

**From:** [Bill Dixon](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Agenda Item 5.a. -- Agreement for use of Spec Keene Stadium, McCulloch Stadium, and Bush's Pasture Park  
**Date:** Sunday, June 23, 2024 2:58:47 PM

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The proposed agreement between the city and Willamette University regarding Spec Keene Stadium, McCulloch Stadium, and Bush's Pasture Park is flawed.

Given the concessions the city is offering (on top of a \$3 million subsidy of state taxpayer money), the university should be required to do more in return. Specifically, the university should provide a guaranteed number of dates when city-sponsored events could occur at the stadiums rent-free – certainly more than the one event mentioned in the proposed agreement.

Also, the agreement should guarantee that the university will upgrade the lights on the Bush Park tennis courts, especially since the agreement would guarantee that university teams could use the courts. As it currently stands, the proposed agreement would provide no improvement to the court lights if the entire \$3 million subsidy was spent on other parts of the project.

Given these shortcomings, the City Council should reject the agreement as currently proposed.

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*Bill Dixon, 608 Salem Heights Ave. S., Salem 97302*

[bill.r.dixon@gmail.com](mailto:bill.r.dixon@gmail.com)

503-602-1708

**From:** [Carlene Benson](#)  
**To:** [Chris Hoy](#); [Linda Nishioka](#); [Trevor Phillips](#); [Vanessa Nordyke](#); [Micki Varney](#); [CityRecorder](#); [vstapleton@cityofsalem.com](mailto:vstapleton@cityofsalem.com); [Jose Gonzalez](#)  
**Subject:** Baseball proposal  
**Date:** Saturday, June 22, 2024 4:11:09 PM

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Mayor Hoy and City Council,

I oppose the expansion of WU's stadium into Bush Park for the reasons that have already been stated and restated by friends and neighbors. It is not consistent with the CLMP for the park which was developed to preserve the natural setting of the park. Commercial use does not enhance that. Don't be bamboozled by a slick salesman.

There is no protection from noise, traffic, parking issues, lighting, etc. stated for those living adjacent to the park beyond "WU's intent to be a good neighbor". HA! Their proposal cites a long history of events at their complex giving them needed info on the parking and traffic issues. Those events don't happen on the average of every other night during prime summer use when other people are also trying to use the park. 35+ games in 60 days. (I counted the other teams game schedule - it is more like 35-40, not Luke's stated 27 and it's mid-June to mid-August, not June, July and August - 60 days not 90). WU's athletic events are generally not well attended unless it's against a team that is located close by- George Fox, Lindfield, and that's only for football. They get about 200 for baseball. This is entirely different if 1500 are expected in attendance every other night- tramping thru the park!

Additionally, as it's all in the news lately, you must be aware of the great concerns with micro plastics entering the water systems and into our bodies. Artificial turf is a contributor to this and is being banned in other countries and states. Why does Salem have to be behind by adding turf when it's being removed elsewhere? I'm happy to provide articles regarding this from respected sources but a simple Google will take you right to them.

I'm really curious what proof you have regarding this helping tourism. I think this is just really speculation? Decisions made on speculation are not often good ones. Please take your time to look into this further and look at hard evidence - not a hope and a prayer. Salem deserves better than that.

Please oppose the recommendation to support this proposal.

Carlene Benson  
Ward 2

**From:** [Claudia Howells](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#); [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Corrent testimony  
**Date:** Friday, June 21, 2024 6:32:42 PM  
**Attachments:** [June 24 testimony Salem City Council.docx](#)

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Accept my apology for sending a neighbor's excellent testimony in error.  
Please add my testimony to the record. Thank you.  
Claudia Howells

[June 24 testimony Salem City Council.docx](#)

## **City of Salem Council Meeting, June 24, 2024**

Testimony on Agenda Item 5.a. 24-252

Submitted by Claudia Howells

1045 Cross St. SE, Salem, OR 97302

### **Mayor and members of the Salem City Council,**

My husband and I have lived within yards of the eastern-most entrance into Bush's Pasture Park for over forty years. We love living on the park and enjoy the activities that keep the park busy for much of the year. We value how well Park staff maintain the delicate balance between park users, park neighbors and the natural resources in a historic park.

The proposed agreement that you are being asked to approve, and the accompanying staff report, fail to address even the most basic concerns presented to SPRAB at two meetings in April and June by several concerned citizens. The addition of night games with the potential of 1600 spectators will disrupt that delicate balance.

Please consider the following issues:

### **Bush's Pasture Park & Deepwood Cultural Landscape Management Plan**

The Bush's Pasture Park & Deepwood Cultural Landscape Management Plan (CLMP), adopted by Council, is part of Salem's Comprehensive Plan. It cannot be ignored. Exceptions to the CLMP must show findings supporting exceptions. While it may be possible to argue that a minor increase in the current footprint of WU's baseball field does not require exception to the city's Comprehensive Plan, there is a strong argument that a commercial baseball enterprise is inconsistent with the CLMP and would require an exception. Any exception must follow a legal process. A member of your staff cannot simply claim compliance with land use documents.

### **Safety and Security**

The Park closes at sundown, for good reason. Lighting in the Lower Pasture is limited to non-existent. Even parking after dark is prohibited. While Willamette suggests that the baseball games will be no different than it's other athletic events, this will be the first time an event will extend into night hours. Beyond being inconsiderate to near neighbors, there are very real safety issues for baseball spectators who will be navigating dark territory after the games.

### **Parking and Traffic Management**

Willamette states that spectators will be encouraged to access the field from the north end of Willamette's facilities, but half of the supposedly available parking is on the south end of the park. That means people will walk across the grassy, Lower Pasture area of the Park, and vehicles will be accessing parking from Cross St., which is a residential street. Parking on the north end, will be accessed from Mission St. which is also the primary access to the hospital for emergency vehicles. Street parking on both the north and south ends of the park is limited.

The number of parking places within the Park area cannot be considered available to those attending the baseball games. Many evenings, the Park is busy with softball players (who pay to reserve Philip's Field), families, small groups playing games, and there are no available parking spots until dusk. I know from personal experience that when the parking lots are full, people will park in the neighborhood, creating traffic hazards on narrow streets. At night, this is particularly important.

The closest transit stop is on 12<sup>th</sup> street, not easily or safely accessible from the Lower Pasture or the athletic fields. There are no secure bike facilities. It is somewhat surprising that this Council claims to want to decrease car traffic, but now seeks to approve a major traffic generator. There is no viable "alternative" transportation, without some serious changes.

### **Economic Costs and Benefits**

Willamette University and city staff claim an economic benefit based on a vague promise of an increase in tourism. There have been no objective economic analysis of this claim, no cost-benefit study, no analysis of potential costs to the city when an additional 1600 people are added to the park and concentrated in the Lower Park area. In fact, with the agreement, the city is volunteering to cover the additional costs that will be inevitable. Don't forget that groups that reserve areas of the park, reserve Philip's Field, pay for that privilege and that large groups pay for additional sanitary facilities.

If the city moves forward with this agreement

Willamette University should be responsible for the following:

1. Provide port-a-potties at both the north and south parking lots on game days.
2. Provide additional rubbish containers and pay for trash pick-up after game days.
3. Provide security for baseball spectators returning to their cars through unlighted sections of the park, to insure their safety and protect the fragile areas of the park .
4. Provide traffic management going into and out of the parking lots.
- 5 Provide secure bike racks on Willamette property, to encourage use of alternative transportation.
6. Work with Salem PD on issues related to extending park hours, which would be every day, whether there is a baseball game or not.
7. Insure safe access for emergency vehicles during games.
8. Restrict all motor vehicle access into the park, excepting emergency or park maintenance vehicles.
9. Prohibit fireworks.
10. Ensure that sound systems are turned off no later than 9 PM.

At the very least, delay approval of this agreement until there has been a full review of the construction project and the baseball proposal, including appropriate historic and land use reviews.

Respectfully submitted,

Claudia Howells

**From:** [cbj49@yahoo.com](mailto:cbj49@yahoo.com)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Willamette University retrofit baseball fields  
**Date:** Monday, June 24, 2024 8:07:17 AM

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No to Willamette request. Bush Park is our community park. It is well used throughout the year, especially during summer and spring. Retrofitting the baseball fields will add more pressure to an already well used park. This is our park. It belongs to the people of Salem. Please protect our park.

Cynthia Jones

Sent from my iPad

**From:** [Evan West](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#); [Chris Hoy](#); [Julie Hoy](#); [Vanessa Nordyke](#); [Linda Nishioka](#); [Micki Varney](#); [friendsofbushpark@googlegroups.com](mailto:friendsofbushpark@googlegroups.com)  
**Subject:** Testimony re: Expanded Willamette University Easement in Bush Park  
**Date:** Saturday, June 22, 2024 11:37:24 AM  
**Attachments:** [Willamette Easement Testimony.pdf](#)

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Dear Mayor Hoy and Members of City Council,

Please see the attached written testimony. City Council has a unique opportunity to safeguard our public spaces while also endorsing youth and non-profit sports in our community. Please refuse to expand the Willamette University easement in Bush Park, and reaffirm your commitment to your constituents, the citizens of Salem.

Please be aware that the attempts to represent that the entirety of the SCAN Board or the greater SCAN neighborhood are in support of this project are patently untrue. Mr. Emmanuel and Willamette University have failed to engage with the public in good faith, and the public is now overwhelmingly calling on our elected representatives to protect the crown jewel of our parks system from commercial development. Thank you for carrying forward the legacy of many hundreds of volunteers before us who have worked to make Bush's Pasture Park the public natural and historic area that it is.

Sincerely,

Evan West

--

Evan West, M.A.

He/Him/His

970-980-1445

[evanwest714@gmail.com](mailto:evanwest714@gmail.com)



June 21, 2024.

Mayor Hoy and Members of City Council:

I join a significant number of your constituents in asking that you DO NOT endorse the expansion of Willamette University Facilities in Bush's Pasture Park. I also join my fellow constituents in welcoming Salem Keizer Athletics to the Willamette University facilities. These two items are not mutually exclusive. City Council has a unique and simple opportunity to promote youth sports in our community while also refusing to hand over the crown jewel of our park system to commercial interests.

I know that City Council values equity and appreciates compromise. The proposal before you directly encounters both of these virtues. Public park space should not be gifted by the City to private enterprises for their exclusive use. The request for an expanded easement from Willamette University is in direct contravention to both the Public Park Transfer Deed that created Bush Park, *and* the Cultural Landscape Management Plan approved by City Council that governs the park today. As a matter of maintaining our park spaces as available for equitable use by the general public, City Council must not approve an expanded easement.

Willamette University has, to date, refused to commit in writing that the West Coast League team operated by Luke Emmanuel and Salem Baseball LLC is needed for Willamette to host youth sports. Willamette University has received state grant funding to upgrade their existing facility to host youth sports programs, and the community would welcome the use of Willamette facilities for this public endeavor which aligns with the terms of the transfer deeds and the Cultural Landscape management plan. Allowing for these programs, while simultaneously refusing to approve a new easement for the purposes of commercial baseball (the West Coast League) is better than a compromise, it is a simple win-win-win for all involved.

As our community faces unresolved budget crises, Willamette University and Salem Baseball LLC have refused to commit that they will provide for the expenses that the City of Salem will inevitably encounter with commercial use of park space. There has been no commitment in writing to a responsibility for trash removal, private security, noise abatement, parking management, or any of the other expenditures that partner agencies such as the Salem Art Association regularly provide at their events. The City of Salem will be left responsible for these costs and with budget cuts looming for our park system will likely be unable to ensure that our public park spaces are safe, clean, and accessible to all.

Lastly, welcoming non-profit youth sports while maintaining the integrity of our public park system is essential to demonstrating an ongoing commitment to the citizens of Salem. Representatives from Willamette University and Salem Baseball LLC have engaged in secretive and actively deceitful behavior to avoid engaging in good faith the members of the Salem community. From refusing to provide information in writing, to refusing to answer more than 20 questions posed to them at the April SCAN meeting, the desire to circumvent public engagement has been evident from the beginning. Luke Emmanuel reportedly began meeting with park staff more than two years ago. Mr. Emmanuel engaged the public on limited occasions for less than half of that time. You will hear in written and spoken testimony attempts to convince you that the

SCAN board, and the greater SCAN neighborhood are in favor of Willamette's partnership with Salem Baseball LLC. In actuality, only 5 out of 19 SCAN Board Members have signed a letter of support, and you will receive a petition with more than 100 signatures from Salem citizens asking that Willamette facilities *not* be expanded in the people's Bush Park.

It is a rare occasion for the people of Salem to come together with such overwhelming numbers, to request a simple solution. City Council can heartily endorse youth sports at Willamette University facilities without gifting public land to private business. In taking this very simple action City Council will affirm its commitment to the people of Salem. I am looking forward to Council renewing its covenant with its residents, with its park system, and with non-profit youth sports partners by refusing to expand the Willamette University easement in Bush Park. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Evan West

**From:** [kathy](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [Linda Nishioka](#)  
**Subject:** Oppose Bush Park Baseball  
**Date:** Sunday, June 23, 2024 8:22:38 PM

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Members of City Council, Councilor Nishioka, and Mayor Chris Hoy:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Agenda item 5.a of the June 24, 2024 City Council Meeting, regarding modifications to Bush's Pasture Park for a privately owned baseball team. I respectfully request that you consider my testimony and oppose this proposal. I am a resident of Ward 2.

1. We need a transparent public process to consider community concerns regarding this proposed action. We must evaluate \*all\* potential impacts in a data-driven manner, not a political manner. Such a major change in use, and loss of land use, in a public park requires such a process. To date, it does not appear to be happening.
2. The impacts to the park will be substantial. Using the schedule for the Corvallis Knights, who play in the same league, there will be 30 home games over a ten week period during the summer, not including playoffs. Some weeks have as many as 6 home games.
3. Consider the impacts of this many people, 30 times in 10 weeks, leaving the games at night. They will need to walk through public park land at night, after the park is closed. Please consider the impacts on the park, the neighborhood, and the City budget for security, damage repairs, additional pedestrian lighting for safety, and trash removal.
4. Parking: existing parking is needed for current users of the park. If all the parking is taken by baseball attendees, the current park users will be forced out of the "Crown Jewel" of Salem's park system, during the most pleasant time of the year.
5. Noise: a resident of Ward 2, Joan Stembridge, took decibel readings during a game at Volcanoes stadium on June 22, 2024. Positioned more than 200 yards from the stadium, the readings ranged from 72.9 dB to 85.0 dB. For comparison, Deepwood Estates (northeast corner near Bush Park) is held to a maximum noise level of 60 dB emanating from its outdoor events. All games or events in the expanded baseball stadium must be held to a 60 dB maximum. The difference is highly significant: 80 dB sound level is \*100 times\* more intense than 60 dB.
6. Historic preservation: the park is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Historic preservation is a proven driver of tourism as well as citizen pride in their local communities. Hard data examples are documented in the excellent publication *The Economics of Historic Preservation* by Donovan Rypkema. I'd be happy to sit down with you some day to discuss it. I can also share with you that I am a tour guide at the Bush House Museum. Local visitors as well as tourists seek out these tours to learn about the history of Bush's Pasture Park and its significance in local and national history. The Park and the Bush House retain much of their historic appearance, or "integrity" in preservation parlance. This integrity greatly helps our guests to understand and appreciate this City that we call home. Let's not destroy our history.

Please do not approve this baseball proposal. Thank you for your time, service to Salem, and consideration of community concerns.

Kathy Lingo  
1755 Winter St SE  
Salem OR 97302

Sent from my iPhone



**From:** [Mark wigg](#)  
**To:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Please support more baseball in Bush Park  
**Date:** Sunday, June 23, 2024 8:30:49 PM

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Dear Councilors,

The baseball stadium is already in Bush Park. Unfortunately, it is rarely used. It may be the least used part of the park. Now we have an opportunity to increase the use of the ball field, provide entertainment for hundreds of people, and encourage healthy sports. The small expansion of the ball field into the park would have a negligible impact on the natural areas of the park. The parking, noise, and lighting impacts can be addressed to minimize the impacts. Please approve the proposed agreement to allow the expansion and use of the field.

Grateful for your service,

Mark Wigg

**From:** [Wally Benson](#)  
**To:** [Chris Hoy](#); [Linda Nishioka](#); [Vanessa Nordyke](#); [Micki Varney](#); [Julie Hoy](#); [CityRecorder](#); [Trevor Phillips](#); [Jose Gonzalez](#); [Virginia Stapleton](#); [dawynn@cityofsalem.net](mailto:dawynn@cityofsalem.net)  
**Subject:** Baseball Proposal  
**Date:** Saturday, June 22, 2024 3:19:26 PM  
**Attachments:** [PICKLES ANNOUNCE HISTORIC THC SELTZER SALES @ WALKER STADIUM.png](#)  
[picclip\\_image002.png](#)

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To City Council  
Regarding testimony on Agenda 5.a. at the June 24<sup>th</sup> City Council Meeting

Mayor and City Council:

Let me start by saying I've played and followed sports for my entire life and am a big supporter; I was Statesman-Journal sports editor for a number of years, followed by more years in the sports department at The Oregonian. Bush Park is just not an appropriate venue for this proposal. Many comments in opposition have already come forth, and I agree with them, but I'd like you to consider several other things.

\_\_ If WU wanted to offer its field to high schools and youth groups, why haven't they already? Their infield is already artificial turf. For the 6 high schools to actually use the field, there is one day a week they would have access, if WU didn't already claim it for one of their own make-up games. Realistically, 6 high schools are not going to be able to use the field on one day.

\_\_ If fans were so eager for college baseball in Bush Park, they would have been packing the WU games, which are lucky to draw 200 people, according to the Athletic Director. If that's all they get, why do they need to expand?

\_\_ The SPRAB report is only suggestions, which WU will just as likely NOT follow. And what happens if WU doesn't follow them? What happens if this turns out to be a bad idea and there is damage to the park and parking and traffic problems start getting out of hand? How do you put it all back in the bottle? It's a 10-year lease!! And I don't see any checks and balances in it. And what kind of open system is it for SPRAB to have its report already written before their meeting and before hearing testimony? And to ignore the CLMP?

\_\_ It's unrealistic to think that people will really go downtown to eat either before or after the games that have a \$3 Hamms beer night on Thursdays or \$2 off beer night every Tuesday, which are plentiful on the other team schedules and so very likely to be here as well. Fans will already be full of beer and hotdogs. And the Portland Pickles are now going to sell THC products at their games. We want that in Bush Park? How do you know this new team/park will help downtown hotels? That's just a wish; where is the evidence? The Olympic Trials in Eugene get people traveling and staying overnight. A summer league baseball team does not.

\_\_ Luke's and Rob's claims of transparency are phony. They tailored their pitch to whomever their audience was and their answers kept changing; we attended many of those talks. For instance, looking at the other league team schedules, they play 35-40 games, not the 27 Luke has mentioned. His team likely would have to play the same number of games. And it's over 60 days, not 90 - Mid-June to mid-August. I've attached the Pickles' schedule. That's an average of 1 every other night, but in reality, the schedules show 4 games in a row one week, 6 games in a row the next, then 1 game, then 5 games in a row. That's a lot of people tramping through the park night after night, more noise, nowhere for regular park users to park, more light pollution, etc., night after night after night. The SPRAB report shows that there will be many responsibilities for the city where Luke promised there would be none.

\_\_ Luke stated he wants to have the biggest turnout of the league, but even with expansion it will be one of the smallest stadiums; I checked some of the others. That means he's going to want to expand and expand. Businesses want growth. His is a business. Have you checked his figures? Is this even sustainable on ticket prices for an average of 1,600 fans? Where will it end? The others have big promotions. Lots of beer nights, fireworks; Luke spoke about concerts and fireworks.

\_\_ Bush Park is a treasure and shouldn't be for sale this way. I've heard from a reliable source that everyone on the Council is already in favor of the park and most have been from the beginning without even knowing all the facts. Again - how open is the process? It's NOT a "no-brainer." But we ask the council to have courage and do the right thing. My experience has been that Salem really doesn't value or protect the historic parts of Salem. If you say no to this proposal, you will be on the right side of the park's history and Luke will still have his team in a more appropriate place. He won't lose anything. He's determined, Salem will have his baseball team, just please, not in Bush Park.

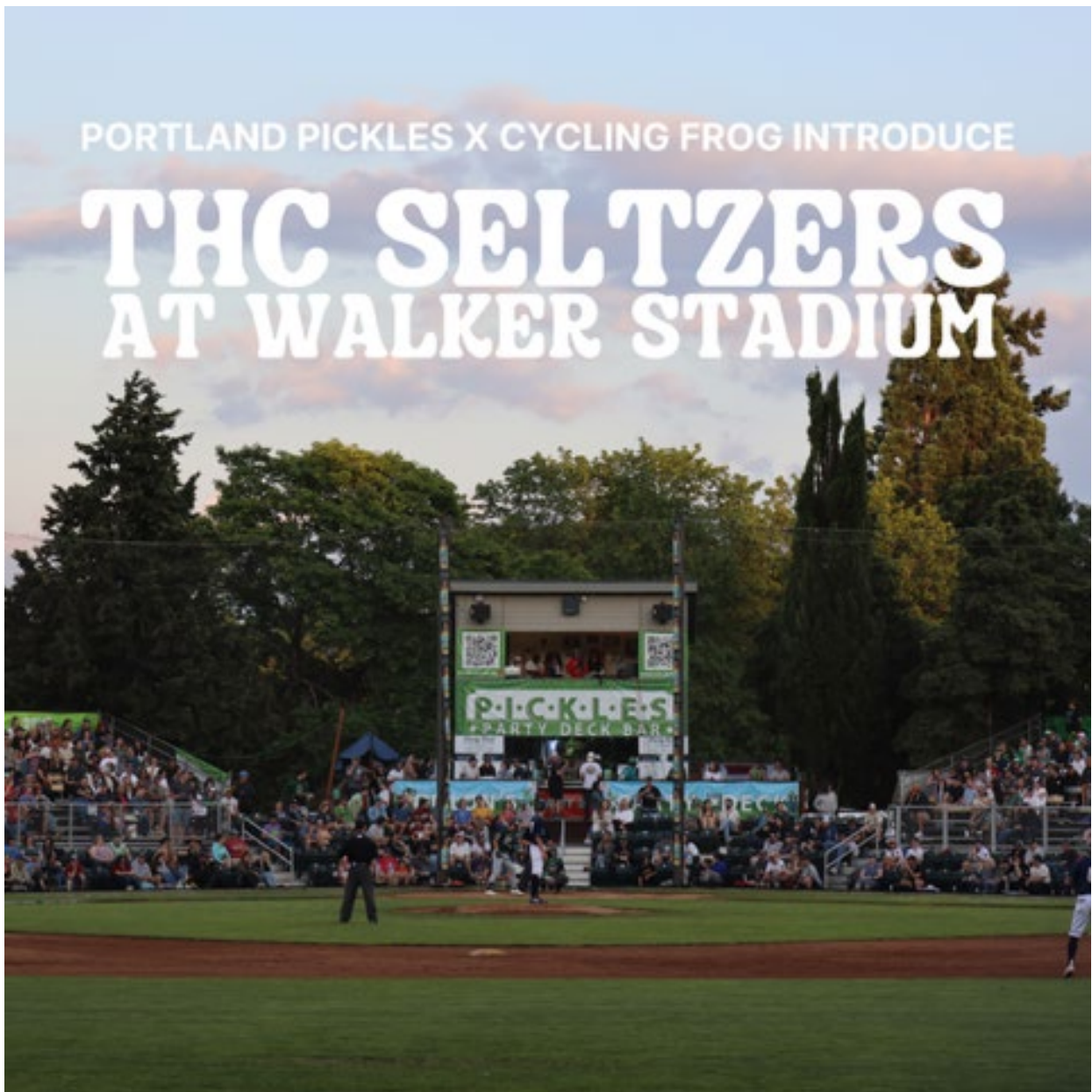
I'm speaking for only myself and my wife here, but I am on the SCAN Board and 5 people signing a letter does not make a majority of a 19-person SCAN BOD. Joan Stenbridge has submitted a letter in opposition with over 152 signers from all over the city.

I request that the written record remain open for 7 days so there is an opportunity to review, to respond, and, if there is a need, for testimony for factual correction of findings.

Respectfully,  
Wally and Carlene Benson

PORTLAND PICKLES X CYCLING FROG INTRODUCE

# THC SELTZERS AT WALKER STADIUM



Green are home games (35), white away, blue all star (9), yellow playoffs (5)

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**WIL Green**  
**Blue Pickles**  
 BEN - BIRD EYS  
 KEL - KIDDA FALCON  
 MPE - WISLA WANDA SWETS  
 ROS - PORTLAND ROSEBUDS  
 COW - CORVALLIS OWIS  
 WIL - WILAMETTE WILD BILLS  
 SPR - SPRINGFIELD BRISTERS  
 ROS - ROSARIO PICKS  
 GRE - GREYSHAM GREYHOUNDS  
 WIL - WILAMETTE WILD BILLS  
 BB - BIRD EYS

**GAME TIMES: MONDAY SATURDAY 7:05PM, SUNDAY 6:05PM**  
**ALL HOME GAMES PLAYED AT WALKER STADIUM**  
**SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

**From:** [Wally Benson](#)  
**To:** [Chris Hoy](#); [Linda Nishioka](#); [Trevor Phillips](#); [Vanessa Nordyke](#); [Micki Varney](#); [Jose Gonzalez](#); [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Attachment to my testimony  
**Date:** Sunday, June 23, 2024 5:18:30 AM  
**Attachments:** [cidclip\\_image002.png](#)  
[PICKLES ANNOUNCE HISTORIC THC SELTZER SALES @ WALKER STADIUM.png](#)

This is an attachment to my testimony that didn't go through with my letter last night. Please attach.

Green are home games (35), white away, blue all star (9), yellow playoffs (5)

JUNE							JULY							AUGUST							
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2	3						7	8							4	5					
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9	10						14	15							11	12					
		COR	COR	COR			BEN		ROS	WIL											
16	17						21	22							18	19					
BB		COW	COW	COW	NAN	NAN			SPR	SPR	SPR	GRE	GHE	25	26						
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WCL Game

All Star Pick

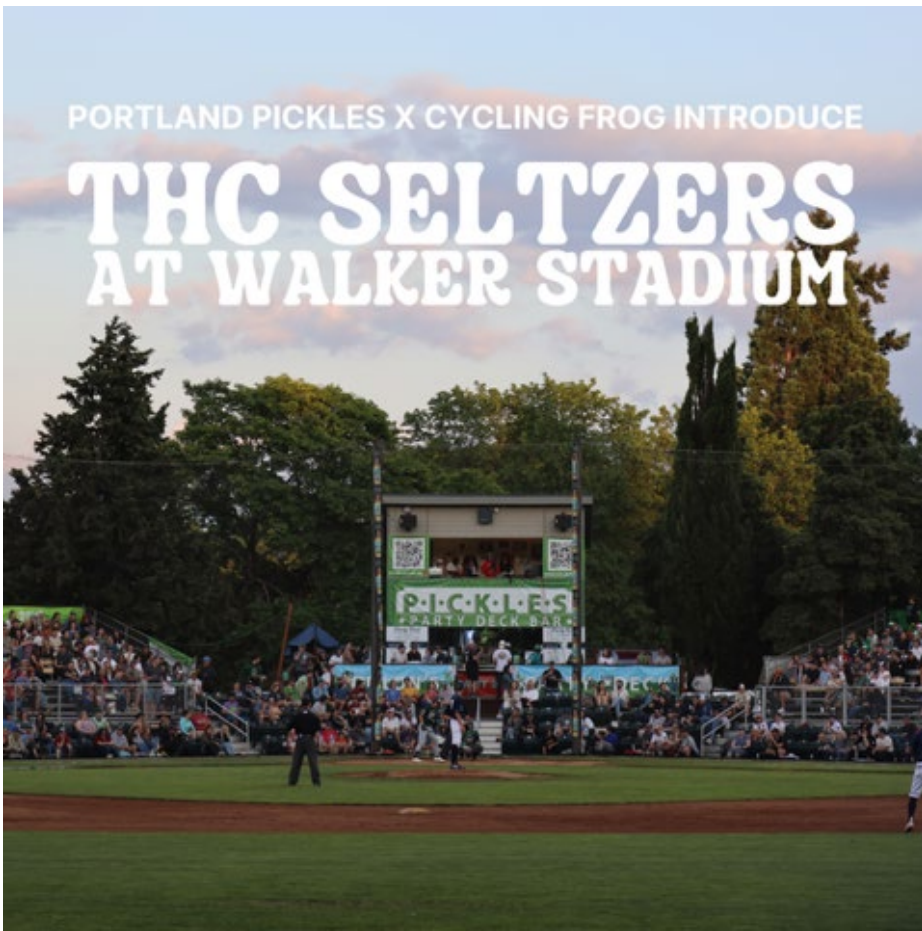
BEN - BEND ELKS    COR - CORVALLIS KNIGHTS    COW - COWLITZ BLACK BEARS  
 KEL - KELLONA FALCONS    RID - RIDGEFIELD RAPTORS    SPR - SPRINGFIELD DRIFTERS  
 WWS - WALLA WALLA SHEETS    YAK - YAKIMA PIPPINS    NAN - NANAIMO NIGHTOWLS  
 GHE - PORTLAND GREYHOUNDS    GRE - GRESHAM GREYWOIVES    MED - MEDFORD ROGUES  
 ROS - PORTLAND ROSEBUDS    WIL - WILLAMETTE WILD BILLS    BB - BEND BUCKS

GAME TIMES: MONDAY-SATURDAY 7:05PM, SUNDAY 6:05PM  
 ALL HOME GAMES PLAYED AT WALKER STADIUM  
 SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE



PORTLAND PICKLES X CYCLING FROG INTRODUCE

# THC SELTZERS AT WALKER STADIUM



**From:** [Jaime Lawrence](#)  
**To:** [citycouncil](#); [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [Colleen Kawahara](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony for agenda item for tonight's City Council meeting  
**Date:** Monday, June 24, 2024 10:35:53 AM  
**Attachments:** [Salem City Council letter June 24, 2024.pdf](#)

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Hello,

Willamette University president Steve Thorsett has provided the attached written testimony regarding agenda item 5a for tonight's City Council meeting.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Best,

--

**Jaime Lawrence** | she/her/hers  
Executive Assistant to the President | President's Office  
900 State Street | Waller Hall, 5th floor | Salem, OR 97301  
Office: (503) 370-6085





Office of the President  
Stephen E. Thorsett  
900 State Street, Salem, OR 97301  
president@willamette.edu  
willamette.edu

503-370-6209 Office  
503-370-6148 Fax

June 24, 2024

Salem City Council  
City of Salem  
555 Liberty St SE, Room 220  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear honorable members of the Salem City Council,

I am writing to request your support for the proposed amendment to the existing agreement between the City of Salem and Willamette University that would allow a minor encroachment of Willamette's property boundary into Bush Park. This expansion is necessary to make safety and accessibility improvements for the expanded use of Spec Keene Stadium, the university's baseball field.

This project is not merely about enhancing athletic facilities for Willamette's student-athletes; it represents a meaningful investment in the health and well-being of our entire community and aligns with the City of Salem's and Willamette's shared vision of fostering a healthy, active, and engaged community.

While the addition of artificial turf to our athletic fields will directly benefit our baseball and softball teams, we are equally excited about the opportunity to open access to the fields for our community partners, including as the Salem-Keizer School District, Boys and Girls Club, and Special Olympics Oregon, who have long sought access to turf fields for their youth-oriented events and activities. We are thrilled we will be able to provide this for them.

The facility upgrades will help expand on a tradition of Willamette University hosting events in those spaces that help bring the community together, bolster the local economy, and enhance Salem's overall vibrancy and appeal.

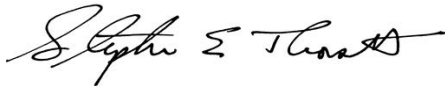
For decades, Spec Keene Stadium and McCulloch Stadium (Willamette's football stadium located adjacent to Bush Park) have regularly accommodated collegiate, high school, and youth sporting events. McCulloch Stadium currently hosts football games as well as track and soccer competitions at the semi-professional, collegiate, high school, and youth levels. Similarly, Spec Keene Stadium hosts collegiate, high school, and youth baseball games and tournaments, weather permitting, including hosting over 30 American Legion baseball games every summer from 1989 to 2019.

Since its founding in 1842, Willamette University has been committed to being a good neighbor and positive force within the Salem community. We recognize that the use of public spaces must be carefully balanced to serve the interests of all community members and are dedicated to

working collaboratively with the City of Salem and other stakeholders to ensure the expansion and use of the stadium respects and enhances Bush Park and the broader community.

We are grateful for the Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board's endorsement of this amendment and kindly request your support as well. This project goes beyond adding turf and lighting to athletic fields; it represents a step forward in our shared vision of a more vibrant and accessible community. We thank you for considering our request and look forward to continuing our partnership with the City of Salem to create opportunities that benefit the community. We are excited to work together on this impactful project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen E. Thorsett". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "S" and a long, sweeping underline.

Stephen E. Thorsett  
President