

RNA September 2014 Minutes

September 8, 2014

Minutes by: Denise Hare

Meeting was called to order at 7:03 by Cyd Manro

Board Members Present: Cyd Manro, Jordan Lanz, Bonnie Bray, Jonathan King, Sean Barnett, Doug Klotz, Megan Light, Chris Flint-Chatto, Elizabeth Varga (arrived late), Denise Hare (not acting as voting board member).

Board Members Absent: Allen Field, Judah Gold-Merkel, Deidre Merrit, Cliff Hutchinson, Karin Maczko, Callie Jones, Heather Flint-Chatto

Others Present: Galina Burley, Viv Libson, Colleen Lockovitch, Mary MacArthur, Cathy Ross, Robert Bellin, Earl Stuart, Sara Logue, Marsha Hanchrow, Frank Saladonis, Maurice Henderson, Jan Van Stavern, Sandra Johnson, Tom Ralley, Linda Ralley, Grant Johnston, Dave Snyder, Matt McGrath, John Melcher, Judi Goldblatt, Isha Leinow, Amy Ruiz, Jeanne Carpenter

July Meeting Minutes: Doug moved that the July minutes be adopted, Jordan seconded the motion. The motion passed with 6 yes votes (Jonathan, Bonnie, Jordan, Doug, Megan Cyd) and 2 abstentions (Chris, Sean).

August Meeting Minutes: Doug moved that the August minutes be adopted, Jonathan seconded the motion. The motion passed with 5 yes votes (Bonnie, Jordan, Cyd, Sean, Doug) and 3 abstentions (Jonathan, Bonnie, Chris).

There were no announcements.

There was no officer present for a precinct report.

Agenda Items:

1. Sewallcrest Park Safety: Galina Burley, Security Manager in Portland Parks & Recreation, introduced herself and described some recent concerns about safety and security in Sewallcrest Park. Neighborhood residents have reported large numbers of people in the park who sleep or camp there, there are reports of alcohol and drug use, as well as shouting, screaming, and other threatening behavior. People sometimes feel it is not a safe or welcoming place to go with children. There also continue to be some concerns with dogs off leash outside of the approved area. Galina told us that all of these cases should be reported either to the PP&R park rangers or to the police. Several residents indicated that they do call, but felt that their calls are not always well received or they feel that they are not acted upon. Galina was asked to clarify the types of circumstances that would warrant a call to each of the different agencies. She responded that if you observe a crime in process (such as someone being beaten, theft, or drug dealings) you should call 911. She said the line between calling police non-emergency or park rangers is a little more blurred. She said that if someone appears to be camping in the park, or sleeping there after the park has closed, you should call the police non-emergency line (503-823-3333). If you see graffiti or broken glass or some non-threatening nuisance behavior, call the park rangers (503-823-1637). Betsy Redfearn, Parks Maintenance Supervisor, was also present and volunteered that you could call the maintenance line

(503-823-8653). She said that sometimes maintenance workers may be working nearby and can reach the problem site quickly. She also said that maintenance staff are out working in the parks regularly and are familiar with many of the people who frequent them—they may be to help address problem behaviors. Finally, Galina said that if you find drug paraphernalia, don't throw it away—at least take a photo of it and upload it to Parkscan (<http://www.parkscanpdx.org>). Parkscan is a good option because you can mark on a map exactly where the problem is located and PP&R staff is required to respond to postings made there.

2. Parks Replacement Bond: Amy Ruiz described Bond Measure 26-159 which will be on the November ballot. This will be an opportunity to replace a bond first issued 20 years ago that funded items such as building the East Portland Community Center as well as the Southwest Portland Community Center. In contrast to the earlier bond that supported construction of new facilities, this measure aims to raise \$68 for major maintenance as well as maintenance need arising from growth. Items needing replacement or repairs include playgrounds, pools, and trails, and affected locations in SE Portland include Creston, Colonel Summers, Buckman, and Sellwood. Some ADA improvements are also needed. About \$35-40 million of the maintenance spending already has been identified, these projects will be completed first and then a second round of projects will be identified. The plan is for all the work to be completed over 6.5 years with payoff over a 20-year interval. The cost to the average homeowner of this bond would be about \$13 a year in the annual property tax assessment. A question was raised about whether there are any plans for bringing a community center to SE Portland. Amy said that although this bond measure is intended for maintenance work, in the longer-term vision there is discussion about a community center at the former Washington High School location. So far there has been no organized opposition to the measure. More about the arguments behind the measure can be found at FixOurParks.org.

Bonnie moved that the board endorse the bond measure, Jordan seconded the motion. The motion passed with 6 yes votes (Jonathan, Bonnie, Chris, Jordan, Cyd, Sean), 2 no votes (Doug, Megan), and 1 abstention (Elizabeth).

3. Measure 90 Open Primary Initiative: We heard consecutively from Maurice Henderson (from Vote Yes on Measure 90) and Sara Logue (from No on Measure 90). Measure 90—the “top two” primary initiative—would create a primary open to all candidates, regardless of party affiliation. All registered voters would be able to vote in this primary and the top two vote getting candidates would advance to the general election. Proponents of the measure note the large number of voters currently locked out of the primary elections, and the high number of recent election outcomes that are predicted to have been altered had Measure 90 been in place at the time that voting took place. They also argue that the measure will increase the amount of information that voters have when making their choice. The opposition questions whether more voters would participate given the historically low numbers that turn out for primaries leading to concerns about selection of the “top two”. Questions were also raised about the sources of funding in support of the measure. In discussion on the floor a question was raised one asking clarification between Measure 90 and another similar recent measure. It was explained that Mark Frohmayer put forward a ballot measure last year proposing a somewhat different reform of the primary election system. This measure was defeated, and Frohmayer has since joined in support of Measure 90. Another comment from the floor noted that although voters registered as independents are closed out of the current primary elections, this is by choice—meaning that these voters could choose to affiliate with a party in order to participate in the primaries if they wished. The board declined to take a position on this issue.

4. Demolition notice about 3415 SE Division St.: Since Ryan Olsen, the developer, was not in attendance, Doug opened the discussion by explaining the process. Olsen proposes to demolish one house and build two new units. There is a 35-day interval in which the neighborhood association or SE Uplift may request a 120-day extension in order to pursue alternatives to demolition. This must be a good faith request and if nothing serious is being done to save the house then the developer can appeal to have the extension revoked. Plans provided by the developer show 2 units, each with three stories above ground and parking below. It was noted that the code would allow building of up to 4 units on this property. Substantial discussion from board members and neighbors ensued. Disappointment with the developer's absence from the proceedings was noted. Proposed plans had been circulated to the neighborhood listserv in advance of the meeting, but many of those present are not on the list.* Adjoining property owners were dismayed about plans that would involve digging to their property lines and also noted that the plans did not reveal anything about the context of the new structures. There were concerns about how they would fit in with surrounding structures and relate to the existing neighborhood. Some felt that the house has fallen into a bad state since being acquired by the new owner. Some noted that there have been upkeep and other problems with the house in the past. Questions were raised about plans for the neighboring property at 3405 SE Division, but it was noted that Portland maps does not show any recent sale of that home. One neighbor acknowledged that she was not prepared to purchase the house (at 3415 Division). There was considerable concern about how the developer planned to proceed, and what impact it would have on surrounding properties.

Bonnie explained that the neighborhood association does not have input into design considerations. And the chair concurred that while there is much disappointment with the new designs, as long as they fit within the code we have no oversight in this matter. The only basis for an extension regards efforts to save the house or propose an alternative to demolition. It was noted that the Division Design work to create a design overlay is explicitly meant to address this kind of issue, but since an overlay is not yet in place it cannot impact this decision. Although several said the house is not historically or architecturally significant, Cyd noted attractive features such as the wooden floors, fireplace, and very large back deck. Megan asked whether deconstruction could be considered as an alternative to demolition as a basis for a 120-day extension request. "Doug said deconstruction is the same as demolition, "alternatives that do not include demolition could include building another house in the back of the existing one". Sean added that it could also include adding onto the existing house. Elizabeth asked for a specific proposal. Chris asked that it include specific information about who would take the lead in efforts to find an alternative to demolition. Caruthers Street neighbors Mary MacArthur, Colleen Lockovitch, Jeanne Carpenter, and Cathy Ross volunteered to head up the effort. Megan proposed that the RNA request a 120-day delay on the demolition in order for these four (MacArthur, Lockovitch, Carpenter, and Ross) to lead an effort on defining an alternative to demolition. Bonnie seconded. Doug asked the goals of these four. Cyd responded that he understood the effort to be exploring opportunities to not demolish but rather to save or keep parts of the house in place—pursuing deconstruction or otherwise not demolishing. The motion passed with 6 in favor (Jonathan, Bonnie, Chris, Jordan, Cyd, Megan) and 3 opposed (Doug, Sean, Elizabeth).

*It was suggested that those present wishing to be put on the listserv put an asterisk next to their name on the sign-up sheet so they could be added.

Given the lateness of the hour there was no time for Committee Reports.

Next meeting is October 13.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.