

# SMILE BOARD MEETING

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2013

SMILE Station

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OFFICERS PRESENT: Mat Millenbach, President; Pat Hainley, Treasurer; Vice President Paul Notti, Eric Norberg, Secretary

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Nate Maki, Bradley Heintz, Gerri Sue Lent, Nancy Walsh, Michael Hayes, Tom Ramsey, Ellen Burr

President Mat Millenbach called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm, and asked for introductions around the room. He then asked that the minutes of the January Board Meeting be reviewed; two corrections were offered, after which Gerri Sue Lent moved, and Nancy Walsh seconded, that the minutes be accepted as amended. The motion then carried without objection.

Sue Thomas, a volunteer representing Portland Park and Recreation's annual "Bird Festival" in Sellwood Park and Oaks Bottom, pointed out that this festival had taken place annually since 1994. Parks is in a financial bind and cannot fund it this year; Sue has raised \$2,000 in business sponsorships, but still needs \$500 to meet the budget and proceed with the festival this year, and she asked if SMILE could help with this local and educational event. Nate Maki made a motion that SMILE appropriate \$500 to Portland Parks and Recreation for the festival this year; Bradley Heintz seconded the motion; it then carried without objection.

Nancy Champlin was present to represent our SNAC (Natural Amenities ad-hoc) Committee to report on the proposal for creation of a small Oaks Bluff Park on public land on the Bybee-13th curve in Westmoreland, at the foot of the "SMILE Christmas Tree". The SNAC Committee is applying for a Metro grant to advance this park. We have discovered only today that the owner of this parcel is not Portland Parks, as previously thought, but the Portland Bureau of Transportation. She reported that all relevant parties involved in the annual SMILE Christmas Tree preparation have reviewed the proposal and found it poses no obstacle to the Christmas Tree project.

Pat Hainley made a motion that the SMILE Board approve the application for the grant for this park through B.E.S. Michael Hayes seconded the motion. Bradley Heintz clarified how the project meshes with the previous Board statement of approval, and Gerri Sue Lent suggested the Sellwood Community Center somehow be involved. With no further discussion, the motion as initially made carried without any objection. Bradley offered

public thanks to those who have carried forward this park project, and there was a round of applause.

Next, Paul Notti, Chair of the SMILE Transportation Committee, and Tom Ramsey, Board member, presented on the Tenino Street traffic safety issue. Last Monday, the Transportation Committee meeting dealt with six projects, of which this one one. Paul gave a history of this issue, extending back some three years. PBOT was involved in surveying this issue on Tenino, and has produced two remediating proposals: (1) a diverter barrier for east-west traffic at 15th, estimated cost \$20,000; and (2) Bioswales at 15th on Tenino, which would also force east-west traffic to turn right at 15th, and could also prevent puddling at the intersection -- but at a cost several times that of the diverter, and for which PBOT has no funds -- but perhaps BES might be able to help with a grant. The Transportation Committee overwhelmingly approved the diverter median project.

Paul then made a motion that the SMILE Board endorse the recommendation of the Transportation Committee and communicate that to PBOT. Tom Ramsey seconded the motion. Ramsey then showed a graphic mapping 22 sideswipes in the last few years on Tenino, plus two intersection accidents and two dead pets; most of the mishaps were on the narrow section of Tenino between 15th and 13th. Notti led a clarifying discussion on the issue.

There was a large number of people present for the SMILE Board meeting, and it quickly became clear that most had come to protest the diverter proposal. The public comments started with a neighbor named Laura Bileau, who had apparently been the one to start the discussion of the the Tenino traffic problem in 2010, and who one month before had endorsed the bioswale concept, but who now gave a strong opposing statement about the proposed diverter barrier, using maps and illustrations.

Bileau was followed by Rick Canham, who also spoke in opposition. He and Laura are calling for a "comprehensive plan to address the entire 'south of Tacoma' traffic complex". A man named Jason said the big cut-through street is Umatilla, and he thinks most drivers on Tenino are simply looking for parking places rather than cutting through, and he also endorsed the idea of a PBOT "comprehensive plan". He also criticised the city approval of high density housing with no parking places.

A Ms. Sherry Shelton arose to agree with the need for a "comprehensive plan". Steve Holcum, of 15th and Tenino, said he supports Laura's statement. John Wohl, who lives on Clatsop Street, said he opposes a Tenino diverter barrier, and dislikes the one already installed on 13th at Spokane Street. Shannon Baird arose to support a "comprehensive solution", "if only to put an end to neighbors on one street belittling concerns of people on other streets; they have no right to do that."

A woman named Jan said she was new to this discussion, but wondered if Tenino could instead be made one-way? Paul Notti responded that the Transportation Committee had asked PBOT to study that, and they said it would not solve the problem. She asked if parking could be limited to just one side of the street, then? Paul said PBOT did not explore that; Tom remarked that the proximity of this section of Tenino to the business district makes that hard to do. A question about speed bumps led to the observation that bumps are not installed by the city when traffic is not exceeding the speed limit; the limit there is still statutorially set at 25 MPH, and PBOT measurements show that people are not exceeding that. (SMILE has explored reducing the speed limit in the 15th-13th strip of Tenino to 15 MPH, but the street apparently does not qualify for that special speed limit.) Jan said she worries about the diverter barrier diverting eastbound traffic to Umatilla, which could increase the hazard to kids at Sellwood Middle School. Tom Ramsey suggested that the bigger problem to these schoolkids is westbound cut-through traffic blowing through the stop sign at 15th and Tenino, where kids going to Sellwood Middle School tend to walk (due to the pedestrian signal at 15th and Tacoma).

Heather Koch, a Tenino resident, arose to say she supports both the diverter proposal and the idea of a comprehensive plan, and she offered several points in support, one of which was the long and thorough public process that led to the diverter proposal. Natasha, a resident on Umatilla Street, arose to say she does not think the diverter will work -- but she conceded that her personal concern is that it would divert traffic to her own street. Brian Posewitz arose to agree with the idea of a comprehensive plan, and to say he has doubts about the diverter.

Paul Notti responded to these concerns by pointing out that PBOT had studied the problem and recommended the diverter as the best practical solution -- and would, after installation, study traffic flow on adjacent streets, and would add to the diverter plan as needed after installing it to resolve any issues that arise. Jenny Helms asked for clarification on PBOT procedures -- and Paul explained them. Tom Ramsey added that the online "Portland Maps" service does include traffic counts on each street.

As for the "comprehensive solution" discussion, Notti said that due to the PBOT methodology of resolving any issues the diverter could cause, the diverter solution would, in practice, be a comprehensive one. Ron Swaren, a resident of Umatilla Street, arose to predict more traffic in the neighborhood in the future when Clackamas County eventually decides to encourage growth in their county, and he added that in his opinion Umatilla Street is "the biggest cut-through street of all". A man named Dave said he lives at 15th and Tacoma, and has seen people turn south on 15th and Tacoma to proceed west on Tenino, and fears that a diverter could increase this, although he did not say why. He

was followed by a man named Joel, who lives at 15th and Tenino, who read a prepared letter opposing the diverter proposal, and said he was concerned with loss of parking at the intersection.

Since the time had by now reached 9:05 pm, already after the scheduled time of adjournment, with more items still to address on the agenda, Mat Millenbach ended the public comment period, to allow the Board to discuss the motion and vote on it. Paul Notti, who made the motion, said that "'comprehensive' is in the motion", because PBOT resolves problems piecemeal, "and what we risk [in not going forward with this proposal] is eliminating practical solutions that we can use today." The diverter would increase safety, he said.

Nate Maki said that he sees problems in many places -- the diverter could solve the Tenino problem, but could divert problems to adjacent streets. Responding to an out-of-order comment from the audience, Pat Hainley said that reducing Tacoma Street from four lanes to two, years ago, had actually improved the traffic flow and reduced cut-through traffic; the real problem with rising cut-through traffic right now is construction on Highway 43 slowing and stopping the traffic coming west across the Sellwood Bridge, and there is thus no baseline for cut-through traffic to use in later measuring the effect of the diverter currently because of that.

Michael Hayes suggested that it would not take much work to remove the concrete diverter curb on 15th if it doesn't work. Gerri Sue Lent said that this is not an either-or situation: We can have a diverter AND a study. Bradley Heintz recalled that the bioswale solution for 15th and Tenino had been favored previously by some who were now opposing the diverter, even though that and the diverter would have exactly the same effect in blocking east-west traffic at 15th -- and the bioswale would actually take more parking spaces than the diverter. Mat said he likes the idea of a comprehensive plan, but is worried about the diverter, and he said he would vote no.

Ellen Burr encouraged all who had come to the Board meeting to get more involved in the Land Use Committee.

The question was called, with a Board vote on the motion of: 6 in favor, 4 opposed, and 1 abstention. The motion carried, and Mat said a Board resolution would be sent to the city endorsing the Traffic Committee request for the installation of the diverter, and the specific vote count by the Board in passing the resolution would be included in it.

Next on the agenda was a presentation by Ellen Burr and Lisa Brown on the proposed large apartment complex at S.E. 23rd and Tacoma. Ellen gave the background on the issue and told of an upcoming city hearing the next day. She recapped the objections

to the project from the SMILE Land Use Committee in previous discussions with the Board [the applicable minutes of previous Board meetings reflecting these discussions are incorporated into these minutes, by reference]. Ellen disclosed that the developer of this project has just introduced a new set of plans for the project, with 45 parking spaces -- still fewer than the number of units planned, however.

Ellen said that SMILE has consulted with a land use attorney who is optimistic about SMILE's objections. She requested the SMILE Board reimburse past and future legal fees for this land use attorney up to the amount of \$600. Mat Millenbach made a motion that the SMILE Board authorize payment up to the specified \$600 limit for land use legal consultations, and Bradley Heintz seconded the motion, which then carried unanimously.

There being no other business, and the hour being late, Pat Hainley moved that the meeting be adjourned -- which was seconded by Paul Notti. The motion carried unanimously at 9:52 pm.