

**From:** [Jerry Bennett](#)  
**To:** [Eunice Kim](#); [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [Chuck Bennett](#); [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Salem Planning -- July 13 meetings; SE Salem inputs; Creekside: An Area of Critical Environmental/Recreational Concern  
**Date:** Saturday, July 9, 2022 2:04:17 PM

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**Eunice Kim, Project Mgr.:** Inputs from a past board member of South Gate Neighborhood Association and Creekside Estates Board, plus a 20 years Creekside Golf 'n Swim Club member. (Retired, with 40+ great years in Oregon's public education system.)

**ALERT:** SE Salem's Ward 4 residents are keenly interested in City Council review and revision processes related to **Salem's Comprehensive Plan and the \$300m Community Improvement Bond proposal!** Creekside Golf/Swim Club members from the Salem area and Creekside Estates' home owners have been interacting with Club owners over a set of financial options to avoid major changes to the 153 acre golf, swimming, recreational, and natural habitat property known as CREEKSIDE. After a failed Creekside Estate's vote to volunteer additional support revenues, golf members joined forces to establish a \$1.2 futures maintenance account. This positive action helped motivate owner Larry Tokarski to forgo closure and continue his long-term support for the Club via a developing lease and management program with private parties. That aside, many SE residents still question if the City's comprehensive plan revisions support golf course and recreational opportunities throughout "Our Salem's" unique 8 Wards and 18 Neighborhood Associations? Are the proven assets of golf courses still listed as priority goals for all ages? Also, are there recommendations for ways the City can "partner" with Creekside's owner and members and residents for ensuring long term success for this amazing 153 acre recreation green space? Example: presently, without **well and creek** options, providing direct access to inexpensive storm water from the 600 Creekside Estates homes for irrigation in trade for the golf course's continuing capacity to limit down stream flooding would be a cost efficient start, as would a small levy on all residents within the flood plain to reduce irrigation costs at Creekside. Better yet, provide Willamette River water rights to Creekside (like Hillsboro) to prevent future housing developments? On the futuristic side, has there been meaningful analysis of the City's capacity to purchase or trade properties for the historical Creekside Valley that has easy access and recreational options, parks, green habitat, wildlife, flood mitigation values, and "forever" golf opportunities? (Didn't Natives roam the valley years ago? Isn't that how Battle Creek got its name?)

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Mr. Tokarski recognizes that Inclusion of Creekside golf course and Creekside Valley in Salem's future is important to the thousands of all-age players, visitors, schools, colleges, businesses, clubs, and travellers that frequent the Creekside facilities and grounds on a daily, year-round basis – where environmentally correct "electric carts and/or walking" are the main modes of travel. Approximately 600 high valued homes surround the 153 acre golf course. Hundreds of other established SE Salem homes and new/proposed developments surround this corridor – all of which would be directly affected by any changes in the golf course's current offerings. And, any closures would obviously impact local FTE and PT employment and services – the latter of which are absent in SE Salem subdivisions. Creekside is the exception. ( If you had attended any of the Club's all-day activities on the 4<sup>th</sup>, you'd clearly understand that Creekside is a big part of the community.) In comparison, occasional carousel rides, bridge walks, and Water Front Park visits and activities are great, but

Creekside golf course and facilities are occupied most days of the year from early morning to 10:00 PM!

South Gate Neighborhood Association has clarified on numerous occasions that Creekside Valley is a designated wetlands, water shed, flood zone, green space, and asserted that wildlife habitat would be dramatically altered if it is re-zoned for hundreds of houses and miles of pavement. Historically, down stream flooding and flood insurance have been priority concerns for the City's Public Works Department and the residents of Kooskooski, Battle Creek, and down town Salem. Last year, for similar reasons, SGNA vigorously opposed the Council's approval of the "Lone Oak Reimbursement District"! But, ultimately the Council capitulated to questionable bridge and road issues. (Recall how COSTCO'S small patch of white oak delayed construction on Kuebler! Next, consider how a comprehensive study of how Creekside's water shed feeds the valley's oak and Douglas fir trees; wildlife: hawk/eagles/osprey/ducks/geese, squirrels, deer; and multiple estuary habitants, and limits flooding: **RESOUNDING PROTESTS!**

Have all SE Salem parties of interest been advised of the Council's recent approval to advance the "\$300m Salem Improvement Bond" to a vote? Will SE Salem residents support it? Reportedly, it champions parks and recreation, which is environmentally sound and good public policy. In that **Creekside is the only golf course within the City limits**, will the Bond issue express how it'll support this valuable recreational, flood mitigation asset? Its facilities are always open to the public! Numerous clubs schedule exchanges with Creekside. **Contrary to SJ byline reports**, it has operated in the black since 2020 --with its present levels of 650+ diversified membership being highest ever! Fact: loss of this tremendous recreational property to developers and pavement would have an immediate negative effect on all existing home values, recreational opportunities, environmental conditions, and down stream flooding. The golf course is situated within the largest **flood plain** in Salem, which has oftentimes flooded properties in Kooskooski, Battle Creek, and down town Salem by overflowing Jory Creek, Battle and Powel Creeks. The momentum and strength of the flooding comes from within Creekside's designated water shed wetlands. Fact: heavy rain water impact gauges in the creeks have proven 2" of rain can raise creek levels by 4'-5'. Residents within the flood zone who have firsthand experience should be very concerned!

Can residents be confident the Council and its committees have given serious analysis to SE Salem's recreational needs and interests? The Public Works Department has set aside significant flood mitigation funds for flood purposes, but rely heavily on Creekside's natural water shed and flood plain as the biggest safeguard of public safety and recreational use. All documented research specifies that the golf course itself is the best deterrent to increased flooding – otherwise mitigation of future flooding carries serious health risk and heavy financial demands on the City's budget and safety liabilities, as well as those of thousands of down stream live-in residents and business owners. What measures have the City taken to support this valuable asset? Loss of this green space valley and destination golf option would be a tremendous loss to the SE Salem community and to Salem as a whole – **it's not replaceable!** Designer Peter Jacobson knew the valley's DNA was a perfect match for recreational purposes, with golfing, swimming, walking, and viewing serving as center pieces. The City has numerous parks for multiple purposes, but not a multiple use golf park!

Thanks for focusing attention to South Salem's "**Jewel in Salem's Crown!**" It won't be a waste of

the Council's and committees' time!

Jerry Bennett – a champion for green and recreational spaces in Salem!

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Pc: Chris Hoy, Mayor-Elect

Dynee Medlock, newly elected Salem City Council, Ward 4 (pending)

Glenn Baly, South Gate Neighborhood Association (and other impacted SE Salem

Neighborhood Associations)

Audrey Konald, Creekside Homeowners Association board of directors

Creekside HOA; Kooskooski HOA; Battle Ground HOA; Sunnyslope HOA; Faye Wright HOA

Salem Chamber of Commerce

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