

SMILE General Meeting minutes

March 3, 2021

Via ZOOM, online

Main Website

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Procedural

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OFFICERS PRESENT: Simon Fulford, President; Bob Burkholder, Vice President; Eric Norberg, Secretary

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Juliana James; Jim Friscia; Neal Spinler; Elaine O’Keefe; Elizabeth Milner

SMILE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: R. Corless; Ashley Asbjornsen; Ginny Yavorski; Bruce Joncas and Lisa Sheppard; Bill Manera

President Simon Fulford called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. He began by reviewing, for those attending, the protocols for SMILE’s ZOOM meetings. Since a quorum was not present at this point, he reviewed briefly the minutes of the January 3 General Meeting, but was unable to ask for a vote for their approval. They will be considered at the April General Meeting.

First to speak was R. Corless, Chair of the SMILE “Crime Prevention/Community Safety” Committee. She reported that the committee “partners with the Portland Police Bureau, the Portland Office of Community and Civic Life, and with all in-neighborhood Community Watch participants”. She has recently visited two homeless camps in the neighborhood; one needed a city cleanup, and she called the city for help with that. Some discussion followed.

President Fulford introduced SMILE members to Ashley Asbjornsen, the new Executive Director of the Sellwood Community House. She introduced herself further in detail, and made some general comments. Juliana James, as the SMILE Board representative to the Sellwood Community House Board, reported on progress recently at that facility, and on the new developments there. Then Ashley urged everyone interested to sign up for their weekly newsletter. Fulford concluded the agenda item with a laudatory statement about the progress of the Community House and its operation.

Jim Friscia was next, with an update on the new SMILE Events Committee. He reported that Portland Parks and Recreation has announced there will be summer events this year, but they will be primarily limited to kids’ activities and recreation – there will be no Concerts in Parks or Movies in Parks in 2021. Consequently, Jim wants to plan smaller neighborhood music events. He added that there is room for more volunteers on the Events Committee. He reminded those present that the annual SMILE Neighborhood Cleanup is planned to return this year on the third Saturday in May – this year, that’s May 15 – in the usual location: In the parking lot at the south end of Westmoreland Park. He also announced that State Representative Karin Power will be attending the April SMILE General Meeting to present an Oregon Legislative Update.

At President Fulford's suggestion, Eric Norberg reported on the upcoming May SMILE Board Election, at the May General Meeting. Five Board seats will be open (some current Board Members in those seats may be planning to run for re-election, but it appears that there will be at least two seats for which incumbents will not be running for re-election. Plus, all four Officer positions will be open, inasmuch as all Officers have one-year terms. Some, if not all, current Officers are likely to be seeking re-election. Elaine O'Keefe called for the appointment of this year's SMILE Election Nomination Committee at the upcoming Board Meeting, in accordance with our Bylaws. We also need to contact Southeast Uplift about their help planning and conducting the election on May 5, she pointed out.

President Fulford remarked that City Commissioner Joanne Hardesty, who is currently in charge of the Portland Office of Community and Civic Life (formerly the Office of Neighborhood Involvement), is planning a general online Town Hall meeting, and he'd like to see SMILE represented at it. R. Corless said she plans to attend; Jim Friscia plans to as well. Although Elaine O'Keefe had a potential conflict, she expects to rearrange her schedule to be able to attend, as well; she said she would like to ask Hardesty how the city can assist neighborhood associations in improving their inclusivity.

Next to speak was neighborhood resident Ginny Yavorsky; she and other neighbors are concerned about a looming parking problem, resulting from the completion of a 75-unit apartment house on Nehalem Street just west of Milwaukie Avenue that will have no on-site parking. Ginny said she is from Ohio, and this is her first-ever neighborhood association meeting. She has canvassed the neighbors about their concerns about this development, and found that they included: (1) It could negatively impact their property values; (2) Traffic congestion could result in Nehalem having to be made one-way; (3) The resulting street parking by many of the tenants could result in no resident parking available nearby (some do not have driveways to use); (4) Nearby businesses fear a negative impact from the congestion and lack of parking; (5) Possible dangerous conditions for pedestrians from all the traffic; (6) The nearby church is reliant on street parking.

The project has been approved by the city, so there is nothing official that SMILE can do about it at this point, except perhaps facilitate a meeting between the developer and concerned residents, seeking some voluntary mitigation of these problems. Elaine O'Keefe suggested Ginny ask Chair Zack Duffly to put this item on his next agenda for the SMILE Transportation Committee in two weeks – and added that Ginny might also want to chat with David Schoellhamer of the SMILE Land Use Committee for further insights. Juliana James suggested that the nearby church could reach out to other nearby churches about possibly allowing their attendees to park in the other churches' lots. President Fulford invited Ginny to get involved in the SMILE Transportation Committee, or to run for the SMILE Board in May.

Before adjournment, Neal Spinler brought up the recent shooting at the Acropolis Bar and Steakhouse on McLoughlin Boulevard in which there were two fatalities – and, also, the traffic problems occurring near there from nighttime drag racing on McLoughlin. He wanted SMILE to be aware of both problems; he lives nearby.

There being nothing else on the agenda or offered from the attendees, President Fulford adjourned the meeting at 8:48 p.m.