

Neighborhood to appeal comp plan amendment that allows residential infill

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

Multnomah neighborhood association leaders have hired a lawyer to appeal a Portland Comprehensive Plan amendment (P-45) which allows residential infill projects with middle housing. The unnamed attorney has been successful in other similar cases, according to chair Carol McCarthy.

"The plan is to write an objection to the comp plan," McCarthy announced at the July 12 association meeting. "There are several issues that need to be addressed by the city before the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development approves the plan."

Jim Peterson, land use chair, said the association will appeal three items: requesting neighborhood associations to be inserted back in the comp plan, truth in zoning, and changing the neighborhood "center" designation to a neighborhood "corridor."

McCarthy said that the 2035 Comprehensive Plan does not adequately recognize the importance of neighborhood associations and coalitions on issues affecting the community.

"These are democratic organizations at their finest," McCarthy said. "The city would rather promote special interest groups that are different from those of Portland's residents."

The second objective proposes truth in zoning. This means that only single-family residential dwellings are permitted in single-family residential zones.

"If the state allows this (Policy 5.6) to be included in the comp plan," McCarthy explained, "there will be no truth in zoning."

The final objective is to return Multnomah Village to a corridor.

"Being a center," Peterson commented, "will allow 'middle housing' essentially everywhere in Multnomah a quarter mile from the neighborhood center. This will allow more infill projects and more demolitions."

Long time Multnomah resident Frank Barbour is already being affected by these issues. He came to the July meeting specifically to share photos and a list of grievances about an infill project right next to his home.

"Actually two infill projects are on either side of my house," Barbour said.

On the east side of his property, a 2,500-square-foot house is being developed on a tiny flag lot. To the west is a proposed project of three row houses which is still gathering permits.

"Originally," Barbour said, "neighbors were notified that the flag lot was going to have a tiny mother-in-law's suite with at least a ten-foot setback from the adjacent property."

"What is being built is not what we were told," said Barbour. "What we thought was going to be a quaint, little cottage has turned into a McMansion."

According to Barbour, the Bureau of Developmental Services gave the builder a variance for major modifications and a new setback of three feet and never notified him.

"What makes us most irate," Barbour exclaimed, "is that the city does not communicate with us and the developer does not abide by best practices."

As Barbour spoke, he passed around photos of the construction.

McCarthy thanked Barbour and warned that this could just be the beginning of destroying the village's charm. She said a website is in the works that basically says, "Don't Rezone Us."

The committee agreed to replace concrete with a pervious surface. Ross said that after that meeting, a follow-up email was sent to this group with no response.

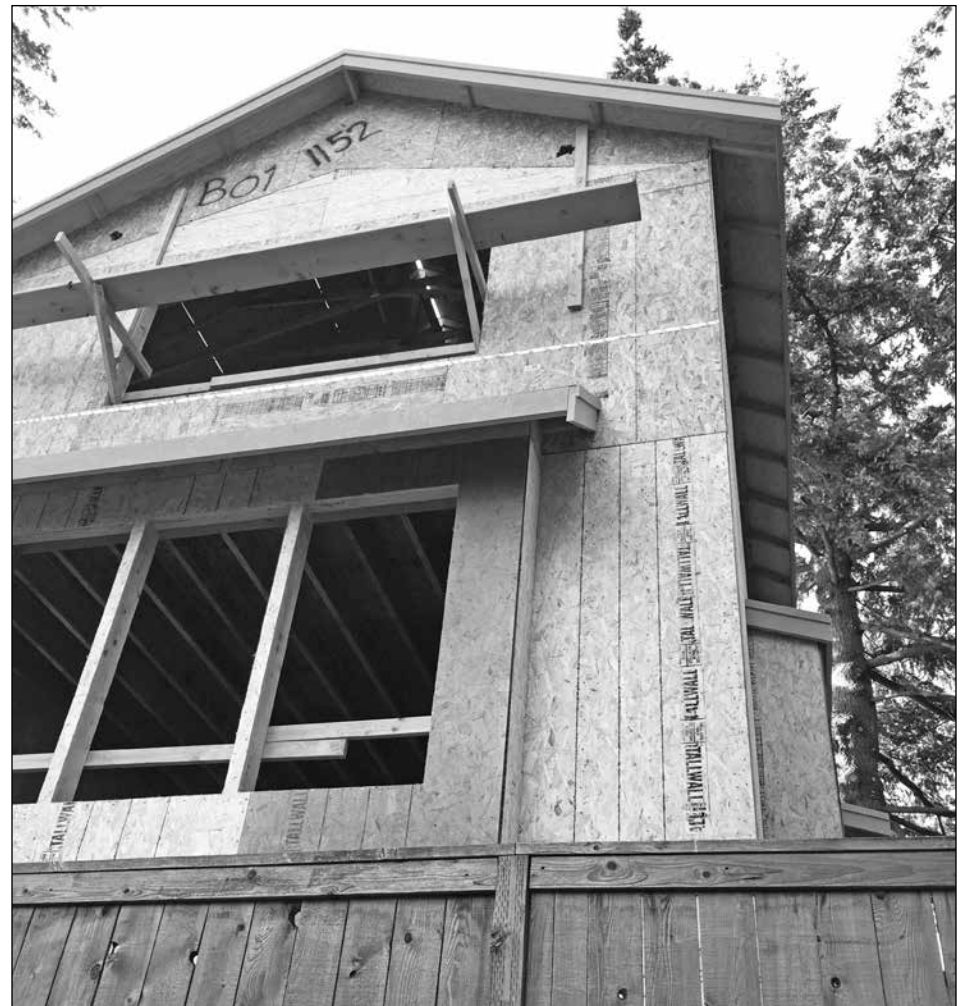
"On the contrary," Davidson said, "there is considerable community support against any built environment in the lower park area. The PAC agreed to a series of boulders to be in this area."

"We hear your concerns about increased noise, traffic and pedestrians," said Hun Taing, community engagement coordinator for the park bureau. "We are mindful in our design to mitigate those conditions where we can."

"At the same time," Taing continued, "we are also obligated to build a park that is inclusive of all ages to enjoy. We anticipate that most of the noise that emanates from the park will come from the playground area."

Ross defended the planned park improvements. "The Project Advisory Committee feels strongly that we had a solid, extensive and inclusive process with an outcome which is satisfactory to the vast majority of park stakeholders. It's unfortunate that a small group of neighbors are not in support of this program element for the park."

National Night Out festivities, including pie and music, will be held at Spring Garden Park on Tuesday, Aug. 2, from 6—8 p.m.



A new flag lot development is just feet from the neighbor's property. (Photo courtesy of Julie Barbour)

Peterson added that the association is printing up signs to inform the neighborhood of the impending changes.

"We found out about all of this because we are watching," McCarthy

concluded. "We do not think other neighborhood associations are aware of these changes even now."

For more information and documents, please visit <http://swni.org/multnomah>.

Spring Garden Park

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site from his front yard. He was so upset that he, and his wife, Cathy Frost, came to the July Multnomah Neighborhood Association to voice their concerns. "The online discussion does not have any mention of the amphitheater," Boltz told the association.

Friends of Spring Garden Park representatives at the meeting explained that teenagers were involved in the planning of the park and that the committee wanted a place for them to hang out.

Boltz said that boulders were proposed for that purpose. "Suddenly," Boltz responded, "a 400- square-foot paved amphitheater is proposed with plans to allow amplified music."

Hannah Davidson, a member of the project advisory committee, said "The inclusion of an amphitheater in Spring Garden Park turns a very small neighborhood park into a regional, destination park."

According to Davidson, "There is no documented community support for an amphitheater or any other hard or softscape development for the lower part of the park."

Mark Ross, a spokesman for the park bureau, said, "Planning for the park was completed in February 2016. At that time, the advisory committee approved, by consensus, the final plan for the park."

Lead Found in Drinking Water

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Officials at Portland Public Schools have recently tested for lead in the water in all PPS buildings, including Bridlemile, Gray, Jackson, Maplewood, Hayhurst, Stephenson, Rieke, and Capitol Hill schools which all feed into Wilson High School.

"So far we have found evidence of lead in about 30 schools and are awaiting results for the remaining schools. Our immediate reaction is to ensure that students have safe water to drink. We have arranged to deliver (bottled drinking) water to all of the schools in PPS this summer and throughout the next school year," said Yousef Awwad, chief financial officer of Portland Public Schools.

The Portland school district contracted with TRC Solutions to conduct district-wide water testing in all PPS buildings this summer. Testing is now complete and the school district is awaiting results from the state-certified labs.

For those with health concerns, there are a few lead screening options available to students and staff at no cost.

Onsite lead level screenings are being conducted on Saturdays and Sundays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. during the summer at Blanchard Education Service Center, 501 N. Dixon St. Go to pps.kadalyst.com to reserve your slot or call 503-916-3122.

Kadalyst Health Partners will perform the finger prick test and results will be available while you wait. A physician will privately advise anyone with an elevated lead level. Families will be asked to provide the name of the student(s), school

and grade. Staff will be asked to provide their school district employee identification.

Portland Public Schools retained the law firm of Stoll Berne to investigate and report on current systems, procedures and protocols regarding water testing.

The Stoll Berne report said that infrastructure and maintenance has been a lower priority than direct educational services due to budget constraints.

Lead in water has not been viewed by the Portland Public Schools board or administration as a significant issue.

The Portland school district lacks clear policies or protocols in place for testing for lead in drinking water or keeping track of which sources have or for remediation of sources that tested, the report said.

The school district does not have a clear reporting system internally for water issues and does not have systems in place to communicate with parents, the public or the media relating to those issues, the report said.

Finally, PPS Superintendent Carol Smith, who has been criticized by several newspapers about her handling of the presence of lead in the water in several schools, announced her retirement on July 18, a year earlier than she had originally planned.

In a written statement, Smith said, "I have provided the school board with a memo of recommendations to address the health and safety of our schools, as well as systems and operational concerns we have identified over the last few weeks that align with many of the issues outlined in the report."