

Blumenauer Talks with Businesses

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is "a key connector. There are places where there's really no place for people to stand safely." Since the original plan the cost of the project has increased considerably, "and half the cost is storm water absorption," Bonella said.

Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. president Marianne Fitzgerald said, "This has become as much an infrastructure project as a sidewalk one. In 1996 storm water wasn't such a big deal. Now it's important."

Fitzgerald added, "We need to enable people to get around without cars. We've watched TriMet defund local transit service, and we can't get money for sidewalks." There is in fact some stimulus money to install new sidewalks on arterials but, Fitzgerald said, "When you have 47 arterials that don't have sidewalks, how do you decide which is your priority?" SWNI picked Southwest Barbur Boulevard.

Fitzgerald noted that sidewalks are being added or upgraded on parts of Multnomah as part of the work there. Multnomah Neighborhood Association chair Moses Ross complained, "Taking the low-hanging fruit is attractive, but essential needs don't get addressed." Bonella agreed, "It's a matter of spending \$10 million on a half mile of road versus five miles where it's flatter and easier."

Blumenauer's specialty has been transportation projects, and he has secured millions of dollars in federal funding for light rail and streetcar extensions. Prior to this he served on the Portland City Council, and he said some of the issues his new constituents discussed were familiar enough to be "personal."

According to Blumenauer, "We need to bring Barbur to urban main street standards. The City alone can't and won't." However, Blumenauer cau-

tioned, "The challenge is that people in Washington are a little crabby about money right now."

Those who gathered discussed other topics, notably medical care. Samira Godel is Director of the Southwest Community Health Center, which provides health care through the good works of 3.3 full time equivalent paid staff and 19 volunteers. "The biggest challenge we have is convincing people that there is a need for our services in Southwest Portland," she told Blumenauer.

Rick Nitti, Director of Neighborhood House and a Community Health Center board member, agreed. "While we have beautiful houses here, there is also significant poverty here," he said. However, Nitti said, for the area as a whole, the level of poverty is "not high enough to access federal funding. FEMA says we're not eligible for emergency food and shelter assistance. That will hit the food bank really hard."

Dental practice co-owner Judy Shaw had issues with health care reform. "I'm absolutely livid that we locked insurance companies into health care reform," she said.

"I'm so in favor of reform, so heart-broken with the way it was done," said Shaw. "Dental health wasn't even included; is the mouth not part of the body? I don't want the government involved in health care, but it's better than having the insurance companies involved in it."

Both Cassinelli and Annie Bloom Books owner Bobbi Tichener said that local commercial districts such as Multnomah Village are critical to the city's health, and both have gone through "ebb and flow." In 23 years, Tichener said, "I've seen empty buildings. Now it's so vibrant. I like it when people are in the store eavesdropping on each other."

Cassinelli said, "It's important for Oregonians to be able to shop in their

own neighborhoods where they know who owns the store and see them once in a while, not some anonymous corporation."

Blumenauer said he has seen the

COMMUNITY LIFE

By Don Snedecor
The Southwest Portland Post

13 Garden Home Community Library's Book Group is discussing "The Help" by Kathryn Stockett on Tuesday, September 13, at 7:00 p.m. at the Library, 7475 SW Oleson Rd (inside the Garden Home Recreation Center).

Books are available on a first come, first served basis. "The Help" is now a major motion picture. New members always welcome. Call 503-245-9932 or visit their website at www.wccls.org for more information.

20 Meet Oregon Poet Laureate Poulann Petersen on Tuesday, September 20, at 7:00 p.m. at the Garden Home Community Library. A poetry reading and book signing are scheduled. Contact details are listed above.

24 The community of Garden Home celebrates 100 years on Saturday, September 24, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Garden Home Recreation Center, located at Southwest Oleson Road and Garden Home Road.

In 1911, the children of Garden Home gathered upstairs over Chris Jager's store (current Dairy Queen location) to begin their first year in Garden Home School. Former classmates, school staff, family, friends



same kind of vibrancy on the east side in places where, in recent memory, "we would not have driven visitors through. It's a blessing representing the best congressional district in the country."

and neighbors are invited to attend this celebration.

A brief program of introductions will be held at 12 noon. Box lunches will be available for \$5 each. Vintage Garden Home calendars filled with old photos and memoirs will be available for \$12. Please call 503-246-5879 to reserve lunch or for more information.

The centennial celebration is being presented by the Garden Home History Project. Visit www.gardenhome-history.com for more information about this organization.

25 Arab American Cultural Center of Oregon will host the second annual Arab festival, "Mahrajan," on Sunday, September 25, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Fulton Community Center, 68 SW Miles Street (near Barbur Boulevard and Third Avenue).

Enjoy delicious Arab cuisine, Arab souq (bazaar), arts and crafts, henna painting, cooking demonstrations, music, dance, poetry, children's activities, a raffle for prizes... the list goes on!

This daylong, alcohol-free event showcases the arts, entertainment, food, traditions and the spirit of Oregon's Arab-Americans, reflecting their diversity and contributions to Oregon's cultural landscape. Donation of \$5 includes three raffle tickets. For more information visit www.araboregon.com.

Editor's Note: Don't miss the Barbur Concept Plan Neighborhood Walks on September 22 and 24 (<http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/barbur>). Additionally there is a SW Corridor kickoff event on September 28 (<http://calendar.oregonmetro.gov/events/index.php?com=detail&eID=5097>).

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