



North Plains Connected

A monthly newsletter from the City of North Plains - February 2024

City of North Plains

31360 NW Commercial St.
North Plains, OR 97133

City Hall is open
8:30 am to 4:00 pm
Monday - Friday.



(503) 647-5555



www.NorthPlains.org



Contact Your Council:

Mayor Teri Lenahan

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City Manager Update: 2023 Highlights

From City Manager Andy Varner

North Plains continues to be the fastest growing community in Washington County, and among the most rapidly developing in the Metro area. Thoughtful growth requires smart planning. The City Council's goals keep us focused on serving and growing our community in a healthy and sustainable manner. We have accomplished a lot and much work remains to meet the Council's vision for a complete community. Below are highlights of progress in 2023 as well as a look ahead, and even more details are available at www.northplains.org.

Goal 1: Community engagement that brings people together.

Progress in 2023: The City partnered with the North Plains Events Association to hold ten regular community events, with continued high attendance. The Elephant Garlic Festival again hosted tens of thousands of visitors in the middle of the community. One of the jewels was the City's 60th anniversary celebration that took place along with the annual ice cream social in June. The City hosted two public project groundbreakings (Jessie Mays playground and public works facility), as well as a holiday mixer to recognize our board volunteers. We supported the re-start of the Community Food Bank in the North Plains Senior Center. We conducted outreach and community meetings on the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) expansion. Our library continued its splendid patron engagement by conducting a satisfaction survey, making over 50 school classroom visits to promote summer reading, and promoting various cultural and community programs throughout the year. In the final quarter of the year, the City Council adopted an updated communications plan that will focus much of our engagement work in 2024.



Ahead for 2024: The Americorps RARE Coordinator is working to re-start a Thursday night farmers market in downtown. We will look to expand the ice cream social to make it a "Summer Social" downtown. We are planning a goals refinement retreat with Council to focus on strategy and a mission/vision/values discussion that will guide City work. The newly adopted communications plan will help to further connect with residents and businesses including the launch of an improved website, a City podcast, and a civic academy. The City will participate in two elections in 2024 and staff will ensure access to and confidence in our election system. The Library will conduct new, inventive programming to extend outreach and inclusivity with a Diwali celebration, evening storytimes, and artist receptions, while continuing thematic months that celebrate the community's culture and diversity. *(Continued on pg 2)*

(City Manager Update - continued from pg 1)

Goal 2: Intentional and managed growth.

Progress in 2023: After many years of work, resources, and community meetings, the City Council adopted a UGB expansion ordinance for the next 20+ years of community growth. That ordinance was challenged with a repeal petition and the referendum will be on the May 2024 ballot. The Economic Development Committee became a standing body with expanded members renamed the Economic Development Commission to take on a larger role in community development. The Planning Commission and City Council adopted the downtown plan with a full implementation strategy to help stimulate growth and opportunity downtown. A local option levy to increase police service and bring fiscal stability to City finances was rejected by the voters but introduced new topics for financial sustainability for the Council and community to consider. The Urban Renewal Agency (URA) purchased property downtown for a future civic center, opening further downtown redevelopment opportunities for housing and commercial space. Despite inflationary pressures, homebuilding (and selling) continued at Brynhill as residents find North Plains a desirable place to live.

Ahead for 2024: The City will continue to work on educating residents about the proposed UGB expansion. We will work closely with agency partners and targeted industry development on concept planning the expansion areas using State grant dollars awarded in 2022. The URA will leverage Brownfield funding for pre-development site preparation (including clearing and hazmat abatement) for the Glencoe Opportunity Area grocery center. We will continue coordination on a new downtown association to convene businesses focusing on downtown improvement. Planning staff will launch Washington County's first ready-made/pre-approved ADU plans to promote additional housing types by lowering the cost and shortening the development time frame.

Goal 3: City services aligned with community growth.

Progress in 2023: We continued work on the capital improvement plan, including final design and groundbreaking on a public works facility and bids for waterline, pavement, and sidewalk



work. We welcomed a new information services contractor to act as the City's IT manager, with a renewed focus on cybersecurity and digital efficiency and funded partly by a grant from the Metropolitan Area Communications Commission. We were awarded a State Water Resources grant to study feasibility of an Aquifer Storage Recovery system. City Council adopted a new water rate system with no new rate increases this fiscal year (no increases since 2013), but with minor increases starting in 2025 for inflation, system capital improvements, and future growth.

Ahead for 2024: Capital improvement projects include new sidewalks downtown and design/bidding for Pacific St pedestrian improvements. The City will study water security and supply options to accommodate future growth and seismic resilience. The Public Works facility/Emergency Operations Center will open in the fourth quarter. We will further study civic center concepts in downtown, leading to schematic design. The Library will use grant dollars and continue investments in community accessibility in the public computer lab and children's area. Concept planning will investigate opportunities for future industrial lands readiness as well as new parks and trails. New master plans will determine future parks and other infrastructure needs.

Welcome New Police Chief Jones



In January, North Plains welcomed Nick Jones as the City's new Police Chief in partnership with the Washington County Sheriff's Office. Chief James Haxton, who successfully served the community for three years, will now manage the Washington County Sheriff's Office Tactical Negotiations Team.

"We appreciate Chief Haxton's unwavering dedication to the North Plains community over the past three years," said Mayor Teri Lenahan. "His leadership has fortified our commitment to small-town community policing values. We also welcome Sergeant Jones as our next Police Chief and have trust in his ability to uphold the highest standards of public safety. We look forward to the continuity of our strong partnership with the sheriff's office for even greater community impact."

Jones brings over a decade of dedicated service to the Washington County Sheriff's Office. Serving as the Team Leader and Supervisor for the Crisis Negotiation Unit, Jones has demonstrated his ability to handle critical situations with expertise. He was part of the original sheriff's office team that began providing law enforcement services to North Plains in 2019 and has also managed deputies in Gaston and Banks, working closely with municipal partners to maintain safe and secure communities.

Sergeant Jones expressed his enthusiasm for taking on this new responsibility. "I am honored to serve as the Chief of Police for the City of North Plains," said Sergeant Jones. "I first worked in North Plains in 2019 and am excited to once again work alongside the dedicated deputies and serve our community with the utmost professionalism and integrity. Together, we will uphold a strong commitment to community policing and enhance the safety and well-being of our neighborhoods."

Outgoing Chief Haxton shared his confidence in Sergeant Jones' capabilities. "I have no doubt that he is the ideal individual to lead the North Plains Police Department.

February City Calendar

Public meetings and events below take place in-person and many offer virtual options. Visit www.northplains.org/calendar for more events and details.



2/5 City Council Meeting 7pm (w/ 6pm Work Session)

2/7 Economic Development Commission - 6 pm

2/10 North Plains Annual Crab Feed

2/12 Parks & Recreation Board - 6 pm

12/14 Planning Commission - 7 pm

2/19 City Hall and Library closed - President's Day

2/20 City Council - 7 pm (*Tuesday due to Monday holiday*)

2/21 Library Board - 7 pm

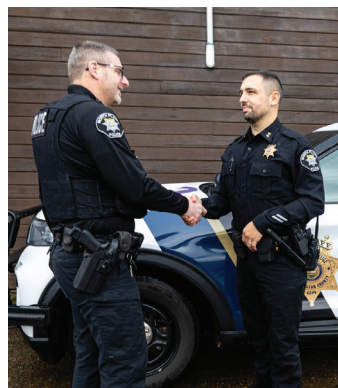
We're Now On Instagram!

We've been on Facebook for years, but now you can follow us and be part of our Instagram community. We look forward to seeing you there.



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@Cityofnorthplains

His dedication, experience, and passion for public safety make him exceptionally suited for this role. I am confident that under his leadership, the department will continue to thrive and provide the highest level of service to our community."



The City began contracting with the Washington County Sheriff's Office in 2019 to provide police services. The chief reports directly to the North Plains City Manager and leads the work of the Police Department's team of three officers with support from the Sheriff's Office.

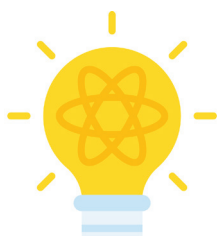
February Library Programs & Events

Featured Programs

***NEW* Cozy Evening Storytime: Tuesdays, 6 pm, February 6 - March 26.** Bring your blanket or pillow for our family evening storytime series at the library. Experience stories in English, Spanish, and Hindi, along with songs, rhymes and movement. Geared toward toddlers and preschoolers and older siblings are welcome. Caregiver participation is also encouraged! Drop in; no registration required.

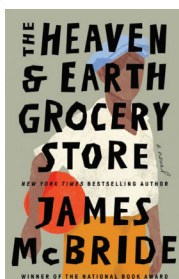


4-H Explorstation Workshop: Wednesday, February 7th at 3 pm in the library. Join Alice Phillips, 4-H Youth Development from the Oregon State Extension Service, Washington County, and Mrs Emily, our Early Literary Specialist, for an hour of STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, math). Register online at wccls.org/ events.



Tech Help: Thursday, February 8th 1-3 pm. Do you want to learn more about using your phone, tablet, laptop or other device? Reserve your spot for a one-on-one tech troubleshooting session and bring your devices or use the library computers. Receive help with creating, saving, and sharing documents, composing & sending emails, navigating the internet, using dictation or text-to-speech, and other basic computer skills. This is a free program. Register online at wccls.org/events, or call the library at 503-647-5051 and we will register you, no library card needed to register.

Book Club: Wednesday, February 28th at 7 pm at the library or on Zoom. Join us for a discussion of *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store* by James McBride. New patrons are welcome to join. No need to register if attending in person. To join via Zoom and receive a link and passcode, please email Carolyn at carolyn@markleavitt.com.



Library Meetings

- 2/12 Friends of the Library Public Meeting - 7 pm @ the Library
- 2/19 Library Closed for President's Day
- 2/21 Library Board Meeting - 7 pm @ the Library



Recurring Library Programs/Events

Homework Help - Mondays, 5:30 & 6 pm

Craft Guild - 1st Tuesday of each month, 5:30 pm

Storytime - Wednesdays, 11 am

Bookclub - 4th Wednesday of each month, 7 pm

Bookbabies - Fridays, 10 am

Teen Council - 2nd Friday of each month, 4:30 pm

Visit www.northplains.org/calendar for more events and details.

If accommodations would help you to attend any library programs - please contact us.

Our Library events are always free!

The North Plains Public Library is a member of:



Washington County
Cooperative Library Services

SAVE THE DATE!

Mayor Teri Lenahan's State of the City 2024

Monday, March 18 at 6 pm

Jessie Mays Community Center & TVCTV Live Broadcast

Mayor OMA Reflections

Mayor Teri Lenahan served as the 2023 President of the Oregon Mayors Association (OMA), a voluntary association of mayors in Oregon’s cities. After completing her term, hear from her on the impacts and benefits to North Plains and cities around the state.

What inspired you to serve as OMA President?



Every mayor has a different style, but one thing we all have in common is “love of our community”. My mayoral journey began over seven years ago with a vision to bring more awareness to North Plains, but more importantly, to create more unity, participation and connectedness within the city. The OMA has a similar vision and I felt right at home being a part of this amazing organization. Every town in Oregon has a story and every mayor I met told similar stories. I was inspired by the shared stories, challenges and wisdom from other Oregon mayors, and our similarities. I’m grateful my colleagues had trust and confidence in me to be their leader in 2023.

Continued on next page...

MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND HAVE FUN DOING IT!

15TH ANNUAL CRAB FEED
Benefits the North Plains Senior Center and the North Plains Events Association



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2024

SEATING TIMES ARE: 3:30 PM and 6:00 PM

Jessie Mays Community Center

Options are a crab dinner or a steak dinner for \$40 per person, or Surf & Turf for \$50 per person. This event benefits the North Plains Senior Center and the North Plains Events Association.

Visit <https://northplainsevents.com/crab-feed/> for more details and to sign up
(deadline is February 4 and must be pre-paid)

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Mayor's OMA Reflections - continued from pg 5

What are the top 3 initiatives the OMA accomplished or made progress on during your term?

The top OMA priority in 2023 was the Homelessness Taskforce Funding Proposal to address Homelessness in the State of Oregon. I, along with my fellow Homelessness Taskforce members, presented this proposal to Governor Kotek and all of the state's legislators to bring awareness about the complexity of homelessness that ALL Oregon cities are facing. The work of the OMA Taskforce is ongoing. Some cities have made progress on shelters while others are still struggling to find solutions. You can expect to see more advocacy from the OMA until we find a viable solution to end this humanitarian crisis. Two other initiatives that Oregon mayors continue to work on is local revenue solutions and property tax reform.

Which accomplishment are you most proud of and why?

A few years ago, when I was appointed to the OMA Board of Directors, I noticed there was no significant onboarding for mayors. I wanted to create a better system so that we could help our newly elected mayors succeed in their leadership role. With the approval of the Board, we re-evaluated the training model for mayors and created the

Oregon Mayors Handbook, Essential Leadership Skills for Mayors and the 25 Survival Tips for Newly Elected Mayors. I am very proud to have been instrumental in teaming up with my fellow mayors to provide a more robust orientation program for Oregon mayors.

What else would you like to share about your leadership and participation in the OMA?

Leadership in the OMA involves a diverse range of mayors, some of whom are natural leaders while others grow into the role. As an introvert who evolved into the position of mayor, I was able to share my unique perspective which allowed for more collaboration, knowledge-sharing and the opportunity to contribute to the betterment of the organization. Other mayors welcomed my honesty and showed more compassion for mayors who might not be the loudest in the room. To me, leadership is about lifting up those around you towards a shared vision. Building relationships with mayors from across the state of Oregon opened my eyes to similar issues we all face, and it reminds me that local governments have more in common than one might think. I am grateful for the opportunity to be myself as the OMA President, and the endearing friendships that I have made along the way will be with me forever.

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