

Ainsworth playground would honor memory of Julia Reimann

By Kate Bennett
Special to The Southwest Portland Post

At the Southwest Hills Residential League (SWHRL) meeting on November 19, Nancy Zadoff and her committee gave a PowerPoint presentation on a proposal to build a new playground at Ainsworth Elementary School to honor a student who was killed in a plane crash last August.

With passion in her voice, Zadoff stated that the Ainsworth School Playground Proposal Committee members want to "create a memorial field for Julia Reimann."

For those who are unfamiliar with the tragedy that struck the Reimann family, in early August, the Reimanns were hosting a family reunion and vacation in a beach rental in Gearhart, Oregon. Around 6:30am on August 4th, a Cessna 172 crashed into their house.

[Editor's Note: The pilot and a passenger who had been on board the plane when it crashed were killed. The pilot was identified as Jason Ketcheson, 36, of Cannon Beach. His passenger was Frank Toohey, 58, of Warrenton.]

Ruth Johnson-Reimann, 47, Christopher Reimann, 13, and Sarah Reimann, 11, all of Southwest Portland, were seriously injured.

The Reimann's youngest daughter, Julia Reimann, 10, died in the accident. Julia's cousins Hesam Farrar Masoudi, 12, and Grace Masoudi, 8, both of Denver, also died in the accident.

Zadoff explained why the committee wants to create a field at Ainsworth School. "A field always gives back," she remarked. She also stated that it would be "in celebration of Julia."

Committee member Matt Reimann, Julia's father, stated that the plan is to "upgrade the existing blacktop to a multi-use synthetic turf." The turf will

have shock absorbing properties that will facilitate safe play. Reimann noted that the school children have not been able to play tag for four years due to the blacktop.

Jim Thayer, President of SWHRL, asked the committee whether they had thought about the spring that runs underneath the blacktop. He explained that the spring has been an issue for a "long time" and that the reason the school laid the blacktop was to prevent water from rising to the surface.

Committee member and Ainsworth parent Katy Disbrow noted that they will speak with the engineers about this, as well as the necessity of leveling the field.

According to the presentation, green practices will be used on the project, as the 13,000 sq. ft. synthetic turf will slow storm water run-off into existing sewer system. They are also looking into directing run-off into the neighboring Tanner Creek tributary.

The estimated project cost is between \$350,000 and \$380,000. Reimann stated that they would like to have the project done by August 2009.

The project, although in its early stages, has been well-received. According to the presentation, Portland Public Schools supports the project and is providing staff assistance. Portland Public Schools has also agreed to incorporate this project into their monthly reviews with the Bureau of Design Services.

The committee has already received over \$100,000 in in-kind donations, with WRG Design, Inc. providing civil engineering and Robinson Construction providing site preparation. Fundraising will continue in sequential phases, first with corporations and foundations, then with the public through broad events.

The group is also working on a website (www.juliareimann45.org) that will

allow people to donate through PayPal. The committee is very excited about this project, and as Zadoff remarked, "We want 100 percent of the school families involved in some way."

South Portland neighbors disagree on pedestrian trail to OHSU

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

The Portland Office of Transportation is currently working on plans for a proposed pedestrian bridge from the South Waterfront to the Lair Hill communities underneath the aerial tram along the Southwest Gibbs Street right of way.

Less well publicized are plans for a designated path that would allow pedestrians and bicyclists to continue uphill to the Oregon Health and Sciences University – and there is some disagreement about where this should be.

Original plans called for the path to follow the Gibbs right of way. However, at last month's South Portland Neighborhood Association meeting, several people said it would make more sense for the route to jog one block south to Southwest Whitaker Street for at least part of the way.

Architect John Perry, who has been working on the pedestrian path plans on behalf of the neighborhood, pushed for the original plan. Due to the tram, and improvements on the land below it, "Gibbs has taken on a unique character, and is the obvious route."

There is virtue to having the route pursue a straight line, he said.

Jennifer Daniluc, a board member and owner of the Ross Island Grocery, disagreed. "Nobody crosses First Avenue at Gibbs; every body crosses

The next general membership meeting is scheduled for January 21st, 2009. SWHRL is contemplating the option of hosting the Reimann project committee at that time.

at Whitaker," she argued. "Why not improve the (existing) trail at Whitaker, where it's safe?"

"The trail is terrible," Perry retorted. Board member Jim Gardner agreed that the existing trail is dark, "meanders," and in places comes within a few feet of private property. However, he said, the Gibbs route would involve utilizing a stairway with 50 steps, which would be difficult for bicyclists.

TriMet changes

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come at the expense of the older neighborhood to the west. The National College of Natural Medicine has added its voice to the opposition for the same reason. "We're as geographically isolated as any place in the city," vice-president Sue Yirku said.

TriMet is also considering altering the #8 bus line to give more direct service to

Terwilliger Plaza, Mills said. To facilitate movement and loading, the agency plans to ask the city to remove a loading zone. In exchange, TriMet would remove an existing bus stop, for a net gain of "one or two" parking spaces, Mills said.

South Portland Transportation Committee chair Bill Danneman said his committee didn't see it that way. According to Danneman, the neighborhood was never consulted about, and never agreed to, installation of the bus stop in the first place. The route change will "exacerbate an existing traffic problem," he said.

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