

Sellwood-Moreland Improvement League
Land Use Committee Virtual Meeting
Meeting Notes April 7, 2021

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chair David Schoellhamer at 6:00 PM. Other Land Use Committee (LUC) members present were Miriam Erb, Vikki DeGaa, Rocky Johnson, Kirsten Leising, Bob Burkholder and Shari Gilevich. Three community members also were present.

Update: 1666 SE Lambert Street project: Instead of an apartment complex, the proposal now is for 36 townhomes each with a garage. The neighborhood contact meeting may be at the May 5th LUC meeting.

Debrief on the March 31st meeting with city planners

Miriam reviewed our March 31st meeting with city planners. Her goals were to meet with the design review planners face-to-face because establishing this relationship will hopefully make it easier to get information and gain understanding about how the process works. She also thought it was important to hear from staff about DOZA, inclusion and architecture.

The committee discussed the "Character Statement" and whether advocating for one would be another way to position Sellwood-Moreland to have more impact on neighborhood development. The question is, what would having a Character Statement get us? It was hard to discern how it functions and is integrated into development review. The staff referred to a couple of completed Character Statements, but added that there was no budget at this time for developing statements for all neighborhoods. City staff did urge us to testify in support of Character Statements to City Council.

Miriam liked the question posed to staff about whether forming a Conservation District could enhance the opportunity to use the Main street guidelines. Staff's opinion was that the Conservation District actually would have no impact on design considerations.

David said that city staff would use a Character Statement instead of the 1998 plan for projects going through design review. However, most development in Sellwood-Moreland does not go through Design Review, so a Character Statement would have no impact. He would hope to see a couple of our design standards adopted into DOZA rather than focus on creating a Character Statement. Vikki noted that we can't create one on our own anyway as it's a process managed by the City. Rocky thought it was still a good idea long term to link to a Character Statement as a design review project might come to the neighborhood.

Miriam also highlighted the proposed removal of the 'd' overlay from the single dwelling zones, specifically R2.5. David explained that the DOZA proposal is for the 'd' overlay to be applied only to multi-dwelling zones, such as RM1, and only for developments with more than four units. All the standards that we've been reviewing are for mixed-use, commercial buildings along the corridors, not for single dwelling zones.

Staci Moore's (BDS staff) email after the March 31st meeting listed six items in the DOZA proposal that may help focus our testimony. Our current work has covered Item 5 ("compare proposed citywide Design Guidelines to our neighborhood guidelines and identify what's missing and what's in conflict") and Item 6 ("review the new design standards to see if they result in buildings that fit into Sellwood-Moreland").

Miriam reported that the City eliminated the "West Portal Town Center" Character Statement; they seem very low on the City's priority list. Rocky supported letting the city know that we're interested in a Character Statement.

All agreed that the meeting with city staff was great and thanked Miriam for organizing it. City staff thought that Sellwood-Moreland was "aggressively active" and said they would want to meet with us again after DOZA is approved.

Advocacy for our DOZA testimony

David reviewed the DOZA project for the community members at this meeting. He noted that this is the first revamp of the design code in 30 years, so is the opportunity to impact zoning code rules for building design in the 'd' overlay zone. We have testimony that was approved by the SMILE Board. This is a good opportunity to try to implement the Sellwood-Moreland Main Street design guidelines in some way.

David and Kirsten had met to discuss how to motivate people to be involved and get information to the community. The main idea for outreach is to create and distribute a flyer, and David, Kirsten and Vikki created two options to review this evening. The flyer would be distributed to residential properties adjacent to the commercial zone along the corridors as these locations are most impacted when a 3- or 4-story, mixed-use structure is built. The committee discussed whether this an effective plan to maximize participation and whether going half-a-block off SE 13th would be worthwhile. Rocky thought we should get the closest properties first, but get as many flyers out as possible. Several committee members volunteered to distribute flyers.

The other outreach actions will be to: add the Board's testimony and links to DOZA to the SMILE web page; post information on Nextdoor; place an article in the *The Bee*; email Main Street participants and the SMILE email list; attend the May 5th General meeting (Board elections); supply flyers to the Sellwood Moreland Business Alliance (SMBA) with a request that SMBA also testify; and, set up meetings with Council members before the May 12th hearing. Rocky thought there may be other groups to endorse our position and who could contact City Council directly.

For emailing lists, Vikki thought that the Main Street email list was Heather Flint Chatto's, but that maybe she could separate that list by neighborhood. David noted that Heather will be involved and focused on design review, but we shouldn't wait for them. Our local effort is focused on design guidelines and we want to imprint "Sellwood-Moreland" on as many Council members as possible. There's concern about how to reach enough people who would respond, but David thought that targeting residents who would be most impacted will help.

The committee discussed the language in the flyer and how to get people concerned enough to testify. Kirsten said that it's important to get across that zoning makes the difference for development. Miriam expressed concern that the City might view our guidelines as "exclusive" rather than "inclusive," the new theme of the City. Kirsten thought this concern could be turned around to underscore that we're doing this work for all of Portland, even areas where people think it doesn't matter. It's the opposite of being exclusive and we should emphasize this to the council. It would be great if residents from other neighborhoods supported our effort. David noted that one of our proposals to implement the design guidelines is to apply them city wide; it will be important to emphasize that. A community member said that people need to feel confident about who is sending the flyer, so the SMILE logo should be at the top of the page.

Committee members liked the wording in the second option, especially that this is a "Once in a Generation" opportunity to testify and have input on this zoning code. David questioned if this language downplayed adjacency of properties to the commercial zone. It was agreed to state "to improve Design Standards" rather than to "change" them. Rocky thought the text in the flyer should hammer home that we want Main Street Design Guidelines adopted into DOZA standards, while David thought that it's a win if we at least get people to say that they want better buildings in Sellwood-Moreland.

The 2nd page has instructions for submitting testimony, including a QR code link to the "Testifying for DOZA" website. A community attendee liked the step-by-step instructions. Step 2 of the instructions asks that testimony include the sentence "I want the design standards recommended by SMILE added to DOZA so there is better building design." Rocky suggested that this is why the flyer's title should include a reference to "standards" to clearly link design standards to their testimony.

To organize flyer distribution, David suggested that we create an address list from PortlandMaps. Using the zoning map base, we can identify and list addresses adjacent to the commercial zones, and so be sure to place the flyers at the correct properties.

The City Council hearing date has been confirmed for May 12th, so once we have the final version, copies can be made for distribution.

David summarized the next steps: The committee will devise a plan to distribute the flyer; he will send information to Vikki for the web page, contact Eric Norberg about an article in *The Bee*, and look into having meetings with City Council members; for our website, www.sellwood.org, Vikki will add the Board's testimony and links to DOZA and the Main Street design guidelines; Kirsten will contact Karen Kelly to request that the SMBA endorse the flyer and request that they submit testimony.

Vikki said she will make changes in the next few days. Miriam suggested showing this next draft to your neighbor to get feedback on the flyer.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM.