

Are developers ruining Multnomah Village? Neighbors' complaints go unheeded

COMMENTARY

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

If the April meeting of the Multnomah Neighborhood Association had a theme, it would be called "Developers Ruining Multnomah Village!"

According to many, if not all members of the association, these developers have been given the green light from the city for their various infill projects.

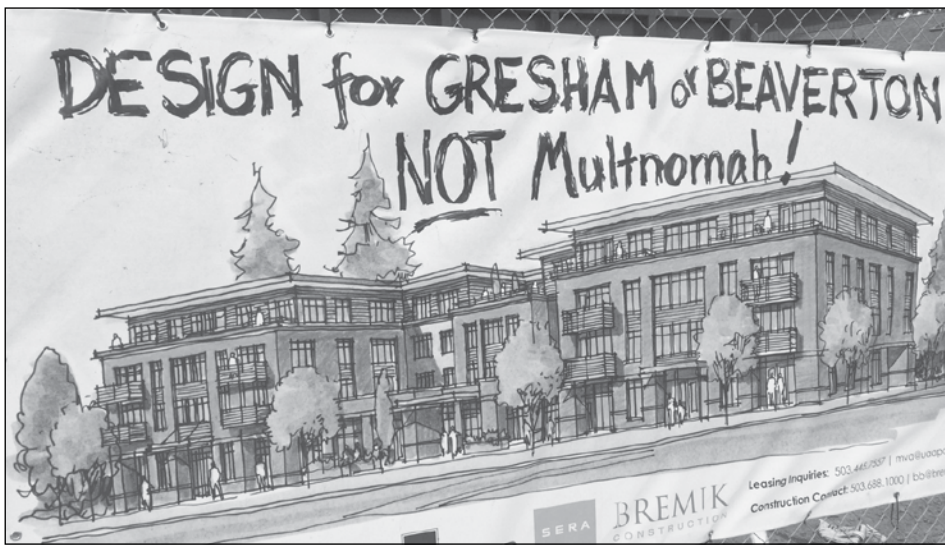
At the same time, they create havoc on infrastructure and road destruction, and test neighbors' patience from complaints that go unheeded.

Covering this community for almost five years, this reporter witnessed an immediate transformation while walking to the recent monthly meeting.

On one street, yet another infill project has begun with dump trucks lining up, pulling dirt away and blocking the small street. Three town homes are planned.

At the end of this same street, a medical-recreational marijuana dispensary has a permit to open.

Construction workers were busy on the roof but oblivious to the major potholes on the road directly in front of the future business.



After this graffiti was discovered, banners came down from the construction site. Some say that the 71-unit Multnomah Apartments building looks nothing like what was proposed in the artist rendering. (Photo courtesy of Amelia Ellis)

On Capitol Highway and 33rd Avenue, the fourth floor has been recently added to the large 71-unit Multnomah Apartments the association tried to stop, or at least scale back.

A resident, Jan, lives right behind the project. She shared that a strong chemical type smell was emitting from the project on April 11. She and a few others were experiencing physical symptoms from the odors.

All people wanted to know what was that smell and how the company would mitigate future potential harmful issues. It was suggested to call both city and county environmental health services and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

"I investigated reports about a strong chemical odor reported to us on April 11," said Trevor Ritchie,

the project engineer for Bremik Construction.

"Workers were waterproofing and caulking windows without masks. I also checked all plumbers and framers and found no problems. Painters were not on site that day. I spoke to the DEQ over the phone who had inquired," Ritchie said.

"I went over all safety data sheets and found there were no hazardous conditions." Ritchie said that the project is slated to be completed by December.

As in all Multnomah meetings, the land use report gets a lot of airplay. A local amateur historian wants to do a documentary on the destruction of Portland.

One of the last previous areas in Multnomah, the Hutchinson property at 4144 SW Canby Street, has been sold to developer Vic

Remmers of Everett Custom Homes. "The property is just west of the Multnomah post office," land use chair Jim Peterson said.

According to city records, the property is valued at over \$2 million. Remmers is no stranger to the Multnomah neighborhood.

"Remmers has been a thorn in our side since 1970," said Chair Martie Sucec. "Especially his father who swore he'd never build in Multnomah again."

Jan Newman, a Multnomah member who comes to meetings occasionally, asked if a class action lawsuit ever could be filed? Sucec said everyone was looking for some kind of hope.

Everett Custom Homes is also working on a variety of other houses near Southwest 46th Avenue and Carson Street. Residents from that area, Jeff and Cheryl Caines, were in attendance.

"What can we do about the Everett trucks destroying the unmaintained streets?" Jeff Caines asked. "I've contacted Everett Homes and have had no communication."

Caines said he contacted his representative in Salem.

"These trucks have made an unimproved road even worse with ruts and mud holes," added Houston Markley who also lives in the area.

"How we can hold the developer accountable?" asked Caines. He was visibly frustrated. "If they're building \$750,000 homes, wouldn't they want to fix the street?"

Sucec said she would invite Commissioner Dan Saltzman, or

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