

**SMILE GENERAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 2022**

MEETING MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by SMILE President Elaine O’Keefe at 7:33 p.m. Attendees introduced themselves.

October 5, 2022 meeting minutes were reviewed and approved unanimously.

Three guests from QFC were introduced: Ryan Baker (Labor Manager), Justin Laney (newly appointed Westmoreland QFC manager) and Justin Hyland (Asset Protection Manager).

Ryan Baker summarized the discussion from the August 2022 neighborhood meeting. He reported that QFC has entered into a contract with OBRC (non-profit firm that services bottle drops) to install and service the new bottle redemption center in the rear of the store. He stated that other stores that switched to the new system experienced a huge reduction in unpleasant behavior both inside and outside the store. He expects the existing bottle drop to be removed and the new machines to be installed sometime after Thanksgiving. Once the new system is installed, OBRC will redeem bottles once or twice per week.

Questions were asked about entering into a “good neighbor agreement” with residents adjacent to the store. Baker responded that it would have to be initiated by the neighbors and that QFC would consider the proposal after receiving it.

Justin Hyland reported that additional cameras have been installed at the Westmoreland store. In addition QFC has approved two new security initiatives:

- They will install a locking loop around the perimeter of the building and parking lot that will lock carts in place if they leave the premises. Customers who park on the street will receive assistance loading their purchases into their cars. This should help reduce both cart and merchandise theft. It will be installed in approximately 2 - 3 months.
- QFC is hiring an “Organized Theft Investigator”, who will work with local police departments to build cases against professional thieves who steal and resell merchandise. This is a new position for QFC and recruitment is underway.

Hyland reported that Kroger (QFC’s parent company) has a “hands off” policy — i.e. employees do not confront or pursue thieves. Attempting to stop thieves puts employees safety in jeopardy.

A lengthy question and answer session ensued. A concern expressed by many was alcohol theft by teenagers, and the ease with which they are able to walk out of the store with cases of beer. Several people stated that lean staffing, particularly in the evenings, contributes to the alcohol theft. The store and merchandise layout also appears to be a contributing factor. Several suggestions were proposed and Hyland explained which can be done realistically and practically. He was asked if alcohol theft was being reported to Portland Police Bureau (PPB) or the Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) and he said it was not, that QFC did not have good information about the quantity of loss. Attendees expressed the opinion that a greater adult presence in the store would help deter theft.

Hyland reported that overall theft at the Westmoreland store is higher in volume and frequency but lower in value than at other stores. He shared that more aggressive theft prevention is challenging without PPB support, which isn't available at the moment.

When asked how neighbors can support the store, new manager Justin Laney said by staying in close contact with store management and continuing to share concerns and ideas for improvement. It was suggested that QFC might participate in the upcoming Decemberville event as a way to introduce the new manager as well as the new bottle drop operation. Elaine O'Keefe extended an invitation to stay in close contact with SMILE and attend future meetings.

Next, Connie Shipley representing the Royal Rosarians talked about plans for the Milk Carton Boat Races held annually in Westmoreland Park. Shipley, who is in charge of the event, is seeking ways to improve and expand the event. She reported that the new sponsor, Alpenrose Dairy, is very supportive and interested in new features. In 2023, the event will include a food drive, and the starting time will be moved back from 11:00 a.m. to noon. SMILE and Sellwood Community House representatives offered to assist with distributing milk cartons to race contestants.

SMILE Board member Emily Pitts spoke briefly about plans for Llewellyn students to sell holiday crafts and hot drinks at Decemberville on December 3rd. Tom Brown offered them space on the sidewalk near the corner of SE 16th and Bybee. The SMILE Station is also available.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:01p.m.