

Neighbors complain that Southwest Community Plan doesn't enforce design standards

(Continued from page 1)

Community Plan through to completion, told *The Post* that during the planning process, "There was a lot of concern about building height. Any change from single-level buildings can be drastic, and given the steep slopes, the effect can be accentuated.

According to Johnson, "Because 'main streets' are supposed to be focal points, we wanted people to be comfortable with them, so we added a design overlay. Unfortunately, we had pretty basic tools to work with; we didn't have the resources to do a plan district (with regulations geared specifically to this community.) I think neighbors understood that this was the best we could do. They were not necessarily satisfied."

Martie Sucec, former Multnomah Neighborhood Association chair, has found this process even more frustrating. "There's been a lot more infill than we bargained for, and the rule, rather than the exception, has been that the new development we've seen here has been terrible," she told *The Post*.

"The bargain we made was that we would accept higher density in exchange for livability. The covenant has been broken, and the Portland Design Commission has helped break it. The planners and the commission seem to be saying, 'Multnomah is clapboard and brick, and how you put them together doesn't matter.' To have an effective design review process you need an effective design commission, not a bunch of bad architects."

Current Multnomah Neighborhood Association chair Bryan Russell is a little more positive ("The Bureau of Planning gives us more of an ear than developers do"), but adds, "There's a 90 to 95 percent approval rate for adjustments. They hire people who are experienced in dealing with the regulations, and it takes a pretty vocal opposition to get things stopped or rejected. They're able to keep building McMansions even though people here say they don't want them."

Multnomah, and other neighborhoods, also have another form of influence on development: the Mandatory Contact Rule. Since 2005, largely at the urging of community activists, the zoning code demands that builders of housing developments

of four or more units must offer to meet with the affected neighborhood association and present their plans.

They are not required to follow requests for changes they receive at such meetings. This contact, it was felt, would allow builders to gauge neighborhood sentiments and make accommodations before they were fully committed to a particular plan.

In Multnomah, the rule has produced mixed results at best. "Where there was good will, it worked," Sucec said. A project by a Eugene-based developer on Southwest Dolph Court is "really good," she said. On the other hand, another developer "didn't give a damn," and his project on Southwest 34th Avenue and Moss Street is "atrocious. It's actually lowered property values for houses around it."

"The idea is good, and some developers have really taken the neighborhood's comments to heart," Russell said. "The big problem is that there are no teeth. Unless they're asking for an adjustment, they have no need to listen to us. For some (the neighborhood contact) is just a check-off. They heard the neighborhood feedback and then did it the way they wanted to in the first place."

Defending the Southwest

Community Plan, Johnson said, "My perception was that this area was going to change regardless of the plan. For the most part, people move to an area because they like it the way it is. The hope is that you get


change that's more to your liking than you'd get if you didn't plan. This will still be a great place; just different." Regardless, Russell said, "All we can do is keep plugging away and hope for the best."




Will Multnomah Village still look like this in 20 years? (Post photo by Anne Snedecor)

Website

Need one? Call me. * 503-245-8148 * IdeasByTheHour.com


MARQUIS
CARE
AUTUMN HILLS
Residential & Intermediate
Alzheimer's Care

Its about what we can do,
not what we can't.




(503) 292-7874
6630 SW Beaverton-Hillsdale Hwy.
Portland, Oregon 97225
www.marquiscompanies.com


Hillsdale Veterinary Group
6359 S.W. Capitol Highway
Portland, Oregon
(503) 246-4660
Over 20 years of experience
and compassion.


Katie with
"LuLu" & "Pablo"

**Dentistry • Internal Medicine • Surgery • Geriatrics
Pain Management • Naturopathic Care**

 **GOOD NEIGHBOR PHARMACY**

be well ...
and well informed

**Bowman's Hillsdale
Pharmacy**
6256 SW Capitol Hwy.
503-244-7582 • email: HDRX@PCEZ.COM

- Walk-In Adult Immunizations
- Experienced Compounding Pharmacists

www.mygnp.com

Salon Certificate

 COMPLIMENTARY SALON VISIT


- An Assisted Living Residence -

503.520.1350
4525 SW 99TH AVE • BEAVERTON, OR 97005

Good for one free men's or women's hair cut and set
along with a complimentary meal. Courtesy of
Beaverton Hills Assisted Living Community.


www.mtwestret.com