

SMILE General Public Meeting minutes

February 7, 2018

SMILE Station

Main Website

www.SellwoodMoreland.org

Procedural

www.SMILErecords.org

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

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

President Joel Leib called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m., and began by asking those present to introduce themselves, around the room. Leib observed that a quorum was present, and asked that the SMILE members present to review the minutes of the January 3 General Meeting. With no corrections or omissions reported, Bob Burkholder moved that the minutes be approved as presented, Kevin Palmer seconded the motion, and the motion carried with two abstentions and no nay votes.

First on the agenda was Meredith Murphy, a Board Member of the Boys and Girls Aid nonprofit organization, appearing in place of Kathryn Carnell of that organization, who had requested time on the agenda to present on a program the organization has called “The Nest”. The Nest is a new foster care program “designed to help children 0-8 years old who are in crisis, and have nowhere else to go. We need to recruit quality foster parents to serve these high-needs children.” She said that foster kids are “the most vulnerable children in our society today.”

R. Corless next stepped up to give a report on the SMILE Crime Prevention Committee, which she heads. She said she is continually in contact with Teri, Crime Prevention Chair at the Office of Neighborhood Involvement (ONI). She hopes to have another featured segment with her at a SMILE General Meeting in the near future with additional useful information for the neighborhood. She said that there are currently seven active Neighborhood Watches in operation in our neighborhood, but so far all except one are in Sellwood; there is only one in Westmoreland. She concluded by mentioning the Portland Police website’s resources available to us.

Gail Hoffnagle was called upon for an update on the Sellwood Community Center’s annual threat of closure by the Parks Department, to accommodate the Mayor’s mandated 5% reduction of its budget for the year; Woodstock Community Center and two other small Community Centers around the city are also potentially under this axe. SMILE’s Friends of the Sellwood Community Center Committee, which Gail heads, will have a meeting soon to get into this problem in further depth, and all interested residents are invited to attend. The Friends of the Woodstock Community Center seems willing to work with us toward a common goal of keeping these small but vital Community Centers open.

One of the residents present for the meeting was a SMILE Board Member some time ago – insurance agent Doug Menely, who has also served on the Board of the Boys and Girls Club, and grew up in this neighborhood aware of the important role the Sellwood Community Center provides in the lives of local youth – a role all the more important now that the Boys and Girls Club no longer has a presence here. He supported the idea of SMILE taking over the Center and running it itself. Gail told him we have explored this idea for years; but the building does need major upgrades, and it would be nice if the city were to perform at least some of them before SMILE steps up. The building is listed on the National Historic Registry, and we are not giving up on it, she said. There followed a general discussion of the importance of lobbying Parks and the city rather hard (once again) to fend off such a potentially draconian cut in our community.

The last agenda item – earmarked for the whole last hour of the meeting – was a discussion led by the SMILE ad-hoc “Friends of Moreland Woods Committee”, a discussion led by Elizabeth Milner, a SMILE Board Member who is also Chair of the SMILE S.N.A.C. Committee. She was joined by Nanci Champlin, a former SMILE Board Member, at the front of the room for the presentation, which began with a PowerPoint presentation. The hour, she explained, would consist first of an background and overview of the effort to obtain this forested and undeveloped land overlooking Oaks Bottom, between the Portland Memorial Mausoleum and Llewellyn Elementary School on S.E. 14th – which then would be followed by a question and answer period, and which would conclude with those present arising from their seats, equipped with adhesive colored dots and sticky note pads, to indicate preferences about how to proceed with this project; what neighborhood priorities are; and what additional comments there might be.

Milner said that the new owner of Portland Memorial is amenable to selling this property to the committee or a designated nonprofit in order to make this parcel a public park, and they will give us one year to make this happen before they pursue other opportunities to sell the land. Since the Friends of Moreland Woods is now an ad-hoc committee of SMILE, donations to the committee for this purpose are tax-deductible, inasmuch as SMILE is a 501c3 nonprofit organization. In answer to a question, Champlin said the amount asked for the property appears to be around a million dollars.

That prompted SMILE Board Member Elaine O’Keefe to ask by whom the proposed park would be owned and maintained? Given the perennial budget cut environment at Portland Parks and Recreation, it seems unlikely they would accept responsibility for it. Elaine remarked that these questions should be settled, and a clear answer should be available, before asking people to contribute money towards buying it.

The committee member then passed out the sheets of colored dots and sticky-note pads to all present, for them to tour the large columnized sheets on the walls, to vote for preferences involving aspects of this effort, as well as examine materials and engage in discussion.

With this activity in full progress and everyone up and interacting, it eventually became obvious that the meeting would not be returning to its former order for adjournment, so Steve Lawson moved the meeting be adjourned, but with current activity continuing without interruption; and Kevin Palmer seconded. The motion passed unanimously at 8:47 p.m.