



Wilkes East Neighborhood Newsletter

"Diversity, Harmony, Community - Together we can make a difference!"

Gresham, Oregon USA

wilkeseastna.org

Summer 2026

PICNIC! • FREE FOOD!!!



You're Invited!

Wilkes East Neighborhood Association Community Picnic

The Wilkes East Neighborhood Association invites all residents to attend our upcoming **Community Picnic**. This first annual event is a wonderful opportunity to connect with fellow neighbors and meet the association board members. The picnic will be followed by the public meeting at 7 p.m.

Please join us for this special neighborhood gathering!

Date: Monday, August 10th, 2026

Time: Starting at 6 p.m. (followed by the public meeting at 7 p.m.)

Location: The Moose Lodge parking lot
[16411 NE Halsey St, Portland, OR 97230](https://www.google.com/maps/place/16411+NE+Halsey+St,+Portland,+OR+97230)

Event Details

To show our appreciation for this wonderful community, this event is free of charge for all Wilkes East residents. WENA board will provide catered taco bar and soft drinks. Residents do not need to bring any food or refreshments.

Whether you are a longtime resident or new to the neighborhood, we look forward to welcoming you. We hope you will join us for an evening of good food and great company as we celebrate our community.

For any questions regarding the event, please contact the Wilkes East Neighborhood Association Board at info@wilkeseastna.org ■



It's time to review and approve WENA bylaws!

We want you to **participate!**

Neighborhood association bylaws are important because they define how the association operates, including decision-making processes, board governance, and member rights.

Understanding these bylaws helps ensure accountability, transparency, and effective communication within the community.

BYLAWS...

- Define Operations
- Establish Member Rights
- Promote Accountability
- Ensure Transparency



As a member of WENA, you have the right to review and approve or comment on the bylaws. We will vote to adopt the bylaws at our November public meeting,

The November public meeting will be held on November 9, 2026 at 7 p.m. at the Moose Lodge, [16411 NE Halsey St.](https://www.google.com/maps/place/16411+NE+Halsey+St,+Portland,+OR+97230)

Read,
download, or
print your
copy of the
new bylaws!



Web: [wilkeseastna.org/files/wena_bylaws_2026.pdf](https://www.wilkeseastna.org/files/wena_bylaws_2026.pdf)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- WENA Community Picnic - Aug 10, 6PM
- WENA Summer Meeting - Aug 10, 7PM
- Meet Gresham's New City Manager
- What Matters to You? Take Our Survey!
- Join the WENA Board. Make a Difference

Do you know about the...

Coalition of Gresham Neighborhood Associations

a.k.a. the Neighborhood Coalition?

The Coalition provides:

- A public forum to review and evaluate issues.
- Education and information on topics important to associations.
- A unified voice for the neighborhood associations.

The Coalition will host a forum to hear from candidates in this year's Gresham City Council races.

Coalition meetings are via Zoom on the second Tuesday of every month except December.

For more info: <https://bit.ly/4yyF9IM> ■

Gresham Parks 2035

The City is setting the course for Gresham's parks and trails system over the next 10 years.

Our project, called Gresham Parks 2035, includes developing high-quality parks, recreation facilities and services for all residents. This Parks System Plan is a 10-year roadmap for community-informed decision making. With a limited budget and resources, the Park System Plan will guide how and where to invest.

The final plan is available!

For more info: <https://bit.ly/4fpYpzz> ■

Mark Your Calendar!
Wilkes East Neighborhood

Summer 2026 Meeting
August 10th • 7PM

Moose Lodge • 16411 NE Halsey

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: wilkeaseastna.org/newsletter.htm.

BOARD MEMBERS

Chair (Vacant)
chair@wilkeaseastna.org
Vice Chair (Vacant)
vicechair@wilkeaseastna.org
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secretary@wilkeaseastna.org
Treasurer Claudette Naylor
treasurer@wilkeaseastna.org
Land UseJanet Unruh
landuse@wilkeaseastna.org
At-Large..... Robyn El Kay
Eric El Kay
member2@wilkeaseastna.org
Bob Lundbom
webmaster@wilkeaseastna.org

BOARD MEETINGS

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

CONTACT US

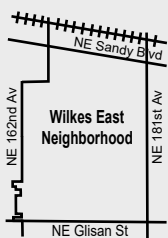
Email: info@wilkeaseastna.org
Postal Mail: PO Box 194, Fairview OR 97024

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

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

SPECIAL THANKS

- The newsletter is funded in part through a generous grant from the City of Gresham.
- Printing by Hush Ink / Print Results. 971-279-4960



info@rideconnection.org

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Providing responsive, accessible transportation at no cost for seniors and people with disabilities

www.rideconnection.org

Who is Teresa Carr, Gresham's new city manager?

By Janet Unruh, WENA Board Member



Most of the coverage of Teresa Carr's appointment as Gresham's city manager has focused on the announcement. A closer look at her background reveals an accomplished executive with extensive management experience and a high level of professionalism—and one aspect that I found unexpected and especially interesting.

Carr was chosen after a nationwide search and became Gresham's city manager in June. As you may know, the city manager oversees the day-to-day operations of Gresham and plays a major role in implementing City Council policies, preparing the budget, and directing city departments.

Before coming to Gresham, Carr spent more than 26 years with the Port of Portland, where she held increasingly responsible leadership positions. Her positions included development project manager, business development manager, director of commercial properties, and director of business development and properties. Ultimately, she led a team managing five business parks, three marine terminals, and over 300 active leases, supporting over 300 companies, 32,000 jobs, and generating \$177M in state and local tax revenue[1].

One indication of Carr's professional standing is her membership on an Urban Land Institute (ULI) Product Council. ULI is the world's oldest and largest global network of cross-disciplinary real estate and land use experts. ULI Product Councils are exclusive, peer-to-peer forums designed for senior industry leaders to share confidential information, debate trends, and exchange best practices in specific sectors of real estate development and land use. These councils operate on a "closed-door" basis, fostering a candid environment where competitors and colleagues can discuss the "state of the art" in their respective fields without public scrutiny. Membership is highly selective, typically capped at 50 members per council, and is available only to ULI Full Members by application or invitation[2].

Carr also serves on the board of the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP) and is a member of the Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW) Future Leaders Committee.

Here's what I found interesting and unexpected: aside her commercial real estate experience, Carr has also become involved in affordable housing policy. "The Homelessness and Housing Committee on January 13 voted to send the Gresham-nominated appointment of Teresa Carr to the Home Forward Board of Commissioners to the full Portland City Council for confirmation[3]." Home Forward, formerly the Housing Authority, manages low-income housing in Multnomah County. (Cathy Keathley, City of Gresham city councilor, is also on the Home Forward Board of Commissioners.)

Carr submitted the following acceptance statement highlighting her interest in housing issues:

Housing affordability and access are among the most urgent challenges facing communities across the region, including the City of Gresham and Multnomah County. I am honored to serve on the Home Forward Board on behalf of the City of Gresham, bringing both a regional perspective and a deep appreciation for the role stable housing plays in creating opportunity, dignity, and long-term well-being. Having grown up with very limited resources and experienced supported housing firsthand, this work is both personal and meaningful to me.

I am grateful for the opportunity to support Home Forward's mission and strategic goals, including expanding access to housing, strengthening resident stability, and stewarding public resources responsibly. I believe that everyone, regardless of background, deserves a safe and stable place to call home, and I am committed to contributing my experience and perspective in service of outcomes that strengthen individuals, families, and the broader community[4].

Her education includes a bachelor's degree in public relations, advertising, and applied communication. She also earned a master's degree in public administration (MPA), with a focus on organizational leadership, and personnel management.

As Gresham's city manager, Carr will play a key role in shaping the city's approach to real estate development and affordable housing. Her background suggests she recognizes that these issues are interconnected and require a comprehensive approach. Cuts to budgets and programs at the federal, state, and county levels threaten Gresham's ability to serve low-income constituents. I hope Carr's combination of executive experience and personal understanding of housing challenges will serve Gresham well in the years ahead. ■

(See web article for story footnotes. Ed.)

Sara and the Thousand Acres Homeless Camp

By Janet Unruh, WENA Board Member

Note: The name of Sara's former employer has been changed.

The humane approach

When Sara led a site remediation team to evict homeless camp residents and remove the debris, she believed she was doing necessary work. Less than a year later, she had quit that job, and was instead helping the people she had once evicted.

The encampment was in the Thousand Acres Park, a forested area northeast of Troutdale on the Sandy River Delta, not far from the Wilkes East neighborhood. The park includes 50 acres of land owned by the Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL), next to 1,500 acres owned by the U.S. Forest Service.

The residents had been living in camps on the DSL land—some of them, for as long as 25 years. In 2025, DSL decided to evict them. It was necessary because, according to DSL, the land is not suitable for habitation because of wildfire risk, flooding, and environmental degradation. So, in June 2025, DSL sent hazmat contractors to force the residents out and clean up the area.

This brute-force approach failed because the camp residents and their sympathizers erected barriers and trenches, and fought the contractors. Several activists were pepper-sprayed, including one who was there to video the proceedings. The governor suspended the cleanup efforts while the incident was being investigated.

DSL then decided to take a more humane approach. They hired Egret Site Remediation, Inc. (ESR) because it was a company that would work with the residents to gain their trust and persuade them to pack up and leave.

Sara (last name withheld) worked for ESR. She told me she believed camps should be removed because of biohazards, human waste, unsafe living conditions, and environmental damage. But she also believes removals should be carried out with dignity, transparency, and respect for the people affected.

Sara had worked on several large cleanups before she led the cleanup crew at Thousand Acres. However, Thousand Acres turned out to be different from other cleanups because people had lived there in the woods for many years and they had an established community that they regarded as family. Thus, the humanity of the situation was much more emotional than the other cleanups.

What can I do to help?

I met Sara on NextDoor after the camps at Thousand Acres had been removed. At that point, she had resigned from ESR because of a change in the company culture. When she began working for ESR, part of the company's mission was to bring an empathetic approach to the work, and to do so they hired people who have lived experience. But over time, management became less humane and more profit-oriented.

Sara herself had had a tough life, and she had a gift for defusing tense situations. This was to serve her well.

Sara had connections in the activist community, and before she began the work on Thousand Acres, she contacted someone she knew, and he got a few of the residents to agree to meet with her. Then, when she went in to the camps, she attended a "council meeting" of the residents. These meetings were held every two weeks to coordinate efforts, discuss problems, and help each other.

At the meeting, Sara told them, "Listen, somebody's going to clean this place up. And I'm telling you guys, I have a couple of weeks to convince you guys that you want it to be me and the company that I represent, because other people would be coming in here and spraying you with mace." She told them other people wouldn't care about their things. Other people wouldn't hold value to their property. Other people, like the contractors that came last time, would come in with a chip on their shoulder. They would be nervous and scared because of what they heard about how the residents fought back in June. They would come in ready to tear down homes. Only they would not view them as homes. She told them, "We're not like that. We're respectful." Then she said, "What can I do to help?"

As one resident told KATU, "I mean, she's a good person. She has a shitty job to do. Nowhere are you ever gonna go throw people out of their homes and be received well. She's done a hell of a job of getting our respect and understanding, and she has got a thing to do, so she's going to do it."

Winning trust

Sara organized weekly meetings with people at the camps, and they cooperated with her. They showed her some camps that had been

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abandoned and the ESR team cleaned those up first. Then, she began working with the residents, helping them sort their things, get packed up, and throw away trash.

Sara got to know the residents. Her background was like theirs and they respected that. The experience of working with the residents of Thousand Acres affected her much more deeply than anything she had done for ESR until then. As time went on, she began to feel like a mercenary who betrayed her people. She felt empathy for them; so much so that she called them "her tribe."

During this time, Sara began to have conflicts with others on the ESR management team. She felt that the company culture had become harsher in its approach to cleaning up camps. It was not the same company that she had respected in the past. After several escalating disagreements, she accepted a mutual separation with severance—which she hasn't received.

Sara's husband had been terminated from ESR because of conflicts with management earlier in the year.

Eviction day

From August until late in September, while Sara worked with the residents to help them pack up, social workers tried to find housing for them. Residents knew they had to leave, and the cleanup efforts moved along, but no deadline had been given.

Suddenly, on September 26, DSL announced that the residents had to vacate immediately. Legal notices were posted informing residents that the area would be closed on October 1st—five days later. By that time, some residents had been placed in housing—about 14 people—but 35 others had turned down temporary housing that offered bunk beds and no privacy. They had nowhere to go.

The task of packing up and moving on short notice was overwhelming, and there was a sense of panic. Sara and her husband both have trucks, and they had already been helping residents move their belongings to storage, but they sped up their efforts, even making trips from the camps to storage at night. Still, they couldn't help everyone, and many ran out of time.

On October 1, 2025, DSL, the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office, and more than 100 law enforcement officers, carried out the closure of the Thousand Acres encampment. They allowed Sara to go in and give everyone a one-hour warning. It was a cold, rainy day. The remaining 35 residents gathered up what they could and left the place that had been their home.

When the officers swept the camp sites, residents' possessions were transported to a warehouse. Residents were told to get their belongings in a month. But the rules required an address for the delivery of belongings. Sara offered her address for deliveries, but that wasn't acceptable. Because of this, most of the former residents lost their belongings. When this happens to homeless people, they often lose their medications, IDs, papers needed for social services, contact information for friends and family, letters, photos, and keepsakes. There was no follow up from the Homeless Services Department. All outreach ended.

I won't let them fail

"We've just been running from one place to the next. 'You can't be here, you can't be here, you can't be here,' [they say]. Well, where can we be? That's the question no one seems to be able to answer," said one of the former residents. There were no good options, only the streets.

And then, quietly, many returned to Thousand Acres. Only this time, they encamped on Forest Service land, which is outside DSL's jurisdiction, and therefore they aren't threatened by another DSL eviction. Sara knows where they are and continues to visit them—not to prepare them for eviction, but to collaborate on plans for the future.

Why did the former residents return? Sara put it this way: that pain brought them together, and no matter what their stories may have been, they were welcomed into the family. Once again, they live together and help each other—and this is more important than shelter and a normal life. For them, Thousand Acres is a place to heal.

And what about Sara? Over the course of less than a year, Sara quit a job that she had believed was beneficial to society, and became an advocate for the Thousand Acres residents. Today, Sara and her husband operate their own cleanup company, but they no longer remove homeless encampments.

Sara told me she has no regrets and believes that everything happened for a reason. She believes the Thousand Acres residents could live on land somewhere legally and govern themselves. Right now, she doesn't see how they can get there, but she believes it's possible and she has confidence in them.

"I won't let them fail," she told me. ■

(See web article for story references. Ed.)

GRESHAM EVENTS

Wed, July 29

[Summer Kids in the Park \(SKIP\)](#)

11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Main City Park and Red Sunset

Wed, July 29

[Curry with the Cops: Connection and Conversation](#)

12:30 pm - 2:00 pm

Flavors of India, 458 SE 185th Avenue

Thu, July 30

[Summer Kids in the Park \(SKIP\)](#)

11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Main City Park and Red Sunset

Thu, July 30

[Rockwood Community Market](#)

3:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Rockwood Market Hall, 458 SE 185th Ave.

Fri, July 31

[Movies in the Park: Hoppers and Superman](#)

6:30 pm - 10:30 pm

Gresham Arts Plaza, 401 NE Second Street

Sat, Aug. 1

[Gresham Farmers' Market](#)

8:30 am - 2:00 pm

Arts Plaza, 401 NE Second St.

Check out... FREE OUTDOOR MUSIC in

Gresham parks, and other events at

<https://www.greshamoregon.gov/Calendar>

Se Habla Español



Start a Neighborhood Watch

Invite your neighbors to attend a meeting and fill out copies of the [Neighborhood Ready workbook](#) ■

Does Your Tap Water Taste Bad?

Gresham is now on 100% groundwater. If your tap water tastes bad or smells like bleach the City would like to hear from you.

Email: WaterSupply@GreshamOregon.gov, or visit

<https://www.greshamoregon.gov/environmental-services/water-quality/> to learn more about Water Quality. ■



POISON! AVOID THIS PLANT!

Wild hemlock typically refers to poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*), a highly toxic plant that can be mistaken for other non-toxic plants like wild carrot. All parts of this plant are poisonous, especially the seeds and roots, and it is known for its distinctive purple-spotted stems and white flowers. It also looks like Queen Anne's Lace!

FEATURES

Height
Stems
Leaves
Flowers
Roots

POISON HEMLOCK (CONIUM MACULATUM)

1.5 to 2.4 meters (5 to 8 feet)
Hollow, smooth, with purple spots
Finely divided, lacy, pinnate
Small, white in umbrella shaped clusters
Long, fleshy taproot

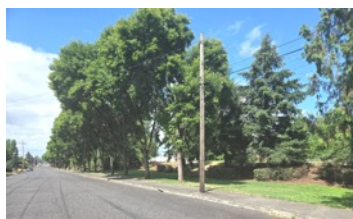
TAKE OUR SURVEY. Let your neighborhood association know what matters to you!

Dear Neighbors,

Your neighborhood association is **looking for your feedback on what matters!** A neighborhood association can have many roles, but in order for us to direct our energy, it's important that we know what matters to YOU. Whether it's cleanliness, business, environment or something else, we look forward to hearing from you!

Your feedback will directly impact what the WENA works toward this year and beyond, and knowing what your priorities are will connect us as a community, and guide our decisions. We all want Wilkes East to continue being a welcoming place for residents old and new, and for the value of our neighborhood to continue to grow.

We appreciate your help and look forward to your responses. **SCAN FOR SURVEY** or visit <https://www.wilkeseastna.org/> for survey link.



Take the time to volunteer and pickup trash on your walks!

By Candee Layton
Sandstone neighbor

I volunteer with **Adopt One Block**. As a Block Ambassador, you'll clean up the block(s)

you've adopted when and how you want, with litter removal supplies they deliver to you for free. They supply grabbers, gloves, trash bags or buckets. I walk all over, more than my block. Even if you are not a volunteer with Adopt One Block you can report dumps of garbage, furniture and other items by emailing:

ridpatrol@oregonmetro.gov.

First- A big thank you to Mike Penner and his crew for cleaning up the walkway down SanRafael, taking donations, and spreading barkdust; also for cleaning up the tree branches that came down on 162nd & Russell St.

Next- Thank you to Albertson's for cleaning up the berm along 169th Ave. It took a week of trimming, pruning, sawing, raking, picking up garbage, and hauling it all away!

To learn more about Adopt One Block, or to sign-up to adopt your block visit: <https://www.adoptoneblock.org> ■

Save the Date!

**Wilkes East Neighborhood
Summer 2026 Meeting
Monday, August 10th, 7PM
Moose Lodge • 16411 NE Halsey**

- Neighborhood Survey
- New Wilkes East Bylaws
- Ted Van Beek, City of Gresham
- WENA Neighborhood Police Liason
- Carol Rulla, What a Neighborhood Association can do for you!

See you there!

Are you signed up?
Nextdoor.com is the social networking service for neighbors to connect with each other. Sign-up today!

