

# Hillsdale neighborhood wants a city task force to study home demolitions

By Janet Goetze  
The Southwest Portland Post

The Hillsdale Neighborhood Association wants a city task force to study concerns about house demolitions that are increasing in Portland.

The association heard proposals from the United Neighborhoods for Reform in December and, while not endorsing all the points developed by a United Neighborhoods committee, agreed that demolitions raise issues meriting new scrutiny.

One point cited by many city residents in the past year is issuance of demolition permits without notifying neighbors or observing a waiting period set in a city ordinance. Developers may seek a waiver under certain circumstances.

At press time, the Portland City Council was scheduled to amend the building demolition code "to require notice and delay for all single family residential demolitions in areas with a residential Comprehensive Map Designation and make other changes."

The Hillsdale neighborhood approved a motion asking the city council to form a task force of citizens, staff members and developers to address the concerns outlined in the United Neighborhoods resolution.

These include preservation of each neighborhood's historical heritage, retention of affordable housing and neighbors' protections from lead, asbestos and other contaminants released by some demolitions.

Several people attending the Hillsdale meeting cited demolitions they have seen in West Side neighborhoods, noting the activity isn't confined to the East Side.

While the code amendment on the council agenda addresses the issues of neighborhood notification and permit waiting period, it falls short of what many residents want, said Al Ellis, immediate past president of the Beaumont-Wilshire Neighborhood Association.

Ellis convened a "demolition summit" in May 2014 after hearing complaints from residents of his Northeast Portland



The Hillsdale Neighborhood Association wants the city of Portland to form a task force to review homes slated for demolition by developers. (Photo courtesy of bikeportland.org)

neighborhood.

To his surprise, he said in a telephone interview, representatives of more than two dozen neighborhoods attended the meeting and formed the United Neighborhoods group.

Some complained of "knock downs" that they believe didn't follow state law for containing lead in paints and asbestos around pipes or insulation, Ellis said.

His neighborhood has at least two examples of substantial houses on large lots being demolished and replaced by two houses, he said, offering

the developers more income than remodeling a single house.

Some residents complained of new house designs that don't blend with the neighborhood, and others were unhappy that new tall houses limited their solar access.

Ellis said representatives of historical organizations want an update of the city's Historic Resources Inventory, with a waiting period mandated before a property can be removed from the inventory. The United Neighborhoods also propose an online system available to the public to track demolition activity.

## Multnomah Blvd. construction

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city said new trees would be planted in the fall of 2014?

A: Urban Forestry will be installing 61 street trees, scheduled for late January or early February.

Q: The "Multnomah Village" sign on the westbound direction right before 28th Avenue has been lying on its side for months now. Whose responsibility is it to put it back up?

A: I spoke to Randy Bonella from the Multnomah Village Business Association about this last spring when it was pulled (out of the ground). To our knowledge the sign was never permitted for installation in the public right-of-way so we can't reinstall it until it is permitted.

Q: The existing green street planters have not been planted yet. There is just a burlap type cover with no plants. The city said these would be planted in the fall as well?

A: The Bureau of Environmental Services will be planting all the storm swales. They are waiting for all the construction of the western section to be completed, so they can do all at

once. (There is more work being done from 35th to 40th avenues on both sides of Multnomah Boulevard.)

Our BES contact indicated that given the proximity to the holidays it will probably be pushed to January, weather permitting. If it's too cold they said it may wait until March.

Back at the bar, Jim Prenty sipped his light beer. The Oakland Raiders scored another touchdown. The bar erupted in cheers.

Prenty was compensated for his old marquee which had to be removed and now he said he doesn't have the funds to erect a smaller version in a different location.

"What gets me most of all," Prenty said, "is that I really miss the marquee. I miss the fun: the birthday wishes, congratulating the Winterhawks, previewing upcoming events."

The one that sticks in his mind the most? "Roadwork ahead next 40 years!" Don't even get him going about the proposed street fee.

For more information about Multnomah Boulevard construction from the Portland Bureau of Transportation, please contact Rich Newlands at 503-823-7780 or rich.newlands@portlandoregon.gov.

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