

River West Village to begin memberships and services in 2017

By Jack Rubinger
The Southwest Portland Post

Whether we like it or not, we're all getting older. Aging brings on many emotions — confusion, fear, excitement and a sense of isolation. The truth is that people have been moving away from their families for generations in this country. But there's a growing movement to help seniors connect with who and what they need.

River West Village is a novel model and part of a hub and spoke grassroots organization (Villages NW) developed by community members for seniors in Southwest Portland and in other areas of Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas counties.

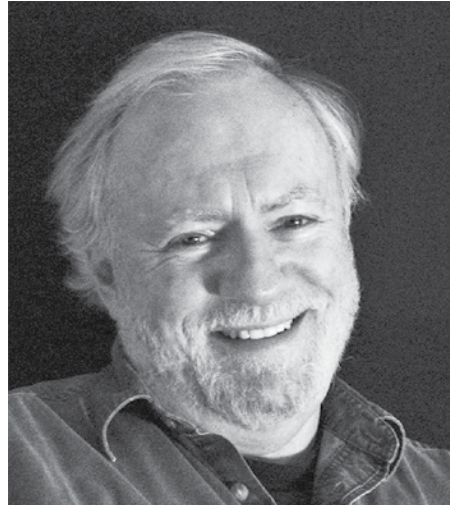
River West will serve seniors in Southwest Portland. The goal is for seniors to live wherever they want to live with a sense of power, a sense of connectedness, interdependence, and information on resources.

To learn more about River West the public is invited to an informational session on Saturday, June 11, from 10 a.m. to noon, at St. Luke Lutheran Church, 4595 SW California St. Or visit: <http://riverwestvillage.org/rwx>.

River West is just getting off the ground and expects to start accepting members and providing services sometime in 2017. So what have River West volunteers been doing since 2015 and what's the plan for 2017?

"We've been raising funds, holding planning meetings, having soup suppers to spread awareness and build community," said volunteer John Dougherty.

River West established a Wednesday morning men's coffee group in 2015. The group has met every week since then at 10 a.m. at the Maplewood Coffee and Tea.



River West Village volunteer John Dougherty. (Post photo by Jack Rubinger)

They talk mostly about fishing, interesting life experiences, and, with restraint, politics. "Everyone is welcome and appreciated," said Darl Kleinbach, outreach team leader. "We are currently in the process of creating the village and building our volunteers corps."

Villages NW, the "hub", is a nonprofit organization which has worked over the past two years to organize neighborhood residents into planning groups and to get seven grassroots "villages" into development across Portland — four in Multnomah County, two in Washington County and one in Clackamas County.

"I see 'villages' as restorative of the ways we'd naturally look out for one another through our lifespans, as we would living in a little village," said volunteer Rachel Mohlere. "They're a modern, urban model for restoring natural relationships."

What kinds of services are provided? "Things like transportation, food, picking up prescriptions, walks, pet care, and computer help — whatever the community demands," said Mohlere.

"An important differentiator is to ensure safety and transparency so all vendors are vetted and criminal backgrounds checked and trained because they're often inside people's homes. Trust is the success," she said.

In the vetted vendor program companies will be nominated by members. Village volunteers will screen these companies. Once approved, River West volunteers will refer members to the vendors when they need a plumber, tree trimming or other services.

Fees are paid by the member just as they would if they did their own research for someone to do these tasks. The benefit is that River West volunteers do the screening for them and will help troubleshoot if needed.

Villages NW is a non-profit organization with 501(c)(3) status. It is registered as an Oregon public benefit corporation. To learn more about the Portland metro-area Village movement and get involved, please visit Villages NW at www.VillagesNW.org or email info@VillagesNW.org.

New gas tax proceeds would help pay for Capitol Highway improvements

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTEBOOK

According to Chris Lyons, who heads the Multnomah transportation committee, the new gas tax allocates \$3,310,345 to Southwest Capitol Highway from Taylors Ferry Road to Garden Home Road (West Portland to Multnomah Village).

The project leverages system development charges. City bureaus are charged with the mission of planning and maintaining Portland's streets, sidewalks, transit, water service, sanitary sewer system, and parks.

These services are partially funded through specific fees.

"There is \$5 million in system development charges [earmarked] for this project," Lyons wrote, "so we now have \$8.3 million dedicated."

However, according to the city, the total cost for improvements is more likely in the \$12 million range, so more will be needed. The hope is that the Bureau of Transportation will grant funds that would help to close that gap.

Here is a link to the full project list, with Capitol Highway information on Page 4: www.fixourstreetsportland.com.

Multnomah joins coalition to oppose gentrification

A motion was passed by the Multnomah Neighborhood Association last month to join forces with several other neighborhood associations (Eastmoreland, Overlook, and Goose Hollow, to name a few) in opposing infill projects that destroy the character of the community, destroying trees and older affordable homes, and increasing density without adjusting for parking.

"We're not opposed to middle housing—small cottages, tiny homes, duplexes," said vice-chair Martie Sucec, "but we are opposed to the location and not wherever they want to put it!"

"Well, a whole lot of middle housing is being destroyed already," said one neighbor. There was one person against joining forces.

— Erik Vidstrand

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Deadline for July is June 20.

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