

Minutes
SMILE Community Safety Committee Meeting
6:00 PM, 10/18/23 at the SMILE Station

In attendance: Grant Huling (Chair), Creed Bruce, Lance Goldenberg, Kelley Stipe, David Stipe

This was the first Community Safety Committee meeting in two years, and the first with Chair Grant Huling. Participants briefly introduced themselves. Most time would be devoted to strategizing around areas of concern raised by attendees.

Lance, a longtime Committee member, mentioned that the previous Chair continues to serve the interests of Sellwood-Moreland through CS Network, a community safety group unaffiliated with SMILE. Grant does not plan to reach out to or coordinate with this group, but said “the more, the merrier.”

Graffiti-fighting efforts were the next topic. Patrick Brunett, a committee member who was not able to attend, has raised the subject as a requested focus. He is a member of “a group of about 7 folks that communicate about graffiti and eradicating it through a text-tree.” Grant has spoken with both Patrick and Mike, the founder of that group. The group wishes to remain unaffiliated with the SMILE Community Safety Committee, but welcomed referrals of interested SMILE members. Three attendees requested contact information for the group and Grant provided it.

Grant discussed his plan for how the SMILE Community Safety Committee’s own graffiti efforts can complement this existing group’s. The existing group identifies graffiti in Sellwood-Moreland then covers it, using paint reimbursed by the Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability’s Graffiti Program. The Graffiti Program has told the group’s leader Mike it would not reimburse graffiti blocker products like VandlGuard. Grant will contact Program Manager Matt Olguin and ask if the Program will provide blockers to SMILE, it being a neighborhood association. If that isn’t forthcoming, he said he will donate five gallons. The SMILE Community Safety Committee plans to prioritize reaching out to businesses that have murals, for an education effort regarding graffiti blockers, and then will offer to donate product if price is a barrier.

Kelley asked if the Committee can help with a mechanism to consolidate and report data. The group discussed the status quo, and what potential initiatives might look like. Currently, Sellwood-Moreland residents tend to hear about crime through Nextdoor and Facebook. Grant said he regularly reviews these sites, sometimes commenting as Committee Chair, sometimes posting about a major issue (the 9/23/23 shooting near Llewellyn Elementary being the only such event to date), and often collecting residents’ reports to provide to PPB Office William Green, the community’s liaison. Grant has begun sending Officer Green and Sergeant Zachary Kelley of the PPB Central Precinct a private “SMILE Crime Beat,” which consists of a summary of issues that residents have either reported to him, or have reported on social media. The group considered whether such a report could become public-facing, being shared on the SMILE website, through a mailing list, or in *The Bee*. The consensus was that merely amplifying

awareness of the existence of crime would not serve a productive enough purpose, and could make residents feel less safe, when the goal of the Community Safety Committee is to enhance residents' perceived safety. The item was dropped for the time being. Reporting directly to the PPB, something the PPB has stated it greatly appreciates, will continue. Kelley was reassured to learn that Grant interacts on social media and has set aside time within SMILE meetings to provide brief updates on major crime items, most recently updating on the 9/23 shooting and Piknik Park stabbing at the 10/4 SMILE General Meeting.

David mentioned the loitering, intoxicated, volatile itinerants at the Milwaukee QFC entrance as a concern, noting that he and his wife Kelley live nearby and that he finds himself feel less safe and free to use the grocer. He said that in the fall and winter months, a crowd of homeless people will often gather under the covered area at the nearby NW Primary Care. Grant noted he had spoken with an Assistant Team Leader and other concerned employees of the QFC, but had not yet found "the right person" at the chain. Lance noted that a QFC employee attended a SMILE meeting in 2022, regarding the grocer's plan to move its can redemption location to its loading dock area, removing a redemption machine out front. Grant said he would review SMILE minutes or speak with fellow board members to find this person's contact information, and would request a coffee sit-down between that person and the Stipes, who had thoughtful questions about the store's policies and how safety might be improved.

A third location at the north of Sellwood, noted by both David and Grant, was SE Mitchell Street. Grant noted that he has volunteered with Transition Projects, which has a facility at that location and which may be drawing criminality (running into traffic, sorting through trash, blocking the right of way, keeping a pit-bull off-leash, and running into the street have been observed here). He said he will reach out to them to start a conversation about how they might help to improve behavior in the area around their shelter.

Grant stated that he thinks it is productive for the Committee to generally frame efforts around problem locations (vs. problem behaviors, like public intoxication), because stakeholders can be engaged and progress can be tracked.

Lance stated his concerns with SE 19th Ave, around the Springwater Corridor. Everyone present had observed issues with vandalism, property crime, or highly intrusive camping in that area. Grant noted This topic was not given the focus at this meeting that graffiti or the QFC received, but the Chair intends to return to it.

Grant provided an overview of how to use PDXreporter.org effectively. He passed out a printout from the website's user portal, noting that the City indicates what criteria it uses to prioritize complaints. For camping, these are "obstructing public right-of-way; misuse of public space; permanent structures; excessive trash or biohazards; damage to the environment; public intoxication or conspicuous drug use."