

Sellwood-Moreland Improvement League
Land Use Committee Virtual Meeting -- Meeting Notes -- June 2, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Committee Chair David Schoellhamer. Land Use Committee (LUC) members present: Bob Burkholder, Kirsten Leising, Vikki DeGaa, Miriam Erb, Rocky Johnson, Francisco Salgado, and Shari Gilevich. Sean O'Neill (Scotia Western States Housing, LLC) and Gabe Headrick (Steelhead Architecture) attended for the neighborhood contact meeting. Thirteen community members also attended.

David first thanked those who submitted testimony on our proposed DOZA amendments. He noted that there will be another opportunity to testify at the City Council hearing on June 10th.

Neighborhood contact meeting for 1666 SE Lambert:

The proposed development on the subject property is 36 townhomes. The initial proposal was for an 85-unit apartment development with 8 affordable units.

David S. reviewed the zoning standards for development in the RM2d (Residential Multi-Dwelling) zone.

Sean O'Neill presented the development proposal. There are 3 types of units, ranging in size from 750 square feet to 1,100 square feet. Each unit has a 1- or 2-car garage. These will be rental units, not condominiums. The two driveways for the development take access onto SE Lambert. They are using Community Design standards, so the design will not go through Design Review.

Several commenters thanked the developer for listening to concerns raised at the December meeting about the proposed apartments. Meeting attendees liked the scale and design of the townhomes as the design fits much better with the neighborhood.

Sean O'Neill and Gabe Headrick responded to the following questions and comments:

Why the change in dwelling type of dwelling? This new project is more in line with the neighborhood and more desirable for the developer. Apartments were out of scale with the neighborhood. Sean said that this style of rental including one- and two-bedroom units, rather than studio apartments, meets the needs of the market now. This is a base for long term tenants and residents who are invested in the neighborhood.

Dislike of white box feature around windows. The design has a single, white colored frame surrounding the 2nd and 3rd floor windows on each unit. Attendees who commented on the frame were opposed to this design. It seemed that adding these frames to the facades would also increase project costs. Suggestions were to remove the frames completely, or reduce the width/size of the frames and use a darker color so that they don't pop out as much.

Gabe Headrick said they were trying to give a separate identity to each unit, while giving a rhythm to the development by repeating this feature. He thought that it responded to the Main Street element for a "base-middle-top" as it give the buildings a solid middle.

Sean said they were about 45 days out for the final design, so they have time to consider these comments and possibly make changes.

What are the setbacks? Sean described the patios for units that front SE Milwaukie or SE 17th. Gabe said the setback is a bit less than 10 feet to the inset door; a reduced setback is allowed because the first floor is raised.

Are trees being preserved to keep the tree canopy? Sean said they will preserve trees if possible, especially on the south side of the site, but can't promise yet which trees will remain.

Options for a grey and black color scheme? Attendees asked if other colors that would blend in with the neighborhood were possible. Sean said the color scheme can still be reviewed.

Is there a better design for the facades of the buildings facing Lambert? The proposed design has the sides of buildings facing Lambert. It was thought that the sides facing Lambert should be more aesthetically pleasing and relate to the front of the homes on the north side of Lambert. It was suggested that the Lambert side would be more attractive with landscaping to better relate these units to the homes on the north side of Lambert and to improve the pedestrian experience along this well-used link. Other ideas were to add windows or a front porch feature on the Lambert side.

Sean said they had looked at other designs, but the proposed design is the most effective on this tight site. They can look at some way to improve this north facade, maybe adding windows, and will consider landscaping and other suggested features.

What are considerations for pedestrian safety at the driveways on Lambert? Sean said that no warning system was planned for vehicles exiting the development, but they were very cognizant of safety.

Other safety concerns: The developer was encouraged to be more mindful about safety and to plan for safety of the development. Sean thought that with more residents, there would be more eyes on the area, thus improving security. There will not be security personnel on site, but residents of the development will have a maintenance and security hotline.

Will there be an east-west pedestrian connection (17th to Milwaukie)? Sean said that there will no longer be an east-west pedestrian way like the access now available across the church's parking lot. He did not think that a pedestrian pass-through was required in the current city code.

Updates on DOZA testimony and Early Assist (EA) for 5415 SE Milwaukie's proposed zone change and comp plan change

David said that 52 people testified for our Main Street design guidelines and there was follow-up communication with the council members. From this council session, the selected amendments will be posted on June 3rd and we'll find out if any of the Main Street guidelines made it. The hearing on June 10th will be the last opportunity to testify if any Main Street guidelines made it. If

they did, David will do an email blast to advise people of the June 10th council hearing and ask for additional testimony in support of our guidelines.

We all thanked David for his extra effort to engage the commissioners on our proposal. He said that 52 pieces of testimony really got our foot in the door.

Committee members added a few comments about the proposed townhomes on SE Lambert. The window pattern, roofline, bottom-middle-top design, and lower height were positive, but there was a lack of open space on site for all these new residents.

5415 SE Milwaukie Early Assist (EA): David described the EA to review a comprehensive plan change and zone change of the subject parcels. He said that the circumstances of how this RM4, CM1d and R2.5 zoning came about in 2018 were really unusual; the parcels initially were RHdn and RHd based on the planned (but now eliminated) light rail station at SE Harold.

Shari attended the EA virtual meeting and said that most of the meeting was city staff reviewing and informing the applicant of submittal requirements, including a traffic study, analysis of storm and sewer impacts, and a geo-tech report. The applicants did not discuss details of the level of development they anticipated, but stated their goal to have all their parcels in the same zone in order to create a cohesive development. The city planner in attendance said that a comp plan and zone change for the R2.5 zoned parcel on the east side of SE Milwaukie seemed unlikely.

Some of the western portions of the parcels on the west side of SE Milwaukie have the River Environmental (e) and River General (g*) overlay zones. Miriam said because this is such a delicate area, it was hard to conceive of 7-story or higher buildings that would be in the environmental area and be visible from the Willamette River.

The allowed development size will be based on the floor-area ratio (FAR), and we believe that the FAR is calculated from the gross site size even though development on some of the site would be restricted by the 'e' and 'g*' overlay zones.

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 PM.