

Business and INDUSTRY

Thriftway to renovate

Rather than wait to build the store it wants someday maybe, United Grocers will try to renovate and reopen its Wilshire Park Thriftway in six months.

William Seidl, director of property management and store development for the grocery cooperative, told the Concordia Neighborhood Association last week that United Grocers is offering \$500,000 toward the remodeling of the 20,000 square foot facility at Northeast 33rd Avenue and Killingsworth Street to anyone willing to operate it. He is now negotiating with "a well-known Portland grocer" who manages several stores in the Portland area, whom he declined to name.

Roger Staver, Seidl's predecessor, tried for two years to build a new, 35-40,000 square foot store on the site after the Wilshire Park Thriftway closed in 1995. In meeting with the neighborhood, he argued that a larger facility was necessary to compete with other chain stores in the area.

Seidl, who replaced Staver earlier this year, agreed that a larger store at this site was "the best option. Unfortunately, we can't do that." One obstacle was the need to vacate one block of Northeast Emerson Street to the south in order to obtain enough property. At a hearing last year, mayor Vera Katz and commissioners Charlie Hales and Gretchen Kafoury indicated they would oppose any such attempt. "Charlie Hales said, 'No way,'" Seidl

said. Another problem was the zoning. Council rezoned the site and a satellite parking lot across Northeast Emerson Street for commercial use, as United Grocers asked, but gave them a Commercial Storefront CS designation. Under this zone, any new or expanded building must be next to the sidewalk.

This meant acquiring a row of commercial properties along Northeast Killingsworth Street, and UG was unable to do so, Seidl said. Even if they had, land use reviews for the new store could take two years, given continued hostility to the project from some Northeast 34th Avenue residents, he said.

Staver had fought for an expanded store because he felt that one within the existing building could not compete with other chain stores. Seidl said that was "true to some extent." However, he said, it could follow the lead of the Zupan's chain, which offers quality "specialty" products in stores of 15,000 to 18,000 square feet. It would have "slightly less product selection" and stock fewer items. "It can't be a Fred Meyer, and trying to go halfway won't work," he said.

"There's no such thing as a perfect grocery store," he added. "People say they want a bigger selection. That translates into size, and size to a big eyesore."

One older resident, who declined to give her name, indicated Seidl's approach would suit her fine. "Older people don't buy as much, and they don't need as much selection," she said. "They want good quality and don't want to go into a mega-store."

Another resident, Mallory Pratt,

said she feared the new grocery might be a "ghetto store" in which higher prices are charged for the same items available elsewhere.

Several said the store needed to be better run than it had been in its final years. One woman said she drove far out of her way to avoid shopping there "by whatever name it was that month. It was dirty, the staff wasn't helpful, I didn't feel secure, and I left with a bad feeling."

Steve Makinster of Northeast 34th Avenue, behind the store, said the new operator needed to be responsible the whole property, not just the entrance.

Seidl said the store's landscaping and appearance needs improvement. "I have a ten year old daughter, and I'm generally proud to show her the stores I've opened," he said. "When we drove by this one, I was embarrassed."

He was encouraged to believe the store could succeed by driving around the rest of the neighborhood, he said. "I see how nice the lawns are," he said. That shows concern and commitment. We've had a lot of opportunities to sell this property, but we have a commitment to the neighborhood."

It is returned. With the exception of some nearby neighbors, residents have strongly supported the re-establishment of some sort of store on the site. "I don't remember a neighborhood association that was so interested in a project of this size," Seidl said. "I'm trying to figure out how to bring that to bear."

Teen work permits no longer needed

Bureau of Labor and Industries officials want to remind employers and parents that teenagers no longer need work permits in order to go to work. Work permits joined dinosaurs in extinction nearly two years ago when the legislature eliminated the requirement. Work permits had been a tradition—a rite of passage to the workforce—for decades. Most Oregonians remember getting one if they worked during their teen years. But many can't accept that work permits are just a memory.

"A lot of parents don't believe us when we tell them we eliminated the permits," says public informa-

tion officer Joan Stevens-Schwenger. "They want them anyway. One parent even offered to pay for one!" Stevens-Schwenger noted that some employers are erroneously requiring them and sending kids and their parents to the bureau for the obsolete documents.

Although the permits are a thing of the past, kids, their parents and employers should be aware of child labor laws still covering working teens:

Minor, ages 14 through 17, no longer need work permits, but they must provide a proof of age to their employer.

Employers must verify the age of the minor. Acceptable proof of age

documents include: a birth certificate, a driver's license or ID card with a photograph, a US passport, or a hospital record of birth.

Employers who need more information about the regulations should call BOLI's Technical Assistance for Employers information line at 503-731-4073 in Portland. Parents and teens seeking information can call Wage and Hour Division offices in their area: Portland, 503-731-4074; Bend, 541-388-6330; Eugene, 541-686-7623; Medford, 541-776-6270; Pendleton, 541-276-7884; Salem, 541-378-3292.

Where are our buffalo? III

By Prof. McKinley Burt

Several readers directed their most heated comments to last week's quote to the effect that "we (blacks)" should have available to our economic development structures the incredible talent of the African American technological geniuses you frequently have cited. This was a black business woman referring to my article of 6/18/97.

The problem here centers around that vast socio-economic gulf existing between those African Americans who show up in the statistics as "having made it" in terms of education, income, housing and other amenities relating to the 'quality of life' - and the masses of the inner-cities, including the 'structurally-unemployed'.

The fast-changing nature of our economy has seen the disappearance of the many traditional jobs on which the less-educated could depend, what with the contraction of the work force as technology replaces manpower or jobs are exported abroad. This reduction of the quality of life leads to certain seemingly contradictory statements such as we find on page 156 of the National Urban League Report, 'The State of Black America 1996: Rising Urban Employment Increasingly Coexists with Rising Poverty.'

In order to connect these issues let us consider the points made during my May, "Neighborhood Capital" series. Particularly, that

there is a wealth of 'human capital' in the form of information, education and even social and spiritual assets. But we are further informed that there can be no viable economic or social structures unless 'we' communicate with each other. And we know that effective communication between the haves and the have nots-between a number of local leaders and the 'folks' - is rare in most communities.

More on that later for right now, I wish to apply this logic to the even greater disassociation and communications gap between the general population (us) and those super-achievers our correspondent believed could aid their fellow African Americans in building the kind of economic and technical structures owned and operated by other Americans; including some of the most recent immigrants.

As usual, let me put things in the real-time mode of my actual experience. In the middle 1950s, I went down to a bustling, thriving Los Angeles metropolis with the intent of developing my accounting and administration skills to a much higher level than was possible here in Portland. That worked very well and in past years I have described the experience as a working model for the young and ambitious, a student or in the neighborhood. To use the metaphor of the native Americans on the come-back trail, I and my peers were trying to get some "buffalo" back for African Ameri-

cans.

We were soon to find that any meaningful interaction with the black "Super-achievers" was no more likely than with the same genre of whites at the top.

Big, wealthy black insurance companies and asset management institutions told you point blank that they had no time or inclination to discuss "building community economies" because they were quite successfully financing the plants and inventories of white supermarkets, furniture stores and the like ("good, safe white money, boy").

I and a neighbor, who was a young real estate broker, tried to talk with our landlord, an African American who owned a dozen apartments of fifty units or more. He had parlayed an older tenement rented in daily shifts to war time shipyard workers, into a real estate fiefdom, with the help of as many as six trust deeds on one piece of property. His partner, also black, had built up a multi-million dollar trust deed operation by advertising for investors in Scandinavian newspapers. And these were two of many. No Go!

It's all gone now, isn't it? Social engineers and government fiddle with "Enterprise Zones" and various "Black and Latino Survival Strategies" they're termed. The dinosaurs failed to seize a 'niche' opportunity and what happened?

Concluded next week.

King Market launches defense

Continued from front

Rho said the list of incidents is being unfairly used against her.

The incidents on the list are appropriate for considering the renewal request, said McGrew, based on a 1989 "neighborhood livability law" that holds licensees accountable for the behavior in and around their area.

A May 8 memo by OLCC regional inspector Richard S. Miller indicated he had two meetings with the store's owners in the past two months and "suggested uniformed security for the lot as an effective deterrent of gang and drug activity, alcohol consumption, and general loitering problems."

The memo notes that Elaine Rho had followed suggestions for security officer candidates offered by police sergeant Harry Jackson but hadn't found one.

Miller's memo acknowledges Rho's assistance to police to "detect the 15-year-old minor with alcohol in the lot." He said Rho agreed to ban from the lot individuals listed in the police reports.

Miller also noted that King Food Mart did not accept an OLCC invitation to attend training sessions on preventing illegal sales of alcohol to minors, checking identification and detecting false identification. As a result, OLCC last December started a 90-day program in which it told store officials that underage decoys would be sent to attempt liquor purchases.

In an Oct. 1, 1996 letter to John and Elaine Rho, Miller accused them of "contributing to the area problems by selling beer and malt liquor in large containers, the drink of choice among street drinkers and gang affiliates, and crack pipes useful to only those engaged in illegal activities."

Eliot Neighborhood Association land use chairperson Aviva Groner two weeks ago contacted Mike Sanderson, the bureau of licenses official in charge of the investigation, and listed reasons to deny the renewal.

In addition to the police list of objections, the association "categorically opposes the sale of malt liquor and the sale of malt beverages in containers larger than 16 ounces," she said.

Groner also said association policy "discourages the sale of alcohol within 500 feet of a licensed child



King Food Mart owner Elaine Rho is fighting to keep her state license to sell beer and wine.

care facility or drug rehabilitation center," mentioning Albina Head Start and The Nanny's House and the drug and alcohol rehab center Project for Community Recovery. All are within a block of the store.

The association also objects to new package stores because of associated neighborhood problems, she said.

"The (city) report was written by a few people," said Rho. "This is my livelihood and they are trying to take it away from me. They are targeting my store only because of where I am."

Rho told The Portland Observer that changes in the neighborhood have caused many of the problems, not the store's practices. Admitting the validity of a few citations for liquor sales to minors, she said it was not unlike many other stores where these infractions occur.

She also complained detractors want her to stop sales of objectionable products which she says are legal and sold by other retail outlets in Portland, including pipes and pipe screens.

"It is not against the law to sell those pipes," agreed McGrew, "but

it shows a lack of willingness to be part of the solution to this problem."

But later, Rho did stop sales of the pipes.

Rho said criticism about sales of the high content of alcohol in malt liquors sold at her store were unfair.

"It is not only gang members who drink malt liquor and not just young people," she said, noting that many local residents prefer the products in question. She said people who criticize the store for selling the malt liquor "just present malt liquor as a gang member drink and then say I create the gang problem."

She also complained that the citations about drug trafficking in the parking lot includes numerous occasions when police pulled over vehicles and "they used my parking lot" and put that down as the location of arrest.

Rho expressed fear that she is being railroaded, without proof about several complaints, to eliminate the store from a neighborhood that is undergoing transformation and being upgraded on many fronts.

"I got rid of fortified wine and my neighbors were with me," she said, noting that "Alot were upset. This neighborhood has changed in the last year, with new people, white people buying houses and changing things. I am the one getting sacrificed."

She also noted that during a recent appearance at the Eliot Neighborhood Association, she was only allowed seven minutes to present her case.

"I couldn't say much," she noted. "Two members came in late, after we said everything. They had already made up their minds. The vote was 3-2," against renewal.

"Through deliberate inaction or the inability or fear to act...the owner and employees are in part directly responsible for the decline of the neighborhood," said neighbors Lisa Gereg and Timothy Edwards.

Happy Birthday Cynthia!

I Love You, Mark



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