SMILE GENERAL PUBLIC MEETING
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2014
SMILE Station

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OFFICERS PRESENT: President Gail Hoffnagle; Treasurer Pat Hainley; Secretary Eric Norberg
BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ellen Burr, Nancy Walsh, Nanci Champlin, Miriam Erb, Corinne Stefanick, Brian Posewitz, John Fyre

President Gail Hoffnagle called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm, asking for introductions around the room. A large crowd was present; with a quorum available, she asked for review of the minutes of the July, August, and September General Meetings, and then asked, since there were apparently no corrections or amendments, for a motion to approve all three sets of minutes as submitted. Nanci Champlin so moved, Miriam Erb seconded, and the motion carried with no dissenters.

City Commissioner Amanda Fritz had originally requested a spot on the agenda to advocate for the upcoming Parks Bond Renewal ballot measure, but was unable to appear due to the recent tragic death of her husband in a Salem auto accident. In her place, Amy Ruiz appeared to advocate for the ballot measure. She said the renewal of the expiring 1994 measure would simply maintain the same level of taxation; there would be no increase for taxpayers. Among the projects slated for repair under the measure are the Sellwood Park Pool House roof, and one other roof in Sellwood Park. She offered campaign materials.

President Hoffnagle then pointed out that SMILE helps mediate local issues. A woman identified as Maret Pfohman, accompanied by Ilyse Ball and Kris Anderson, arose to describe an increasingly difficult situation being encountered by neighbors around S.E. Tolman at Milwaukie Avenue, involving homeless individuals camping on sidewalks and in yards, creating a problem for schoolchildren going to and from Llewellyn Elementary School, and urinating in public spaces. Although the homeless have been present in that area for some time, the three explained, and had not been much of a problem, the permission given by a local business to stay overnight at its location has sent "mixed messages" to these people, who are now becoming aggressive and troublesome as a result. "We just want them to move on," the trio explained; "The issues have arisen in the last year and a half."

Tom Brown, President of the Sellwood Westmoreland Business Alliance, said that he owns property across the street, next to Dairy Queen, and he had to install bright lighting and fences to

discourage this group from inhabiting his property; he advocated the installation of bright lights as a good nighttime deterrent.

Brian Posewitz suggested the residents determine if something these persons are doing is specifially illegal in Portland, and alerting the police when they do it. If the police are ineffective in resolving the issue with this information, he added, then try approaching city officials about it.

There followed discussion in which various points of view on this issue were discussed. The three homeowners ended the discussion by asking for help from the community in resolving this community problem. President Hoffnagle asked them to keep her informed on this issue.

Next -- the final agenda item of the evening -- Gail Hoffnagle introduced developer Vic Remmers, and two archtect colleagues, to present his concept for a four-story mixed-use building on the northeast corner of S.E. Spokane Street and 13th Avenue in Sellwood, should he be successful in his efforts to purchase the property.

The pair from TVA Architects presented a PowerPoint presentation on what they referred to as the "Spokane Ave [sic] Apartments", pointing out that the presentation was intended to get resident and business feedback to their design plans, which are early enough at this point potentially to be modified to respond to such feedback. Remmers pointed out that there is no city requirement that he make such a presentation to the neighborhood association; he simply genuinely wanted the feedback, he said.

The four-story building, the proposed design for which was shown, is to have retail space on the ground floor and three floors of apartments above it. It includes an open courtyard on the northeast corner of the 100' x 100' lot, but there will be no parking anywhere on the property. There will be 30 residential units, ten per floor, of various sizes -- studio apartments of under 400 square feet, and one and two bedroom apartments. Proposed rents range from $1,000 to $1,500 per month for the apartments; a retail rent of $22 to $26 per square foot is currently contemplated on the ground floor. Materials palattes and design elements were shown by the architects.

There followed considerable discussion and questioning from members of the large crowd in attendance, many of whom apparently live fairly close to the proposed development. There were comments and questions conderning the metal materials proposed for the exterior, and the lack of on-site parking. Mr. Remmers said that providing on-site parking would "ruin the courtyard" concept, and since any parking to be provided would be leased space, he finds that often residents do not lease it. Another comment from the floor pointed out that "there is no

easy transit available here", increasing the likelihood that tenants would have cars. Remmers responded that prospective tenants for such small apartments tend to be younger and without interest in having cars, frequently relying on bicycles for transport. He said he does not expect such tenants to make use of on-street parking to any great degree.

The residents rising to speak seemed generally to be skeptical of the overall plan, the design, the expectations of tenants, etc. The archtects responded that they are proud of the design, and pointed out that it is entirely compliant with all Portland zoning and codes, as well as with the new proposed Portland Comprehensive Plan.

When residents asked if the external windows on the proposed new building would be "real", it was with reference to Mr. Remmers' previously constructed apartment building on S.E. Tacoma Street just east of 17th, in which the western exposure of the otherwise blank four-story building has false windows installed on the exterior. Remmers said that he is not proud of that building, finding fault with its architects with whom he has since severed his relationship. Yes, he said, the windows on the new building will be "real".

There followed more attendee comments, generally critical, disappointed, and/or skeptical in nature, but none rising to ill temper or outrage. The architects insisted, when questioned on the point, that indeed they were presenting the plan specifically to receive constructive comments, which they do hope to incorporate into the final design as appropriate. Brian Posewitz said he rather liked the proposed design (Eric Norberg subsequently said he did too), and he added that he thinks the owner has a right to determine his own design. Nancy Walsh was among those dissatisfied with the design.

Ellen Burr ended the discussion with an informed discussion of the project, and asked pertinent questions of Remmers and his associates. She asked for advance notice of the various steps of construction that could impact nearby residents and businesses, and Remmers appeared to agree to send e-mails of that nature to her.

President Hoffnagle declared the meeting adjourned at 9:09 pm, but many of those present lingered, in order to speak further with Remmers and the two architects, before dispersing.