

Montessori school takes issue with Terwilliger neighbors over dog poop

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

The Sunstone Montessori School is now ensconced in the old Terwilliger School building and grounds at 6340 SW Corbett Ave., and has inherited an old issue associated with the property: dog poop.

As Principal Kathy Newman told the South Portland Neighborhood Association last month, she met informally with nearby neighbors when her institution first moved in.

"I asked them if they had any particular concerns, and this came up," she said. By "this," Newman meant use of the school's two-acre front lawn as an off-leash dog park, an activity that has been going on for decades.

"I told them, 'You can do it if you clean up after yourselves,' and they haven't been," Newman said.

It was an issue also with the building's last occupant, the Portland French School. The principal assured neighbors and South Portland that the dogs would be welcome – then abruptly installed a fence to keep them out, permanently alienating much of the community.

In contrast, Sunstone Montessori School sought advice on how to proceed.

Ironically, South Portland representatives advocated taking a fairly tough stand with the transgressors, although they counseled meeting with them first. Board member Bill Danneman said, "I'd suggest having a meeting at the school" with the dog owners.

"Tell them this is irresponsible dog ownership, and put the onus on them. If that doesn't work, you may have to take draconian measures."

Board member Jim Gardner noted

that the site has long been viewed as public property, and therefore available for the public to use. He suggested posting signs spelling out the conditions under which the lawn can be used.

Danneman said that if there are still violations, Newman should call the police. A police officer present said, "It would only take one arrest for the word to get around."

Newman said she had considered installing a plastic bag dispenser on the lawn. However, she said that if this happened she would like to see contributions from locals toward the \$1,500 cost.

"I don't think it's right for us to foot the whole bill when it isn't even our problem," she said. South Waterfront resident Len Michon said that such stations exist in various places in the neighborhood, "and no one uses them." Newman said that some residents bag the feces, but then leave the bags behind.

South Portland board member Lee



Neighbors like to use Sunstone Montessori School's two-acre front lawn as a dog park. (Stock photo courtesy of Susan Frikken via flickr)

Buhler suggested engaging the dog owners and urging them to "self-police." Newman said that aside from

this issue, "The neighbors have been great to us, and the school has staged an open house."

City of Portland hopes to save \$25 million by cutting budgets

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

Last month all City of Portland bureaus submitted fiscal year 2013-14 budgets that were 10 percent lower than their current ones, as ordered by Mayor Charlie Hales. They all reflected major cuts in operations and services.

The cuts are necessary to meet an expected shortfall in revenue of \$25 million. Some of this is due to the imposition of a new Library District for Multnomah County.

The Library District provides more stable funding for the county's library program. However, since it involves an

appropriation from the General Fund, and the law does not allow property taxes to increase beyond the rate of inflation, "compression" occurs-- meaning that funding elsewhere must be cut.

The Office of Neighborhood Involvement's cuts include elimination of the bureau's yearly stipends for neighborhood associations to cover printing, mailing and other communications costs, a staple of the budget since the office was created in 1974.

Also cut are the bureau's popular Neighborhood Small Grants program, most of its support for volunteer graffiti cleanup activities, some of its insurance coverage for recreational activities, and two of its 11 neighborhood crime pre-

vention coordinator positions.

Other bureaus have similar cuts. The Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission's budget calls for reductions in public outreach calls for such processes as the Portland Comprehensive Plan update and possibly the elimination of district planners who have worked with citizen groups on local planning issues.

The Bureau of Parks could see the elimination of some recreation programs and reduced maintenance at parks and facilities. All bureaus have also submitted add-back packages arguing for the re-addition to their budget of services they deem essential if the funds can be found.

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