

Minutes of the Fairmount Neighbors general meeting, November 19, 2013

Present: Twenty-one neighbors (including eleven board members) and five guests

Welcome and introduction of board

Co-chair Steven Asbury called the meeting to order and board members present introduced themselves.

Hendricks Park

Co-chair David Sonnichsen introduced Sandra Austin and Mieko Aoki to talk about Hendricks Park. Sandra, who has volunteered over the years, reminded us that the core group of volunteers is aging. There is a need to build up a volunteer base for work parties. Some of the work is light. Mieko, seasonal volunteer coordinator assistant, leads volunteer groups at Hendricks park, including Tuesdays in the rhododendron garden, Saturday monthly work parties in the forest, plus MLK day in January and also Presidents day. There is also some collaboration with the university to pair Friends of Hendricks Park with UO students. Work to be done includes pulling ivy, trail work, ongoing maintenance, and sometimes planting. FOHP is looking at ways to increase volunteer activity in the park. Handouts included a link to survey monkey to help figure out how to get more volunteers, and flyers listing dates and times. Sandra remarked that financial support is also important, encouraging neighbors to give to FOHP. The work parties can accommodate as many as 85 in a group, though it's helpful if they know ahead of time. For example, Oregon Community Credit Union has a staff day on Presidents Day.

Neighborhoods USA conference

David introduced Rene Kane, Neighborhood Services, and Karen Hyatt, UO University Relations. Eugene is hosting the Neighborhoods USA national conference, May 21-24, 2014. Participants will include people from all over the US as well as Japan. Topics often include land use, working with youth, working with communities. Karen described seven program tracks that will represent Eugene. Eating well close to home; Growing Green, sustainability, environment, transportation; Town and gown and neighborhood relations; Caring and safe communities; Creating inclusive communities--how to get all involved; Organizing for effectiveness; Bring on the fun, parks, arts, and culture.

About 40 different 90-minute workshops are planned. Friday will feature tours during the afternoon and evening, with a meal included.

Rene provided some information about the three keynote speakers. Julian Agumon will talk about food security and Just sustainability. He looks at food from the standpoint of social equity. Michelle Hunt worked in the Clinton white house and is associated with an organization called Dream Makers. Jim Diers is a former neighborhood activist from Seattle. He now does international speaking about how people create community. He will also conduct workshops. The conference will

start on Wednesday with big party at Ford Alumni Center. Workshops and keynotes will take place Thursday and Friday and the conference concludes at lunch on Saturday. A reduced registration fee for local participants will include the party. There will also be a one-day fee. Work trades are available for volunteers. A goal is to reconnect with other neighborhood associations up and down the Willamette Valley.

Crime and break-ins

Steven reported on two recent break-ins in the neighborhood. In one, thieves broke in while neighbors were asleep, entered through the front door and took off with belongings and a car. Be extra vigilant, especially at this time of year. EPD reminds us to not keep valuables in our cars, even if they are in the garage. EPD sells steering wheel clubs at cost. Another break-in occurred in daytime. It's a good idea to keep an eye on vacant homes during the upcoming holiday. Thieves target empty homes, especially the homes of students.

Romania Lot Proposal

Karen Alvarado urged neighbors to get involved in visioning and planning for the use of the former Romania lot, now owned by the University of Oregon. Two and a half years ago, the university came to the neighborhood with some potential ideas for the site. At that time, it appeared that 20 or more years would pass before anything major was done. Karen believes that may no longer be the case. Her proposal involves the creation of a grand art center. She pointed to models around the country, especially the Grand Central Art Center in Santa Ana.

Report on public hearing, R-1 amendments

David reported on last night's hearing on R-1 code amendments and interim protection measures. He was surprised that the hearing was low key. Twelve people testified. A large body of testimony has been submitted in print. Questions from councilors indicated support for interim protections while expressing doubt about R-1 amendments being ready for adoption. Councilor Clark was skeptical about specificity, especially alley access lots. George Brown echoed David's testimony, without cooperation between neighbors and city staff, interim measures won't work. The measures will be in effect during the time three neighborhoods are doing area planning. The next step is a work session on 11/27, followed by a vote in early December. The record is open through next Monday to submit written testimony.

Question: When would they become effective?

David: There was a suggestion that the measures go into effect immediately, with more work to be done on R-1 amendments.

Neighbor: I walk the alleys all the time. We are overpopulated with illegal SDUs that have been there a long time. Any existing SDU would be grandfathered.

David: Nancy Reckord's testimony invited the council to come over and walk through the alleys.

Micro neighborhoods as a livability strategy

Nancy Reckord reminded us of Karen Hyatt's presentation at the September

meeting about restorative justice. Nancy has trained as a volunteer, and there have been no cases yet. Her topic this evening is micro neighborhoods. People have talked about their desire to get to know their neighbors better. It's important that we get to know people in area, for community building, crime prevention, and emergency preparedness. Nancy and Sandra initially got folks together in their area to talk about resources to share. Then there was an article in the paper in October stressing the importance knowing neighbors and sharing resources. In addition to the emergency preparedness meeting, Nancy's near neighbors have had three social meetings. She hopes there are others who would like to do similar activities in other areas of the neighborhood. Maybe someone could carry on the next two blocks, and continue from there. Anyone interested in the idea of getting to know neighbors, contact Nancy or Sandra. A member of Walnut Street co-op said they are interested and have done a map your neighborhood. Sandra has made up a little pamphlet for folks who are interested.

New website

Steven announced new website, fairmountneighbors.org, created by Kay Rose. The neighborhood also now has a Facebook page. We hope to have more content on shortly. The website will be up tomorrow or next day. Camilla spoke briefly about beginning to test iContact, a newsletter service provided by the city. The service is internet based, and would ensure privacy of individual e-mail addresses.

New business

Walnut Street Co-op is interested in helping with a social event, possibly a coffee party. They are also interested in knowing about deadlines for matching grants. Camilla will publicize on the e-list. Rene reminded us that anyone can go to the city website and sign up for the Neighborly News. Rene will also make available a list of the kinds of social events sponsored by other neighborhoods.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Camilla Bayliss, Secretary