

WUN meeting, June 3 2004
7-9pm, Indigo District
Notes by Deborah Healey

Present: Board members Drix, Deborah Healey, Steve Baker, Ron Lewis, Clark Cox, David Kelly; WUN residents Sheila Abbott, Meghann Coniff; others present: Steve Norris, Seward Meintsma

1. Report from Drix

- a) We still have some money for one more mailing - we can distribute newsletters or mail postcards. We should try to have something to put on business counters with info that is useful, such as a neighborhood yard sale.
- b) June 12th target for yard sale - could get something printed in time to deliver by hand
- c) WUN park - we need to come up with something. Three more neighborhoods opening up parks in June - refurbished parks in Trainsong, Bethel, one other.
- d) Neighborhood Leaders having a retreat in June re how to represent ourselves as an organized body that can take stands and represent the people in our neighborhoods.
- e) Planning Commission would like to hear from neighborhood groups.
- f) Chief of Police wants to come to a meeting to talk about neighborhood policing and other police issues. Would be good in fall term, maybe October meeting.
- g) WUN has a yahoo group: email Drix to join (drix@drix.com)
- h) Neighborhood NL - maybe something like Blink (though it has ads). City-published newsletters can't contain ads, but the neighborhood could do its own.

Zak V: neighborhoods can do a lot of activism, but where is the limit for the City?

David K: The City has guidelines for newsletters.

Ron L: I'd like to see a one-page that can be distributed in coffee shops, etc.

David K: There is some hook that we are not aware of, that we need to get people.

Whether it's topic, or how the information is distributed - it's not just a postcard. Once you've got people in, then it's worth coming back to.

Steve N: You're so new, you hardly have had a chance to know each other. The Board need to figure out how to get to know each other. People jump on board with issues.

Ron L: Like when the hospital tried to tear down houses in the neighborhood.

Drix: It would be nice for the neighborhood to promote what's there. Maybe we could make enough money just selling ads. Mostly it would be a way to know who's here.

Steve N: The next flyer should note the yahoo groups site. Some people worry about having yahoo mail - you don't need to get mail, just get a name and password to get into the group. There may be a problem with linking from the city website to a site with ads.

- i) Litter: Drix: Here's a sample of the bucket we're been talking about. We could have a series of these, cable them to a tree - each resident with a bucket takes care of it. Put a catchy saying on it, like pitch in - 2 points for one shot. We could take pictures and put them on the net.

David K: Anything that can help the litter situation is a good idea. It would be good to promote that through a fall newsletter, maybe collect a small number of these and tell people where to pick them up. It's a way to help that's easy. We can all work on it, make it a contest.

- j) Security is another issue we can talk about later.

2. Group introductions

3. What's happening at City Council - David Kelly

- a) Budget: The City budget committee finished the budget for the next fiscal year. No significant cuts to general fund services. Slight increment was added to the neighborhood budget. There were a couple of specialized funds that were cut. The storm water fee on the EWEB bill hasn't changed in the last 12 years; there will be substantial cuts to the programs that storm water fee funds, such as taking care of vegetation, stream team fund, elimination of all public education about the Endangered Species Act, cuts in road fund.
- b) Toxics Right to Know Law: there was a cap put on the largest fee that any company can pay. About five of the companies had their fees dramatically reduced to the \$2000 cap (from \$12,000 for Hynix) - so the small businesses need to pay more. So the same groups that lobbied council to put the cap on came back to complain about fee increases. Now Council needs to look at ways inequities can be reduced next year. There is a potential to fix inequities by referring the issue back to the voters at a high cost. \$2000 is maximum set by the state legislature. City had assessed based on quantity of toxics used - courts called that illegal because of a previous state law about fire marshal regulations. Each session, certain lobbyists try to hack away at the Toxics Right to Know Law. There has been a change in the tone of the debate about whether public services are valuable. My response to the assertion that there is waste is to tell me what the wasteful programs are and we'll try to fix them.
- c) Housing standards: I was pleasantly surprised that at the May 24 meeting Council voted to have staff draft a housing standards based on the Corvallis model. The hearing will take place in the fall - a working group will meet in the summer to work on the language, but the hearing will be in the fall.
- d) Civic Center vision: information about this was in the RG. The City currently has downtown office space scattered across several facilities around downtown. There are inefficiencies - a study showed that separation of more than 200 feet for parts of an organization was too much. Many of these facilities were built and sized 40 years ago, and Eugene has grown substantially. Issues include adequate space, space nearby other city buildings, and earthquake safety. A few years ago, there was discussion about replacing the police building. Some people wanted to step back and take a larger look at the whole government needs - city, county, state, federal levels. Representatives from each of those agencies plus from local nonprofits like Womenspace (rape crisis intervention in police station) were also included. Late this month/early next month the committee will present ideas. Sketch that was published was based on "what might we do if we could do just about anything" with some consideration for cost. This is probably the kind of thing you build in pieces over 20 years.
Zak V: if you study something for a very long time, then the time spent studying becomes the reason to do it.
David K: It's been about 4 months for this and about \$5000.

Zak V: At visioning meeting they were talking about June 14 as next meeting to discuss this - most people are out of town. The idea of vibrant downtown was connected to tunnels to avoid traffic difficulties. You need to come up with something better - ADA requires no stairs without an elevator, so that's a consideration.

David K: If we were going to try to adopt a final plan in the summer, I would agree that it would have to wait until fall. The most significant thing to happen this summer would be for Council to say "that seems like a good general idea, but it needs to be elaborated with more public input." In terms of borrowing money, the City has a facilities fund it has set up. To build even one of these buildings, the city would have to have a bond measure.

4. Seward Meintsma: project manager of alley paving project - paving 25-26 alleys.

Everyone seems to have been positive about this. Maybe by next month I can bring drawings to show what we've got so far. We've made good progress on the design. Still a lot left to do, including the assessment calculations. We're launching into that now.

Drix: Maybe you can give us a project list to put online.

Seward M: We're not doing the bids yet. We have six designs out for internal review now, six more going out this week, six more next week. This includes EWEB consult. We have four more that a consultant is working on. By next month we will have comments back, but probably not much going on until the end of the year. We're looking at January for bidding if we're lucky, probably Feb-March timeframe. We won't do them all in one bid package - probably 3-4 packages, so likely more than one contractor will get them. The work will probably get going after school is out for those close to the university; others further away we might get started earlier, like middle of April or May 2005.

Sheila A: Utility tunnels?

Seward M: That might be more expensive to do.

Steve B: It's just putting in conduit, not the wiring - if EWEB can identify where to put the conduit and you put it under the paving, that will save a lot of money in future. I'm sure the businesses would like electrical and phone underground.

Seward M: I don't know what the design issues are - EWEB is looking at the designs now. I don't know what the details are that need to be looked at. I'll try to get to WUN meetings the next few months for the discussion.

Steve B: I'd be glad to meet with you and EWEB about the conduit. They don't have to put all the pieces in place now, just plan for it.

Seward M: I think you need to bury that 30 inches. That's deeper than our base, but not much deeper. We were thinking about conduit aprons in the street, but not in the alley.

David K: Assessments - is it a safe assumption that you will do a general outreach to all property owners that will give people a phone number to call to find what their specific assessment will be?

Seward M: I'm working on that now. Maybe a fall timeframe - maybe in a month or so I'll have some idea. I was surprised to see that the cost of asphalt had not gone up in a bid I just looked at.

Drix: You can see the names in the concrete in some sidewalks. Is there a way to add that into this activity so that it's not just plain?

Ron L: And bottle caps...

Drix: Can we come up with ideas and send those out to you? Like a date, the seal of Eugene, something memorable.

Seward M: Sure.

David K: The concrete equivalent of a watermark. Personality would be a good thing.

Seward M: Next month I'll have a bunch of drawings that you can take a look at. We have some pretty fancy manhole lids. We've got fish ones - we use them all the time as we do projects. People have been pretty positive.

Drix: Downtown Seattle by Pike Street has a bunch of them - they show you where you are in the city.

Ron L: Can you talk about the City's taking over the alleys?

Seward M: We're not really taking them over, we're just maintaining them. The only thing that will change is that they'll be paved. Many people are glad not to have the potholes. About making it look better - I studied architecture and that's what got me into this. I hear what you're saying about the aesthetic issues.

Steve B: This issue about alleys came up at the West University Task Force - it's from the neighbors, not from the City.

Seward M: Designs are based on a combination of quality and cost. There is no way we can favor one contractor over another one. There are purchasing mechanisms that are CMGC - Construction Manager General Contractor - but I don't want to get into that. All of our stuff is based on low bid.

Zak V: What do you know about the Cannery demolition?

Seward M: I don't know anything about it.

Steve B: Alleys don't have anything to do with that. Alleys were brought up by people in the neighborhood.

Seward M: A lot of the things you're talking about relate to the facilities organization in the city. We're roads and curbs and gutters - someone else deals with the facilities stuff.

Drix: Dumpsters are another issue - in parking areas and the planting strip. Are you aware of the little strips of gutters that are unusual - are you dealing with those?

Seward M: We won't take out sidewalks. We may need to take out some driveway aprons and a couple of sidewalk panels, but that's it.

5. Neighborhood yard sale.

Steve B: I went to Central Presbyterian Church requesting that we have space by Patterson for June 12. Pastor Ken said that it sounds like a good idea - he'll let us know on Tuesday. We might be able to get some tables from the church. This would be from 9:30-5 that day.

Sheila: We could supply free refreshments from Rainbow Optics.

Drix: Make sure you add info about Rainbow to the things you bring.

Ron L: Let's make sure that we have a plug about the neighborhood group in this, too.

Drix: We're got a great neighborhood - lots of great people here.

Zak V: Think about tabling in front of the bookstore.

Drix: Can we make cards that we can hand out as flyers?

Steve N: The City can pay for the cards and flyers.

Zak: Let's have information about saving the park, too.

Deborah: That would be a good addition to the flyer we hand out at the yard sale.

Yard sale activities:

Promotion - Drix will do a flyer announcing the neighborhood sale - put them on business counters in the neighborhood. This needs to include what to do, where to bring it, what their responsibilities are. \$5 fee to sell; \$4 back if you clean up. Call Drix for information. The City can pay to print it. Can be on colored paper. We need to have those to Steve N by Monday morning; they'll be printed Tuesday; we can hand them out the rest of the week.

Flyer at the event - info about coming activities, save the park information - maybe a calendar. Zak will send some information to Drix about the park. Drix will lay out the flyer; Deborah will review it. To Steve N by Tuesday or Weds. Word format to Deborah and PDF format to Steve N.

Drix will distribute the flyers.

Deborah to talk to the Emerald and ask if we can leave a stack at the bookstore; also to check with goodwill re pickup at the end of the meeting.

Ron will be at the sale; Steve B for part of the time

Sheila will arrange for so to bring refreshments over on Saturday morning - she'll probably be out of town.

Drix: I'd like to have High Street signs to sell.

6. Other business

a) Meghann: Von Klein doesn't have recycling containers available.

Drix: That should be part of the housing code. We need to put that in there. One thing we should try to do is to get all property management companies have their name on the outside of the building.

Zak V: Need to be sure that the UO is included in housing requirements.

b) Steve N: WUN needs to decide how to spend newsletter money by the end of June, too.

c) Zak V: June 14 is the date for the Civic Center information to be given out. June 23 is date for rezoning of land east of the university 19th-Villard-Agate-Franklin - Atrium Building for the meeting.

7. Nanotechnology issue: Zak Vishanoff

Zak V: Nanotechnology - UO is building a new 60,000 sq ft facility for nanotechnology studies. One possible future application of nanotechnology is to have tiny videocameras in the walls of a home to detect intruders. My issue is that we have a public university making a decision to get into an expensive technology. The City Council without a hearing may allow them to go ahead and build this. It's early to know exactly what they're going to do. I've studied this for a year. This could be the next industrial revolution, and they'll be filling out the research park with other nanotech-related companies. With Hyundai, there were a lot of talks and hearings. With this new facility and technology, it's on par with Hyundai but the neighborhoods don't know what's going on. We don't know who's doing what, how it will be monitored. Federal buildings could be patrolled by artificial birds. Some could be created here or at OSU. Those should be public policy decisions. People should be discussing what technologies are appropriate. They got something like \$20 million for this building.

I have been invited to ask a question at City Club about nanotechnology. I'd like my question to the top people to be "Will you support my new goal of creating a 30-40-person advisory committee on nanotechnology in Eugene?" They would meet every 2 weeks or so to learn about this so that it wouldn't be just scientists talking about it and making this decision. These people of all types should be looking at this - compensated slightly. For example, California has looked at the tiny tags used on things to track shipments. We're not familiar with this stuff, so it might put us into a position we won't like later. This committee isn't formed yet, but we've allocated the money and announced the building, and Eugene is getting branding related to nanotechnology. Our policymakers have gotten way ahead of us. The reason this is important is because there aren't regulations yet. They're streamlining processes, saying there won't be a hearing for this technology. I'd like the Board to endorse the idea of a nanotechnology advisory committee because this is a large project, but the town doesn't have a safety net related to it yet. This will help me talk about this to the media. The committee would look into monetary, land use, environmental impact, etc. of this project.

Steve B: Is there going to be a forum on the City Club about this?

Zak V: There will be a discussion there. My question will be, why isn't this committee in place. I'm hoping to get the approval of student cooperatives. I'd like to get the neighborhood group's endorsement as well. It's better to hash those questions out early. June 25th at noon is when this will be. The publisher of Wink published one of my essays about nanotechnology, and he's a former president of City Club. That's how I got asked.

Steve B: Our neighborhood group is limited in what it can do. We try to focus in what we can do in our neighborhood. We don't have enough bodies to do our work.

Zak V: I fear for any neighborhood that can't see a threat and respond to it.

Ron L: I want you to focus it a bit so we can talk about it. None of us are denigrating your passion for this.

Zak V: If you cared, you would have read about it. That was why I contacted you a month ago. I've been announcing the center for a year and I'm not getting anything from them.

The sense of the Board was to get more information before providing a formal response.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10pm with thanks to Indigo District for hosting.

Next meeting: 7-9pm July 1, Indigo District, 13th and Oak.