

SMILE General Meeting minutes

Wednesday, August 7, 2024

SMILE Station

Main Website

<http://www.SellwoodMoreland.org> <<>> <http://www.SMILErecords.org>

Procedural

OFFICERS PRESENT: David Dugan, President; Pat Hainley, Treasurer; Eric Norberg, Secretary

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Elaine O’Keefe, Tracy Fisher, Grant Huling, Suzanne Kruse (*and, via ZOOM*): Jim Friscia, Jason Sturgill

SMILE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Richard Benson, Jack Tayenbaum, Marianne Nolan, Kasey Takien, Lance Goldenberg, Jerry Schmidt, Rosemary Southwood, Creed Bruck, David Montesano, Kelsey Stark (*and, via ZOOM*): Judith B., Rose, Bob S., Mary, Manon

GUESTS: Ciatta Thompson, Bob Weinstein, Ben Hufford, John Toran [all are candidates for Portland’s new City Council District 4]

The meeting was called to order by SMILE President David Dugan at 7:34 p.m. He led the self-introductions of everyone present – around the room, and attending via ZOOM – and, determining that a quorum had been attained, called for the review, the amendment if necessary, and the approval of the minutes of the July 3 SMILE General Meeting. Suzanne Kruse moved the minutes be approved as presented, Tracy Fisher seconded the motion, and the subsequent vote of approval was declared unanimous by Dugan.

President Dugan introduced Grant Huling, a SMILE Board Member who also Chairs two SMILE committees; he was appearing tonight as Chair of the Crime Prevention Committee – informally known as the Community Safety Committee, pending any change in the name of the standing committees defined in our bylaws. Grant said that this committee has six core members, and would welcome more from the community. He recounted accomplishments of the committee in the recent past – these included a self-defense workshop led by the Portland Office of Violence Prevention; participation in the Adopt One Block trash cleanup program (and he presented a map which showed solid membership in this program throughout our neighborhood – much more so than in the surrounding areas), and participation in the city graffiti removal program. Grant went on to define the core values of the committee, among which are responsiveness, collaboration, transparency, and legality. The committee’s next project is overseeing a Community Safety Town Hall, which will constitute the main theme of the September SMILE General Meeting on Wednesday, September 4, 7:30-9 p.m. There was a question-and-answer period at the end of Grant’s presentation.

Next on the agenda was a presentation by Kelsey Stark, Volunteer Coordinator for Transition Projects, the nonprofit organization which is the operator – for Multnomah County – of the Willamette Center homeless resource center on S.E. Milwaukie Avenue at the north end of Westmoreland. She acknowledged that total homelessness here is increasing, but she said there has been a recent 16% decline in “chronic homelessness” here. She explained that Transition Projects also helps support people on the streets, and provides a safe place to sleep for some 700 people in eight different shelters, and also houses 800 people each year, with a 70% housing retention rate. However, the Willamette Center, at 5130 S.E. Milwaukie Avenue, is not one of these facilities – it’s a Multnomah-County-owned low-barrier shelter for up to 120 adults (and their pets) who are committed to finding a job and permanent housing, and the Center actively supports them in doing so by connecting them to essential services, job openings, and permanent housing options. The Willamette Center seeks volunteers in the community to provide an evening meal (cooked on-site or in a commercial kitchen), to prepare snack lunches (they need fifty to a hundred of these each day), and to donate gently-used and new clothing, with an emphasis on the need for underwear and towels; personal hygiene items are also welcomed. There followed considerable Q and A with those present. Some expressed concern about campers in the vicinity of the Center, which have no connection at all to the Center.

With no other items on the agenda, Tracy Fisher moved the meeting be adjourned; Suzanne Kruse seconded the motion; and the motion carried without objection at 8:45 p.m.