

SMILE GENERAL PUBLIC MEETING
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2013
SMILE Station

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Officers and Directors present: President Mat Millenbach, Vice President Paul Notti, Treasurer Pat Hainley, Secretary Eric Norberg; and Directors Gerri Sue Lent, Michael Hayes, Tom Ramsey, Bradley Heintz, and Nancy Walsh

President Mat Millenbach called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm, and began with a request for introductions from everyone in the room. Since a quorum was present, he asked that the minutes for both the December and the January General Public Meetings be reviewed. With no errors or omissions noted, Tom Ramsey moved that both sets of minutes be approved as submitted, and Gerri Sue Lent seconded the motion, which then carried without dissent.

First on the Agenda was SMILE Past President Kevin Downing, to discuss the latest threat to Portland Parks keeping the Sellwood Community Center open, staffed, and independent. He recounted how the Center has been run by the Parks Department since 1920; the need to respond to a projected \$25 million city deficit is threatening it again, as happened several years ago. Jeff Milkis of Parks was present to discuss this, and Kevin introduced him.

Jeff Milkis explained that the city is requesting a 10% cut from each department; 35 "packages" of ideas about ways to accomplish this in the Parks Department have been developed by a volunteer committee, and the cuts to Sellwood Community Center are "in the middle of the pack". He pointed out that it is very early in the process; the proposal, if adopted, would allow only limited use of the Sellwood Community Center, run from the Mt. Scott Community Center (as the Woodstock Center has been for several years, staffed by local residents volunteering their time) -- but it would not have its current two administrative personnel.

The paradox is that the Sellwood Community Center brings in \$400,000 of revenue annually at a taxpayer cost of \$60,000; with this plan, the taxpayer cost would go to zero, but the revenue would drop to \$100,000, thus costing the city \$240,000 in revenue to save \$60,000. "But, it could still happen," said Jeff. Sellwood ranks #4 out of 11 Community Centers in Portland in terms of "revenue efficiency", he said.

Kevin thanked Jeff for appearing, and then recounted the background behind the formation of the "Friends of the Community Center" several years ago, the last time budget issues led the city to propose to close our Center. The result was the establishment of a "Permanent Fund", aiming for at least \$1.5 million in capital, which would be retained permanently --

the SMILE contribution to the funding of the Sellwood Community Center would come entirely from the interest on the principal. The fund currently has about \$400,000 in it.

There then followed some discussion about the possibility of SMILE taking over the operation of the Center -- but we cannot propose that until we have a workable plan to do it. In the meantime, said Kevin, write Mayor Charlie Hales! He will make a decision on the city budget items in April -- at the moment he has taken all the city departments into his own portfolio.

Next to appear was Jennifer Koozer, a Sellwood resident and the local TriMet spokesperson for the Inner Southeast MAX light rail construction project. She said the project is currently about 1/3 done, and approximately 1/3 of the budgeted money has been spent. TriMet figures the project accounts for 4,700 jobs, of which 2,500 are directly involved in construction activity.

"Pretty much everything is under contract now," Jennifer commented -- but the contracts have totaled significantly more than the budget available, so steps are being taken to bring them down to budget ("mainly engineering stuff", she said of the cuts). There have been changes in construction materials, for example. She gave further details, including how a planned welded-wire fence down McLoughlin Boulevard along the MAX line will be replaced with a chain-link fence, which costs only half as much.

Teresa Pucik, SMILE representative to the local MAX Citizen Advisory Board, was present and said that she was concerned about changes to the Bybee and Tacoma Stations at the time they were announced (since details were not then provided), but she conceded that these engineering details now make it sound as if the cost-saving measures at these stations may not make a material difference in their design or function. But, she said, she would still like TriMet to use the welded-wire fence -- and, since there will be reductions in the planned number of lamp standards in the parking lot at the Tacoma Street Station, she is concerned about any reduction in the lighting there, although Jennifer responded that the original plan was "overlit", and that the lighting there will still exceed standards.

SMILE Vice President Paul Notti, who is also Chair of the SMILE Transportation Committee, made a motion to support Teresa's concerns: Moving that SMILE advocate for (1) Improved fencing, (2) Improved station lighting, (3) Bus access directly to the Tacoma Street Station, and [after some discussion] (4) Increased parking at the Tacoma Street Station by adding back a parking structure of up to three stories, to accommodate up to 600 vehicles. Mike Pucik had seconded the original motion (which included only the first three points), and then after the discussion which led to the addition by Paul of the fourth item, worded in the manner shown, Mike repeated his second of the

motion. The motion then easily carried with no nays, but with at least one abstention.

Jennifer Koozer then reported that the pile-driving activity currently underway at the location of the Bybee Bridge Station will continue for another month -- but the Bybee Bridge itself will remain open at all times during this construction.

Next on the agenda was Nanci Champlin, a member of the SMILE ad-hoc SNAC Committee, who summarized the proposal previously presented to the SMILE Board at its January meeting, for a safety-motivated pedestrian/biking upgrade on the west side of the curve where Bybee Boulevard meets S.E. 13th at Wilhelm's Portland Memorial.

The particular concern is the safety of children and parents biking and walking to and from Llewellyn Elementary School in Westmoreland. A pocket park under the SMILE "Christmas Tree" would be included, on what is PDOT land overlooking Oaks Bottom. (Details of this plan are incorporated here, by reference, from the January SMILE Board Meeting minutes.) No action was taken at this time; this was simply a means of informing the community of this proposal, for which a Metro grant may be sought later this month.

The final agenda item involved Paul Notti, reporting on various local transportation issues; Kyle Chisek of PDOT was present to discuss some of them. The primary issue he came to discuss was the lingering problem of cut-through traffic on S.E. Tenino Street.

After study and discussions with neighbors, Chisek reported, two possible street treatments to address this seem feasible. The first, and least expensive (estimated cost \$15,000), would be to put a barrier down the middle of S.E. 15th at Tenino, similar to the in-street barrier at 13th and Spokane, to nudge motorists to turn right rather than to continue on Tenino, no matter which direction they were going on Tenino. The other option would be to put in bioswales on the northwest and southeast corners of the intersection on Tenino, which would not only address long-standing puddle issues there, but would prevent continuing straight in the right-hand lane in either direction on Tenino, in the same manner as the bioswale on Spokane on the northwest corner at 13th. This solution would cost closer to \$150,000, but could be eligible for a B.E.S. grant.

Some residents near this intersection who were present seemed to prefer the bioswale alternative, but others preferred the other option, and some found fault with both, while still expressing concern about the cut-through problem these solutions were offered to address. The lack of a clear consensus led President Mat Millenbach to ask what steps might be next. It appears that

a more thorough assessment of Tenino residents' thoughts and preferences will be needed before SMILE can consider advocating for a specific solution.

Paul Notti also wanted to touch on a few other transportation issues in the neighborhood -- and began by mentioning that a Sellwood Middle School student had been hit by a vehicle at S.E. 15th and Tacoma in January, and he wondered aloud if there might be a way to slow the speed limit on Tacoma from 30 MPH to something slower. There seemed to be no clear answer to that.

Paul added that the curve at Nehalem on S.E. Milwaukie Avenue is also a safety concern. He invited neighbors concerned about traffic safety issues to contact him personally, and he repeated his personal e-mail address for those present.

Also on the agenda for mention in this segment of the meeting was the S.E. 19th "bicycle boulevard" already in development, and federally funded.

Raising this issue sparked sharp questions from Mike Pucik, who said he lives on S.E. 19th and feels this to be inappropriate for his street; he would prefer it be on S.E. 18th or some other street. He and his sister, Teresa Pucik, directed a series of heated questions and comments to Paul and to Kyle Chisek on this subject. This acrimonious discussion appeared to have a negative effect on the large crowd in attendance, which gradually got up and left during this exchange.

When the discussion subsided, there were relatively few people left in the room, and no quorum sufficient to pass a motion for adjournment. Consequently, President Millenbach took it upon himself to declare the meeting adjourned at 9:23 pm.