

SMILE General Meeting minutes

April 3, 2019
SMILE Station

Main Website

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Procedural

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

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Elaine O’Keefe; Julie Currin; Bob Burkholder; Tyler Janzen; Elizabeth Milner; Kevin Palmer; Simon Fulford

President Joel Leib called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m., and began by asking those present to introduce themselves, around the room. With a quorum present, Leib asked that the minutes of the March 6 General Meeting be reviewed. After the review, Elaine O’Keefe moved the minutes be accepted as presented, Simon Fulford seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

President Leib reminded those present that the next General Meeting, on May 1, will center on our annual Board election. At least four at-large Board seats will be open for election, and at least two of the incumbents will not be running for reelection. All four Officer positions will be open – and a new President will be elected, since Joel is term-limited at present by the SMILE ByLaws and cannot run again at this time. The SMILE Nominating Committee, led by Kevin Palmer, also including Ed Nunez and Miriam Erb, is developing the slate, and is handling the election details. He suggested that anyone interested in being on the ballot contact one of them as soon as possible. Nominations from the floor will also be accepted before the election, on May 1.

First to appear was Phil Richman of TenBridge Partners, who was present at Board request for his semi-annual report on the SMILE investment account, which includes both SMILE’s own funds as well as the separate and dedicated Helen Hiczun funds – which Hiczun willed to SMILE a decade ago “to help SMILE keep the Sellwood Community Center open”. He distributed a summary sheet on the account – incorporated into these minutes by reference – which showed that despite a temporary dip in value last year, the fund is up sharply so far this year. The value of the account has approximately tripled since it was opened by SMILE a decade or so ago.

Next to appear for the balance of the meeting was Read Stapleton, representing Foundation Partners, new owners of Wilhelm’s Portland Memorial Funeral Home in Westmoreland. Stapleton made it clear that he is not an employee of Wilhelm’s, but is a land use planner with DOWL in downtown Portland, who is consulting Wilhelm’s in the matter of the land use decisions being made about parts of the Portland Memorial property they bought.

Stapleton was introduced by SMILE Land Use Chair David Schoellhamer, who briefly presented slides of maps showing the sections of the “conditional use” property in question,

and the zoning and plans announced so far. It officially was a “contact meeting” with the community on behalf of Foundation Partners, he said. Already sold to a developer a couple of years ago was the south parking lot of the funeral home; the Foundation Partners seek rezoning of the north parking lot for a similar sale, said Schoellhamer; a “contact meeting” is required by the city prior to submission of a Type III application. After the application is submitted there would be a public notice of hearing; and a public hearing would take place, with both written and oral testimony. When the land use decision is made by the city, there would remain the possibility of an appeal to the City Council. Schoellhamer concluded with a slide showing the city’s criteria for approval of the application. Specific rules apply to tree preservation; a parking study is needed prior to approving the repurposing of a parking lot.

Stapleton arose to comment that tonight constituted “an informal setting for the applicant and the neighbors to discuss the proposal”, and he went on to describe the project. However, he cautioned, contrary to original expectations, the Foundation Partners plans are not yet concrete, but he will return to meet with us again for the actual “contact meeting” within a couple of months, when these plans “come into focus”.

One thing still on the table, he said, is the elimination of the conditional use status of the north parking lot. He is gathering data now on both on-street parking demand and off-street parking demand at the funeral home’s normal services (which are mostly on weekends) plus their occasional special events, which could require valet parking arrangements. There are about 17 vehicles arriving currently for typical funeral services, he disclosed. “‘Foundation’ is still looking at all options, at this point,” he said.

The north parking lot at Wilhelm’s is a half-acre; the north half is zoned R2.5 (maximum of 4 housing units) and the south half is zoned R2 (maximum of 5 housing units).

In answer to a question from the SMILE “Moreland Woods” Committee members present, Stapleton replied that Foundation Partners is still open to the neighborhood buying the property for a park; but it was also clear that the company is expecting to develop any needed replacement parking on a section of that land, and is interested in the possibility of establishing a graveyard on another section of “Moreland Woods”.

There followed considerable Q&A on various points between attendees and Stapleton. He concluded by saying he hopes to return in June or July to discuss a “concrete final plan”.

There being no other business on the agenda, or offered from the floor, Pat Hainley moved the meeting be adjourned, and Bob Burkholder seconded the motion, which then carried with unanimity at 9:03 p.m.