

News Around Town

Walnut Park construction could portend renaissance for lower Northeast business

Wyant group plans construction of town square type mini-mall at the old Fred Meyer site. Project could begin by mid summer and end in 1990

by Stephen E. McPherson, Special Correspondent

Last week the big red and white Fred Meyer sign that has stood on the roof top of Fred Meyer as a quiet sentinel overlooking the new Martin Luther King Ave. came down without even a whimper. The week before that most of the windows and doors that would be vulnerable to vandalism and burglaries were covered over with plywood. Chains bar entry to the once busy parking lots that are now littered with rubbish. One can't wonder but how quickly the process of deterioration sets in once a piece of property of that size lies dormant. At first it was thought that Korno Foods would fill the void left by the departure of Fred Meyer, but that expectation did not blossom into fruition apparently because Korno itself is faced with a cash flow impediment.

The business community should not yet despair because all is not lost. The Wyant Group of Salem, known for developing important pieces of commercial property all over the state has shown an interest in that site which could serve as the impetus for the commercial renaissance the lower Northeast has needed for a long time.

The driving force that propelled the Korno disappointment into jubilation is a package of innovative ideas proffered by Don Wyant, Jr. This new approach has a decided advantage over the simple replacement of one failing store with another. It is an endeavor that brings a lot of excitement to a depressed community. When Mr. Wyant spoke to the Portland Observer last week he was quite enthusiastic about the success of the plan. Various details are still being worked out, but Mr. Wyant indicated that he was in consultation with an architect so as to determine what would be the most economically feasible way to proceed with a plan that would require major construction on the site. He also had entered into a discussion which would see a major retailer as one of the significant anchors on the site. In general, the Wyant plan calls for a mini-mall similar to a town square prototype. It would also include other adjunctive business enterprises which could very well encompass parcels of land adjacent to the present site. If plans progress

unimpeded, the entire development is expected to begin by mid summer and its completion could very well coincide with the opening of the nearby convention center. It is very exciting to observe that the entire endeavor would be undertaken with private funds.

Curiously, the offer to purchase the site for this specific purpose was one of the first to be made when it became known that the Walnut Park property would be placed on the market for sale. It did not receive a very high priority at the time possibly because the assistance promised by the Portland Development Commission was less speculative and offered what the negotiators thought was a better chance for success. Chadwick and Associates was involved in the acquisition of the property and the promulgation of the new concept. Their team was spearheaded by Michael Debman and his brother, Chad. They are two well-known business men from the African American community. One of the exciting things about their involvement is that it gives the minority contractor another chance to participate in the lucrative local construction industry and at the same time also offers opportunities for the employment of northeast residents.

Certainly the sale of the Walnut Park property is not going to resolve the Urban League's pecuniary shortfall. It does, however promise the infusion of badly needed cash into a dwindling treasury even though offering only a temporary respite for the beleaguered organization. By some estimates the Walnut Park property is valued in excess of \$1 million. The Wyant Group is thought to be purchasing it for \$525,000 which by any analysis is a tremendous bargain. Of the money realized on the sale, it also is known that the First Interstate Bank has encumbered at least \$100,000 as a result of a lien from a previous foreclosure. To be sure, if the Urban League's problems could be ameliorated with only about \$400,000 then certainly with a clear and free equity of more than \$1 million in the Walnut Park property alone they should have been eligible for a long term mortgage. Unfortunately some of the problems that plague the Urban League are chronic, endemic and intractable. In such cases their money managers should follow the

example that other well-respected institutions have chosen when faced with the same situation. Chapter 11 of the federal bankruptcy laws would afford them the opportunity to cut their losses and to re-organize under more favorable circumstances. Under such a process they would need the guidance of a fiduciary expert experienced in breathing new life into a failing financial entity. To ignore such a set of nagging problems is not to make them disappear.

For some time the Urban League has expressed the view that it did not have the business acumen to remain engaged in the management of real estate. Their loss of property by foreclosure, tax delinquency and sales far below true market value would appear to underscore that contention without challenge.

In the meanwhile the short-lived honeymoon previously enjoyed by the new Urban League leadership is now on the wane. Numerous complaints are now expressed in the African American community not only about the leadership style of its managers but people are also beginning to ask what experience do they have in fund raising on such a large scale.

One year later, the outlook is still bleak, but there is a glimmer of hope on the horizon. The success of any voluntary organization frequently is determined by the enthusiasm and commitment of its grass roots element. Perhaps one of the mistakes the retired Urban League board of directors made was to harbor unreasonable expectations of its new leadership. Even if the new leadership had had the experience and success in managing the day to day activities of such an organization and at the same time was successful in developing new avenues of fund raising, the organization still could not have succeeded without a dedicated and active clientele, knowledgeable about how their community works and how the league should be run. There was a time when the Urban League Guild served such a function. It recently was re-organized under the leadership and demonstrated know-how of Pat Hill. It is only by community involvement and monitoring will the Portland Urban League return to its place of prominence within the larger community.

BPA TO HOST BENEFIT FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) celebrates its Sixth Annual "Energizing the Community Benefit", sponsoring the North Portland Nurse Practitioner Community Health Clinic (NPCHC)

A fundraising auction will be held for NPCHC, Friday, June 23, 1989 at 7:00 p.m. to midnight, in the Smith Memorial Center Ballroom, Portland State University. The admission price is \$8. Food and music will also be provided.

The March of Dimes honored Mariah Taylor in an annual "Salute to Women of Achievement" benefit. Mariah Taylor provides health care to children of low income families. The clinic serves individuals aged 0 to 21 regardless of the ability to pay.

Sweatshirts and T-Shirts are now on sale in two colors: Peach and Turquoise. They are available in sizes S, M, L, and XL. The price of the T-Shirt is \$8.00 and the sweatshirt is \$13.00. If you have questions, please call Cherie Long at 230-4279.

DONATIONS FOR AUCTION ITEMS ARE NEEDED!!! For items donated, please include the following information:

- Time Limit
- Location
- Dates and Number of People You can Accommodate
- Minimum Bid
- State Whether Bid can be Lowered

If Bid can be Lowered, How Much Should it be Lowered

To help with the advertising, please attach a picture of the item if you have one. Prior to the auction, items should be delivered to Kathy May at Bonneville Power Administration, 905 NE 11th Avenue, Portland at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday June 21, 1989. On the night of the auction, items should be delivered to Petey Fleishmann at the Dittmer Building, 5411 NE Highway 99, Vancouver, Washington.

If you have questions, call Kathy Hay at 230-7391 in Portland. A receipt will be given for tax-deductible contributions, following the auction. Join hands with BPA and NPCHC

To: Community Leaders
From: Halim Rahsaan, Chairperson, Desegregation Monitoring Advisory Committee DMAC

Please come out on Tuesday, June 6, 1989; 7:00 - 9:00 PM demonstrate your support for the quality education of our children and support the preservation of our community school's programs

Now is the time for us to come together as a community and let the entire city know that we will still have a voice and a say in the education of our children.

This meeting is to muster our forces; share ideas to develop a strategy that will assure us that the programs that are important to quality education and quality of life in northeast Portland will remain in our community and that notifications will be made through our own community network.

- Topics of concern include:
- ***Student Achievement
- ***Student Discipline
- ***Update On Multi-Cultural Curriculum-The Real Story
- ***Economic And Morale Impact Of Closing Jefferson HS

Be there-----Have a say in what will happen to our children-----
To our community!!!!!!!

June 6, 1989--King Neighborhood Facility
4815 NE 7th
7:00 - 9:00 PM

Students at Whitaker Middle School Excel in new self-enhancement program



Njeri White LaShanda Huff



Marvin Lambert Charlotte Hudson



Travis Elliott Emanuel Mosley

"The I can and I will" is a new program established at the Whitaker Middle School. It is part of a self-enrichment endeavor headed by Edna M. Pittman, the student service specialist. The youngsters pictured in this issue are from Mr. Moonan's eighth grade class. They have all made remarkable improvement in their attitude, behavior and grade point average. The Portland Observer salutes these students who have chosen to excel in such a positive way.

Flagger Training Sessions Set at PCC Cascade

The Northwest Business Center Has scheduled summer classes in flagger certification at the Portland Community College Cascade Campus, 705 N. Killingsworth St.

Participants may choose Saturday sessions June 10, June 24, July 8 or July 22, said Michele L. Albert, center president. The classes will be from 1 to 4pm in Portable Building 5 at PCC Cascade.

Anyone who wants to take part in a June or July session should register and pay the \$30 fee at the Northwest Business Center office, 5516 NE 16th Ave., no later than one day prior to the class.

Further information is available from Albert at 284-8103.

JOB CORPS TO HOLD REUNION

The Tongue Point job Corps Center will sponsor an Alumni Student and Staff reunion July 7th and 8th in Astoria, Oregon. The reunion will commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Job Corps program and will be held in conjunction with the Center's annual Open House scheduled for July 7. Reunion activities include a no-host dinner at the Eagles Lodge in Astoria Friday beginning at 6:00pm and a free barbeque on the Center from noon to 2:00pm Saturday. Reservations are necessary for the dinner by June 15. All graduates and former employees of Tongue Point Job Corps Center are invited to attend. Please contact the Director's Office at Tongue Point, Astoria, Oregon, or call 503-325-2131, for more information.

The Black United Fund of Oregon will hold a community forum on June 8, 1989 from 1:30pm to 3:30pm at the North Portland Branch Library Auditorium, 512 N. Killingsworth. The forum will feature presentations by Kay Sohi of Technical Assistance for Community Services and Steve Johnson of the Institute for Science Engineering & Public Policy. They will discuss corporations that donate computers and software to non-profit organizations and how to best utilize computers for word processing, data bases and accounting. For further information contact Herman L. Brame, Technical Assistance Manager, The Black United Fund of Oregon at 282-7973.

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