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Rob Fiset - SEN Board

SEN Board Candidate Rob Fiset

1. Why do you want to be on the SEN board?

Rob Fiset: I think neighborhood associations (NAs) hold great promise for helping to organize people in ways I want to be a part of. Southeast Ready, the SEN emergency preparedness committee, is a shining example of this—connecting neighbors to each other and building up resources for self-sufficiency in an emergency to keep everyone as healthy and safe as possible. Truly beautiful stuff.

In practice, NAs can also be quite reactionary. The Neighborhood Leadership Council's (NLC's) fight against aggressive middle housing zoning standards is a current example, with support from SEN leadership and land use committee (and other NAs and their other resources). These bodies do not explicitly have the power to enact this agenda, but they represent “voters”, “homeowners”, “business owners”, “taxpayers”, and other classes privileged by the status quo—so, elected officials are often cowed by them to maintain their own power and privilege.

NAs can be exclusive—renters typically do not participate; participating while working and raising a family is difficult; and our neighborhood is the afterlife of fervent, intentional, and persisting colonization, racial exclusion, and class exclusion.

So, in short, I want to be on the SEN board to help build more of the former type of thing while working to mitigate the latter type of thing. I think I bring a perspective that is common among humans just trying to live but relatively uncommon in this space.

2. What experiences do you have that make you a good candidate and how would those experiences benefit the board?

Rob Fiset: I have been on the board for almost two years—so, I know a bit of what is happening there.

I have lived in many cities and states mostly rented (though not anymore)—this means my perspective is not so Eugene-centric, not so SEN-centric.

I am a geriatric millennial who only recently bought my first house, more or less completely by dumb luck, and it just happened to be in this neighborhood. To hear questions from people who bought homes in this neighborhood long ago, it is clear that there is little understanding of what it is like here now to be starting out, starting a family. So, I think this perspective, strongly asserted, helps round out discussions of key issues that impact the city and the neighborhood.

3. What do you believe is the role of the SEN board?

Rob Fiset: I think the board's role is primarily in organization, communication, and advocacy.

We organize committees that engage in certain work that we think is important to neighbors—we reach out to people, connect them with the work, connect them to each other via the work.

We communicate about the work, where they can get involved, what resources are available for connecting to each other and addressing neighborhood concerns.

As we engage in the work, issues may come before us that warrant advocacy with City Council, commissions, advisory boards, etc. At such times we may advocate officially for some policy or outcome.

4. Participation in board committees is a requirement; as a member of the board, which committee(s) do you plan to join? Why?

Rob Fiset: Since shortly after joining the board, I have organized the SEN Human Rights Committee (HRC). The committee was formed before I joined the board, and the existing organizer was departing, but curiosity about the committee is what drew me to the board in the first place. To me, this "human rights" framing is a strange umbrella to operate under as a neighborhood committee, but of course our fair city intentionally violates the human rights of many of its (and SEN's) residents every day, so in fact maybe it is not so strange. Unclear, but here we are.

The current iteration of the committee is driven by discussion, typically of current events, and information curation. I find this is a useful way to be in touch with how global issues impact or cast shadows on our neighborhood city county etc. and vice versa. And of course, I like to connect with other people who are interested in thinking this way but experience things differently or from a different perspective. So we discuss, and share information with each other and ultimately with our mailing list (and occasionally SEN's mailing list) that we think is important for understanding the world as it is, and thinking about what's next to be done about it.

Kit Kirkpatrick SEN Board Candidate At Large

1. Why do you want to be on the SEN Board?

Kit Kirkpatrick: Having lived in the neighborhood since 2016, I can appreciate what a great place it is to live. By serving on the Board again, I believe that I can help to disseminate valuable information to our neighbors. Organizing neighborhoods for disaster preparedness has been important to me since I moved here. I have come to know my immediate neighbors that way and feel we all have made important connections.

I am always excited about the picnic that the Board organizes at Tugman Park and look forward to taking part once again. I feel that that particular venue helps to create a more cohesive neighborhood.

2. What experiences do you have that make you a good candidate and how would those experiences benefit the Board?

Kit Kirkpatrick: I served on the SEN Board from 2017 until 2019 as the Treasurer. I was the Chair of the River Road Community Organization for two years as well. I worked on special projects for LRAPA, EWEB, the City and the Friends of Hendricks Park. For some of those organizations I was a Board member and for others I had a close association with the Board. All of those experiences familiarized me with the function of non-profit boards and spurred me to take on projects as I saw fit to promote the mission of a particular entity.

For the SEN Board, I prepared treasurer reports, organized my close neighborhood to be prepared for disasters, helped to organize the Tugman Park picnic and decided to launch a fund-raising campaign to raise funds for the lawyer who had helped us save the Amazon Headwaters. By helping to remunerate him more fully, I sense that he will be more inclined to work for other non-profits and help us in the future if need be. I became familiar with the tasks necessary to complete a mailing to inform our neighbors of our efforts. All of these experiences will ultimately help me to work effectively with the SEN Board.

3. What do you believe is the role of the SEN Board?

Kit Kirkpatrick: I believe that the SEN Board has worked effectively to make the neighborhood safer in the event of a disaster. Continuing to disseminate information to the citizens in the area is important to a more cohesive neighborhood. The speakers that the Board has brought to general meetings have informed our neighbors and have fostered goodwill among the attendees. These are all important roles that a neighborhood organization can play to shape an improved City for us all.

4. Participation on Board committees is a requirement; as a member of the Board, which committee(s) do you plan to join? Why?

Kit Kirkpatrick: I would probably join the Disaster Preparedness committee given that I continue to stay in contact with the area captains by radio once a month. I believe that the information that we offered some years ago should be reiterated so people are aware of where they might go for help and what sorts of things should be done for their own safety and the well-being of others. I would not, however, be opposed to serving on a different committee depending upon the need.

Devon Mann SEN Board Co-Chair

1. Why do you want to be on the SEN board?

Devon Mann: I have enjoyed the community connection and involvement since joining the board in late 2020. I appreciate facilitating communications between SEN residents and both our elected and non-elected city and county officials as well as other public entities, such as EWEB. I strongly believe the service we provide as a board is valuable and I wish to continue my role as Co-Chair. In addition, I am grateful for and wish to continue my relationships with fellow board members.

2. What experiences do you have that make you a good candidate and how would those experiences benefit the board?

Devon Mann: I have previous board experience serving on a K-8 public school board for a three-year term, on my neighborhood association board and architectural review committee for four years, and first as Vice Chair and now Co-Chair of the SEN board for nearly two years. Not unlike the SEN board, the school board was governance in nature (as opposed to a managerial board); this similarity helped prepare me for the information curation and distribution role of the SEN board. Professionally, my skills as a career science educator (currently teaching a biology course at the University of Oregon) bring a unique and evidence-based perspective to the board. In addition, my personal experiences as a Eugene native and parent of a SEHS student are assets.

3. What do you believe is the role of the SEN board?

Devon Mann: As alluded to above, the role of the board is to collect and distribute information regarding issues, ranging from the local to federal, that potentially affect SEN residents as well as foster a greater sense of community whenever possible.

4. Participation in board committees is a requirement; as a member of the board, which committee(s) do you plan to join? Why?

Devon Mann: I plan to continue the work of the Environmental Stewardship Committee which, among several things, is currently focused on reducing emissions and other issues cause by gas powered leaf blowers, protecting the City of Eugene's urban canopy, and researching the native path and configuration of Amazon Creek in preparation for any future restoration projects.

Christina Hansberry SEN Treasurer

1. Why do you want to be Treasurer on the SEN board?

Christina Hansberry: I enjoy tracking our expenditures and being a steady resource for the board. I currently serve as the Treasurer for the SEN board and would appreciate the opportunity to continue this role.

2. What experiences do you have that make you a good candidate and how would those experiences benefit the board?

Christina Hansberry: I currently serve as the Treasurer for the SEN board; this has given me experience working with the SEN Board and the Human Rights and Neighborhood Involvement folks at the City of Eugene. My background is in finance, so I am comfortable tracking expenditures and reconciling accounts. Prior experience on a board was serving on the Finance Committee for the Town of Arlington in Massachusetts.

3. What do you believe is the role of the SEN board?

Christina Hansberry: The SEN Board provides neighbors with a way to engage and stay informed on issues in the neighborhood as well as topics that are at the City level. Neighborhood groups are a great way to get to know one's neighbors and collaborate.

The SEN Board encourages civic engagement and is a liaison between our neighborhood and the City.

4. Participation in board committees is a requirement; as a member of the board, which committee(s) do you plan to join? Why?

Christina Hansberry: I am currently a member of the Environmental Stewardship Committee and the Communications Committee. I plan to continue to participate in these committees if elected.

Jess Roshak SEN Board Member At large

1. Why do you want to be on the SEN board?

Jess Roshak: I've served on the board for just a little while now, and I think what got me interested in the first place was when East Amazon parkway got completely re-done with the bike path. Now I love that path, but right away I noticed there were and are some dysfunctional spots. I was really wondering how something that major gets done with that kind of money thrown at it, gets completed without regular neighbors getting a chance to help out with some feedback on the design and functionality before completion, and that really bothered me quite a bit. By chance, it wasn't long after that I learned about LTD's plan for Transit Tomorrow which would have basically taken away all neighborhood public transit south of 18th Ave and I just thought to myself that our neighborhood was going to continue to get these rather major things and decisions done to it if no one steps up and starts watching and listening and holding leaders more accountable. Since then, I've worked to get things done like re-do the website, run the social media posts, and overall try to maintain a pragmatic and moderate voice on things that come up.

2. What experiences do you have that make you a good candidate and how would those experiences benefit the board?

Jess Roshak: Professionally, I've been a social studies teacher for over 20 years and the absolute most important message for students to understand is that every single person, no matter their age or upbringing or politics anything else, is a valuable part of the community and has a unique,

important voice and power to make the world a better place. I try to live that creed, but it's definitely not easy. The last few years have been very difficult for families, and it's been even harder for working families to participate in civic life with all that has happened and transpired in our lives. I have two young kids, and I can help bring that perspective of what families need in their neighborhood and that voice into the equation.

3. What do you believe is the role of the SEN board?

Jess Roshak: Eugene is a pretty civically active community and there is lots and lots happening as our town grows up into a more metropolitan city. More committees, groups, meetings, commissions, and panels all the time, it seems. The role of the neighborhood association in civic life is 1) to help bring awareness and make sense out of issues that will affect our neighborhood, like we did on buses and disaster prep and proposed code amendments— it's very important because no one can possibly be on the pulse of what is happening and sometimes by the time people realize something very important will affect them, it's too late, which is what I think happened on East Amazon re-do design. So in my view the neighborhood board isn't necessarily for advocating for one specific outcome on these things but to do the job of communicating with neighbors and helping each interested neighbor to understand things and find their own voice and where best to direct it in this sometimes convoluted and confusing system we work in. And 2) equally important for the neighborhood board for sure is to take on the mission of harnessing the power of hive mind, kindness, belonging, and volunteerism within our neighborhood boundaries and help make it a nicer, more liveable, thriving place for everyone in the small ways we can— beautifying parks, clearing sidewalks, meeting people, sharing resources, organizing for disasters, etc. I think we've only skimmed the surface of what SEN is capable of doing in these areas.

4. Participation in board committees is a requirement; as a member of the board, which committee(s) do you plan to join? Why?

Jess Roshak: I would probably choose to continue on the communications and transportation committees because that's what I've been active in to this point, but I'd consider other arrangements.

John Ostrom SEN Board Candidate At large

1. Why do you want to be on the SEN board?

John Ostrom: While serving as a Friends of Tugman Park Co-Lead for the past year and a half, and also becoming more familiar with the SEN Board activities, I'm now interested in serving our neighborhood as a contributing SEN Board member. I'm looking for opportunities to make a difference in the civic life of our Southeast Neighbors community. Being retired, I now feel I have the time and motivation to take on such opportunities in a leadership role.

2. What experiences do you have that make you a good candidate and how would those experiences benefit the board?

John Ostrom: Much of my professional career involved sales management wherein I developed skills, knowledge, and motivation to lead successful teams (regionally & globally). Likewise, my numerous volunteer activities since I've been retired (Friends of Tugman, Mt. Pisgah Arboretum, TrackTown USA, Food For Lane County, Catholic Community Services of Lane County) has allowed me to further develop my values and passion for making a difference in my community. These experiences, whether in a leadership role or serving on committees, make me a good candidate to serve on the SEN Board. More specifically, my pursuit of active listening and ability to build alignment, not necessarily consensus, will suit me well in this role. Getting behind a decision so we can authentically move forward together is a trademark of my leadership style.

3. What do you believe is the role of the SEN board?

John Ostrom: I believe the role of the SEN Board is to be a conduit for information to flow from neighbors to the City and conversely from the City to neighbors. Just as important, its role is to facilitate neighbor to neighbor interactions. The board acts as a vehicle whereby information is shared and connections made through a Committee model made up of interested neighbors. I don't see the role of the Board as a platform for its own agenda or agenda of specific board members. Rather, it serves as a facilitator for the various committees to communicate their plans, activities, and positions to the neighborhood.

4. Participation in board committees is a requirement; as a member of the board, which committee(s) do you plan to join? Why?

John Ostrom: As a current co-lead of the Friends of Tugman Park (an SEN Committee), I plan on continuing in this leadership role. We meet bi-weekly for two hours and are involved in various beautification projects at the park. This volunteer opportunity is very fulfilling not only in what we accomplish at the park but also in the new friendships with neighbors that have occurred. I would like to explore the possibility of establishing volunteer park adoption groups at some of the other parks located within the Southeast Neighbors boundaries. I also would like to serve on the SEN Annual Picnic Committee. This picnic is typically held at Tugman Park. Therefore, I feel my involvement and experience with Friends of Tugman would be beneficial to this committee, especially in an operational role.

Finally, I am interested in serving on the SEN Transportation Committee. I'm already involved in their Sidewalk Cleanup endeavors and would like to be more involved in public transportation (e.g. LTD bus service in SE Eugene) and traffic safety issues.