

## Minutes

### Spencer Butte Neighborhood Association Board Meeting

May 8, 2024

**Board Members Present:** Michelle DeKlyen, John Dickinson, Paula Grisafi, Doug McCarty, Maureen McClain, Adam Novick, Bob Reeves, Chris Seubert, Kathy Sherwood, Kerry Silvey, Rolly Thompson

No minutes are available from the last meeting to approve.

#### Lane Electric Cooperative Update

Chris Seubert, SBNA Board member, who is also on the Board of Directors of Lane Electric Cooperative updated the group on the Cooperative's activities. [Note added after the meeting – Lane Electric Cooperative is divided into Districts. Chris is the Director for the Central District, where SBNA is located, and is also the Board Treasurer.]

- Chris has been on the Coop's Board for 21 years and is the most senior member.
- Chris is happy to answer questions or discuss SBNA residents' concerns.
- **Annual Meeting June 1<sup>st</sup>** at the Lane Electric Main Office. Chris encouraged people to attend. There will be a BBQ, entertainment, and a speakers panel that will include Chris and Heather Buch, our Lane County Commissioner. Maureen will e-mail an announcement.
- The Coop: owns 3,000 miles of power lines, has about 50 employees including 15 linemen, & purchases power from Bonneville Power Administration (BPA).
- **January ice storm.** The storm cost the Coop \$10,000,000. They don't have insurance for this. When a national disaster is declared, FEMA covers 75% of the costs. However, FEMA is very slow to pay - the Coop is still waiting for \$7,000,000 from the ice storm four years ago. FEMA reimbursement for natural disasters is funneled through the state.
- **Overhead vs buried power lines.** Prioritizing which lines to bury next is primarily based on fire risk. It is still about 5x cheaper to put in overhead lines. Even considering repair costs, it is much more expensive to fix buried lines when they do need repair. 50% of Lane Electric's 3,000 miles of power lines are buried, which is very high for a rural coop, and the most of any coop in Oregon.
- **Burying power lines.**
  - **Fox Hollow:** Burying power lines along Fox Hollow has been completed. There is one stretch where it is not feasible to bury the lines because the ground is solid rock. The lines on this stretch have been moved closer to the road to make maintenance easier.
  - **S. Willamette:** Burying power lines along S Willamette was originally scheduled to be completed 3 years ago. Multiple challenges combined to explain the delay, especially redirecting resources to restoring power to the McKenzie area after the Holiday Farm fire, and that the coop was hit hard by COVID, first by low staffing levels, and then having a high proportion of new hires requiring extensive training.

- So far, the lines have been buried from Fox Hollow to approximately the SBNA park. Completing burying the lines from the park to 52<sup>nd</sup> Street (the city limits) is scheduled to begin in July and be completed this year. It is possible that unforeseen circumstances could further delay the project, but hopefully this won't happen. Funds from a FEMA grant are paying for the project. Archeological studies are required for projects funded by FEMA.
    - **Streets accessed from Fox Hollow and S Willamette.** Chris' understanding is that sides road power lines will also be buried.
    - **McKenzie corridor:** The cooperative has also received a \$5,000,000 grant to bury the lines up to Blue River. The project will start this year.
    - Residents can request that lines from the street to their homes be buried. Residents in our area can contact Chris with requests.
- **Area substations:** There are 2 substations in our area: Most of the SBNA-area is served by the Hideaway on Dillard across from the Ridgeline Trailhead and Fox Hollow. The Fox Hollow substation serves areas west towards Territorial Hwy.
- **Transmission Lines:** The cooperative owns very few transmission lines. One goes from the Hideaway Substation to Cresswell.
- The coop is also **replacing many overhead wires with insulated aerial wire and changing how wires are stacked on poles** to decrease the chance of power outages from fallen branches or trees.
- **PSPS – Public Safety Power Shut-Offs.** Utilities are required to have a plan outlining the conditions when power will be shut off. They consider humidity, wind, and temperature in the decisions. Replacing overhead wires with insulated wires will make shut-offs for fire prevention less likely.
- **Electronic Automatic Meter Reading (AMR).** Lane Electric is the 1<sup>st</sup> coop in Oregon to buy AMR. AMR eliminates most manual meter reading and enables improved power line monitoring. Households served by the Hideaway substation (our area) will be the first to receive them. Property owners can decline an AMR meter, but will have to pay extra for manual meter reads.
- The coop is currently **Negotiating a new 30-year contract with BPA** to start in 2028. The current is for 20 years. It is for about a 1% “slice” of BPA power, and they have never needed more than that.
- **Electric Vehicle (EV) use.** The state provides electric utilities with the addresses of people with service area. If the number of electric vehicles (EVs) in our district continues to increase at the current rate, the coop will need a larger “slice” of BPA's power. The Coop will be setting up incentives to charge EVs at non-peak usage times.
- **Communication between the coop and customers.** The coop understands that communication during storms and outages needs improvement and is working to improve this. During the last storm an unexpected combination of staffing challenges hampered providing updates – the general manager was doing this.
  - The coop posts updates, including during storms and outages, on its Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/LaneElectricCooperative/>. See the SBNA website discussion below about how to improve access to Lane Electric outage & storm update info.
  - Maureen will work with Lane Electric to try to arrange automatic posting of Lane Electric outage information on the SBNA Facebook page.

## SBNA Website

A document to guide to guide discussion, “SBNA Website Discussion - 5/8/24 SBNA Board Meeting”, was e-mailed to the board prior to the meeting and followed for the discussion.

It was much harder to learn how to edit and add content to the website than we thought it would be.

The website work group, Maureen McClain, John Dickinson, Bob Reeves, Kathy Sherwood, and Kerry Silvey; are happy with the current version website, sbna.net. They are asking the board for general input and input on specific questions, and to approve it so it can be announced to the membership.

### 1) **Website purposes.**

a) After discussion, the Board agreed that at this time, the purposes are:

- i) Build community in the SBNA area
- ii) Provide easy to access information specific to our area and links to other resources useful to area residents.
- iii) Connect new residents and people SBNA wants to work with to SBNA.

2) It was moved, seconded, and the vote was unanimous to **approve the overall look and function of the website** and move forward with enhancements.

3) **Organization e-mail address.** SBNA currently does not have an organization e-mail address. The board agreed we should have one and post it on the website. The primary question is who will answer and/or triage the e-mails. Options of have a small group of 3-4 people responsible for monitoring the e-mails, or a group of 3 or 4 people rotate answering was discussed. Concern was raised that if there is not one specific point person, it won't get done.

a) Kerry & Maureen will follow-up with the website work group

- i) Talk to Neal, our web designer about the best way to do this on the website
- ii) Obtain the e-mail address & post it on the website
- iii) Decide who will answer the e-mails

4) What **new features or pages** do we want to add to the public-facing part of the website?

a) Should we **use the website to post current information** such as blocked roads, road conditions, power outages?

- i) The SBNA Facebook page, which has 226 members, is currently used for this, and board members think it works well. Users must be approved and the page is moderated. 50-60 SBNA non-members are approved to participate in the sight, e.g. family members of residents, people who live nearby, people who live in the area but have not paid dues.
- ii) Some SBNA members don't use or rarely use Facebook. We don't know what percent of SBNA members who use Facebook.
- iii) Challenges
  - (1) Someone would have to monitor.
  - (2) If the Facebook page is continued, people would have to post things both places.
- iv) The Board decided not add this to the website now. Reconsider in about 6 months.

b) Privacy policy – yes.

c) *Why Join SBNA?* and *How to Join SBNA?* – yes.

- d) Currently available grants to residents, e.g. Firewise grants for wildfire prevention. Yes, if we can maintain the section.
  - e) Upcoming and ongoing activities in the SBNA area, e.g. growers” market, raptor center. Yes, if someone volunteers to identify the activities & we confirm with people holding the activities that they want the activity posted, e.g. someone holding a house concert might not want it posted on the public part of the site.
- 5) Do we want to add a SBNA Members-only section requiring log-in? Yes
- a) What to post?
    - i) SBNA Bylaws - Yes
    - ii) SBNA Board members with contact information - Yes
    - iii) Financial reports – No
    - iv) Chronological list of SBNA e-mail announcements – Yes, if it’s easy to maintain.
    - v) Contact information for SBNA Board members and Local Neighborhood Leaders – yes
    - vi) Contact information for SBNA members who want to opt-in. Yes
      - (1) This will require thinking through and coordination with Rachel to use the SBNA list.
        - (a) How to set it up so it’s easy for people to select their privacy preferences.
        - (b) Include a button requiring something like “I promise not to share anyone’s contact information”.
  - b) Potential features
    - i) **Ability to e-mail local neighborhood groups, the Board, or other future groups** from the website. Not at this time – it would require everyone to keep their contact information up-to-date, which they are not used to doing, and the current system of neighborhood leaders keeping their e-mail lists up-to-date is working well.
    - ii) Require people to pay their dues to use the members-only section? Yes.

### **Summer Picnic**

- 1) The date was set for **June 15<sup>th</sup>**
- 2) John will oversee. Michelle and Chris will help if they are in town.
- 3) Rachel will get the BBQ from Paula by the beginning of June.

### **Next Board Meeting**

Scheduled for August 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm.