

Sellwood-Moreland Improvement League
Land Use Committee Virtual Meeting
Meeting Notes -- Nov. 3, 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, and Shari Gilevich. Blaine Whitney, CCG Management, attended for the owner of 5515 SE Milwaukie. Five community members also attended.

Preparation to prepare testimony for 5515 SE Milwaukie:

Proposed changes to Comprehensive Plan and Zoning designations: 5515 SE Milwaukie currently has three lots zoned R5 with environmental and constrained sites overlays, and three lots zoned CM1d. The proposal is to change the plan to multi-dwelling urban and zoning to RM4. The 10,000 sq. ft. parcel on the east side of SE Milwaukie is zoned R2.5. The proposal is to change the designation to RM2. Maps were displayed of current and proposed zoning. Both the Comp Plan and the zoning designations would be changed.

David said that the project notice from the City had not yet gone out, so this meeting is just to discuss preparing our recommendations for the SMILE Board and soliciting neighborhood input. He showed the RM4 zoning features, including building height up to 100 feet with proximity to "frequent transit," although buildings usually are four to seven stories. Also, the base FAR of 4:1 can be increased to 6:1 if affordable housing is included in the development.

The plan and zone changes proposed have to be based on this area being a "multi-dwelling urban center," so the application has a request to reclassify this area to that designation. The more intense plan and zone designations are applicable on parcels along a Civic Corridor, so the street Design Classification of SE Milwaukie in this section would also have to be changed from Neighborhood Corridor.

David reviewed the procedure of this Type III review. The application will go through a quasi-judicial review process: review and staff report by BDS; public hearing and recommendations by the hearing's officer; and, public hearing with and decision by the City Council. The proposed comprehensive plan and zoning changes will be reviewed concurrently. The approval criteria address some 100 comprehensive plan policies, and those are the only items that will be considered by the hearing's officer. This public hearing is to be scheduled within 51 days of the application being deemed complete by city staff. BDS will make its recommendation at least 10 days prior to that hearing.

SMILE will schedule a meeting for the neighborhood as soon as the city notice comes out in order to solicit information from neighbors. Our recommendations will be made to the SMILE Board so that our board can prepare comments to submit before the public hearing.

Blaine Whitney said that the City is reviewing the application now. Once the developer has the City's comments, then they may make revisions to the application and resubmit it. He does not know what the timing of this process will be, but will keep SMILE posted on major milestones.

Blaine provided electronic copy of their 71-page document that addresses the comprehensive plan criteria. He thought that city staff liked placing the lots of this one ownership into a single zone (on the west side of Milwaukie Avenue) as it would allow for a more cohesive development. He said that originally the affordable housing interests wanted to keep RM4 zoning here, but the city wasn't supportive at that time. Blaine felt like they had full support from the city for the changes and that they would not pursue this application if the city did not support it.

There was concern from LUC that a precedent would be set for this type of up-zoning. David said that the city contends it does not set a precedent.

David showed a graphic of the possible building coverage on the parcels. Buildings would not extend over the bluff line and the bulk of the buildings would be in the southerly portion of the ownership.

Vikki added that this is an extremely important location for the neighborhood as it's a site that welcomes people here. She hoped that any building design will reflect that.

Blaine agreed, but noted that they are not the developers and will be selling the property. He believes that the rezone was probably going to happen because it makes sense to allow a developer to do something new and cohesive, and noted that the city "offered up" RM4 on the parcels on the west side of Milwaukie Ave. He suggested that the LUC focus on design ideas to discuss in the future; the timing for a development proposal is probably at least a year away. He thought that the buildings would not be over seven stories because it is cost prohibitive to build higher than that.

Vikki stated that height is so out of scale with our neighborhood.

Post-meeting follow-up: The City planner for the proposal, Amanda Rhoads, told the committee *'We do not conduct our reviews in advance of the land use review process and would not offer "full support" of any proposal in advance of the review. We do look at the proposal during the Pre-Application Conference and identify any major red flags. The notes show we did have major concerns about the original proposal to apply RM4 on the eastern lot, and stated the applicant must make a strong case for extending this urban zoning south onto the R5 and CM1 zones.'*

Bridgehead Neighborhood Contact meeting (Dec. 1, 2021)

David described the proposal for two blocks on SE Tacoma west of SE 6th: north of Tacoma, 535 and 545 SE Tacoma, and south of Tacoma, 536 SE Tacoma and 8145 SE 6th. Each block will have 52 dwelling units (total of 104 apartments), plus 5,000 square feet of retail on each block fronting SE Tacoma.

David asked about our general letter to developers/architects to request the kind of information we would like from them at the neighborhood contact meeting. Vikki will make sure that is

available for this project. She also will work up a flyer about the contact meeting and LUC will plan to distribute them on Nov. 22-23.

Brenda asked if the flyers were mailed and had concerns that the flyer clearly state who the source is. Vikki noted that we always put the SMILE logo on our flyers and explained that the flyers are placed at locations within a block of the project, but not mailed. Brenda expressed interest in being on the Land Use Committee and will help distribute the flyers.

SE 13th and Tenino project, Neighborhood Contact meeting

This proposal is for two, 19-unit apartment buildings. The developer would like the contact meeting in the next few weeks. It was agreed to host the meeting on December 8th at 6:00 PM. David will contact the developer to confirm date.

Updates

Shari gave updates on the pipeline list, and will complete an updated pipeline list for SMILE web page soon. The completed projects total 1,292 units from 45 projects completed since 2013. The November 2021 pipeline list has 690 units, but the total does not have the still-to-determined units for the 5515 SE Milwaukie project. She said that the city has changed how the "Weekly" permits are reported, making it somewhat more laborious to pull out projects in Sellwood-Moreland. She'll let the committee know how it works out.

Discussion

Committee members generally discussed whether the city would already be simply supportive of the proposed major plan and zone changes on SE Milwaukie. David will send a message to the city asking for their view. There were several concerns: whether a precedent is being set to turn back to RM4 when there were valid reasons to downzone those parcels; potential hazards to building at the bluff; and impacts on the tree canopy and vegetation by the proposed extent of development.

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 PM.