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Multnomah NA threatens lawsuit over sale of Freeman water tank property

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

Woods Park Advocates, a subcommittee of the Multnomah Neighborhood Association, recently threatened to sue the city if the Water Bureau completed the sale of the site, 0.7-acres of wooded land that houses a defunct water tank, to Renaissance Homes.

The neighborhood's attorney argued the city violated state and local laws with the sale.

Commissioner Nick Fish, who runs the bureau, maintained that the city was bound by its sales contract with Renaissance, which the city signed more than a year ago.

Fish said the city faced the possibility of a lawsuit from the developer if he canceled the sale — or from neighbors if he completed it. So he requested mediation.

"In response to the city attorney's correspondence," said Woods Park Advocates chair Jeremy Solomon, "we support Commissioner Fish's effort to improve citizen involvement

and decision-making in the stewardship of valuable public resources like the Freeman water tank property."

Solomon went on to say that Multnomah provisionally agrees to mediation between the three parties: the city, Renaissance Homes (the developer), and the neighborhood subcommittee.

"Provided this can be accomplished in an expedited manner, the closing of the sale will be postponed until mediation has been tried or one of the parties quits," Solomon explained.

He maintained the subcommittee's willingness to mediate does not change their fundamental position that the contract for the proposed sale is illegal.

Over the past several weeks, things



The Woods Park Advocates board continues to fight the sale of the Freeman water tank property to Renaissance Homes. (Post photo by Erik Vidstrand)

have been happening at an accelerated pace. Attorney Kristian Roggen-dorf, who was hired by the Woods Park Advocates to review the legal standing regarding the sale of the

water tank property, sent a letter to Commissioner Nick Fish, and the city attorney.

The letter detailed the many ways
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Portland Bureau of Transportation is due to pave the TriMet bus stop pull-out lane at the new Barbur Safeway by mid-February. A new bus shelter is also scheduled for completion. (Post photo by Erik Vidstrand)

Safeway concerns include bus stop, sidewalk connectivity, truck routes

THE COUNTRY STORE

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

The TriMet bus stop situated at Southwest Capitol Hill Road and Barbur Boulevard still remains closed since the new Safeway supermarket's grand opening last November. A temporarily stop is located a half a block farther south on Barbur.

According to Luke Stanhope, Safeway public and government affairs manager, Safeway dedicated property on Barbur to construct the required sidewalk width and to allow for the new bus pull-out.

Final construction plans will include a bus shelter.

"The process took longer than we had anticipated," Stanhope explained. "PGE had to install a new power pole and relocate power from the existing pole to the new one.

"At this point, we are discussing approval of the paving and striping final plan with the Portland Bureau of Transportation. When that is resolved, the work will commence."

The bus stop isn't the only project left undone. The ongoing concern about the lack of sidewalk connectivity from the grocery store to Multnomah Boulevard was brought up at a recent Multnomah Neighborhood Association meeting.

Some neighbors were also concerned about delivery trucks that weren't

meeting terms agreed upon by the two parties. Safeway assured local residents that trucks would not cut through neighborhoods when leaving the store.

According to MNA chair Moses Ross, the understanding was that the trucks were going to go down Multnomah Boulevard to Oleson Road (by Lamb's Thriftway) and connect to freeways and not use local access roads.

"It was part of the neighborhood discussion [with Safeway officials] prior to it being built," Ross stated. "I have also seen the trucks go to Southwest 40th and connect to Capitol Hwy [which] can create a traffic headache and also be dangerous, adding to the pedestrian and bike safety concerns along Capitol that already exist."

Ross has yet to contact Safeway in an official capacity but said he plans to.

Safeway had its grand reopening in early November and business has been relatively steady, especially with the holiday season and unique kosher foods department.

But weeks after opening, floor tiles had to be ripped up to get access to frozen water pipes which broke during the extreme frigid temperatures in early December.

The pipes have been replaced and floor tiles are back like nothing had ever happened.

"All-in-all, we hope customers have been pleased with our new store," Stanhope said. "The paving should be complete by mid-February depending on weather."

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