

WUN Notes for 7-1-2004 meeting

Deborah Healey, Notetaker

Present: WUN board members Drix, Deborah Healey, Steve Baker, Ron Lewis, Clark W. Cox, David Kelly; WUN residents Meghann Cuniff, ?Will (hard to read name on sign in sheet - my apologies); City of Eugene staff Steve Norris and Seward Meintsma; and other interested people Zach Vishanoff, Charles Biggs.

Synopsis: We discussed the mapping project proposed at the last meeting by Marc Schlossberg, got an update on the alley improvement project from City Engineer Seward Meintsma, discussed combining an effort to reopen the park with efforts to get more people to meetings, and talked about upcoming events at meetings. For the mapping project, the Board decided to brainstorm ideas about what we would and would not like to see happen, share those to come up with a small list, and then make a final decision about moving forward with the project. Seward M said that the alley planning is continuing and shared one alley design with the group. He will bring back responses to questions about artwork and the alleys next time. It was suggested that we ask the City to open the park for a neighborhood event this fall, some sort of information fair. Drix will draft a letter to send in August.

See attached list for brainstormed ideas about possible mapping projects. These will be discussed, probably on the Yahoo Groups forum. You can also send comments to Drix (drix@msn.com), 307 E 14th, Eugene 97401; 485-1585. Join WUN's Yahoo Groups site at <http://groups.yahoo.com> by emailing Drix.

Detailed notes:

Drix: Update on mapping project - Drix and Deborah met with Marc Schlossberg on June 24 to get more information about the mapping project and to talk about possibilities. Marc wants to make this a real study with neighborhood input (Map WUN). If we do this, sometime in fall we'll have a larger group meeting and set up groups of students with neighbors to do the mapping. We saw maps of the city with a grid and a sample of other cities with more detail. We as a neighborhood need to decide what we'd like to have on this map. WUN will decide what we want to do. Plat = a plot (owned lot) on a map.

Zach V: Did the board decide if we'll move ahead with this?

David K: What sort of information do we not know now, that if we had it, would help us chart neighborhood and city policy? I assume this will be a sidewalk survey - not a knock and talk. One of the best things in my mind in a walk by would be to determine what we have in the way of commercial, residential, single-family, apartment, etc. If they could develop a condition criterion that is even vaguely objective, we could lobby for money for rehabilitation. I assume that if a resident sees someone out doing the survey, we'll talk to them.

Drix: We'll be doing some outreach to the community to get more people interested.

Deborah: We'll have meetings in September and October to finalize, then action. We can brainstorm now, then discuss.

David K: The minutes can ask people to comment.

Charles: Trees are a possibility.

David K: Building condition, type of housing, commercial uses.

Charles: Crime overlays.

Steve: Street and other lights at night; where the big dumpsters are.

Charles: Where the good parties are.

Drix: Historic-looking houses and other structures.

Steve N: Medical buildings.

Ron L: I live in a city to be anonymous - I'm kind of against of this whole thing. I don't want the cops knowing what I'm doing, what kind of house I live in. The more you can compile, the more the police know about me. A lot of people in this neighborhood do things that people don't want others to know about. If you can get the university and this neighborhood to work more closely together, I'm all for that. I like the idea of trees and lights.

David K: The city does not have tree information. They know where the city lights are, but it would be hard for the average person to deal with it.

Charles: Street activity

Ron L: If you can get positive things out of it, I'm all for it.

David K: Ron, part of what you said is very valuable - we need to tell them what we don't want to collect.

But if we're trying to lobby the city to provide low-cost loans for rehabbing housing, we need more information. I'm a strong advocate for privacy issues.

Steve B: If we have a map of lights, we could ask the city to fill in the gaps.

Zach V: A lot of people worry about light pollution.

Ron L: There's also the underlying thing where we make decisions on this board in some sort of star chamber, where we're not all involved. We're not going to amend the charter until September, where was that decided? My impression was that all kinds of decisions were being made that this board signs off on outside of the board.

Deborah H: We don't have enough people here to amend the charter. We need at least 10 neighborhood residents who aren't on the board to make that decision.

David K: I spoke sloppily when I first spoke. We decided at the earlier meeting that we were interested in discussing possibilities. We said that we were interested in dealing with the charter when we have more people.

Drix: We can go to the university and say that we don't want any study, we don't want any help. We can watch things happen like the house on 14th - they took out the only hickory tree in the neighborhood on 14th. We don't want information, we want the dark ages where things get decided by people outside the neighborhood.

Ron L: I don't believe there's a channel for opposition.

Zach V: In September, we do something in the Barometer where we get students involved. They can decide if the United Nations is getting involved in this mapping.

Ron L: We need a forum for some opposition.

David K: Can opposition be respectful?

Ron L: Let's look at how we treat Zach V.

Drix: Zach, you can bring information to the next meeting about how the UN is mapping things so that we can all know.

Meghann: When is the class proposed for?

Drix: Fall term.

Steve N: This would be a story for the Emerald. If you can get more information out, that would be good.

Drix: Marc has a person who is such a good cartographer, he was hired away from the university, but he wants to help out with this process. Ron - I appreciate your keeping us going but not yelling at us here.

Ron L: I'm a Midwestern farm boy who's used to calling the cows. Yelling is louder.

Drix: I'm excited about this. I think having a map of our neighborhood would help us defend our neighborhood. If you go in front of City Council you can't just say "I don't like this" - you need data. I asked Marc if he's going to let us have the data he collects - he said he's going to have it on a university computer. This is one thing I don't like as much. If he leaves, then the data is gone.

Ron L: How about let's have a list of non-taxed properties in the neighborhood?

Steve B: We can look at the list of ideas after today and find what we like. We can then suggest what we'd like them to do.

Charles: Part of the project objective is to find something that will help community action or improvement.

Zach V: There may be hidden points that are not on the university's official list. We need to find out what those are.

Ron L: Sidewalks that need to be repaired.

Zach V: A slant column in the Weekly gave a glowing review of the University creating more housing in WUN. I don't know where they're going to get the land. They don't usually take parking lots. A university study said we should create more housing there.

Steve N: Garbage cans - public trash cans (like Drix's and others)

Charles B: Nice landscaping.

David K: Ask Marc to what extent he would be able to take existing data and merge it into this data - e.g., could his students take non-tax properties from the county and add it. The other area is willingness to hand the data over to the neighborhood - we don't want it lost or locked behind a password.

Zach V: Could we make a request that if I compile 15 pages of data, that he will be required to answer it?

Steve B: We can look at the 15 pages ourselves, then pass it on to him.

Zach V: Everybody here is all cozy with the university. I won't be happy if we don't grill the university on these things.

Steve B: Telephone, power, cable locations for use during the alley repair - rotting poles, etc. We'd work with the utilities to see what they will do.

Seward Meintsma: EWEB has design standards - they require that their conduit be run with a 7-foot easement. I'm going to pursue it to see if there's a way that having conduit as part of the alley repairs could be done. EWEB needs to be able to get to the conduit. If it's under our pavement, then it's difficult. Part of the problem - it's part of the design - that there are code requirements. You need to know where the point of connection is, etc. I'm going to do it with one alley to see what it would take so that we'll know.

Will: I might have some arguments about the alley thing - but today I'm just going to observe.

Drix: We suggested all sorts of things about the alleys last week, putting in art, etc.

Seward: I forgot to bring the manhole cover art this time - I'll bring it next time.

Drix: I'm a bit off topic, but I've got a bunch of jawbreakers to pass out here. [Enthusiastic response and munching]

Steve B: Seward, is there anything you could use for mapping? What about parking lots?

Seward M: I can't think of anything off the top of my head.

Steve B: What about a survey of trees along unpaved alleys?

Seward M: We're already doing that. We've got some pretty detailed surveys.

Steve B: What about fruit trees in the neighborhood?

Alley discussion - Seward Meintsma, project manager of alley paving project

Seward M: Last month I said we expected to have all of the alleys in design review and I'd bring them by. They aren't ready yet, but I brought one alley design by. I'll try to point some things out, then we'll pass it around. Most of our alleys are 14 feet wide. Our typical alley section is seven inch concrete. If there are any that are paved, you can see that. We're trying to put piped storm drains in. We're putting catch basins in where we have to. Along the edges we need a transition. What we have is a grade - we need to slope to the edge. If it's asphalt there at the edge, we'll use asphalt; if it's gravel, gravel; if it's grass, grass. We'll be contacting property owners down the road to get their buy in.

Ron L: Will the city maintain the slope?

Seward M: It's a very minor slope - not an issue. We're only replacing aprons and sidewalks where they're very badly damaged or where we need to put a storm line across.

Charles B: I've heard of alley repaid where the work gets done and the person can't open a gate. Where are the typical problems in what you're done in the past?

Seward M: We haven't really done this in the past. We're trying to avoid problems.

Zach V: Once the group of alleys is done, will we have a body count on the trees? Alleys are usually skinny and these look wider.

Seward M: We pay close attention to that. We try very hard not to cut trees. We are bending over backward to avoid cutting any trees. We will do an inventory of all the trees, including how big they are.

Zach V: Can you run it by this group before the cutting is done? It would be nice to be involved.

Seward M: That sounds doable to me.

Zach V: That might get people to the meetings.

Drix: Are there any alleys that are unique that you'll be proud of?

Seward M: There's nothing really glamorous.

Drix: There's still an opportunity to add art, as long as it doesn't add cost, right?

David K: Like the old-fashioned imprints on sidewalks.

Seward M: That sounds doable.

Drix: One of the city crews has pieces of sidewalk that are interesting. It was the weekend crew. It adds history and connects to the souls of people.

David K: The alleys need to be navigable by trucks.

Zach V: As the housing becomes more expensive, the humvees will have lots of trouble.

Steve B: It's not the EWEB trucks, it's the Sanipac ones that do the dumpsters that cause problems.

Seward M: We're constrained because we don't have much right of way to work in.

David K: There's at least one more point where this comes back to Council. I know there will be a question of trees at that point. It would be good to have that information there.

Seward M: We can pull that information. Trust me on this - we are looking very closely at that.

Will: What are we trying to accomplish by paving these alleys? I'd like a synopsis.

David K: I'll take the heat on that one - it was Council that initiated it. The issues were several. One was a public safety issue. A number of residents feel less safe on unpaved than on paved. It's the broken window syndrome - if the property looks shoddy, owners feel less like taking good care of it. Another was safety with the potholes - cars and pedestrian safety.

Will: My alley is really bad - you need to know how to drive not to bottom out. People don't want to go down my alley. That's my main reason not to want it fixed. I'm not that opposed to alley improvement in principle.

Steve B: What I see is in the alleys on 15th and 16th where there are a lot of apartments, etc. It looks like a third-world country, with dumpsters emptied out on the gravel.

Zach V: If residents are treated better with a housing code, then they'll behave better.

Steve B: I helped design the woonerfs. We put things in to slow traffic. There is still time to ask for speed bumps in high-impact alleys.

Seward M: I wouldn't want to be too definite about that. There are a lot of people who need to get involved in those decisions about speed bumps. It makes some sense to me, though.

Steve B: You could also do some things like making some alleys one way. I'm very glad I live on a paved alley. Otherwise, the contents of the dumpsters on my block would be mostly on the ground.

Drix: Does everyone know what the broken window syndrome is? It's where you have one broken window, you get more.

Zach V: Part of it is people break windows because they feel mistreated.

Steve B: All you need to have is one garbage can partially emptied, and you get a series of them. We should have some alleys where we check which ones have speed issues. (Maybe part of the survey.)

Seward M: I don't know if there are any one-way alleys in the repaving plan.

David K: I know the city has converted an alley to one-way after neighbor requests. This might be an answer for Will's issue too. As more and more people started using it as a cut-through inappropriately, neighbors asked the city to turn it into a one-way alley.

Seward M: You really need the full width to use alleys well.

Charles B: If all the dumpsters had to be on one side, you could have drainage on the other.

Steve B: Judging from my alley - here's the problem. The dumpsters are over here on this side, so the truck backs into my lilac tree to get to the dumpster. It has to back up several times to get the dumpster and put it back into place.

David K: Zach V brought up another issue - mapping public art.

Zach V: I don't want my art mapped.

Seward M: A lot of these ideas that I'm hearing may not fit all the situations, but they're good ideas. Nothing is impossible, but not everything is possible.

David K: As a neighborhood resident, some of the aesthetic ideas are very appealing - can you bounce those off of the other people involved and bring their response back to us?

Zach V: At one point we had discussed opposing the alleys. The alley idea was proposed by the Legislature.

David K: No, the original funding for certain types of work came from there, but this specific project has nothing to do with Salem.

Ron L: Have you contacted St. Vincent de Paul about turning glass into building material - putting some into sidewalks? They might be able to donate some things.

Seward M: Where I studied architecture, they did a lot with waste glass.

Zach V: There's a monument by Sundance that has pressed glass.

Drix: Seward, I'll send you an email reminding you about these things, okay?

Getting more people to meetings

Drix: We need to have larger general meetings - where there are 10 people other than the Board members.

If we do go forward with the WUN Map, we need to have a place where everyone gets together.

Deborah suggests we use food to bring people. Sometime an opportunity in the fall to get people together about the mapping project. Does everyone get the Yahoo group mail? It automatically sends an announcement about the meetings?

Deborah H: I send an email announcement in addition, because there are still a number of people not on the Yahoo Group list.

Steve B: We should have a list of people to call about the meetings.

David K: Laurel Hill group had a phone tree. At each meeting, you get a list of people to call for the next meeting. When the phone tree didn't happen, there was a definite difference in the number of people.

Rather than the list growing and growing, the secretary would strike the names off the list who hadn't come to the last four meetings.

Charles B: We have a big lineup. It's usually one theme, but the mayor, other bigwigs come. We did our first newsletter this time. We also did a radio ad.

David K: Do you know if anyone responded to a radio ad?

Steve N: When you took a vote, only 39 of those 70 people were able to vote - so it looks like you did get more people.

Zach V: You could tie into the Animal House event in Cottage Grove to get more people interested in the neighborhood. The Emerald might not mention this huge thing in Cottage Grove - maybe have a sister neighborhood relationship. Cottage Grove Main Street mixes with Max's tavern. One of the Animal House shots - you can see it down the alley from Max's. We could have Hollywood people in the alley, talking about how wonderful the alley is.

David K: I like the tie-in. I wonder about the timing. It's Labor Day weekend, which is before the students get back.

Zach V: The City of Eugene would be skirting its responsibilities if it doesn't recognize this. We've lost one opportunity with things already being demolished.

Drix: I like the new Wink as a way of getting information out. Maybe not something this big, but something with lots of little news bits.

David K: Next meeting would be August 5. How many people will be around? If we could get information from Seward by the next meeting - trees, speed issues - that would be useful.

Zach V: If we all read the Weekly's article on the Riverfront, we could discuss that.

Charles B: Controversy does bring out the neighbors. A sports field, lights.

Zach V: We could add a note in the mailing about what to read for the next meeting.

Drix: Mailings are expensive. We can't do very many.

Steve B: We should do a mailing for the September or October meeting.

Deborah: If we do a phone tree, who is willing to call? (David K, Steve B, Drix respond.)

Drix: Anyone heard from Caroline with our archived newsletters?

Steve N: November is an election time. Think about when to send a mailing. We need nominations in October for the election in November.

Deborah H: We can do more hand-delivery, but we need people who are willing to deliver to the 3000 addresses in the neighborhood.

Zach V: What about the park?

David K: Nothing will happen in the park until the master park design is done, sometime in 2005.

Drix: Looking at the parking area at 14th and Patterson as a possible alternative park site, we don't need to be married to the green. We're an urban neighborhood.

Steve B: We don't need to be either-or. We may not be as bad now as we were.

David K: I think the challenge is that there's nothing obvious. This neighborhood can do the philosophical work. We don't as a neighborhood have the financial resources. There's nobody who would be the obvious champion. The Parks people say yes, there should be a park in WUN, but no one is taking it to the next step and saying "How do we make that happen?" To be fair, I don't think it's that they're dragging their feet. They're still working on implementing the 1998 parks bond measure that was passed - 5 more parks to be designed from that, then also the master parks plan to be designed. The third thing is some of the citizen members want to send another bond measure to the voters in November. In a poll, 72% said it was a good idea; with the financial effect attached, 65% still wanted a park bond measure.

David K: Has the neighborhood board ever made a formal written request to the Parks folks to have the park reopened, or to open it for a specific event? Then either you're surprised and they say yes, or you get a no and why.

Steve B: The park wasn't one of the Neighborhood Task Force recommendations. We did a brainstorming session where we came to short-term and long-term recommendations. The Park was on the long list of 300-some recommendations, but it didn't make the short list of 10 short-term and 10 long-term recommendations.

Zach V: If they decide to tear it down, we should get a cost estimate of what it would cost to tear it down versus the cost to reopen it.

Steve B: The police will be strongly opposed to opening it because of its location. If they fight it, then they may be more open to a different location.

Zach V: If we find out we're losing the park, then there's a big rally for a community garden. People who can't define the space around them are more likely to be rioters. Opening the park now to get the neighborhood involved would get more people to meetings.

Steve B: Let's figure out a strategy. You get it open for some special events, then as a pilot project. We have to realize that if we open it and we have problems, then we need an alternative strategy.

Drix: I'll draft out a letter to the Parks Department and show the letter to people on email; we'll discuss it at the next meeting.

Steve B: We should figure out an event to have in the park.

David K: Let's try to find a way to bring the historic aspect in. Ken Guzowski is a fount of resources. Even in October, it might rain.

Ron L: Randy said that if we put on an event, he had tents. We could do a picnic in the park and bring people in as a welcome to the neighborhood, get handy phone numbers, register to vote, for example.

Zach V: We could tie it to the Animal House event - something by 11th Street.

David K: We should make this decision in August so we can send a letter to the City.

Steve B: A neighborhood cleanup event and tree-planting event might be another idea.

David K: Add an info fair, too.

Zach V: Fairmount gets donations from Track Town pizza.

Steve B: We should get donations from Pegasus - it's in our neighborhood.

Ron L: Rainbow sent us refreshments at the yard sale; did they get thanked?

Deborah: They got a thank-you letter.

Ron L: White Bird was very happy with the leftover refreshments.

Meeting adjourned at around 9 pm.