

**Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods  
Land Use and Transportation Committee  
Wednesday, August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013, 7:00pm  
Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods Office, 4815 NE 7<sup>th</sup> Ave., Portland, OR**

**MINUTES**

**Committee Members Present:** Carol Gossett, Sullivan's Gulch/Committee Co-chair; Steve Cole, Irvington; Anjala Ehelebe, Woodlawn; Allan Rudwick, Eliot; Jim Brown, Alameda; Paul Anthony, Humboldt;

**Additional Participants:** Leigh Rappaport, King neighbor; Rene Corbin, King neighbor; Andrew Smith, Humboldt neighbor; Nan Stark, BPS staff; Debbie Bischoff, BPS staff; Dwayne Haag, Humboldt neighbor; Brian Murtagh, Humboldt Neighborhood Association; Allison Jones, Humboldt neighbor; Kory Ward, Humboldt neighbor; Lori Lachman, Humboldt neighbor; Paul T. Allen, Humboldt neighbor; Shoshana Cohen, NECN staff; Katy Asher, NECN staff; Benjamin Adrian, NECN staff

**Meeting called to order. Introductions.**

**Development project at 4523-5 N Albina Ave., Rahim Abbasi, Abbasi Design Works**

Rahim introduces a proposal to demolish an existing duplex house, and build a 4-story mixed-use building that will be primarily residential, with ground-floor commercial space in the Humboldt neighborhood.

Originally, the financier of the project required on-site parking. However, the site is located on a curve in N Albina which makes it hazardous for cars entering and exiting the parking spaces. PBOT found the situation to be hazardous as well, so the on-site parking has been removed entirely. Rahim has also pushed the front of the building back a few feet from the sidewalk, allowing for the doors to be further inset and also a larger sidewalk space. The upper floors of the building will overhang this inset area. The developer is seeking to use wood for much of the building, including some reclaimed barn wood from Idaho. Masonry and concrete will comprise the ground-floor walls. The project may be seeking a LEED Silver certification.

What is the height of the building? It is still being finalized, based on the reused wood, but sits at about 42 feet tall currently.

The zoning code requires setbacks on the rear of the building because there is a residential zone abutting the property. On the fourth floor, the required setback increases from 10 to 25 feet. The extra setback of the building will be a rooftop balcony for the entire building to use. The northern portion of the balcony will be a private balcony for the top floor living unit, because of privacy concerns for the adjacent (to the north) property owners. Rahim has gone so far as to place the windows on the north side of the building to not align with the windows of the existing house on the northern side, to avoid the "look-in" effect.

Discussion of the parking concerns: While it seemed dangerous to have the driveway entrance on the curved road, the lack of on-site parking is also perceived to have negative impacts for on-street parking

availability. On-site parking is not required by the zoning code, nor is a loading area for residential or commercial spaces.

General discussion of the zoning, EX, and everything that is allowed by right within such a zone: The developer is also working on another project which is across Albina and a few lots to the south, immediately north of the John Palmer House. This other site has an alleyway and could potentially have a loading area.

Why aren't the balconies on the street facing side of the building? Design constraints, working within the setback requirements, placing the balconies in the front would have changed the building layout and required additional height to the building, which is not allowed under the Community Design Standards.

Could you have placed the balcony on the very top of the building, not in the rear setback? This was considered, but the construction costs were higher due to need for an elevator.

Debbie announces that BPS received a grant for planning work that would address situations like this, inviting meeting participants to get involved. Barry Manning, BPS, is project manager, and the project is called the Commercial/Mixed zone project.

### **Sullivan's Gulch Trail and Transportation advocacy priorities**

Carol and the SGNA are very interested in the Sullivan's Gulch Trail. Benjamin explains that a recent land swap proposal that Metro is working on with Union Pacific Railroad is relatively small, but is located in a key location as identified in the Sullivan's Gulch Concept Plan. Metro Councilor Bob Stacey asked for a delay in the land swap to consider what could be gained for future projects such as the SGT. Speaking with Councilor Stacey's Policy Director, Ramona, he learned that Council Stacey is interested in the SGT and that focusing SGT advocacy efforts at the City of Portland are important next steps.

Neighborhood representatives discuss additional transportation priorities. Anjala talks about interest in Train Quiet Zones and Trimet layover issues in Woodlawn. Also, impacts of coal transport by trains would impact Woodlawn. Specifically, Anjala is concerned about whether citizens are able (or not) to hold Trimet accountable. Other neighborhoods along the rail lines have come out against all coal transport by rail, and this issue in particular could use additional coordinated advocacy from neighborhood coalition and beyond. Garlynn will see if George Bruender, former CNA Land Use Chair has any information about whether Concordia has explored quiet zones.

King neighbors ask about the status of crosswalks implementation around Irving Park. Sabin CA has been working on this for a while now with funding from 1% For Green. Another crosswalk request in Sullivan's Gulch.

Looking forward, LUTC seeks input on transportation issues in preparation for hosting the new PBOT director, Leah Treat. Debbie suggests collecting these transportation concerns and sending them in advance to PBOT so answers can be prepared to make a meeting more productive. Shoshana instructs LUTC reps to ask for time to discuss this at their Neighborhood Association meetings as well.

## **Comprehensive Plan Update, Debbie Bischoff BPS**

Debbie introduces the Comprehensive Plan Update, which is planning for the future growth of Portland. Currently, Part 2 is being worked on, with a focus on mapping and infrastructure systems.

BPS is working on a computerized map application, which will include varying layers to allow users to zoom in on their neighborhood. A companion guide will be developed for non-computer users as well. The goal for this is to help solicit more input from the community. Debbie expects more public outreach to be conducted in this phase as well. For instance, BPS will attend community meetings to instruct community members on how to use the mapping tool. There will be a limited number of larger workshops, which will be focused on areas of town with more significant changes proposed. NECN may not be one of these.

Parcel specific properties- split zoned parcels. Certain lots are primarily zoned EX, with a slight portion remaining Residential. After identifying these situations, there could be outreach to property owners and adjacent property owners to change the zoning to one per lot.

Nonconforming uses- Looking at specific instances of this, for example in Eliot. Will look at specific properties where a zone change could be beneficial.

Lastly, the split between the zoning map and the Comp Plan map. For instance, in Concordia there are lots with a Comp Plan designation of R2.5 but are zoned R5. Should we address these situations? East Portland presents more significant situations of this.

**CTE grant-** Commercial zoning project to update commercial zones. Barry Manning is the project lead for this. Debbie thinks it will get underway in the fall, possibly November.

Institution zones? BPS is looking to move forward with an Institution zoning project. Funding did not come through for this, so the scope may be different than what had been proposed.

**Change to BPS NE District Liaison-** Debbie is changing roles at BPS, moving to a role to work in the Central City on Riverfront planning. Nan Stark is taking over Debbie's former role as NE District Liaison. Nan introduces herself, and says she has worked with BPS since 1994, on citywide Development Review projects and the Riverfront. Debbie has been working with Nan on Cully work recently, so she is already learning the NE District.

## **Columbia River Crossing update**

As has been reported recently in the news, the Columbia River Crossing is still being discussed by Oregon leaders including Gov. Kitzhaber. Details are still emerging, but Oregon leadership is considering revised projects which could be implemented without Washington State funding or collaboration. Just today, Governor Kitzhaber asked ODOT and the Department of Justice to create reports on the situation. Major questions remain about the recent efforts, but there is a September 30<sup>th</sup> deadline on the existing legislation authorizing the CRC. If anything is to move forward, there would likely be a special legislative session called before September 30<sup>th</sup>.

The NECN Board has approved signing on with a forthcoming letter by the Coalition for a Livable Future against this recent revival. The letter will be sent to the LUTC list once available.

### **Neighborhood Updates**

Brian from Humboldt mentions development proposals, for example, the presentation of the project on N Albina the Committee heard tonight. Just getting the meeting tonight was an additional meeting than required, as the developer had already come to one Humboldt Neighborhood meeting. It seems extra attention to this particular project is the result of a motivated neighbor, which Brian thinks has resulted in beneficial changes to the project. Is this a larger issue for other neighborhoods? The uptick in development in the past year or two has showcased how little community engagement is typically required.

The Design Review process allows for additional input and public comment, but the project on N Albina did not require Design Review. Discussion of the Community Design Guidelines and the two-track approval system. Oregon law stipulates this system, which allows for objective guidelines to be met and does not require review by the design commission.

Commissioner Amanda Fritz is now in charge of the Bureau of Development Services and comes from a neighborhood background and could be an ally to address these concerns.

The City of Portland has lobbied in Salem to change the laws for more robust Design Review process. State law needs to be changed before the City can require more public input in the design review process.

Will the Comp Plan Update address aspects such as this? Potentially, within the limits of State law.

Who should we advocate this to? Your State legislator, and also the City Council, as each year the City of Portland selects State lobbying priorities and we could push for more effort on this issue.

Garlynn says Concordia is interested in residential design guidelines to aid developers building new homes in the area.

Finding out details of developers can be difficult. Portland Maps provides this information, but can be hard to follow project progress such as when permits are pulled.

**Regulatory Improvement Code Amendment Projects (RICAP) update**, Benjamin briefly mentions that short term property rentals, as popularized by web services such as “AirBnB” is one topic for the RICAP update.

Benjamin Adrian, the staff person for LUTC for the last few years is leaving NECN and Portland for graduate school. Katy Asher will be the NECN staff contact until Benjamin’s replacement is hired. Shoshana serves cake acknowledging Benjamin and Debbie’s work with the LUTC.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.**