

Morningside Neighborhood Association
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
July 13, 2016
Painters Hall – Pringle Creek Community
MINUTES

This meeting was combined with a general neighborhood meeting/program to discuss the issue of a proposal by Verizon Communications to locate a cell phone tower on residential zoned property in the neighborhood. In addition to eleven board members including Brad Nanke who could not be present during discussion of the Land Use related issue (quorum), there were more than 30 non-board-member neighbors present. Most of the 30 were from the residential blocks immediately surrounding the church property on which the tower would be located.

Call to Order – Chair Pamela Schmidling called the meeting to order at 6:29 PM, and – referring to the impending discussion – asked that the crowd be courteous and brief in their comments on the matter.

Introductions – Attendees introduced themselves by name and residential street; an attendance sheet was circulated, but the secretary does not have it at the time these minutes are being typed; Hopefully, Chair Pamela S. has it; Board members noticed by the Secretary as present at the time the meeting was called to order include: Pamela Schmidling; Janet Bubl; Scott Schaefer; Geoffrey James; Chap Milbank; Bennie Yows; Bob Krebs; Sam Hall; Lloyd Chapman; Al Tocchini; and Brad Nanke; Sue Reid; McKenzie Farrell.

Police Report – Officer Schofield of Salem Police Department said that – with his recent return to the shift in this neighborhood, he had nothing new to report, and asked for questions from the attendees: Al T. asked the officer if he was aware of any issues with the SPD on-line crime reporting system, and stated that three attempts to report a theft of property failed after completing the details requested – had to find the telephone number for reporting by phone – which was not posted on the web-page; Officer said that he was not aware of any such problems, but understands that the online reporting site is only for certain type of crime reports?; Benny Yows asked if there is a limit on time a vehicle can be parked on the street, and cited a truck van which has been parked at the southwest corner of Albert Avenue and 12th Street – already a congested spot due to narrowing of 12th – that blocks view of traffic approaching the intersection; officer said he would check on it; Another attendee asked if the officer’s was on “shift” in this neighborhood right now; answer “yes”, and attendee reported a lot of car break-ins in the Chaparral – Crowley Loop area and apparent homeless camping on or near the church property, and that they are currently trying to set up a Neighborhood Watch program, and invited the officer to meet with the organizing group; Another attendee reported a problem he had about a year ago when he called 911 to report a burglary that had just happened at his residence, and was chided by the 911 operator for using “911” to report the crime, because the culprit was no longer onsite; he asked that a system be developed by which the 911 operator can forward the call when they deem the matter no longer an emergency; the officer explained that there *is* a follow-up investigation procedure by which Community Service Officer will collect evidence; (there was some disagreement with that assertion.)

Approval of Minutes – Chair Pamela called for approval of the minutes to the May and June meetings (quorum was not present in June to approve May minutes); minutes of both meetings were approved by board members now present.

Neighborhood Goals – Pamela called for more definite Board decision on whether or not a change of goal statement is needed, as deadline for submitting changes is near; board voted to keep the goal statements as they are for the coming year.

City Council Report – Since Councilor Brad Nanke would need to leave the meeting during discussion of the cell tower issue, Chair Pamela asked him to give his report before discussion ensued. Brad began his report by explaining his absence at recent MNA Board meetings due to City Council business being conducted on the same evenings; Nanke mentioned the hearing scheduled for July 25 to discuss proposed substantial increase in garbage rates (due to County’s increase in “tipping” fees at the power generation waste burning facility; Nanke also mentioned that discussion are also coming about a new river crossing, expansion of the city’s Urban Growth Boundary in Polk County; the first meeting of the Water Rate Task Force is considering an increase in rates not expected to be more than 3% from current rates (work sessions are scheduled for the 3rd Monday of the coming months; One attendee from outside Morningside asked Nanke if anything can be done about homeless campers in the woods around Pringle Elementary School, and in other areas along local creeks where there is a lot of garbage being left by them; someone reported that the City has just got a grant to help house up to 40 homeless Veterans (possibly an OHA-administered grant); Nanke mentioned there was a CERT meeting in June, and one scheduled for August, and encouraged all to consider signing up for the free 21 hour course; Benny Yows asked Nanke if hard copies of the City’s Emergency Preparedness Plan are available; Nanke suggested citizens going to the City’s Website and download and print it at home, and that printed copies may be available for a small fee from the city; Pamela S. added that the document can be reached inside the Fire Department section of the Website; Roger Stevenson is the city’s Risk Management Administrator; Nanke further reported that CERT training sessions will be held on October 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th, and November 1st at Salem Family YMCA, and class size is 16 (must register ahead); the next round of training will be held at Chemeketa Community College; contact Roger Severson’s office to register (503) 763-3331; one attendee mentioned that the Neighborhood CERT cache is located at Morningside United Methodist Church on 12th street, and this is also the current designated Morningside Neighborhood gathering place during major emergency situations. Discussion complete on the City Council matters, Nanke then left the meeting.)

Verizon Cell Tower Discussion

This was a lengthy and busy discussion/commentary involving both Board and visiting neighborhood residents (mostly from Chaparral Ave, Aneka Loop, Crowley Ave and Kampstra Street blocks surrounding the proposed tower site; so these notes may not have captured all of the commentary – but hopefully represent what took place.)

Sharon Gretch, MD7 Consulting: – site location contractor for Verizon – led-off with saying that this is NOT-YET a done deal, and that the public still has time to present their concerns to the City for hearing

scheduled for 5:30 PM, August 10; (Pam Cole, City Planning Office, said that she needs any written commentary two weeks ahead of the hearing to include it in Staff report on the matter, but that both written and oral testimony can be given up through the time of the hearing and entered into the record.) The presentation was also interrupted by questions about details that the speaker and associates said would be answered in the presentation. Sharon G. continued by explaining the need for more Cell service in the area – citing the explosive growth of data transfer in recent years with the advent of smart phones, and the switch of many households from phone line to all cell service. Regarding noise and light pollution, Sharon G said that the only noise emitted from the tower would be from the emergency power back-up generator, which would be tested briefly once each month. Chart showed noise level similar to background in a library. Someone from audience expressed concern that the high wall at the back of the adjacent shopping center would deflect and amplify the noise. MD7 is not yet sure whether or not a light will be required on the top of the tower (residents felt on most likely would be required - at least for the 75' tower for which Verizon is applying for an exception from the zone's 50' height limit for such structures - because it would be in the regular down-wind approach route for the airport. MD7 Regarding health and safety concerns, Sharon encouraged citizens to research literature on the subject, but make sure they are citing peer-reviewed material to form their opinions. Handouts regarding the proposal were sent to all of the regulating and affected agencies and institutions. Questions from audience: Why was Buttercup Hill School not notified? Aren't there any more-appropriate sites available in Commercial zone? Is Verizon the only vendor that will use the tower? Verizon is the only one currently scheduled to use the tower (75' tower is designed for two carriers including Verizon.) Discussion turned to City's denial of permission to Verizon to locate the antenna on their nearby tower: "Why is City exempt from their own code?" Pam Cole said that she would put the question into the Staff Report. The Code does not prohibit City from taking other users on its towers. Discussion turned to Code specifications for panel dimensions on tower structures: There is no maximum panel width in the Code, but Code requires the tower to be concealed as much as possible within its site's surroundings. Next question had to do with chance of homeless camps developing in the landscaping surrounding the tower and generator enclosure: There had been a problem with people camping in the high shrubs that used to be behind the shopping center building, but church pastor got the property owner to remove the vegetation, and problem has subsided. Board member Lloyd Chapman asked for someone to speak on the church's behalf, and the pastor agreed to give his views: The church has been a part of this neighborhood for 45 years; it hosted the 10 year celebration of MNA; he has fielded many questions regarding the tower issue; the church wants to be a good neighbor. The offer from Verizon for the tower site was a 25 year lease with a five-year opt-out, and from the church's perspective it provides a dependable revenue stream; the pastor said that if he had concrete evidence of the health and safety and property devaluation concerns expressed in the neighbors' petition, he would have signed it as well. A comment from the group was that with those issues aside, there is still an "eyesore" issue to be considered with the tower's proposed design. The pastor responded to the aesthetics question: It is in an acceptable place with acceptable camouflage for the place. Comments from attendees: e.g. "Does it matter?"; Verizon: "Still looking at other property." "How come other property in commercial zone wasn't included in the search/study?" "Who is making sure SRC is followed?" Pam Cole looked at the materials and is having a 3rd party reviewer to confirm need for tower and need for height proposed; this is a first review; no final documents seen yet; Janet B.

commented Code was modified to allow this – but with the highest level of review; What do they need to prove it meets code? What if we think more proof (of meeting SRC) is needed? The MD7 technician charged with finding a tower site for Verizon explained that there is only a very small area that will do for the necessary coverage; they have already spent \$100,000 to \$200,000 on this matter; The City’s Public Works Tower was a good candidate when the search began some 2-1/2 to 3 years ago (2012-13). At this point, Chair Pamela S. called an end to the discussion, and people who wanted to discuss the matter further were asked to leave the meeting room so the Board could handle the remaining business on its agenda.

Committee Reports

Traffic – Committee Chair Alan Meyer not present, so there was no report.

Land Use – Geoffrey James had four items to talk about:

Fairview Refinement Plan comment deadline for entry into the Staff Report was yesterday, and we voted on line to support it; Sam Hall said the same handouts that we were given and we approved were in the RP packet; The hearing will be on the 19th; Lloyd Chapman moved that we formally approve the changes to the refinement plan in this meeting; motion seconded and passed unanimously; Geoffrey J. mentioned that the Fairview Community Park plan relies on approval of the changed refinement plan; Geoffrey J. reported that Simpson Hill asked for a two year extension on their planned development; and that they had recently mowed the brush and weeds that had grown back since they did the site grading a few years back; Finally, the Hilfiker tower discussed earlier was a land use issue; Janet B. asked Geoffrey J. if he knew anything about the new medical building going in on 12th Street, near McGilchrist . . . there was some discussion about its proximity to the creek, whether or not a new crossing was part of the development. (minute taker unsure about what the answer was.)

Parks – No report.

Pringle Creek Watershed Council – Chap Milbank said there was no meeting since the last MNA meeting.

CERT – Pamela S. - Nothing else to report.

Liquor License – Pamela S. had no new applications to report.

Transit – Bob Krebs - Nothing New to Report.

Council Report – already given by Brad N. before he left the meeting.

Election of New Officers – Janet B. moved we keep the same slate of occupied positions, Chap M. seconded the motion and it passed; Pamela S. reminded the Board that there was still a Vice Chair position (vacated by Thomas Smith) to fill, and, after some gentle coercion, Bob Krebs was convinced to accept nomination for that position; vote was taken and passed unanimously.

Old Business

From at-large: _____ (name unavailable) reported that her request to get a 4-way stop sign on Ewald Street and Harvey Avenue was not getting a response by the City official(s) in charge of such; reported that people are still not yielding to person on the right as rules dictate – even saw a school bus blow through the intersection; MNA Traffic committee chair Alan Meyer contacted the city after her last visit to a Board meeting, and the matter was dismissed; Pamela called for the question as to whether or not we should ask for the city to study that location; Geoffrey J. said that according to CATSC standards, the traffic load on that part of Ewald may not meet the threshold for such action; Question was revised to ask for a traffic count to see for sure (unsure if this was voted.)

New Business-

August Meeting – Pamela S. asked if anyone wanted to hold a meeting in August (we usually take July off – but held this meeting to help discussion on Hilfiker tower issue. Board voted to cancel August meeting;

Derelict Residential Property – Benny Yows asked if anybody knew the situation with a home on Suntree Ave, which appears to be vacant and is in need of yard maintenance; Pamela S. said the matter should be reported to the Compliance Officer.

Back to Verizon – Hilfiker Tower – Pamela S. said that the Board needed to decide whether or not to take a position on the matter; Janet B. opened discussion stating concern that the tower – being the first in a Residential Zone in Salem may be setting a precedent we don't want for our neighborhoods; If City doesn't want it on their tower in/near Woodmansee Park, then why should residential areas be used for the installations; there was more discussion on several facets of the matter, and a motion was made, seconded and passed by those present to abstain from taking a vote in support or against the Hilfiker Tower siting; Lloyd Chapman disagreed with the motion/decision to abstain, and proposed that we make comment to the City of our concerns about 1) precedent of allowing exception for a 75 foot tower where only a 50 foot tower should be considered if at-all; 2) the massive, poorly-camouflaged "big panel" design (why not a faux tree?) since nothing tying the tower to the church is allowed (e.g. the crucifix); and , 3) The objections of a significant number of neighbors to the subject property who disapprove of the installation. After some "words of encouragement", Lloyd agreed to draft the letter and circulate it to the Board before submitting. The members present (8 of the 11 originally in attendance) voted in support of such a letter. There was some concern that the vote would not be legitimate, since a quorum was no-longer present. McKenzie F. looked through the by-laws and could find no clause to counter the vote in support of the letter, so the decision was made to proceed (especially since all the board would have a chance to approve or disapprove the draft.)

Adjournment - Meeting was adjourned at about 8:45 PM by Chair Pamela S.

