

**Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods
Land Use and Transportation Committee
Wednesday, July 24th, 2013, 7:00pm
Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods Office, 4815 NE 7th Ave., Portland, OR**

MINUTES

Present

Ed Abrahamson, Co-chair/At-large
Carol Gossett, Co-chair/Sullivan's Gulch
George Bruender, Concordia resident
Steve Cole, Irvington
Stephen Gomez, Boise
Diana Moosman, Boise
Paul Van Orden, Eliot neighbor
Paul Anthony, Humboldt
Anjala Ehelebe, Woodlawn
Garlynn Woodsong, Concordia
Debbie Bischoff, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
Benjamin Adrian, NECN staff

Introductions

Agenda change: Because Paul is not yet here, we will begin with the Boise Design Guidelines first.

Stephen introduces himself as the co-chair of the Boise Land Use Committee. Stephen recounts his initial interactions with the large amount of development in the neighborhood and the somewhat chaotic Land Use meetings.

Starting in February of this year, a small group of people worked on developing a document of design guidelines for the neighborhood. These are "soft-power" in the sense that they are not becoming part of the zoning code. The guidelines are meant to provide constructive feedback when in discussion with developers, and provide direction from a neighborhood perspective.

Four primary areas of consideration, and it is still a work in progress at this point. Lots of pictures to illustrate what is desired or not.

Stephen and Diana walk through the guidelines and explain what we are looking at. The BNA guidelines are available online, at the Boise website BNAPDX.com. ([Click here for direct link to guidelines](#))

Have you taken these to the City yet? No, but we are meeting with Debbie B. and other planners soon.

Stephen thinks the guidelines are helping the BNA Land Use committee in discussions with developers. Helps organize and guide the discussion.

Massing- the committee has observed that the big projects often try to break up the building massing, but contribute to buildings taking on a chaotic appearance.

Balconies- are these desirable? Balconies contribute to the break-up of massing. Also, noise complaints with neighboring commercial activity (bars). Other complaints arise with new buildings giving new (higher) vantage points to observe nuisance behaviors.

Parklets? Small park-areas as part of new developments? These can be nice, depends on implementation.

The guidelines address streetscape activation and exterior plaza areas. The activity needs to feed into the space. Tupelo Alley (on Mississippi Ave.) has a plaza area, but is surrounded by residential use, which doesn't activate the space enough. The plaza is underutilized. The guidelines suggest keeping commercial uses in the windows to help attract people in. Often businesses will have the windows covered in advertising or have inventory inside, blocking the view.

Handicapped accessibility? Yes, seeking to incorporate this as well.

Materials. This is a difficult area to create guidelines around. Much of the recent residential development uses HardyPlank, which is not recommended for mixed-use or commercial buildings. Questions on the durability as a desirable building material.

There is a Design Commission (zoning- "d" overlay). Outside the Central City and Gateway areas, there is a two-track system for Design Review. You can go through normal Design Review, or meet the objective Community Design Standards.

Affordability? Is this being considered? Yes it is, there are a couple of ways it arises. Unit size is one way, with developers shrinking the square footage to decrease costs. Material choices can change the costs too, so needing to keep this in mind when making other recommendations.

Windows? Vinyl or other materials? This can be a challenge for color and cost considerations. Also, longevity of appearance.

Other lesser concerns include light pollution from buildings and bike parking (short and long-term). Especially in developments with low amounts of motor vehicle parking, quality bike parking facilities will be important. Size and number of bike parking spaces, plus keeping the storage secure and inside.

N Williams and Fremont zoning change, "Back Bridge Lofts," Paul Van Orden, Eliot neighbor

Paul briefly describes the situation, which is that City Council has approved a zone change for the SE corner of N Williams and Fremont, site of the proposed Back Bridge Lofts. Just today, neighbors have filed a LUBA appeal on this change.

Paul reports the lead petitioner for the LUBA appeal is a long-time resident of the neighborhood. Paul feels the appeal is based on a desire to have the neighbor's voice heard, not just seeking to block the project.

At the City Council hearing, neighbors presented a detailed analysis of FAR (Floor Area Ratio), which they feel was largely ignored in the decision making process. Paul emphasizes the long-term vision of this appeal, and a willingness of the petitioners to work with the developer.

Where is the developer in the process? At this point, the developer went through a code hearing process, which is in regards to the zoning and comp plan map, not an actual project proposal. In this process, there are concerns over the transportation impacts of a development of the size that has been mentioned.

The developer has said he is seeking a boutique hotel, with housing as well, but details are not clear.

A significant increase in the square footage being proposed occurred between the initial discussions and the City Council hearing for the zone change.

Paul is optimistic about the next steps and the amount of support for the appeal that is emerging in the community. Several architects and design professionals have agreed with the appeal side and are willing to help out.

The Eliot Land Use Committee did support this zone change, but did speak up at the Council hearing saying the size had grown significantly since the Committee considered it and reached a decision.

The appeal has already been filed, today. Paul dropped a copy off with NECN staff.

Future Committee work areas, co-chair led discussion.

Ed explains the co-chairs and staff had discussed various ideas of what to do, one idea is walking tours to see what's going in our neighborhoods.

Anjala says walking tours are of interest.

Site specific work? Looking more in-depth at certain sites that could use the Committee's attention.

Debbie explains some past walking tours she has helped facilitate. The focus was on specific concerns, asking neighbors to point out things they like or don't like.

George recalls the walks with Debbie as well, which resulted in better advocacy in front of City Council, and did garner some traffic improvements along Killingsworth.

Carol has conducted recent walking tours in Sullivan's Gulch at the Albina Fuel site, now being developed as Grant Park Village. The tour attracted people from outside the neighborhood, and really helped get people on board with the project.

Ed asks if this is something that committee members are interested in doing with individual neighborhood associations, then bringing it back to the coalition-wide LUTC to consider issues.

Reaching out to other coalitions and neighborhoods to look at areas of overlapping concerns. Especially inner SE, has similar neighborhoods typology and development dynamics.

Anjala brings up the transportation part of our Committee and would like to include it in our future work.

Debbie mentions the Comprehensive Plan update will include work on the Transportation System Plan. This could cover the next expansions of the Streetcar, so could be relevant to NECN neighborhoods, along MLK or Broadway, for instance.

George mentions a regional issue of fossil fuel exports, which we should keep on our radar as it could have significant impacts.

Transportation Systems Plan and Capital improvement plan list? Debbie says we could seek out more information on these, possibly combining the two projects into a future meeting agenda. Not clear on the timeline for the TSP update, as to when it could be presented or when a public comment period will be available.

Neighborhood Announcements

George asks about median maintenance along MLK and the new Gateway plaza. Dan Leiden at PBOT-person to contact on the MLK questions, for follow up with George.

Benjamin mentions a sidewalk access issue on MLK that Allan has pointed out. There are construction sites on both sides of MLK and both sidewalks are closed. Allan has seen people walking in the street rather than taking the extended detour. Suggested to report this to the City via 823-SAFE, which Allan has done.

Humboldt neighborhood: 4523 N Albina project proposal. Paul explains the situation, a 15 unit apartment with small retail has been proposed. Currently the site has a duplex on it, and this proposal would demolish and take up the entire lot. Would have a small parking garage, which Paul believes would create a hazard on the curve (site is located where Mississippi goes down the hill and turns into N Albina).

Carol asks about having drawings of the proposal available to see and consider. Paul has only seen very basic drawings.

Discussions of the parking and other details.

Paul thinks a meeting would be helpful to allow the immediate neighbors to have a more structured discussion with the developer. The discussions have been somewhat disorganized thus far.

General zoning considerations for this stretch of N Albina. The existing businesses and buildings do not seem to fit with the EX zoning.

N Williams Traffic Safety Operations project has been funded. More work is being done for the final designs, and should include a public comment period. Also, the historic recognition and Rodney Greenway elements have been funded as well, not clear on implementation timeline of those aspects.

Paul reports the construction is still going quite well at PCC, with a responsive contractor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.