

Developers continue to demolish existing homes in Multnomah

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

Vic Remmers, owner and president of Everett Custom Homes, was on hand at the Oct. 13 Multnomah Neighborhood Association meeting to field questions from neighborhood members about a series of projects in the area that have involved demolitions and rebuilding larger homes, and in some cases, several homes.

On Southwest 30th Avenue alone, a recent demolition took place after Remmers bought the property and planning to erect three single-family houses at up to \$650,000 apiece.

When asked about a sidewalk, Remmers replied he's working on an agreement with the Portland Bureau of Transportation with no waivers of remonstrance. He will most likely have to install a bioswale.

"The city likes bioswales," Remmers said, grinning, "and that will most likely mean removing the large bank and removing a mature tree depending on city codes."

The list of demolitions goes on: two on Spring Garden Road, one on Troy Street, two on Adolph Street, two on Alice Street. Of course these aren't all projects of Remmers.

Mike Roche, former land-use chairs in both Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. and Multnomah, asked how Remmers was improving the neighborhood.

"All my homes are energy efficient," Remmers responded, "use tankless water heaters, and have two garages (keeping cars off the street).

"I also responsibly take care of asbestos and lead paint removal," he said.

When asked about the demolition tax of \$25,000 proposed by Portland Mayor Charlie Hales, Remmers replied that the tax is focused on politics.

Under new guidelines recently released, however, builders who tear down a single home and replace it with either affordable housing or multiple new dwellings would be able to apply for a rebate.

Multnomah neighbors discussed a motion of which called for an end to exemptions and rebates the demolition tax. Multnomah member Jessica Wade reminded the group that the \$25,000 fee goes into an affordable housing fund. The motion passed.

A single-family home at 8330 SW 45th Ave was purchased by Renaissance Custom Homes in April for \$351,000. Sitting on a 9,500 square-foot lot, the developer applied for a process that would take four historic lots as well as the west 15 feet of four other historic lots and would turn those into two lots for new construction.

But although an Eastmoreland neighborhood found success with the delay appeal, Multnomah did not fare as well at a hearing the same day appealing a demolition by the same developer.

The property is located within an R7 zone,



After a smaller, older home was demolished, a larger home (built by Everett Custom Homes) dwarfs its neighbor. (Post photo by Erik Vidstrand)

meaning there can be one residential unit per 7,000 square feet of land in future land divisions. The developer worked around loopholes in the code which allowed the developer to circumvent current zoning that is grandfathered into the current code.

Renaissance Custom Homes applied for demolition of the 1949 Multnomah home. Multnomah lost the first appeal to fund

preserving an existing house scheduled for demolition.

According to United Neighborhoods for Reform, a grassroots organization, last year there were 273 demolitions in Portland and this year that rate expects to top 400. Many of these demolitions have occurred under the guise of remodels. UNR says that the city does not have a definition of demolition.

Mt. Sylvania neighborhoods form coalition to deal with high capacity transit

SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR PLAN

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

At a meeting of the West Portland Park Neighborhood Association on Oct. 8 at Jackson Middle School, a small group of neighborhood representatives announced they are coordinating efforts regarding the development of the Southwest Corridor Plan.

Two members from West Portland Park, Ashcreek, Far Southwest (Portland) and Mountain Park (Lake Oswego) associations have formed a coalition which will be meeting on a regular basis while the transit project is being developed.

Even though Mountain Park is outside the development area and in Clackamas County, neighbors live on Mt. Sylvania and citizens from that area will be impacted.

"At this point we don't know where Portland Community College is at with

the plan," said Ryan Blum, West Portland Park webmaster. "We do know PCC administrators are working feverishly on the project design."

The main concerns of the coalition continue to be on Southwest 53rd Avenue where a tunnel is proposed. Metro leaders are studying it further, looking at other direct connections between PCC Sylvania and Barbur Boulevard.

The biggest news of the night was that the Metro steering committee was delaying any decisions regarding tunnels in the coalition neighborhoods to PCC Sylvania.

The committee is also delaying a decision on the type of transportation to be built, either bus rapid transit or light rail.

The West Portland Park board shared results from a short survey to their members. They received 74 responses. Light rail was favored over bus rapid transit. Almost three-fourths supported a high capacity transit connection between PCC Sylvania and the West Portland Park area but residents were mixed on whether it should be a light rail tunnel or bus service.

The Crossroads (Interstate 5, Capitol Highway, Barbur Boulevard, and Taylors Ferry Road) continues to be a priority. Residents want better signals and safe pedestrian crossings at the busy intersection.

"There's not even a way to cross Haines Street," said West Portland Park vice president Britta Herwig who facilitated the evening meeting.

"We want this project to bring in more business," said Sarah Jane Owens. "The original plan was to only have one stop between Barbur Boulevard and PCC. We want the college community to spend time in the area."

She noted there are not many alternative routes meaning construction disruptions are likely to be serious for residents.

"An open house in conjunction with Metro," Blum said, "is being planned for January."

The latest document from Metro details the technical evaluation results to support the decisions of the steering committee. The steering committee, which met on Oct. 12, kept April 2016 as the scheduled date for confirming a final preferred package of high capacity transit options.

This will include roadway, bicycle and pedestrian projects, a funding strategy, and land use matters for the corridor. The committee also directed project staff to contact neighborhood associations to ensure there is adequate time for public review of the February decisions prior to its decision in April.

The Metro report reviewed components that will be addressed in the coming months. These include comparing

performances of bus versus light rail, access to transit, and advanced transportation projects that encourages physical activity.

The summary provides options that reduce overall transportation costs, ensure benefits and impacts, promotes community equity, and looks for improvements to natural resources, habitat, and parks in the corridor.

The report noted that the goals, objectives, and measures may be refined through the draft environmental impact statement process once the project is handed off for federal review.

For more information on the Southwest Corridor Plan, please visit www.swcorridorplan@oregonmetro.gov or call 503-813-7535.



Under a different option, light rail or bus rapid transit could stick to Barbur Boulevard, serving PCC Sylvania from a station here, at Southwest 53rd Avenue. The downside is the 1/3 mile walk to campus. (Photo courtesy of Metro)

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