



CITY OF SALEM

555 Liberty St SE
Salem, OR 97301

Revisions to the Agenda #2

City Council

Monday, January 11, 2021

6:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

6.h. [21-14](#)

Strategic approach to protests, assemblies and marches in our community

Ward(s): All Wards

Councilor(s): All Councilors

Neighborhood(s): AllNeighborhoods

Add - New Report Added.



Staff Report

File #: 21-14

Version: 1

Date: 1/11/2021

Item #: 6.h.

TO: Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Steve Powers, City Manager

FROM: Trevor Womack, Police Chief

SUBJECT:

Strategic approach to protests, assemblies and marches in our community

Ward(s): All Wards

Councilor(s): All Councilors

Neighborhood(s): AllNeighborhoods

RECOMMENDATION:

Information Only.

Please see the attached presentation (attachments 1 & 2).

Attachments:

1. Presentation - Strategic approach to protests, assemblies and marches in our community.
2. Statement from Chief Womack
- 3.

Strategic approach to protests, assemblies and marches in our community

SALEM POLICE DEPARTMENT

Presentation to Salem City Council • January 11, 2021





The grounds of the Oregon Capitol Mall have been the stage for approximately 100 events and protests since June 2020.

Communication



CITY OF *Salem*
AT YOUR SERVICE
POLICE DEPARTMENT

Search...

Community Resources Business & Development Public Safety

Questions About Recent Protests, Assemblies, and Marches in Salem

Categories: Departments and Agencies News

December 30, 2020

[A Statement from Chief Womack Regarding Protests](#)
[Una declaración de parte del jefe de policía sobre las protestas](#)

Over the past few weeks, residents have asked us questions and shared concerns about recent protests, public assemblies and marches in Salem. The Salem Police Department will continue to protect public safety while managing such events, including issuing citations where appropriate. Our primary goal is to prevent or intervene in acts of violence or property damage, while respecting individuals' right to free speech and assembly. Here are answers to the most common questions.

Why is this happening in Salem?

Our city is home to the State Capitol, the seat of government for Oregon. This makes us a host for many groups and activities in which people exercise their rights of free speech to be heard by those elected to serve, the Legislature, and the Governor. We take that responsibility – and public safety – seriously, regardless of the content of the speech or the ideology of the groups. For events that occur at the State Capitol, the Oregon State Police has jurisdiction and enforcement responsibility. However, the Salem Police Department and Oregon State Police have a longstanding partnership and assist each other when requested and needed during assemblies, protests and demonstrations.

Are the protests, assemblies or marches issued permits?

Currently, public assemblies are not permitted, sanctioned, or endorsed by the City. When the State of Oregon required monitors for large assemblies, Salem stopped issuing permits for special events in the parks or for the use of the streets for parades and marches. Our intent was to discourage social gatherings, consistent with public health guidance. When we know of events in advance and have contact information, the City always requests the cooperation of event organizers in complying with public safety and public health guidelines and requirements.

Can the City prevent or shut down assemblies or marches?

The City cannot prevent assemblies and marching absent a specific, direct, and actionable threat of violence or property damage. Language has sometimes been offensive, obscene, and personally objectionable, but has not risen to a level to preemptively stop a march. Freedom of speech is

Set objectives



Police Chief Womack Issues Statement About Expected January 1 Protests

The Salem Police Department is aware of several protests that are planned in our community on Friday, January 1, 2021. These protests may impact areas and city streets near the Oregon State Capitol, Bush's Pasture Park and Mahonia Hall. The Salem Police Department, in partnership with the Oregon State Police and the Marion County Sheriff's Office, will have resources including patrol, crowd management teams and SWAT officers to monitor and manage the protests as they unfold.

The Salem Police Department's preparations have included reaching out to protest organizers. Conversations with organizers about safe and lawful protests and the actions which could result in police enforcement or intervention are an important component to maintaining order and safety for everyone. Although attempts to speak with all persons involved have not yet been successful, we remain open to the opportunity for communication.

We recognize the concerns brought forward by residents. These events have affected our entire city in one way or another. When opposing groups come into contact, the risk of violence increases as evidenced in previous protests. The recent events at the Oregon State Capitol also resulted in violence and property damage. Due to these past unacceptable and unlawful actions, the Salem Police Department has set the following objectives and goals for its response to the upcoming protests.

- Our primary goal is to prevent or stop violence, prevent or stop property damage and deny the unlawful occupation of public or private buildings, while respecting individuals' right to free speech and assembly.
- Keep opposing groups from converging in order to prevent violence and best ensure community safety.
- Take proper enforcement action to address minor offenses when reasonable and appropriate.
- Ensure follow-up investigation of criminal behavior that was not immediately addressed.

**PUBLIC
SAFETY**

**CONSTITUTIONAL
RIGHTS**



Communication



Organizers



Neighborhoods



Overall community

JANUARY 5, 2021

Protest at State Capitol Expected January 6

Salem, Ore. — The Salem Police Department and [Oregon State Police](#) are aware of a planned protest at the Oregon State Capitol on Wednesday, January 6, 2021. *Operation Occupy the Capitol!* is set to begin at noon.

For events that occur at the state capitol, the Oregon State Police (OSP) has jurisdiction and enforcement responsibility. However, the Salem Police Department will work in a support role to OSP and assist when requested and needed. The assistance may include patrol, crowd management teams and SWAT officers deploying to the state capitol or the surrounding areas.

Salem Police officers are ready and prepared to achieve Chief Womack's [previously set objectives](#) related to [protest activities](#) in the Salem Police Department's jurisdiction.

To the extent possible, residents are encouraged to avoid the area around the state capitol as there may be disruptions to traffic flow.



Communication



Partner agencies

**CITY OF SALEM
FIRE & PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENTS**

**OREGON STATE POLICE
MARION COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
AND OTHER REGIONAL AGENCIES**

SALEM HEALTH

DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE



These goals and objectives are based solely upon the neutral interests of overall public safety, regardless of the view held or expressed by any particular group.

Strategic approach to protests, assemblies and marches in our community

SALEM POLICE DEPARTMENT

Presentation to Salem City Council • January 11, 2021





POLICE DEPARTMENT

333 Division ST NE • Salem, OR 97301 • 503-588-6123

To the Salem Community,

As I complete my second week as your Chief of Police, I want to assure you I have listened and heard the questions and concerns expressed related to the recent and continuing protests. I highly value transparency, so I believe it is critical to immediately begin openly sharing information and answering questions as fully as possible. To that end, we are providing online [answers](#) to the most common questions we have received. We will update this web page as necessary to ensure it remains current, accurate, and contains timely information.

My staff and I are continually assessing available information about potential protests, planning appropriate responses, and communicating and coordinating with our partner law enforcement agencies and the community. Our priorities for any protest are to protect the rights of citizens to freely express themselves and peaceably assemble, while preventing violence and destruction of property.

During recent protests, speech has occurred that is racist and offensive. We as police officers can do little to stop such offensive language. *However, let me be very clear, I do not condone nor support racist speech, and condemn racism in all its ugly forms including white supremacy.* There is no place for hatred in our community or within the Salem Police Department.

I look forward to the coming new year with hope and anticipation. I know that together, as one community, we can improve safety, bring a sense of peace and mutual respect, and build bridges of trust across all cultural and socio-economic boundaries.

Thank you and Happy Holidays.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "T. Womack", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Trevor Womack
Chief of Police
Salem Police Department