

SMILE Land Use Committee
8210 S.E. 13th Avenue
Meeting Notes
June 27, 2018; 7:00 - 8:30 PM

Committee members present were David Schoellhamer, Miriam Erb, Vikki DeGaa, Bob Burkholder, Kevin Palmer, and Shari Gilevich. The meeting was attended by six area residents.

Note: This meeting is being held in place of July's meeting which this year falls on July 4th.

Chair Schoellhamer called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Neighborhood contact meeting for 5316 SE 18th Avenue

The subject property, a 5,000 SF parcel with one single family home, is now zoned R1. The proposed 8-unit apartment, however, is vested under the previous RHd zoning. Chair Schoellhamer reviewed the RH zoning standards: Floor-area-ratio (FAR) is 4:1 (the maximum building size for this parcel is 20,000 square feet); side and rear setbacks range from 5 ft. to 14 ft., depending on the size of the structure; lot coverage maximum is 85%; maximum building height is 55 ft.; on-site parking is not required because the project has fewer than 30 units and is close to frequent transit. The focus of this meeting is the project design; ideas from the community are not binding for the developer.

The developer decided to use Community Design Guidelines which requires a neighborhood contact meeting.

Architect Ben Hufford presented the project, a two-story, eight unit development. He said the Community Design Guidelines are being used because the project design would not meet three elements (roof slope, overhang and dormers) required by the Community Design Standards. The development will have two buildings each with four apartments. The buildings are a total of 6,400 square feet and have 56% lot coverage. Building height is 26 ft. 8 inches to the peak. The units are 1-bedroom apartments of 650 to 750 square feet. The roof is a modern designed, metal, angled roof as preferred by the owner. He also said that the project will not be submitted for the affordable housing program.

The building facing the street is designed to look like two townhomes. The front setback is approximately 6 ft. for half the structure and 10 ft. for the other half to enhance the perception of two townhomes, and the staircase to the upper units is between the two buildings, so not visible from the street. The street-facing façade has cedar horizontal siding and some concrete block work, and the front landscaping includes 18-inch tall planters that will help with rain containment.

The group discussed the front façade, concerned with potential for active space, such as a porch, in the front, window trim and the concrete block elements. Mr. Hufford thought that there might be enough room for a porch for the unit with the deeper front setback, and said that trim possibly could be added at the windows, but not on the corners. He said the owner wants to include the concrete block design, but the final style has not been selected.

There was a question about maintaining existing trees. Mr. Hufford said that the three small trees in the back yard (east side of the lot) will be maintained. The large cherry tree and large willow tree that are visible near the back yard are actually located on adjacent lots, so are not considered for removal. A neighbor who lives near the project noted that new development must provide a root protection zone around the trees, so that may affect placement of the buildings.

Mr. Hufford expects that it will be 30 to 40 days to complete the plans, and then the notice will be mailed.

There will be a public land use notice and opportunity for the public to comment on whether the proposal satisfies the Community Design Guidelines. Contact land-use-chair@sellwood.org if you want to receive the notice.

Neighborhood Contact Code Update Project.

Sara Wright with Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability discussed the Draft Report to be released in late June. The Draft will be presented to the Planning and Sustainability Commission (PSC) on August 14th. (Link: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/74046>.) She encouraged the committee and community members to submit testimony and reiterate previous comments.

Ms. Wright described the objectives for amending the neighborhood notice and contact rules:

1) Find a better method than certified mail to contact neighborhood groups and affected neighbors: proposal is to use regular mail and email; 2) Improve the reach of any notice to inform more people that something is being planned: proposal is to add a requirement to post an on-site sign of the proposal; and, 3) Create uniform thresholds across the city for when notice is required: for projects between 10,000 square feet and 25,000 square feet, an email will be sent to the neighborhood list and a 5 ft. x 4 ft. informational sign will be posted on the property. For projects larger than 25,000 square feet, the notice requirements will be email notice, informational sign posted on site, and a neighborhood meeting that will be managed by the developer.

Ms. Wright noted that in the Discussion Draft, the development threshold to require a neighborhood contact meeting was 40,000 square feet, but that was reduced to 25,000 square feet in response to public comment.

She asked for comments that could add more specifics to the notice requirements -- are there features other than the 10,000 SF size threshold that should prompt a notice? The City also is creating parameters for the developer-led meeting, such as requiring that the location of the neighborhood contact meeting be within two miles of the project site. Is more flexibility needed?

The 'd' overlay would no longer trigger a neighborhood notice because the City wants consistency in notice requirements and not every neighborhood has the same application of the 'd' overlay. Still, Ms. Wright encouraged re-submitting testimony supporting the 'd' overlay for requiring notice. She said that the "Design Overlay Zone Amendment" (DOZA) project is working on how the 'd' overlay may be applied in areas of the city.

Kevin and Vikki expressed concern that the productive contact meetings that SMILE has had may be lost if contact meeting times and locations are variable. Ms. Wright said that it is not possible for the City to manage which neighborhood groups have meeting space, so cannot make that a requirement.

Miriam brought up the concern that developers would work around the thresholds to avoid meetings, but Ms. Wright didn't think that the notice requirements are a big barrier, so would not impact development proposals.

The group discussed the benefit of having the property owner participate in neighborhood contact meetings. Ms. Wright said the city could not require owner attendance.

David reviewed the Land Use Committee comments: acknowledge that the proposed size threshold for a neighborhood contact meeting was reduced from 40,000 square feet to 25,000 square feet; the 'd' overlay should continue to signify a requirement for a neighborhood contact meeting; and, projects that get a size bonus should be required to have a neighborhood contact meeting.

Submitting comments and testimony on land use issues.

The group discussed streamlining the process to submit comments on some planning documents. David described how often there are short deadlines for getting the Land Use Committee's draft comments to the SMILE Board for approval and submitting them to the City. Often the Land Use Committee needs to hold an additional meeting to complete comments and provide them at the monthly SMILE Board meeting. David proposed asking the Board to allow the Land Use Committee to submit comments to city staff without Board review if the timeline is too short. For comments that will be submitted to an appointed or elected city official, the Land Use Committee comments will still go to the SMILE Board for review and signature. Bob thought this would be a great idea.

Sara Wright said that the comments from the Board would not have greater weight than those submitted by the committee or by individuals.

The attending Land Use Committee members agreed with David's proposal. He will draft up a memo to amend our procedure and submit that to the Board.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM.