

SMILE General Meeting minutes

Wednesday, September 4, 2024

SMILE Station

Main Website

Procedural

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

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

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Elaine O’Keefe, Tracy Fisher, Grant Huling, Suzanne Kruse, Jason Sturgill

SMILE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Ed Nunez, Steve Brown, Teri Collins, Marcus E. Lee, John & Miriam Erb, Lance Goldenberg, Kelly Hannan, Derrick Tackett, David Gray, Peggy Christopher, Troy Gabriel, Jacque DeVore, Patricia Brady, Richard Benson, Sarah Sturgill, Gail Meyer, Paul Steigleder, Allen Nicholson, Patrick & Carolyn Brunett, Esme Danriise, Kari Kohrmann, Sue Safford, Susan Lattimore, Cindy Barnett, Elizabeth Luthy, Alison Murphy, Juliana James, James Barta, Frank Alfenhoen; (*and, via ZOOM*): Lisa Thomas, Kimberly’s phone, Brenda R. S., Lisa Marie, Stan & Brenda Scrutton, Amanda Fowler, Bob Schomburg, *and three unidentified*

The meeting was called to order by SMILE President David Dugan at 7:33 p.m. He led the introductions of THE SMILE Board Members present – and, determining that a quorum had easily been attained, called for the review of the minutes of the August 7 SMILE General Meeting. Suzanne Kruse moved the minutes be approved as presented, Ed Nunez seconded the motion, and the subsequent vote of approval was declared unanimous, with one abstention, by President Dugan.

President Dugan then 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 – and introduced the special program for tonight, which was intended to be the entire focus of this General Meeting. He started by showing a graph – one of a series, showing crimes by category and month in our neighborhood over the past two years – and mapped by offense.

He then introduced our two new NRT (Neighborhood Response Team) Central Precinct Officers – Officer Laura Frear (laura.frear@police.portlandoregon.gov) and Officer Joseph Bernard (joseph.bernard@police.portlandoregon.gov), both of whom encourage direct citizen contact on ongoing issues in the neighborhood.

They stepped up to discuss their specific community-focused role at Central Precinct; they spend a lot of time learning about and attempting to resolve community issues. Unlike patrol officers, they have the opportunity to pursue these issues. They are interested in chronic problems, particularly – building a case for prosecution, if necessary. They then invited questions and comments from the large crowd in attendance.

Members of the audience asked questions about various such situations they are familiar with. In the course of responding, the pair made the point that they are responsible for all of Central Precinct in their roles, which led to questions about the understaffing of the Portland Police Bureau; they said that “thirty more officers are coming onboard”, but there still are not enough officers to respond to problems in a city the size of Portland.

There was some discussion of shoplifting, and the officers commented that not all shoplifters are homeless – some appear to be “very well off” citizens. There followed

various other questions, with the subjects ranging from Measure 110 recriminalization, to Portland Street Response, the use of 9-1-1, homeless encampments, PBOT policy, ownership of military weapons, criteria for involving the police in community situations, inconvenient neighbors, and public access to granular crime statistics from official sources.

For merchants in particular, the two officers advised “upgrade your camera systems” – the older ones still in wide use are grainy and often useless – but nowadays even cheap cameras and surveillance systems “make great photos and even videos”, making criminal identification far more likely to lead to arrest and prosecution. “Good photos make a difference in solving crimes.”

Someone in the audience, referring to a comment by the NRT Officer who spoke to a SMILE General Meeting a year ago, asked, “Can anything be done to deal with the Fentanyl crisis?” Officer Frear said that the recriminalization of these drugs has given us a new way to address the problem.

There followed more discussion of the value of having a sufficiently-sized police force to have enough officers to respond in timely fashion to issues in the City of Portland.

The officers concluded by telling, in answer to a question, how the Portland Police are developing a drone program of their own, so they will no longer be dependent for drone surveillance on the availability and response of other neighboring police agencies who already have and use such programs.

There was much applause from the large number of attendees at the end of this presentation. Then President David Dugan declared the meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.