

SMILE GENERAL PUBLIC MEETING

October 5, 2016

SMILE Station

Blog

www.SellwoodMoreland.org

<<>>

Procedural

www.SMILErecords.org

OFFICERS PRESENT: Corinne Stefanick, President; Eric Norberg, Secretary

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Nancy Walsh; Elaine O'Keefe; Miriam Erb;

Bob Burkholder; Timothy DuBois, Joel Leib

President Corinne Stefanick called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m., with an announcement of the special election to be conducted at this meeting, and an explanation of the procedure to be followed.

With a quorum easily met by the large crowd, she asked for a review of the minutes of the September 7 meeting. After the review, Tim DuBois moved the minutes be accepted, and a woman identified by President Stefanick as Roseanne Corless seconded the motion, which carried with apparent unanimity – there were no “no” votes or abstentions.

President Stefanick called Tim DuBois forward to conduct the special election for the remainder of the term of Nanci Champlin, who resigned from the Board when she moved out of the neighborhood. DuBois was designated the Chair of the Election Committee, and the other committee members – Miriam Erb and Patrick Morton – were at the registration table near the door, qualifying attendees as eligible to vote under SMILE bylaws, and giving ballots to those who did. The two previously-nominated candidates were Elizabeth Milner and Matt Hainley; DuBois said additional candidates could be nominated from the floor prior to the vote, after the two identified nominees had spoken briefly of their interest in the position.

Elizabeth Milner stood to introduce herself; she is an eight-year resident of the neighborhood, has been Co-Chair of the SNAC committee, with Nanci Champlin, and now continues in that role – and she cited the accomplishments of the committee, and added comments about her interests and concerns in the neighborhood.

When Matt Hainley was called forward, SMILE Station Manager Lorraine Fyre stood instead to announce that Matt had been detained in Seattle on business and was unable to attend. She outlined his background and long involvement in SMILE, which included negotiation for SMILE's purchase from the city of SMILE Station over a quarter century ago, and having served as SMILE President and Treasurer; and, she added, despite his long absence from the Board due to other commitments, his commitment to SMILE has been unwavering, as he has provided maintenance for SMILE station on an ongoing basis, right up to the current week. President Stefanick asked the Board if a candidate who was not present could be elected, and it was pointed out that the Bylaws make no such restriction, and in fact this has happened a number of times in the past.

DuBois asked one last time if anyone else present would like to make a nomination for the seat, and no other candidates stepped forward, so voting commenced. Election Committee members circulated a large cardboard box into which the folded ballots were collected, and then retired to the basement to count the votes and establish the winner of the vacant Board seat, under the supervision of Katy Asher, a representative from Southeast Uplift.

Next on the agenda was an appearance requested by Portland City Counselor Amanda Fritz, but she was not yet present, so President Stefanick skipped ahead to the next agenda item, which was an update on the Multnomah County Homeless Services Center and Shelter soon to open on S.E. Milwaukie Avenue at Mitchell Street at the north end of Westmoreland.

Stacy Borke, Director of Housing Services for Transition Projects, took the lead, announcing that the facility is expected to open in about one month. Shaynna Hobson, Eastside Emergency Shelter Manager for Transition Projects was also present, and she added that the facility will be staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Borke said that St. Vincent de Paul had moved out of the former business building at the end of August, and since September 1 Multnomah County had been remodeling and renovating the building for the new use. The 120-bed shelter – for women and couples, with some space for Veterans and the disabled – will be occupied on a prior-reservation basis, and limited to the defined categories. In the daytime, services for the homeless will be offered all day.

Borke opened the floor to questions, which Borke and Hobson answered, with occasional clarifying comments from a woman who had come on behalf of Multnomah County Chair Kafoury. The following questions and answers are presented in bullet form, for clarity:

- *Will there be background checks of shelter residents?* No, but participants must follow behavior guidelines, or they're out.
- *Will there be curfew hours?* Yes. 10 p.m. weeknights, 11 p.m. on weekends. Residents can leave after 5 a.m.
- *People must be homeless to participate?* Yes.
- *Is there "accountability" in the program, requiring residents to make an effort to look for work or a place to live?* There are rules to follow, and help is offered for these objectives, but there is no requirement to get a job or housing in order to stay in the program.
- *What's the incentive for participating homeless to make an effort beyond this first step?* The county spokesperson said that quantities of the participants in this program are moving into jobs and/or housing, and it is working. 84% of those in the county rent assistance program are still in housing a year after the assistance ended, which shows progress. "These programs are not just maintenance."
- *Are there comparable programs for women with children, and families with children?* The county spokesperson said that the county will be adding shelters for these categories in the next few months in East County and Gresham; rent increases have added to the problem, and the county is scrambling to add more housing.
- *You mentioned Veterans and the disabled. Are they being cared for by the VA? Is some of the funding for this coming from the VA?* The county spokesperson said that there are currently 187 Veterans experiencing homelessness in Multnomah

County, but not long ago there were 422, so we are making progress; the VA is getting better with this too.

- *You said there are rules for the shelter residents – can you elaborate?* What would cause the removal of someone from the program? We require being a good neighbor and respect for the neighborhood. Rules include no panhandling, smoking, or drug or alcohol use, no littering, no destruction of property. One challenge some face is getting along with others in the program. We give those departing a cab ride or bus fare to go to other shelter opportunities.
- *How does the shelter relate to problems on the Springwater Corridor?* The county spokesperson replied that an indoor shelter is safer and healthier than camping outside. The county has been helping those affected by the city's Springwater Sweep. Rent raises have been displacing those on fixed incomes or who have limited resources.
- *Will pets other than dogs be accepted in this shelter, and how will you take care of them?* Most pets brought with residents are dogs, but there are a few other pets. Veterinary services are provided, but we don't encourage more animals, and owners must be responsible for their pets.
- *Will there be opportunities in your program for volunteers?* Yes – definitely – and clothes donations and donations of personal hygiene products are more than welcome. We particularly need meal providers volunteering at present. The doors will be open in less than a month, when donations may be made at the facility itself.
- *How long can someone stay in transition if they NEVER make progress on obtaining jobs and housing?* Stacy Borke responded, "We don't have people staying in the shelter for years."

With that forum concluded, Tim DuBois stepped forward with the result of the election: Elizabeth Milner will complete the remainder of Nanci Champlin's term, which expires in May of 2018.

At that point, City Commissioner Amanda Fritz, having arrived, was invited forward to "discuss local issues", as she had requested. She chose to limit herself to upcoming city ballot measures, all of which she was advocating: Renewing a Metro levy for green spaces; the proposed Affordable Housing Bond; a 3% city tax on recreational marijuana sales; and a Campaign Finance Reform measure.

There being no other business on the agenda or offered from the floor, Bob Burkholder moved that the meeting be adjourned, and Nancy Walsh seconded the motion, which carried with no discernable objections at 9:04 p.m.