

SMILE GENERAL PUBLIC MEETING

July 6, 2016
SMILE Station

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Procedural

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OFFICERS PRESENT: Corinne Stefanick, President; Gail Hoffnagle, Vice President;
Pat Hainley, Treasurer; Eric Norberg, Secretary

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Nancy Walsh; Elaine O’Keefe; Tim DuBois; Joel Leib;
Bob Burkholder; Nanci Champlin; Steve Szigethy

President Stefanick called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm, and asked those present to introduce themselves, in turn, around the room. Observing, after a headcount, that the meeting had met the quorum requirement of 20, she requested a review of the June 1st General Meeting minutes. Three errors were found in the minutes and corrected. Following the review, Corrine Stefanick moved that the minutes be approved as amended, and Gail Hoffnagle seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

President Stefanick introduced Nicole Pierce and Rich Watanabe of ODOT, who were present at SMILE request to update us on the plans for repaving McLoughlin Boulevard (State Highway 99-E) from S.E. Harold Street south to Harrison Street in Milwaukie, starting mid-year in 2017. The starting point will be Harold, and then the work will move southward.

Pierce said that there will be four weekend closures of northbound McLoughlin – Friday through 6 am Monday, from mid-July to the end of August next year – to facilitate the replacement of the Crystal Springs Creek bridge under McLoughlin, opposite Westmoreland Union Manor. Other than these closures, which will certainly cause problems for motorists, ODOT will try to keep the highway open for daytime traffic loads throughout the project, and regular work being conducted at night will help to do that. This work may last all night, but the noisy part – such as grinding pavement – is to end by around 10 pm, she said. And there will be a noise-reporting hotline.

Watanabe was next to speak, and he spent most of his time responding frankly and in detail to a letter sent to ODOT by the SMILE Board requesting various mitigations on behalf of the neighborhood’s residents. In his point-by-point response he pointed out that all of these requests by SMILE are economically infeasible at this time, or are outside their jurisdiction. He described some of the processes and procedures that will be followed in this extensive repaving project. As concerns SMILE concerns about the noise that vehicles cause on the pavement, he remarked that road noise should be reduced by the repaving – particularly in the first year.

He also said that the City of Portland has requested a “speed study” on the portion of McLoughlin Boulevard within the city limits, and that will take place this summer, which is

something SMLE also wanted. He pointed out that such a study could result in speed limit reduction but also a speed limit increase – or simply leaving the 45-mile-an-hour speed limit as it is. That will be determined by the speed decisions motorists routinely make on the highway. The ODOT presentation concluded with a Q-and-A session with the audience concerning details of the project.

Next to speak was Bradley Heintz, who is seeking to complete the Park To Park walkway project he initiated in 2009, when he was a member of the SMILE Board. The two parks involved are (upper) Sellwood Park and Westmoreland Park, and the west-east walking route is on Bidwell Street in the western portion, and Lambert Street in the eastern section. Three BES bioswales and many curb cuts have been installed, and most of the work on the route is completed, but there remains the complicated crossing at S.E. 22nd and Lambert right at Westmoreland Park, where a crosswalk is still needed. Heintz answered questions from the audience, and President Stefanick and others suggested Bradley attend SMILE Transportation Committee meetings, and work with the committee to advance this project.

President Stefanick invited Bob Burkholder and Gail Hoffnagle forward to report on their second round of disaster-preparation workshops, which took place recently; they drew well and were successful. Next, in September, they plan a symposium in Sellwood Park with hands-on disaster preparation exercises; it may happen shortly after Labor Day.

The remainder of the agenda for the evening was labelled “Open Discussion”, and President Stefanick began it by remarking that SMILE expects to accept the gift of a piece of the railing of the former Sellwood Bridge offered to us. The donor was present; an acceptance agreement is being arranged.

Darci Walker arose to identify herself as a longtime Sellwood resident and a bicyclist, and a member of a group trying to organize security improvements on the Springwater Trail from the Hawthorne Bridge to S.E. 39th (Chavez Blvd). She reported encountering considerable enthusiasm and support in the community for this so far. She complained about the frequent lack of response to calls for the police made to 9-1-1; Eric Norberg pointed out that the 9-1-1 service is not run by the police department but rather by the Bureau of Emergency Services, and if the 9-1-1 operators judge that a given call is of secondary or little immediate importance, they filter it and do not even tell the police officers about it. This is an issue for the officers. “Try calling Central Precinct directly with such reports,” he suggested.

Apropos of the personal security issues raised by Darci, President Stefanick announced that the first three Monday nights in November have been reserved at SMILE Station for “WomenStrength” trainings, which will be open to all.

Nancy Walsh concluded the meeting by reporting that everything is now ready for our annual “Sundae in the Park” celebration at upper Sellwood Park on August 7, and the publicity goes out this week. “Come and have some ice cream sundaes,” she invited.

There being no other business, Bob Burkholder moved that the meeting be adjourned; Emily Pinkstaff seconded the motion, which then carried unanimously at 9:07 pm.