

Laurelhurst Community Club
Minutes for October 9, 2006
St. Stephen's Church, Seattle WA

Attending: Maggie Weissman, Leslie Wright, Brian McMullen, Barb Bender, Don Torrie, Liz Ogden, Jeannie Hale, Joe Herrin, Mark Trumbauer, and Stan Sorscher

Excused: Jennifer Biely, Mark Holden, Marian Joh, Susan Rupp, Bonnie Zinn

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM.

ADMINISTRATION:

Changes to the Agenda: Add requested leaves of absences. Jennifer Biely and Bonnie Zinn have requested six-month leaves of absence. If the board approves the leaves, the quorum for meetings would be reduced from 10 to 9. By general agreement, leaves of absence are granted for Jennifer and Bonnie.

Treasurer's Report: Marian Joh sent a monthly status report. LCC had committed \$10k to the sidewalk safety project. That went on hold until our financial condition improved. We will reactivate that item.

Minutes: The board reviewed the September 11, 2006. **Motion** by Liz Ogden seconded by Don Torrie to accept the minutes as submitted. **Motion passed** unanimously.

CALLS AND CONCERNS:

1. Missing bikes: Biely reported that the two bikes that had gone missing from her yard had been recovered on 9/12. Ogden found one of the bikes about a block from her house. Biely's daughters posted signs about the bikes (LCC had checked with the city attorney's office and learned that neighbors have the right to post signs in certain locations to find lost pets, advertise garage sales, etc.) Neighbor Allison Rider noticed the second missing bike down at the Washington Mutual Bank on Sand Point Way. She had seen the signs and brought the bike to the Biely's house. Katie and Sarah Biely were thankful for the safe return of their bikes. Weissman suggested that LCC have a lost and found section on its website.
2. Sidewalk safety: On 9/12 neighbors Jim and Mary Jo Gasparich reported that they had finished their sidewalk project and were hoping for partial reimbursement through the sidewalk safety program. The program anticipates that a number of projects on the Laurelhurst inventory would be undertaken at the same time to save on costs and then the city, LCC and the neighbor would share in the cost. Unless Merlino Construction is the company that the city hires to undertake our sidewalk program and this project can be rolled in with the others, it is unlikely that the Gasparisch's could be reimbursed for a portion of the cost.
3. Traffic safety: Barb Ragee called on 9/13 to ask if LCC could pursue street markings or signage at 5 Corners going out of Laurelhurst in the far right lane. She said that cars in that lane sometimes turn left, rather than turning right or going

straight. With two other lanes turning left, sometimes cars go over the line causing a hazard.

4. Curb cut installation: As part of the pedestrian improvements being installed around Laurelhurst School, a curb cut was being installed directly under the NE 45th overpass (across from the corner of NE 45th and 47th Avenue NE). The PTA and LCC jointly contacted the transportation department (SDOT) to make sure that there had been no misunderstanding about the request for safety improvements. Concerns were raised about potential danger for those crossing the street due to lack of visibility for drivers and pedestrians due to the hill.
5. Waterway No. 1: On 9/18, Judith Thornton contacted LCC to report that a truck had deposited two half logs, approximately ten feet long and three feet wide, several large root balls of yellow flag iris and several large rocks and chunks of concrete rubble into the shoreline area at Waterway No. 1. She asked if this action was part of the design plan for the waterway. Hale checked it out and didn't find anything out of the ordinary. It just looked as if the current brought in a couple of small half rotten logs. The water level was low, so some of the items on the bottom of the lake were visible. Hale reported this to Thornton who then took Hale down to point out what she meant. There were no tire marks to indicate that a vehicle had been on the lot and the tall grass next to the bollards had not been disturbed. Thornton reported that she did not go over check out what was going on, when the truck was supposedly there or get the license plate of the vehicle. She did say she knew there was dumping because there were footprints in the mud on the shoreline. She said she was willing to hire someone to cut up the logs. Hale cautioned her that a shoreline permit may be necessary. Torrie also checked out the area. He found no large logs as Thornton had described, only two small broken logs.
6. Tree markers: On 9/18, Eric and Leslie Harder contacted LCC because they had purchased one of the Holly oaks in honor of Lester C. Harder and their names were not listed in the September newsletter. Mr. Harder had Alzheimer's and later died. Biely followed up. Betsy Lee called on 9/10 to say that she and her husband Larry bought a tree for their son Larry. Two other neighbors contacted Biely. Four additional tree markers have been ordered in memory of Lester C. Harder, Jason Andrew Lee, Howard and Leila Coombs and Professor John and Mary McDiarmid. Apparently what happened is that there was space for a few additional trees and an appeal went out to neighbors to see if there was additional interest. Because the project was started 18 years ago, records of the additional tree purchases were not readily available.
7. Contact info: Coco Sherman emailed on 9/19 to see if we had contact information for Merlino Construction as she thought they might be interested in contributing to the Laurelhurst playground project or discounting services.
8. SR 520: On 9/19, Martin Pagel emailed for clarification on LCC's position on the SR 520 Replacement Project. Herrin responded. Pat and Lisa McCabe sent LCC their comments opposing the Pacific Interchange due to the impact on the Arboretum and

for other reasons. Herrin and Jean Amick have been in touch with a number of neighbors about SR 520 issues.

9. Skatepark—CON: Dillana Crawford emailed on 9/18 to express strong opposition to a skatepark at the Playfield (she lives across the street). She thought a skatepark would bring more traffic and pointed out that there are already parking and speeding problems. She was concerned that a skatepark would become another place for teenagers to hangout in the evening and lead to more nighttime disruption and underage drinking. She also had concerns about noise and graffiti. Stacy Graves emailed on 9/19 to say she hoped there would be no skatepark anywhere near Laurelhurst. She said that kids that hang out at skateparks look like delinquents. She is worried about property vandalism and negative role models for neighborhood children.
10. Skatepark—PRO: Fred Wemer emailed on 9/20 to say he likes the idea of a skatepark in the neighborhood. He is 68 years old and said he wouldn't use it, but maybe his grandchildren would use it instead of watching television. Mimi Winslow emailed on the same day and said she also supported a skatepark. Debbie Jenner emailed on 9/25 to express strong support for a neighborhood skatepark. She is an ex-skateboarder and mother of three school age children (12, 10 and 7) who are avid skateboarders. The only options are skateboarding in Ballard, in Fremont where it costs \$8 per person or on the street. Jenner thinks that a skatepark in the neighborhood would bring kids from Laurelhurst Elementary, Eckstein, Villa, Assumption and nearby high schools together to socialize.
11. Basketball hoop: New neighbor Amy White inquired how to lower the basketball hoop at Waterway No. 1 as it is locked. She was put in touch with the Armintrouts who have the key. Armintrout started locking the hoop because older boys had been lowering the hoop and hanging on the rim and they thought it would get broken. White arranged to get a key so she could lower the hoop for her younger children.
12. Burglary: On 9/25, a home on the 3300 block of East Laurelhurst was burglarized. An open window was likely the source of entry. The burglars went into an office and stole many items, including some credit cards. They seemed to know exactly where to go reports Karmann Kaplan.
13. Rooming house: Barb Ragee and Paul Klemond notified LCC on 9/29 that they have been in touch with the Department of Planning and Development to complain about potential code violations for the mega house on 44th.
14. Caution tape: On 10/04/06 Doug Armintrout emailed inquiring when the caution tape on NE 41st could be removed. The tape had been put up a few months ago to protect newly planted shrubs from those trampling over the median. LCC has received complaints over the past few months about the caution tape and the orange cones. Dick Barnum who oversees the planted median for LCC has removed the caution tape and will be inquiring with the UW about the orange cones.

15. Suicide Hill: Ogden continues to work with Mark Nagle and neighbors on the 43rd Avenue boulevard and on Suicide Hill about speeding and other issues. She is reviewing installation of the speed humps on 49th Avenue to see if that might be a possibility along 43rd. On 9/14, Ogden, Nagle and Wayne Wentz from SDOT met to discuss the issues.
16. Property acquisitions: On 10/04, Bender reported that a neighbor mentioned to her that McCaw was buying up property behind the Battelle property in the business district.
17. Street lighting: On 10/04, Bender reported a neighbor had contacted her to inquire about upgraded street lighting in the neighborhood. Bender will follow up on this and also inquire about installation of lighting in areas where there is no lighting.
18. Beach Club: A neighbor called about the Beach Club and was given the contact information.
19. Mega House: Maggie Weissman heard that a mega-house is being built in Bryant.
20. Pocket Park: Richard Bennett asked Maggie for schematics of the pocket park. He is thinking about siting of the drain under the street or sidewalk. Maggie and Liz Ogden understand that the deal has not closed, pending compliance with all the terms of the agreement and coordination with neighbors.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Thank you! Thanks to Don Torrie for coordinating distribution of the agenda packets and to Heather Newman and Lora Poepping for assisting.
2. Special thank you to Joe Herrin and Jean Amick: Herrin and Amick have worked tirelessly on SR 520 issues over the past year and a half. Amick's history extends back almost a decade! They both have represented Laurelhurst on committees, attended many meetings and responded to inquiries from neighbors about the issues. Both testified at the recent public comment meeting on a preferred alternative for SR 520 replacement. They are to be commended for all of their hard work on behalf of our community.
3. Neighborhood Matching Fund grant applications: The applications for matching fund grants for the pocket park and the basketball court refurbishing have been delayed. Applications will be submitted for the next cycle of funds.
4. Prospective board member: Betsy Conrad, who had been nominated to serve on the LCC board, was elected as president of LAZER so indicated she is unable to join the LCC board at this time.
5. The Seattle Public Channel may broadcast a program about the parks audit, in an effort to help with public accountability.

REPORTS/ACTION:

Crime Prevention: Maggie Weissman and Brian McMullen have agreed to serve as Crime Prevention Co-Chairs. Pat Wright provided copies of her report of crimes in Laurelhurst in October listing the following:

1. 9-13-06--4700 block 49th Avenue NE., 3:30 p.m. Investigation of a forced entry residential burglary.
2. 9-19-06--Laurelhurst Playfield, 8:42 p.m. A group of teens with a fire at the fire pit. Fire Department was called to extinguish the fire. The teens cooperated and left the park.
3. 9-23-06--Laurelhurst Playfield, 10:12 p.m. Report of fireworks in the park. A second call was received a few minutes later stating there was a loud party. The officers chased a small group from the park.
4. 9-25-06--3300 E. Laurelhurst Drive NE, 7:23 a.m. A call was received. An investigation followed of a non-forced entry. Suspect entered an open window while the family slept. Several credit cards were stolen.

The Seattle Police Department now provides crime statistics for census tracts on its website. The crime activity is not up-to-date, but is available through August 2006. Crimes are divided into Part I crimes (serious felonies) and Part II crimes (non-serious felonies and misdemeanors). Laurelhurst is in the 41 census tract. From January through August, the Laurelhurst census tract, which includes Windermere, had one rape, two robberies, two aggravated assaults, 21 residential burglaries, 10 non-residential burglaries, 97 thefts, 18 auto thefts and two arsons for a total of 153 reported crimes. For the same time period, there were 124 non-serious felonies and misdemeanors: 14 frauds, one embezzlement, 39 vandalisms, one weapons possession, two sex offenses, 15 offenses against family and children, one liquor law violation and 49 "all other offenses."

Sustainable Single Family Housing Ordinance: For years, LCC has been concerned about the proliferation of mega houses in the neighborhood. In April 2003, LCC heard a presentation about the Sunset Hill proposals to address the lot coverage, height and other issues and unanimously endorsed the recommendations of that group. At the May 2004 Annual Neighbors Meeting, neighbors heard a presentation of the proposed solutions from LCC land use consultant Carol Eychaner. Since then, LCC has been working for council sponsorship of measures to address the issues. Councilmember Richard Conlin responded and has developed the Sustainable Single Family Housing Ordinance. This item may be brought to the City Council in December.

The proposed ordinance addresses two of the issues LCC proposed—height limits and lot coverage. The proposed ordinance would reduce the base height limit in SF zones from 30 feet to 25 feet (and would not affect the exception in the land use code that allow for higher heights). Currently, the height limit in low-rise zones is 25 feet—lower than SF zones!

Regarding lot coverage, the current code allows maximum lot coverage of 35 per cent or 1750 square feet, whichever is greater. The proposed ordinance would delete the language “or 1750 square feet, whichever is greater.” This language allows substandard sized lots to have greater lot coverage than 35 percent.

The third part of the proposal addresses consolidation of contiguous lots for fewer houses. It would deny demolition permits to tear down two or more houses on lots next to each other if fewer homes would be built. The demolition could not result in a net loss of single-family homes.

The proposed ordinance is intended to address mega houses in single-family zones and the resulting loss of more affordable housing, sunlight and views, trees and green space and open space.

MOTION by Liz Ogden, seconded by Joe Herrin to support Richard Conlin's sustainable family housing ordinance. **Motion passed** unanimously.

Laurel Village Parking: Newman has been working with Theresa Doherty from the University of Washington regarding overflow parking from Laurel Village. As a result, the resident director of the student housing sent a memo to residents of Laurel Village reminding them that they only have one parking space per unit and that second vehicles should be parked along Mary Gates or in the E-3 parking lot. The letter sent to residents is included in the correspondence packet. Mark Trumbauer said the day care workers also park in the complex, and should be included in the communications from UW.

Doggy Day Care: The City Council's transportation committee recently voted out a proposal to legalize doggy day cares in neighborhood commercial districts. Currently, these facilities have been treated similar to dog kennels are only allowed in industrial and commercial zones, but due to the uncertainty in designation doggy day cares have surfaced in neighborhood commercial district bordering residential areas. The full City Council will soon be voting on the proposal to allow these facilities in neighborhood zones adjacent to single family zones. The facilities would be required to have a six-foot fence and screening, comply with health regulations and provide one parking space per ten animals or one for each staff person, plus loading spaces at a ratio of one space for 20 animals.

MOTION by Brian McMullen, seconded by Stan Sorscher, to oppose the proposed ordinance reclassifying kennels and to oppose this land use in NC zones. **Motion passed** unanimously.

SR 520 Update: Herrin testified on behalf of LCC at the 10/04 public comment meeting on a draft city council resolution selecting the Pacific Interchange as the council's preferred option for SR 520 replacement. Amick testified on behalf of neighbors Pat and Lisa McCabe and Shirley Cummings. Hale testified on behalf of the Seattle Community Council Federation. Several Laurelhurst neighbors attended the meeting and testified in opposition to the Pacific Interchange. Those attending included Colleen and Bill McAleer, Rolfe and Nancy Turnure, Ila and Arnie Groth and Russ Amick.

Joe Herrin attended the City hearing. The City distributed a statement in advance of the hearing in which the City Council endorsed the 6-lane alternative with the Pacific interchange. The statement called for steps to mitigate noise, and scale and steps to protect the Arboretum. About 200 people attended the meeting, with speakers against the Pacific interchange alternative running about 10:1 against. The Audubon Society was opposed.

Proposed Ordinance to Change the Appointment of Park Board Commissioners: Councilmember David Della has proposed an ordinance that would increase membership on the park board from seven to eight and equally share appointment authority between the Mayor and the City Council. The board would be empowered to designate its own chair. The Northeast District Council and the Seattle Community Council Federation have unanimously endorsed the proposed ordinance.

MOTION by Brian McMullen, seconded by Liz Ogden to support Council member Della's proposal to increase membership from 7 to 8. **Motion passed** unanimously.

NEDC Parks Survey: The NEDC has proposed a survey to assess both what residents see as strengths and weaknesses in our neighborhood parks and their condition. To do this NEDC is member organizations to have neighbors complete the survey addressing features they like in parks and what changes they would like. NEDC will compile the results along with an assessment of existing park conditions and present the results to the Parks Department in January. The hope is that the findings will serve as the basis for future funding and development within parks in our northeast area.

We have a goal of 200 completed surveys, so everyone is encouraged to participate and get others to fill out the survey, too.

Nan Haigwood prepared a report on the Parks Committee meeting. The report was distributed to the Board and discussed. At issue is a plan to commercialize space in Magnuson Park that is otherwise available for community organizations and public use.

Motion by Liz Ogden, seconded by Barb Bender to oppose commercial use and retain the hangar in Magnuson Park for community use. **Motion passed** unanimously.

Urban Forest Management Plan: On September 6, the Mayor released the draft Urban Forest Management Plan for public comment. This is the city's first comprehensive plan for managing all of the trees - public and private - throughout Seattle.

Seattle has experienced a loss of canopy over time. About 50% of the land area is zoned for single-family housing. The draft plan proposes to increase the canopy cover by two-thirds in 30 years. Because private property makes up about three quarters of Seattle, tree planting by residents is a big part of the plan. The plan would include voluntary incentives and free tree promotions.

Two public workshops were held to solicit public comment. Written comments are due on October 20. Informational material about the plan is in the packets along with an op ed by the founder of Plant Amnesty.

Liz Ogden worries that the voluntary plan might do more harm than good by giving the appearance of progress without any substance or real likelihood of increasing tree density. Among other things, we should preserve existing trees and maintain them better. Liz will comment in the public process, reflecting the discussion in the meeting.

Traffic Circle Stewardship: Recently, the traffic circle located at 46th Avenue NE and NE 50th has undergone restoration due to the efforts of neighbors. There were three white oak trees in the circle that were planted in 1985. The planting theory at the time was to put in three, with the hope that at least one would likely be run over and one would survive. Well, all three survived and two of the trees were growing close to the power lines. Liz Ellis, an arborist from the transportation department (SDOT), said that there is not enough growing space for all three to survive and proposed removing two trees to improve the growing conditions and lifespan of the remaining tree. Had the trees been planted in a parking strip, they would have been spaced 25-30 feet apart.

SDOT has partnered with neighbors to remove two of the trees and restore the groundcover and maintain the circle after the tree removal. Neighbor Catherine Kalke has taken the lead on this and received donations from 24 neighbors who live on the two blocks adjoining the circle. The trees have now been removed, mulch applied and new plantings installed.

Hale and Ogden thought that the work at this traffic circle could be an example to set up stewardship groups for other circles in the neighborhood.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM

Minutes by Stan Sorscher