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The Southwest Portland Post

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New Hamilton Street sidewalks could be resurrected by neighborhood

By Polina Olsen
 The Southwest Portland Post

Marianne Fitzgerald, chair of the Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. (SWNI) Transportation Committee reported the local improvement district (Halo LID) project on Southwest Hamilton Street is dormant but can be resurrected by the Bridlemile Neighborhood Association.

Halo LID is a funding scheme that divides costs among property owners within a defined radius of the sidewalk construction. With traditional funding, only abutting property owners pay for the new sidewalks. "We didn't want to go further than 1/2 mile," Fitzgerald said, explaining the different cost options for the four Southwest Neighborhood Halo Lid Pilot Projects.

When people live more than one half mile away from the new sidewalks, they don't understand why they should help pay them, she said. Both cost and design proved controversial with neighbors choosing between 16 types of sidewalks and a halo of one-eighth, one-quarter or one half mile.

Two of the four proposed Southwest

BRIDLEMILE NOTEBOOK

Halo LID projects are on hold: Southwest Hamilton, from Southwest 39th Avenue to Southwest 60th Place and Southwest 35th Avenue from Southwest Stephenson Street to Southwest Arnold Street.

The other two projects, Southwest Vermont Street from Southwest 45th Avenue to the county line and Southwest Vermont Street from Southwest 30th Avenue to Southwest 37th Avenue, will report their status at the next SWNI transportation committee meeting. Call 503-823-4592 for the meeting schedule.

Crime Prevention

Bridlemile Neighborhood Association History Chair Ginger Danzer reported the Hamilton Park foot patrol project needs more people. The project started in response to underage drinking, graffiti, vandalism and general noise, especially on weekend nights.

"We've cut down the amount of speeding, use of alcohol, and rowdi-



Tanya Ghattas (back row center, glasses, white shirt), the new Bridlemile Elementary School principal, stopped by the neighborhood meeting to say hello. (Post photo by Polina Olsen)

ness in the park," Danzer said. "This summer was amazingly quiet but we don't have the number of people needed to keep [the foot patrol] going well."

The group works with the city crime prevention specialist and the police. "We wear little vests and go out and walk from 8:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. on weekend nights, carry our cell phones and report mischief. It's a nice way to walk and visit with your neighbors."

For more information on the Hamil-

ton Park foot patrol, call Ellen Underhill at 503.297.6916.

Land Use

Karen Tabata, Land Use Chair, raised the question of how to incorporate adult foster care facilities within residential neighborhoods. While Adult Foster Care began with private homes taking in a few elderly residents,

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Seniors find gardening to be therapeutic at Maplewood retirement home

By Polina Olsen
 The Southwest Portland Post

Helen Sandstrom ate beans like that with olive oil when she was young. Now, in her nineties, she enjoys them straight from the vine. As the West Hills Village Senior Residence group gathered around their newly grown garden, they chatted about early memories and the current harvest.

"There's a lot of touch and it's interactive," said activity director Holli Wronski about their two-month-old program with Garden Partners, a non-profit Portland organization that brings therapeutic gardening to the

community. "They talk about their past gardens, their mother's gardens, and gardens in their later years."

Garden Partners started in 1999, when occupational therapist Mary Rowan saw a great need for meaningful activity where the elderly could nurture. She found existing programs emphasized things being done for seniors rather than proactive activity. Rowan hooked up with a nurse and landscape architect and by 2003 started programs in long-term care facilities.

Today Garden Partners has programs in eight Portland locations including an abused children's center, long term care facilities, and the Portland Memory Garden (Southeast

104th Avenue and Powell Boulevard), a park designed for people afflicted with Alzheimer's disease.

According to the Journal of Therapeutic Gardening, working in the garden increases attention span and provides exercise. Rowan also finds it increases self-esteem and gives a sense of spiritual fulfillment and joy.

"Nobody is excluded," Rowan said, explaining Garden Partners accommodates all physical and mental challenges. "We see people quite advanced in their disease. When we go to a new facility residents say, 'I can't garden.' It can easily be setup with the right planter, wheelchairs in the right place, handing people the hose, and making sure tools aren't too heavy."

Garden Partner's volunteers or staff come once each week throughout the year and vary sessions according to weather conditions. In winter, they give lectures on topics like plant or tree identification. They prepare soil, prune, weed, water and harvest during the summer.

West Hills Village residents enjoy watching the vegetables, herbs, and flowers from the small patios outside their apartments. Tomatoes and cucumbers were particularly good this year, and the large yellow beans are firm and tasty. Although the kitchen uses the fresh produce to prepare the resident's meals, sometimes passersby can't resist sampling.

"The concept of Garden Partners is getting the community involved," Rowan said about her work with the project. "It changes the feeling of the environment because it's positive -- people aren't talking about their illnesses." Although she volunteers full-time with the organization, she finds it time well spent. "When you get a strong calling, you want to see it happen."

West Hills Village Senior Residence is located at 5711 SW Multnomah Blvd. For more information on Garden Partners visit www.gardenpartners.org, email info@gardenpartners.org or call (503) 288-1280.



Anne Dugan and Helen Sandstrom stand next to their Garden Partners project. Both are residents of the West Hills Village Senior Residence. (Post photo by Polina Olsen)

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