

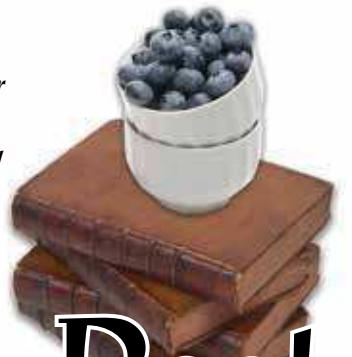
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Residential infill project causes uproar at Multnomah open house

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

The Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability held an open house

on June 15 at the Multnomah Arts Center to unveil a residential infill project which will be part of the city's comprehensive plan.

Even with little notice given, over 200 community members and leaders

packed the auditorium to hear the city's proposal. Many residents have been distressed with demolitions of older homes, housing affordability, and changing the character of the neighborhood with out of place house designs.

Earlier in the day, the Portland city council approved the 2035 Comprehensive Plan including the controversial amendment P-45. This amendment enables and encourages development of "middle housing" which includes multi-unit or clustered residential buildings.

These buildings provide relatively smaller, less expensive units, and a scale transition between the core of the mixed-use center and surrounding single-family areas.

Zoning changes would allow this type of development within a quarter-mile of centers, corridors and transit stations. The Multnomah Village business district is proposed to be designated a "center."

The evening started out as any typical open house. Staff stood along

easels with maps, photos, and statistics. Residents mingled with staff. City commissioner Steve Novick was in attendance as was a TV news station. A brief presentation then took place.

"Many of you are here for various reasons," began project manager Sandra Wood. "Some of you may be thinking about remodeling, downsizing, or upset at McMansions being erected next to small bungalows."

Wood, and her colleague Morgan Tracy, shared various proposed standards of single-dwellings. The rules will address scale of house, middle-housing (alternative housing types) as well as the development of lots in R2.5, R5, R7 and higher zones. Home size regulations would be reduced from the current maximum of 6,700 square feet down to 2,500 square feet.

"Square footage would be limited proportionally to lot size," explained Tracy. "Rooflines would be lowered and front setbacks could be reduced to match neighboring homes."

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Scale of houses would be limited under the proposed residential infill rules. Rooflines would be lowered and setbacks would be made consistent with adjacent homes.
(Post photo by Erik Vidstrand)

Bridge, boardwalk and nature trail to be built at April Hill Park

By Jack Rubinger
The Southwest Portland Post

A mix of local residents, officials, teachers, students and kids gathered together on a typical Portland late spring day — alternately sunny and rainy — at April Hill Park on June 10 to celebrate a new trail which will bring safe access to the park's wetlands.

The well-orchestrated ceremony included comments from Maplewood Elementary School principal Jill Bailey, project manager Lisa Tyler, and Portland city commissioner Amanda Fritz — all celebrating nature in the neighborhood.

Jordan Mercier from the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde spoke eloquently about the importance of wetlands in tribal culture and everyday life.

"I first saw this area in 1996," said neighborhood activist Jill Gaddis who was dressed for the occasion in a quilted vest and boots.

"There's incredible birdlife, plants and flowers like the monkey flower which is rarely seen in city parks. Right now, the trails are too steep and difficult for visitors to navigate," said Gaddis.

According to Gaddis, hiking on the

trails as they are now compacts the soil which drains the wetland, so the solution will be a long boardwalk and viewing platform across the wetlands.

Longtime neighborhood resident and master of ceremonies Bill Rector honored Gaddis with a few rhyming lines, "There once was a lady named Jill, queen of Park April Hill. And the swamp is a beaut, but don't step on a newt which will give her a license to kill."

This project has been unfolding for many years and money has been raised through movies in the park and other neighborhood events, including a series of fundraisers between May 2013 and January 2014.

According to Commissioner Amanda Fritz, money to pay for the park project came from more than \$300,000 from Systems Development Charges paid by developers and allocated by the Portland commissioner — in addition to the fundraisers.

For kids, the park is a haven to get up close and personal with robins, the melodic Pacific Chorus frog, sword ferns, dragonflies, big leaf maples, Douglas squirrels, Douglas firs, butterflies, Steller's jays, mushrooms, vine maples, skunk cabbages, chickadees, and

Oregon grape.

While the delicious cookies, officials-with-shovel photo opportunities and speeches helped recognize and support all those who've put time and energy into the park, the best part of the day, for this reporter, was a hike through the park led by Gaddis.

Several kids and parents broke off to join Gaddis on the hike. Some kids splashed around the creek, while others cautiously stayed on dry ground.

The planned nature trail leads to a boardwalk which leads to a bridge that crosses Woods Creek. The trail will wind up at Southwest 58th Avenue. Pink ribbons tied to assorted small trees and shrubs indicated the locations of trails and crossings.

Gaddis explained that the project will hopefully be done by the end of October with a ribbon cutting ceremony. Construction will begin in mid-July.

For more information about April



Bill Rector "toasts" neighborhood activist Jill Gaddis with a short poem at the April Hill Park groundbreaking ceremony on June 10. (Post photo by Jack Rubinger)

Hill Park, contact Jen Seamans, SWINI watershed resource manager at watershed@swni.org or Jill Gaddis at AprilHillPark@swni.org.

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