and Columbia View.

For any citizens of Gresham who have followed City Council meetings, Budget Committee meetings and many other committees, you should know we are in trouble. The City of Gresham was in a budget crisis before COVID19 and it is even worse now. I was at Nadaka recently doing a walk around with a City official who indicated the parks would be in even worse shape next year and staff may have to be cut to three people.

So if you care at all about our parks I would strongly suggest you start speaking up by letting the Mayor and City Council know. You can do this by going to the City's website and emailing your elected officials. Email addresses for Mayor and Council are on the City's website. Or send written testimony or ask to give oral testimony at the next City Council meeting. Email Susanjoy.Wright@GreshamOregon.gov and tell her you want to be notified of upcoming Council meetings so you can participate via Zoom by phone or computer. Her phone number is 503-618-2697.

Nadaka Update We are very fortunate that [Play Grow Learn](#) youth have been working at Nadaka on Thursday mornings for about five weeks primarily removing invasives. If you see them at the park please say *Thank You!* Beginning in August I think that group will be joined by [Rosemary Anderson](#) Summer Works youth. If that happens the plan is to work at Nadaka two or three days a week. They are wearing masks and maintaining safe distances.

If you are someone who wants to get out and make a difference at Nadaka you are always welcome to remove invasives. You don't need an appointment and you can spend as much time as you want. The forest is full of ivy which most people know what it looks like. If you are familiar with weeds you can work on the planted beds near the entry at NE Glisan. The mulched areas north of the play area as well as the rocks surrounding the sand pit at the south end of the play area are also full of weeds. You can't miss the large piles of invasives at the north end of the play area on the east side of the road. All debris go there. There is also plenty of ivy in **Columbia View Park** that should be removed. It can be piled next to the trash can on NE 169th.

If you are on [Nextdoor](#) there is a brand new group called *Our Parks, Our Future Discussion Group*. It will be a group of Gresham citizens who can share ideas, learn about parks districts and get engaged with City Hall regarding parks. ■

DEFICIT (Page 1)

Spending time in untampered green space has also proven to decrease symptoms of anxiety, depression, ADHD, and other conditions. I myself use the park each day to ease anxiety symptoms. With our filled schedules, it is critical to have this advantage of untouched green space nearby our homes. People do not have time to drive out to the Gorge regularly, which is also becoming increasingly crowded on weekends. As a mom, I find it is prohibitive to load the kids into the car every time we want to venture out.

Currently, the city of Gresham seeks to develop more amenities within Columbia View Park. They have reached out four times to seek feedback from the community. At each instance, I personally have heard an outcry from our neighborhood. Many ask to let this unique and special landscape remain an untouched green space. At each subsequent step, however unfortunately, more and more elements have been added to the city's plan.

The current proposed design includes a cement walkway, a fenced dog park, cement courts, picnic shelters, and a community garden. This is far too many things for such a small space and apparently a cookie cutter design reiterated for several parks in the city.

DEFICIT (Continued)

The plan did not take into consideration police sight lines to the picnic shelter, unrealistic secondary access points through neighbors' property, the grade of the land, or the expanse of ground people would have to traverse carrying gardening tools. Further, it will destroy Columbia View's unique natural landscape and green feeling, and raise the risk of overnight trespassing, drug use, and drinking directly next to HB Lee Middle School.

Rachel and Stephen Kaplan, who have been studying the effects of nature on the brain since the 1970s, say that in city environments, neighborhood streets, the classroom, and at work, people strain to use more of the brain. In nature, people relax their minds, pay attention more broadly, and exert less mental effort. This leads to an overall healthier body and mind. The amenities the city plans will diminish the unique restorative qualities of our neighborhood green space at Columbia View Park. It will make the neighborhood less desirable. It will make the park a destination for those who live outside the neighborhood, increasing vehicular traffic and congestion.

If you value the irreplaceable dose of restorative nature in our neighborhood park, I urge you to reach out to Tina Osterink from the City of Gresham (tina.osterink@greshamoregon.gov), our city council members (greshamoregon.gov/Meet-the-Council), and attend our August 10th Wilkes East Neighborhood Association meeting to insist our feedback is heard!

The neighborhood association is interested in your feedback and your continued support on the Columbia View Park development plan. Please follow this link tinyurl.com/wenasurvey to provide us with an email to receive updates and let us know your own thoughts on what the park might look like. ■

Albertina Kerr Workforce & Inclusive Housing Update

Jeff Carr, CEO Albertina Kerr

Since the last update I shared in this newsletter a lot has changed in our world with the onset of the Coronavirus. While this has delayed our timeline somewhat, we have continued the planning and development process and the following progress has been made:

- Albertina Kerr has exceeded our private fundraising goal of \$1.2 million
- Albertina Kerr submitted our application to the City of Gresham Metro Housing Bond NOFA on June 3rd and expect to receive notification of awards in late July/August. The funds Albertina Kerr has requested from the City of Gresham are the final piece of the financing necessary for the project to be constructed.
- Approval for the project was received from the City of Gresham Design Review Commission on June 3rd.
- Drawings were submitted the last week of June to begin the permit review process.
- The project has incorporated design innovations that will enable it to be "net zero", which means we will produce all the energy needed to power the entire building on site through solar panels. This will be a significant accomplishment and be one of the most innovative "renewable energy" projects in the Pacific Northwest.
- Assuming we receive a funding award from the City of Gresham before the end of the summer, our expected start of construction would be in late October/November. We anticipate a 15-month construction timeline, which would mean we would begin leasing and moving people into units the first quarter of 2022.

One question presented by a neighbor was about sidewalks on 162nd Avenue and Holladay. As part of the requirements from the City of Gresham, we will be widening the street and putting in sidewalks and a planter buffer between the sidewalks and 162nd the entire length of the Albertina Kerr property (east side of 162nd). In addition, a sidewalk will be installed on Holladay from 162nd Avenue to the new entrance onto our property on Holladay (south side of Holladay). ■

Did You Know? Gresham has a total area of 23.64 square miles

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Avoid Assumptions

We are all influenced by our life experiences and our world at large. We have all received subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, messages about what skin color means in our society. Because this messaging is constantly being thrown at us through the media, it takes a lot of work to mitigate the effect and undo negative thought patterns. It is important to actively avoid assumptions about other people because they are based on preconceived notions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, religion and other layers of identity rather than facts. If you see someone in the neighborhood you don't recognize, avoid making assumptions about who they are and why they are there. Remember that a stranger is only a stranger until you get to know them.

Connect Across Differences

We are naturally attracted to people with whom we share similarities. Similar age, family structure and outdoor hobbies can be a simple way to form a connection with a neighbor. These are all examples of surface level traits- things we can visually see about someone before we even get to know them. You have a boat, me too- let's be friends! It is normal to connect based on surface level commonalities, however, creating an inclusive neighborhood means also intentionally connecting across differences. There are so many factors that make each of us the unique person we are and that is a beautiful part of the diverse community we live in. The more we learn about someone else below the surface, things we wouldn't know just from appearances, the more we might find that we have in common. Don't let surface level differences deter you from connecting with your neighbor.

Connection, community and sense of belonging are all important aspects of human nature. When we are able to push our comfort zones just a little to create that new connection, we all benefit. Building an inclusive community isn't about being a perfect neighbor, nobody is perfect. It is about accepting that nobody is perfect but everyone is worthy. As Dr. A. Katrise Perera, Gresham-Barlow Superintendent, recently said during Gresham's Conversation on Race and Reconciliation, until we can say Black lives matter, we can't say all lives matter. The more we can set aside our own unique story and understand our community at large, the better we can work towards equity and justice. ■

PARK (Page 1)

Additional feedback from nearby neighbors during a virtual meeting held in June 2020 is as follows:

- Keep this neighborhood park in a natural state with limited upgrades.
- Supportive of trails to improve access and a community garden but wanted staff to consider either eliminating the shelter and courts or at least move those items towards the school.
- Consider natural long-lasting materials for an ADA perimeter path around the park.
- Dog park located under chestnut trees hurt dog paws and in what is now informally known as "the fetch it zone".
- Some would prefer an off-leash area vs. fenced dog leash area.
- Consider placing amenities closer to H.B. Lee Middle School but engage the school first.
- Concern with picnic shelter location on upslope portion of park that interferes with backyard privacy and could contribute to real or perceived safety concerns.
- Lack of police access into the SE portion of the park near potential amenity placement.
- Further explore feasibility of providing secondary access off NE Pacific St.

During the June 2020 meeting, staff stressed the importance of balancing input from nearby neighbors with meeting the equity,

PARK (Continued)

opportunity and access needs for community members who live within the quarter-mile walking and biking service area.

Next steps in the outreach process include meeting with Community Based Organizations to gain their input on the concept plan for Columbia View Neighborhood Park, online review of the concept plan report from July 13 – August 31 and then convene on August 10 at the Wilkes East Neighborhood Association Meeting .

Additional information can be found at the Parks Planning website and you can reach out to Tina Osterink at Tina.Osterink@GreshamOregon.Gov or by phone at (503) 618-2392.

Project website where the concept plans and draft report can be viewed: greshamoregon.gov/Parks-Planning/ ■



Find us on Facebook!

The WENA board is excited to invite you to connect through a private Facebook group for Wilkes East residents and businesses. Find us under **Wilkes East Neighborhood Association**. Join to stay up to date on neighborhood happenings, meetings and most importantly- connect with neighbors! ■

Wilkes East Land-Use Update

Greg Hartung, Land Use Chair

Project: PZ20-26000116 Albertsons Distribution Center Parking Lot Expansion. Location: 17505 NE San Rafael St Gresham, Or 97230. PROPOSAL: Albertsons is proposing to relocate an existing carrier staging lot inside the existing yard at their Distribution Center.

Project: PZ20-26000129 Pape Machinery. Location: NE Sandy Blvd @ NE 172nd Place, Gresham, Or 97230. PROPOSAL: Two new structures, the first approximately 45,000-60,000 sq ft. Buildings are for, combination of heavy and medium duty new/used construction, agriculture, and forestry equipment sales, rental, parts and service dealerships. A lot consolidation from three lots to two lots and a lot line adjustment are also part of the project.

Project: PZ20-26000193 PAM Albertina Kerr Housing Solar System. Location: 930 NE 162nd Ave and 722-876 NE 162nd Ave, Gresham, Or 97230. PROPOSAL: The proposal includes the development of a four-story apartment building (100,548 gross square feet) with a total of 150 units, 146 dedicated residential vehicular parking space areas, children's play area and other associated site improvements. The proposed area is 2.7 acres at the southeast corner of NE 162nd and NE Holladay Street. The proposal will remove the Wynn Watts building, eliminate one vehicular access from 162nd and develop one vehicular access from NE Holladay Street. PV Panels have been added to the pitched roof along 162nd Ave. Carports with large PV arrays have been added to the north and center of the parking lot. ■

Save the Date!

**Wilkes East Neighborhood
Summer Meeting
Monday, August 10th, 7-9PM**

Virtual online meeting via Zoom
Visit wilkeeastna.org for the link!

- Gresham Police NET Team Update
- Columbia View Park Concept Plan
- Recent Changes at City Hall
- Gresham Parks Looming Budget Crisis
- Neighborhood news and more

See you Online !