

Cellar Door wine shop draws opposition from neighbors; South Portland NA board recommends liquor license approval

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

To hear owners Karen Hinsdale and Michael Price describe it, their Cellar Door wine shop, with occasional tastings, will be the lowest key commercial operation imaginable.

Neighbors nearby aren't so sure. Price plans to set up his financial services business at 4525 SW Condor Ave. in a commercial building last used as the offices of an architectural firm. Hinsdale, his wife, will move her Cellar Door fine wine retailing business from Southwest 16th Avenue where she has operated since 1994.

Price's business will close at 4 p.m. daily, he told the South Portland Neighborhood Association last month, while the Cellar Door will hold tastings from 3:30 to 7 p.m. weekdays.

Hinsdale said her customers would be tasting wines selling for \$20 a bottle or more. "In 16 years I have never had a police or (Oregon Liquor Control Commission) complaint," she said. "My reputation is my most valued possession."

They are neighbors to Seventh Day Adventist Tabernacle Church but, Price said, because of the different hours of operation alone there should be no conflict. Several friends and associates testified to the business's quality and the couple's good character.

A neighbor, Norman Malbin, had a different perspective. Parking on the street is very congested, he said, and although the business has its own 16-space lot, "I can't help but think there'll be overflow. If we have one party on the street, we're full up."

Malbin envisioned young children "darting between cars" into the path of

drivers "young and inebriated."

Another neighbor, Jamie St. Mark, agreed that the street is "very small and very congested. The real issue is alcohol being drunk while little children, cats and dogs are in the street." She envisioned havoc from visitors who have consumed enough to "get a buzz."

A church representative disputed Price's statement that business and church activities would not overlap, saying that the church has activities at times other than Sundays. Yet another neighbor said, "I have nothing against (Hinsdale's) business, it looks perfectly acceptable to me, but it's not a good fit for this block."

Crime prevention specialist Stephanie Adams said that the City of Portland had made no recommendation on the liquor license application for the property, which she said is the practice where there is controversy but no overt reason to deny a license.

South Portland board member Kerry Chipman told opponents, "It's not proper to call this a 'liquor establishment.' They're not selling Mad Dog wine to transients. This is an urban neighborhood that is seeking to be vibrant. I can see no rational basis to oppose this."

Instead, Chipman moved to endorse the liquor license request, and the motion passed by a vote of seven to two.



Karen Hinsdale is moving her Cellar Door wine shop to South Portland. (Photo courtesy Cellar Door)

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tivists fear what such reductions might mean for them.

At last month's Southwest Neighborhoods Inc. board meeting, transportation chair Roger Averbeck said that a one-time appropriation of \$16 million for new sidewalks, of which half would go to East Portland and half to Southwest, made "an easy target" since it is not part of a regular bureau budget.

Averbeck asked the SWNI board to write a letter asking for the allocation to be retained, and the board agreed to do so.

Kirky Doblle, chair of the Southwest Parks Committee, feared that the park bureau would sacrifice the Fulton Park Community

Center, the oldest and smallest such facility in the system.

Not only is the facility well used, Doblle said, but also its elimination would put great pressure on the facilities of the Multnomah Center and Southwest Community Center at Gabriel Park, both of which are strained to capacity. Again, the SWNI board agreed to argue against the cut.

SWNI land use chair John Gibbon reported upon an issue relating to sewer lines. A change in the City's plumbing code in 2006 made it illegal to have sewer lines shared by separate single-family residences, or that are located in the public right of way.

This made some 4,500 systems citywide into code violations. "The good news is that most of them are in the inner east side;

there are 350 at most in southwest," Gibbon said.

The bad news is that under current procedures, the cost to homeowners of fixing the offending system would average \$9,000 per household, and in some cases would be as high as \$20,000. Until the problem is corrected, Gibbon said, the property owner "can't sell, upgrade or refinance the house."

A new proposal would have the City assume most of the burden for correcting the problem, at a total cost of \$4 million. Individual property owners would be liable only for the branch fee, at a maximum cost of \$4,800.

Glenn Bridger of Hillsdale called for support of this approach, saying it seemed like "the most equitable solution." The SWNI board agreed.

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