



Grant Park

Neighborhood Association

P.O. Box 13102, Portland, OR 97213

Winter 2021

Neighborhood Land Use Updates

By Neon Brooks

Below is the latest news concerning land use, both in Grant Park Neighborhood and nearby.

I'm excited to share that two new food cart projects are planned on NE Broadway: Koble Creative Architects (who are also designing the Aircraft Factory building renovation) is designing a **6-cart food cart pod at 3505 NE Broadway**, in the parking lot of the building containing Wyrd War and Reliquary Tattoo. The permit for this pod has already been approved and food carts could be open there this spring.

The same firm is working on a planned **18-cart food cart pod at the former Burger King location (3550 NE Broadway)**. Plans include renovation of the existing building and patio area. Expect to see construction beginning this winter or spring, with food carts opening as soon as late spring or early summer.

Aircraft Factory (former Gordon's Fireplace): The construction permit for the planned 19-unit apartment building with ground floor retail at NE 33rd and Broadway has not yet been approved by the city. Koble Creative informs me that they expect the permit to be issued by the end of the year, with construction starting in earnest in early January. As part of the project, the sidewalks along Broadway in front of the property will be widened to match those on the West side of 33rd, and improvements will be made to the pedestrian crossings at the intersection. No changes will be made to the traffic patterns on Broadway, although the lanes will be narrowed somewhat to accommodate the wider sidewalk. The Aircraft Factory building is now listed on the National Registry of Historic Places.

Grant Park Upper Field Improvement Project: Plans to begin construction on the new girls' softball field on U.S. Grant Place have been delayed somewhat as the permit review process with the city is taking longer than expected. Portland Public Schools (PPS) hopes to get the permit issuance and all necessary contracting completed during the month of December, which would allow construction to begin in early January 2022. Despite this shortened timeline, PPS says the contractor still hopes to have the project completed during the spring of 2022.

Tillamook-Hancock Greenway: Since the last update, PBOT changed the stop signs on Hancock at 35th and 36th Avenues to facilitate bike travel along Hancock. In the spring, PBOT plans to install pavement marking (primarily sharrows), and signage on this portion of the greenway. While PBOT already completed curb and signal improvements on three corners of Hancock and 33rd, planned improvements for the southwest corner of the intersection (replacing curb ramps and adding a bike-accessible push button) will be constructed by a contractor to CVS. At this time, the schedule for these improvements is uncertain, but more information should soon be available.

continued page 2

2022 MEETINGS:

- January 18
- April 12 (Annual Meeting)

LOCATION:

All meetings for the foreseeable future will be virtual rather than in person. To check the meeting schedule and agenda, learn how to participate virtually, or to suggest an agenda topic, please go to: <http://grantpark-na.org/meetings-minutes>. Due to unforeseen circumstances related to the pandemic, meeting dates may be subject to change.

MEETINGS:

GPNA holds elections at the Annual Meeting in April. Necessary special or emergency meetings may be scheduled at any time. Meetings are open to the public. ALL persons living, working, or attending high school within its boundaries are members of Grant Park Neighborhood Association. If you need special accommodation, please contact a Board member.

GPNA

EXECUTIVE BOARD:

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Neon Brooks

Communication Chair/

Newsletter Editor:

Stacey Tipp

At Large:

*Linda Burch, Marion Horna,
Vivek Kothari, Laurene Mullen,
Lois Okrasinski*

Contact the Board at:

general@grantpark-na.org

Land Use, continued

East of Grant Park, traffic changes are planned to Hancock between Cesar Chavez and 41st, to be implemented this spring: Hancock will become one-way westbound for car traffic between Cesar Chavez and 40th, and one-way eastbound for cars between 40th and 41st; bike traffic will be permitted in both directions (see <https://tinyurl.com/hancockgreenway> for details). In the fall of 2022, PBOT plans to add speed bumps to Hancock east of 43rd; to update Kelly Plaza, and to add a bike-only signal across Sandy at 43rd. These improvements will likely take place in 2023.

NE 33rd Ave: The planned improvements on NE 33rd at Hancock and U.S. Grant Place (removing parking to improve visibility at both intersections, bike boxes at 33rd and U.S. Grant Place, and making Hancock right-turn only in both directions at 33rd) are in the PBOT maintenance operations queue and awaiting construction, which will likely take place this winter or in spring as weather permits. In October, GPNA sent a letter to PBOT and PBOT Commissioner Joann Hardesty thanking the bureau for conducting the traffic study and for the planned changes, and suggesting two further safety changes on 33rd Ave: relocation of the signal box on a light pole at the Southeast

corner of 33rd and US Grant Place that obstructs drivers' view of the crosswalk, and a pedestrian-activated signalized crossing at 33rd and Thompson (the full text of this letter can be found at <http://grantpark-na.org/news-events>). Commissioner Hardesty's office acknowledged receipt of the letter and GPNA hopes to get a response from PBOT soon.

HollywoodHUB: The HollywoodHUB project at the Hollywood Transit Center has been awarded \$28.4 million in Affordable Housing Bond funds from the Portland Housing Bureau to finance the 13-story building with about 200 units of permanently affordable housing, 40 parking spaces, and community space at the Hollywood Transit Center site. All units will be affordable to people at 60% of area median income, and 35% will be affordable at 30% of median income. A Design Advice Request meeting with the City of Portland's Design Commission is scheduled for December 16th at 1:30PM to get initial feedback on the proposed building. This meeting is open to the public and will review early design concepts before land-use review. The meeting agenda and link are available at www.portland.gov/bds/design-commission.

continued page 3

Letters to the Editor and Articles

Grant Park Neighborhood Association (GPNA) welcomes letters to the editor and original articles for publication from those residing or working within neighborhood boundaries. Letters concerning prior published articles must be submitted within 30 days of newsletter distribution. Letters or articles that include profanity, libelous statements, personal attacks against individuals or specific organizations, or that are unreasonably long, will be rejected. Articles should be original or with attribution stated, and should address topics of local interest. Letters and articles submitted anonymously will be evaluated on a case by case basis for publication, but the editor must be able to verify the identity of the writer to ensure authenticity. Letters or articles that support or oppose individual candidates for public office cannot be published, but those concerning ballot measures will be considered. All submissions must be in Word or other text-based format, not PDFs.

GPNA Newsletter Ads

The GPNA newsletter reaches over 2,000 homes and businesses between NE Broadway and NE Knott and from NE 26th to NE 47th, with some overlap around the outside edges. Distribution of the newsletter occurs quarterly.

Ads need to be print ready about three weeks before delivery of the next issue.

There is a per-issue standard rate, due upon receipt of an invoice with an attached copy of the issue in which the ad has run, and a per-year 10% discounted rate, which must be paid in advance. A copy of each issue will be sent to the advertiser.

For copy information contact Ron Laster, printresults@aol.com, 503-287-9566.

Ad deadlines for 2021-2022: Dec. 15 issue: November 24, 2021, March 16 issue: February 23, 2022, June 1 issue: May 11, 2022

RATES/SIZES

Business card	2"H x 3.5/3.625"W	per issue \$45	per year \$162
Quarter page	4.5"H x 3.5/ 3. 625"W	per issue \$75	per year \$270
Half page (horizontal)	4.5"H x 7.5"W	per issue \$120	per year \$432
Half page (vertical)	9.5"H x 3.5/ 3. 625"W	per issue \$120	per year \$432
Full page	9.5"H x 7.5"W	per issue \$210	per year \$756

Land Use, continued

The new infrastructure components of the project, led by TriMet, will include new bus facilities, a substation, a ramp/stair structure leading to the pedestrian bridge to the MAX and across I-84, and street improvements (bus stops from the transit center will be moved to NE Halsey). A consulting team led by DEA and architects Mayer/Reed will lead the detailed design phase and will begin this design work in the new year, subject to agreement on final contractual terms.

At the January 18th GPNA Board meeting, Scott Cohen, Neighborhood Greenways Program Coordinator at PBOT, will provide updates and answer questions about the Tillamook-Hancock greenway and the planned improvements on NE 33rd Ave. We will also be joined by representatives from TriMet and BRIDGE Housing to provide updates and answer questions about the HollywoodHUB project. As always, all interested neighbors are invited to attend and participate in the meeting.

Please don't hesitate to contact me at neonbluebrooks@gmail.com if you have questions or concerns about these or any other land use matters in the neighborhood.



Grant Park Church
Where All Are Welcome

Please join us for a special musical
Christmas Eve Service
Friday, December 24th at 4:30 pm
(Masks Required)

Sunday Worship 10:00 AM
Reverend Jeremy Richards

We're at 2728 NE 34th Ave.
503-282-5596
Visit: www.grantparkchurch.com

Could Portland Get a New Form of City Government?

By Ron Laster

To many residents, Portland cannot seem to solve its problems. From crime and gun violence to houselessness, drug addiction, and trash piling up everywhere, progress seems to have stalled out. Many observers think that a major impediment to finding effective solutions to these problems is the current form of city government.

Portland is unique among large American cities because it has a commission form of government. The Portland City Council consists of the Mayor and four City Commissioners. The Council passes laws, approves the city budget, runs the city bureaus, carries out the laws, and hears land-use and other appeals. The other component is the City Auditor, who reviews city bureaus and offices, oversees city elections, and promotes access to public records.

Portland voters cast ballots for the Mayor and the four Commissioners. The Mayor has sole discretion in assigning all City Bureaus to himself and the four Commissioners. In other words, the Mayor and Commissioners serve as the administrators of City departments, individually overseeing bureaus and carrying out policies approved by the Council.

continued page 5



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WeShine is Ready to Go at a New Site

WeShine Initiative (Welcoming, Empowering, Safe Habitat Initiative, with Neighborhood Engagement) continues to move forward with site development. Previous plans to establish a micro-village at the site of the former Gordon's Fireplace property fell through because the owner-developer could offer only a nine month lease, which is inadequate for WeShine purposes. We are thankful for their initial support—it helped us make huge strides in our planning and readiness to proceed.



WeShine's prototype 8'X8' pod (backview) – minus the roof and some adjustments to be made in window location.

In the meantime, we received unanimous support from the Parkrose Community United Church of Christ's Council to develop a village in partnership with the church and the Providence Health System on church property at 125th and N.E. Halsey. Since our aim is to shelter the most vulnerable of Portland's unhoused population, we are collaborating with the congregation to decide which group to serve at this micro-village.

Although initially drawn to the artistry and coziness of the Conestoga hut, originated in Eugene, we ultimately decided to use our own design for sleeping pods. The WeShine volunteer building team felt that the Conestoga huts would be complicated for volunteers to build, were not very portable, and were incompatible with city requirements for power and heat in each sleeping pod. Our volunteer architect and two experienced builders put together a prototype panelized pod design and are finalizing the instruction manual to guide our volunteer building helpers. Our engineering volunteers are working on the site plan to connect to existing power, water, and sewer at the church site. Need we say — we are in awe of the skills, commitment, and hearts of the amazing professionals who have chosen to volunteer with us!

We have proposed a budget to the Joint Office of Homeless Services (JOHS) to support the development and operation of three villages, including the one at the Parkrose Community church site, during the 2022 calendar year. We expect to receive an answer very soon. We are in search of a warehouse where our building helpers can assemble the panels for each pod. The panels will then be taken to the village site where they can be put together by another group of volunteers armed with power drills and good screws! As soon as we get funding, we are ready to go! <https://www.weshinepdx.org>.

You Can Help Oregon's Foster Care Crisis

On any given day, there are 7,000 children in Oregon's foster care system. Many of these children come from situations of abuse and neglect only to find themselves facing uncertainty and instability once they enter foster care.

Boys & Girls Aid, a nonprofit founded in Portland in 1885, wants to change that. We are looking for compassionate people to help improve the lives of children in foster care.

A good foster home is often the first place a child in foster care has felt safe in a long time. Foster parents help children build trust in adults and provide a supportive environment where they can thrive.

Boys & Girls Aid supports foster parents with responsive program staff available 24/7, ongoing free professional training, and generous monthly, tax-free stipends ranging from \$1,200 to \$3,500 per month. There are options to fit every family, from full-time placement to relief care a few days a month.

Fostering children might bring life changes and challenges, but it's a great opportunity to make a difference in a child's life — and in your own life, too. "It's worth it to get to know these kids," said experienced foster parents Jen and Chad. "It's enriched our lives a lot."

To learn more, visit our website: boysandgirlsaid.org/fostercare, or contact Outreach Coordinator Scott Appel at (503) 542-2316 or sappel@boysandgirlsaid.org.

Hollywood Soccer Club Needs Your Support!

Hello Hollywood, Grant, and Rose City Park Community,

The Hollywood Soccer Club is a club that is strong due to all the community involvement and participation of its members and supporters. And now that we have a season up and running, it is such a joy to see kids playing soccer, building relationships, and having fun.

Currently, we are looking to recruit Board Members and a Communications Director(s) to make our club even stronger. Our communications needs include website management, social media, and strategies to inform the community about registration deadlines and details regarding the club. We welcome new board members for whatever expertise and energy you can bring. Board Positions open up as our kids age out of middle school and our program - we need you to keep this great community thriving!

If you are at all interested, please email: HWSCsecretary@gmail.com.

Thank you for your time and support.

Thank You to All Those Who Help with the Making and Distribution of this Newsletter

By Stacey Tipp

The newsletter you are holding is the result of a lot of peoples' hard work. After our wonderful graphic designer has laid out the newsletter and it gets printed, a whole host of our neighbors band together to actually get it into your hands.

The newsletters are collated into route bundles, which are then dropped off at volunteer neighbors' homes for delivery to your doorstep. It's a big job as the newsletters go to about 2,000 homes and businesses in our neighborhood.

We would like to express a heartfelt thank-you to all those involved in this process. It's a real collaborative effort and an example of great community cooperation. Here is a list of those we want to thank. We are especially grateful to our lead distributors, as well as new volunteers who responded to our recruitment drive earlier this year. If we have inadvertently omitted anyone from this list, we do apologize. Please let us know by shooting us an e-mail at general@grantpark-na.org. We'll thank you in our next edition!

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Sierra Evans

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Marion Horna

Terri Jentz

Larry Keltner

Christina Kirby

Cindy Lech

Karen Lewis

Merryl Mix

Matt Morrissey

Laurene Mullen

Kathie Newlyn

Marsha and Clyde O'Neil

Libbi Pinkley

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Julie Schmidt

Laura Schwab

Rebecca Teborak

City Government, continued

For example, Commissioner Dan Ryan is currently responsible for the Portland Housing Bureau, the Joint Office of Homeless Services, the Bureau of Development Services, and the Portland Children's Levy. Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty currently oversees Portland Fire & Rescue, the Portland Bureau of Transportation, and the Office of Community & Civic Life. The Mayor also has complete authority to reassign Bureaus as deemed necessary.

Portlanders all have individual reasons for voting for a candidate for City Council. These may include a proven track record of effective leadership, the ability to connect with citizens, a vision for the future of the city, and appropriate priorities for a safe and livable community. The problem is that very rarely, if ever, do voters select a commissioner because of perceived ability to manage a Bureau. And even if a candidate possesses the knowledge, skills, and experience to manage a specific Bureau, there is no guarantee that the mayor will assign that Bureau to that candidate. In other words, a City Commissioner can oversee a Bureau without any experience in the substance of the work of the Bureau, and without any experience or track record in managing large-sized budgets, programs, and staff.

Every 10 years, the City Council convenes a Charter Commission to review and recommend amendments to the City of Portland Charter (Portland's Constitution). The Charter

Commission is an independent body that sets its own scope of work. The Commission is working right now, and one of the items being addressed is potential changes to our form of government. One model under consideration, and one common throughout the nation, is the Council-Manager form of city government. In this model, the City Council hires an experienced City Manager, essentially a City CEO, to oversee day-to-day municipal operations, draft a budget, and to implement and enforce the council's policy and legislative initiatives. The potential for a change in our system of city government is gaining traction, with many Portlanders seemingly ready to jettison the commission form of government with something more professional and in tune with the rest of the country. A report published by the Portland City Club in 2019 concluded that the Commissioner form of government fails residents in nearly every way imaginable and is "inherently inequitable."

The Commission has broad latitude to recommend amendments to the city charter. The Commission has 20 members. If a supermajority of 15 or more agree, it's expected that the recommendations will go to the voters on the General Election ballot of November 8, 2022.

The process is an open process. It's our city, pay attention, get involved.

Neighbors Gather to Voice Concerns about Crime, Safety

By Stacey Tipp

On September 20, under the covered shelter at Grant Park by the Beverly Cleary School Hollyrood Campus, about 25 neighbors sat and listened to a one-hour presentation about crime and safety issues in our community and city. Jacob Brostoff, a Community Safety Coordinator with the Community Safety Program of the Office of Community and Civic Life, led the meeting. Mr. Brostoff continued this conversation and offered more information at the Grant Park Neighborhood Association (GPNA) Board meeting on November 9th.

The September 20 meeting was organized by a concerned Grant Park neighbor. Three members of the GPNA Board attended the meeting. They are Ron Laster, President; Stacey Tipp, Communications Chair/newsletter editor; and Linda Burch, member at large.

The meeting was held in an informal question and answer format, covered multiple topics, and did include useful phone numbers and some limited guidance on how to respond to different incidents (see below). As the meeting progressed, however, neighbor frustrations at rampant crime and the ramifications of the homeless crisis became more apparent. Neighbors were looking for real solutions to specific problems, and it seemed as though their expectations were not met. As Ron Laster put it, "When the City doesn't have answers, you can't expect their staff to have any."

Re. gun violence, Mr. Brostoff said that the City Council did not have a consensus on how to address this growing problem. He did, however, recommend Advocacy Training, a free training program of about 35-45 minutes, that teaches community members how to participate in Portland City Government. If a community member has a specific issue, concern, or solution they would like City Council to know about, such as gun violence, this training is for them.

If someone appears to be a danger to themselves or others due to apparent mental health problems, neighbors can call the Multnomah County Mental Health Crisis Line. This number is 503-988-4888, and the lines are open 24/7. If this number is called, you will talk to a mental health professional, and they will decide whether to dispatch someone to the scene. If a weapon is present, neighbors should call 911 emergency (more on 911 below). Mr. Brostoff also mentioned Portland Street Response, a program that teams Portland Fire Bureau paramedics and mental health professionals. The purpose is to avoid the use of police in situations involving those in mental health crisis where weapons are not present. The program recently expanded from a pilot program in the Lents neighborhood to most of East Portland. The city council is expected to expand the program citywide next year.

Neighbors should call 911 for true emergencies, where there is an immediate danger to life or property, or a crime is in progress. 911 should always be called if there is a weapon present at the scene of the incident you are reporting. Note that neighbors can also text 911, which is a good solution if you cannot talk or make noise during an incident. Texts can only be in English, and emojis are not accepted, just text. The police non-emergency line number is 503-823-3333, and this line takes calls from all of Multnomah County. Please note that when giving details on what you are seeing, housing status is not an important fact to report.

A neighbor asked a question about slow response times for 911 calls. Mr. Brostoff acknowledged that phone wait times and dispatch times are not optimal right now, and City Council is aware of the problem. Mr. Brostoff noted that one of the reasons is the difficulty recruiting dispatchers. The job is extremely stressful, and many candidates are washing out of training.

For neighbors concerned about homeless camps, and the behavioral and environmental problems associated with them, neighbors can call the Homelessness and Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program. This is a joint city-county program that manages the homeless camps. Go to <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/toolkit/article/562211>.

Towards the end of the meeting, peoples' frustrations with brazen property crimes, such as car/catalytic converter thefts, package thefts, and vandalism, and very disturbing incidents involving drugs, fights, and random violent attacks, including incidents in the park where we were sitting, became more apparent.

Some neighbors were concerned about vigilantism. Mr. Brostoff discouraged vigilantism, but encouraged neighbors to get to know one another, to share information such as cell phone numbers, license plate numbers, routines, special skills, etc., and to keep an eye out for one another and develop a safety plan to prepare for contingencies. He also offered training opportunities including a free Personal Safety Workshop. According to Mr. Brostoff, this workshop is, "primarily focused on the role of intuition in keeping us safe, verbal de-escalation techniques for lower-level conflicts, escape options for dealing with situations where physical safety could be in danger, and being an Upstander versus being a Bystander."

Additionally, free physical self-defense trainings for women and female identified include the Strength programs WomenStrength and GirlStrength, offered by the Portland Police Bureau. For more information on these classes and how to register, go to: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/index.cfm?&c=35911>

Neighbors Voice Concerns, continued

For violence prevention, Mr. Brostoff recommended the Community Peace Collaborative, hosted by the Office of Violence Prevention. This is a, “bi-weekly public forum that increases communication and coordination between service providers and the community to develop strategies to reduce violence.” Go to <https://www.portland.gov/oyvp/community-peace-collaborative>.

An additional service offered by the North/Northeast Community Safety Program is the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) assessments. These assessments are, “evaluations of the environmental factors that may help discourage certain types of criminal activity. They are free of charge, and we do them for all types of development in the City of Portland, including residential, commercial, and industrial development. There is no obligation to implement our CPTED suggestions. However, we prefer that there be an invitation from a property owner, manager, or person-in-charge for these assessments.” Mr. Brostoff did note that groups of neighbors can jointly request an evaluation of their whole block under this program.

One person who spoke out extensively towards the end of the meeting was Ron Laster, the current President of the Grant Park Neighborhood Association. Ron has lived in Portland for 42 years and has been involved with the neighborhood association structure for 30 years. Ron noted that the police force is understaffed by up to 600 officers, making property crimes extremely low on their priority list. Ron stated that we neighbors are our own best resource, and we must get creative. He echoed Mr. Brostoff’s emphasis on getting to know your neighbors and gain safety and solidarity that way.

Ron also mentioned how the structure of Portland city government feeds into a lack of progress on these issues. When commissioners are elected, they are assigned bureaus, and become bureaucrats instead of our representatives. We need to hold their feet to the fire with continued pressure and our votes.

Also, Ron noted that some programs that provided neighborhood security have been disbanded by the city, such as Neighborhood Block Watch and Foot Patrols. A woman at the meeting had been a member of a neighborhood Foot Patrol. She described how they would go out at night wearing reflective vests and using walkie-talkies provided by the police. The patrols would walk the neighborhood, advising neighbors of a safety issue (e.g., an open garage door), and presumably communicating with police when necessary. However, Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty has made it clear she is not interested in reestablishing block watch programs. Another issue Ron mentioned is that the Multnomah County D.A. is not prosecuting serial property crime offenders and is just releasing them back onto the streets.

In conversations and communications after the meeting, it became even more apparent that neighbors are done with rampant crime and violence. One fear I heard is that all these problems are going to come to a head and result in vigilantism. As GPNA Board member Linda Burch said in a subsequent e-mail, “I think our neighborhood association should try to encourage people to reach out to their neighbors and start phone trees, etc., because the police are not going to come for property crimes. We need to look out for each other. I would encourage people to get on Nextdoor if you think these things can’t happen to you. A woman was attacked in Sellwood the other day for yelling at a person to get off her neighbor’s porch, where the guy was stealing. The guy clocked her in the face and ran away. Many of these incidents are happening with people high on meth. We also need to be proactive and demand that city officials do their jobs. Call the commissioners and the mayor with your stories. I am afraid our neighbors are going to start using guns when they feel threatened. Thieves and vandals are getting much bolder. They don’t even care if you videotape them because they know that there will be no consequence.”

If readers have questions or want more information about any of the programs described above, Jacob Brostoff can be contacted at 503-823-8973, or by e-mail at Jacob.brostoff@portlandoregon.gov or pdxnorthteam@portlandoregon.gov.

Another member of the North/Northeast Community Safety team available to answer neighbor questions is Daniel Franco-Nunez, who can be reached at 503-823-8236 or at daniel.franco-nunez@portlandoregon.gov.



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Virtual Practice Builds Real-Life NET Skills

Nanci Tangeman, Grant Park NET member

Two days after a major earthquake hits the Portland area, power is still out. Cell service and internet are spotty. There is heavy damage to many buildings and those standing are unsafe.

Grant Park's Neighborhood Emergency Team (NET) has set up its makeshift command center in the Grant Park Church parking lot. Trained NET members and other helpful residents provide minor medical treatment to injured neighbors. Communicating by radio, they walk the neighborhood, assessing damage, searching for victims, and organizing help wherever they can.

A strong aftershock hits. A damaged building at NE 33rd and Knott collapses, blocking the intersection. A woman inside a multifamily building cries for help. A fire burns at a nearby church.

Now what?

That's the question your Grant Park Neighborhood Emergency Team (NET) answered on a recent Sunday afternoon. NET volunteers are Portland residents trained by the Portland Bureau of Emergency Management (PBEM) and Portland Fire & Rescue to provide emergency disaster assistance within their own neighborhoods.

Covid forced the exercise onto Zoom. Still, citywide over 200 NET volunteers – a dozen from Grant Park – participated in the virtual disaster scenario.

As reports came in about damage to the neighborhood, Grant Park NET members put their skills to work. The organizational and communication practice (albeit mostly via Zoom) was "live." Other tasks, such as medical assessment, extrication and triage, were simulated.

"Our team was aware how different our communication style would be without the visual and audio capabilities of Zoom," says NET volunteer Debra Haines. "It was still enriching to interact with the team, even though it was virtual."

"Having done this several times at [Portland Police] Scenario Village and in other city-wide exercises, we're developing better organization and communication as a team," says NET volunteer Chris Blumenthal. "The scenarios left us with time to discuss issues like victim transportation and the best use of neighborhood volunteers."

The scenario reinforced the important role neighborhood volunteers who do not have formal NET training could play in recovery plans. NET volunteers are trained to utilize the resources of everyone in the neighborhood who wants to help, directing them where their skills are most needed.



NET volunteers practice fire suppression skills, 2017

The exercise brought other issues to the team's attention, such as the need to build relationships with businesses in the neighborhood who could help replenish medical supplies, food and other items to support the operations and people being cared for at the Grant Park NET command center.

Although the NET volunteers did not experience the physical work and psychological toll a real emergency will require, Peter Maxfield, Grant Park NET incident commander for the day, summed it up, "Practice makes perfect." Even when the aftershocks are contained in a computer screen.

More about NET: Neighborhood Emergency Team (NET) volunteers are Portland residents trained by the Portland Bureau of Emergency Management (PBEM) and Portland Fire & Rescue to provide emergency disaster assistance within their own neighborhoods. Anyone who lives or works in Portland can become a NET, and anyone over the age of 14 is welcome to attend meetings, regardless of whether they've completed NET training. Training includes light search and rescue, basic disaster medicine and triage, radio communications, fire suppression, disaster psychology and trauma intervention. After completing basic training, NET members also receive access to free advanced training and practice opportunities, including drills at Portland Fire & Rescue's Scenario Village facility.

To learn more about your Grant Park NET, please visit bit.ly/GrantParkNET For more information about Portland NET and CERT National, see portlandprepares.org/net-teams.