

SMILE BOARD MEETING

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2013

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

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

President Mat Millenbach called the meeting to order at 7:32 pm, and asked for introductions around the room. He then asked that the minutes of the March Board Meeting be reviewed; Tom Ramsey moved that the minutes be accepted as submitted, and Gerri Sue Lent seconded the motion. The motion then carried without objection.

Present to discuss the issue of the Parks Bureau seeking to cut programs and staff from the Sellwood Community Center as a money-saving measure was Kevin Downing. He pointed out that Portland evidently faces a 25 million dollar deficit, and all Bureaus are asked to make cuts. One potential casualty is the Sellwood Community Center, which would still offer limited service, operated from the Mount Scott Community Center. SMILE has been building consensus in the neighborhood on the value of the Center on our part of town. There was a very-well-attended budget hearing last Thursday at Montgomery Place in Northwest Portland; Kevin was on the list to speak, but time for public comment ran out just when his turn came, so he did not speak.

Kevin reported that the Center is still on the cut list; the Parks Bureau now wants to consolidate its Community Centers, leaving only the big ones, and wants to close the small ones. Kevin thinks inertia is moving against retaining full operation of Sellwood Community Center; Woodstock Community Center is still volunteer-operated, but that's not sustainable over the long haul. He is now considering a model by which the city owns and maintains the Center, but SMILE would run it -- like a business, on its own cash flow.

Kevin told the SMILE Board that he would like to put this concept on the table for a meeting with the Mayor's Office next week -- then ask that our Center be funded by the city for one more year to explore the feasibility of resolving the issue our way, resulting in a decision either to adopt this plan or find it infeasible by the end of the next fiscal year. He requested the SMILE Board put a resolution on the table to present to the Mayor. He added that he still has misgivings about having to privatize a service that the city really should be funding.

Downing then conducted some Q&A with meeting attendees from the community, some of whom expressed incredulity at the city's criteria and values in their intention to reduce service at our Community Center. Bradley Heintz explained the mathematical analysis he presented to Portland Parks to defend its operation.

Gail Hoffnagle, a local resident formerly with the Parks Bureau, commented that Parks lately seems to have drifted away from the history and mission of Portland's Community Centers. She pointed out that if we are gentrified, now, as the city seems to think, we weren't always, and the Community Center has been part of the real improvement that has recently occurred here. A woman named Erica Jayasuriya said she lives near the Center, and has noticed a drop in traffic there that coincided with Parks' cutting all its teen programs some time ago; when her kids turned 11, they stopped going there, because there now was nothing there for them. She said that this neighborhood could serve as a model for the city, to show what a Community Center can be -- and she advocated for Kevin Downing's proposal.

The open discussion ended, and Board discussion of the proposal began. Kevin said he wants a year to evaluate the plan, with "offramps" available to abandon the effort for both SMILE and Parks. Pat Hainley gave a history of Parks' efforts to downsize the Center in the past, and he discussed operational efficiencies and plans, and ways of leveraging our other participative projects with the Parks Bureau.

Mat Millenbach then moved that the SMILE Board adopt a resolution:

Resolved, that the SMILE Board authorize the Chair of the Friends of the Sellwood Community Center to negotiate with the city on behalf of the neighborhood to keep the Center fully open as it has been for the next year -- during which time SMILE will commit to developing a business plan, if feasible, for operation of the Community Center, by December 31, 2013.

The motion was seconded by Tom Ramsey, and then passed unanimously.

The next item of business on the agenda, offered by Mat Millenbach, was the proposed purchase of a cordless electric mower, to keep the grass cut at Golf Junction Park and possibly elsewhere. Josh Cheney, a neighbor, is willing to cut the grass (he is already edging it), but needs a mower to do it. There was some input from the Board indicating that the cordless electric mowers do not hold up well, but Mat said that there is no nearby source of electricity for corded electric mower, and a gas mower is a nonstarter, since the garages nearby in which it would be stored all have gas water heaters in them, posing a

risk of fire from ignition of gasoline vapors by gas water heater pilot lights. Mat made a motion that the Board approve of this purchase, with an expenditure ceiling of \$400 (\$200 of which would come from the SNAC Committee budget, and \$200 of which from the Golf Junction Park budget). Stan Hoffman seconded the motion, which then passed with apparent unanimity.

Treasurer Pat Hainley was present to offer a mid-year SMILE budget review. He passed out the budget analysis (incorporated into these minutes by reference), and then went over it with the Board, answering questions as they were posed. His summary: "No big surprises -- we're pretty much on track."

President Millenbach pointed out that the next SMILE meeting is our Annual General Meeting in May, at which our Board elections take place. We have a four-person election committee, which will run the election part of the meeting, take additional nominations in addition to the recommended slate, and tabulate the ballots during the meeting. Paul Notti, Stan Hoffman, Nate Maki, and Tom Ramsey have chosen to leave the Board. Nancy Walsh and Bob Burkholder are willing to run, and Corinne Stafanick and Anna Stulz may run. Gail Hoffnagle is willing to run for President, and Mat for Vice President. Eric and Pat are running for re-election to their officer positions.

With the agenda completed, an attendee, Ron Swaren, a Umatilla Street resident and a former SMILE Board member, asked to speak. He said he was interested in seeing a traffic management plan for the neighborhood -- he is particularly interested in addressing Umatilla Street's heavy use for cut-through traffic. He said the traffic is likely to keep increasing on Tacoma Street as Clackamas County develops, and that would put pressure on motorists to continue or increase cutting through the neighborhood to avoid it. He said he has thought of solutions for Umatilla Street: "How about a diverter to block east-west truck traffic at 17th?" Mat Millenbach commented that the city is unlikely to do anything further until the new Sellwood Bridge is done, according to our recent meeting at PBOT.

There being no other business, Tom Ramsey moved the meeting be adjourned, and Gerri Sue Lent seconded the motion, which carried with evident unanimity at 8:58 pm.