

SMILE General Public Meeting minutes

June 7, 2017

SMILE Station

Main Website

www.SellwoodMoreland.org

<<>>

Procedural

www.SMILErecords.org

OFFICERS PRESENT: Joel Leib, President; Gail Hoffnagle, Vice President;
Eric Norberg, Secretary

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Kevin Palmer; Elaine O’Keefe; Kim Borcharding; Bob Burkholder; Timothy DuBois; Elizabeth Milner; Miriam Erb; Brian Bawol

President Joel Leib called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m., and asked those present to introduce themselves, around the room. With a quorum established (although not all present had signed in, and a couple who did apparently were not sure whether they lived in the neighborhood, although their addresses showed they do), he asked that the minutes of the May 3 General Meeting be reviewed for approval. After the review, and three minor errors were found, Tim DuBois moved the minutes be approved as presented, and Miriam Erb seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Rachel Ginocchio was present, representing the Sellwood-Westmoreland Business Alliance, and asked to begin the meeting with an announcement of an upcoming business promotion: “Summer Sidewalks”, on the last Saturday of July, the 29th. Each participating store will host some sort of activity for the public. It’s planned that home businesses and those without a local storefront will have a central area in which to set up for visitors. SWBA has a new logo and is updating its website, she said.

Joel Leib and Eric Norberg began a report on the upcoming “Sundae in the Park” on the first Sunday in August in upper Sellwood Park – August 6, noon until around 11 p.m. Eric gave the history of the event and invited anyone interested in being impresario of this event in the future should contact Nancy Walsh, the current chair, to shadow her for a year to learn the ropes. Nancy also has a binder with all the necessary information and resources. Nancy was expected, momentarily, to continue the discussion.

Elizabeth Milner introduced a woman who had signed in with her first name, which appeared to be Amele, representing a new group called “Friends of the Moreland Woods”, which is seeking a way to avoid development on the forested lot overlooking Oaks Bottom between Wilhelm’s Portland Memorial mausoleum and Llewellyn Elementary School. The new owners of Wilhelm’s has decided this lot is superfluous to its operation, and has put it up for sale. “But there are some obstacles, so it hasn’t sold yet,” she commented. Possible avenues for preserving the wooded lot were discussed by members of the audience.

Nancy Walsh had by this time arrived, and gave details of the various entertainment acts and activities planned for this year’s “Sundae in the Park”, invited volunteers, and urged everyone to plan to come to this notable neighborhood celebration on August 6. She distributed flyers from Portland Parks promoting the movie, “Storks”, to be shown there.

Miriam Erb stepped up to make a report from the SMILE Land Use Committee, which had ended its meeting in SMILE Station just before the current General Meeting got underway. She recounted the agenda items of the meeting: Reviewing requested property adjustments, issues with a divided lot, pending legislation, and zoning code changes.

R. Corless, Chair of the reactivated SMILE Crime Committee, arose to discuss the Neighborhood Watch program, which is administered through the Portland Office of Neighborhood Involvement (ONI). Corless went on to explain when to call 9-1-1, and when it is more appropriate to call “Police Non-emergency” – 503/823-3333 – which is answered by the same operators at the Portland Bureau of Emergency Services, but at a lower priority than emergency calls on 9-1-1. Information on crime prevention is posted on the main SMILE website, www.sellwoodmoreland.org.

Brian Bawol, a Crime Committee member, continued the dialogue, observing that graffiti in the neighborhood seems to be “getting worse”. It’s important to document graffiti with a photo, and then report it **with** the photo, he said. He went on to advocate, as a home safety measure, the use of a doorbell camera which allows interacting with visitors at the door remotely with one’s voice, by smart phone, when you are out.

The final agenda item of the evening was a PowerPoint-illustrated presentation by Board member Tim DuBois on the subject of “Urban Density in Our Neighborhood”. He began with a graphic showing that new job creation in our country is now mostly centered in metros of over one million population – where housing may be expensive or in short supply. Autonomous cars are coming, he added, making car ownership unnecessary. His concerns were enumerated as: Walkability, Sustainability, and Affordability.

Tim addressed these in turn. Our local “Walkability” issue, he said, is that Sellwood and Westmoreland business districts have been physically constrained to the places where they have been for decades. Turning to “Sustainability”: He discussed the paradox of preservation vs. moving ahead pragmatically to accommodate demand; he thinks our Urban Growth Boundary does a generally good job of balancing these competing needs. And as for “Affordability”: Supply and demand affects our housing problem; the area’s desirability and limited available inventory drives up prices, making housing too expensive. The rich, he says, will always be able to buy the house they want, the poor are getting “affordable housing” subsidized by the taxes of the middle class, but the middle class receives no benefit from these taxes and are getting priced out of the market, and are leaving Portland.

Consequently, he advocates an end to zoning, to permit housing construction to meet demand and bring down housing prices, to make them generally affordable. He ended the presentation by engaging in some Q&A with members of the audience.

There being no other business on the agenda or offered from the floor, President Leib moved the meeting be adjourned, and Bob Burkholder seconded the motion, which carried unanimously at 9:16 p.m.