

BHT Neighborhood Association

Meeting Minutes for 11-05-13

ATTENDEES: Stephen Garner, Cindy Garner Francis Hanna, Margaret Tolan, Neil Loebner , Meredith Olmstead, Robert Jester, Steve and Nancy Inman, Bill Weber, Rick Mishaga, Frances Hanna, Doug Ainslie, Amy Reece, Cammy Pierson: 15 attendees.

SPECIAL GUEST: Mr. Chris Paul, Wildfire Supervisor of NM, Cascade district. Our hill is within their administrative boundary. He's seen our draft resolution and has commented on it. There have been several emails and calls questions back and forth between Steve and Chris.

The meeting was called to order by Steve at 7:03pm

Steve Garner gave the group an update on the I-205 progress:

On October 10-16-13 the WL Planning Commission (PC) met and the Parks & Recreation dept. presented on the trails. The planning commission supported our BHTNA group and said PC needs to listen to them. The result was a list of 5 conditions that are required to be met **prior** to the I-5 trail build: fire risk assessment, fire suppression plan, fire risk mitigation plan, safety/crime prevention plan, and fire safety maintenance plan.

Last night (11-04-13): there was a City Council work session where the Parks & Recreation dept. (Ken Worcester) said the trail plan has met all 5 requirements. He provided no proof of this that we are aware of.

Steve met this morning with Thomas Frank, city councilor, who seemed to listen. (Jenni Tan seems to be ready to listen to us as well, per a meeting last week with her by Steve and Meredith.) He is very interested in being a "fire watch" city. City is watching Title 3 money closely since it's most of our funding and it's slowly draining away.

Steve turned the conversation to Robert Jester, who said at the meeting last night a representative from the governor's office, who works on city planning, led a discussion and complimented the City of West Linn for having the best planning in a city in Oregon. Robert looked around the table and saw no embarrassment at the table. The City of West Linn had just fired the head of planning, John Sonnen!

The Trails Master Plan endorsements: TAB, Parks and Recreation Department, city council. The City Council wanted time to review the Master Trails Plan prior to the public City Council mtg.

Ken (Worcester) says we "believe we've resolved all the neighbors issues but not I-205 trail. Their (neighborhood association) only resolution is no trail". He stated that the trail

will serve as a fire break. The Sunset and Willamette Associations have passed motions in favor of the trail.

Jenni Tan talked to Robert Jester prior to the mtg. "I'm glad someone's here from the BHTNA. I didn't find any information about the five conditions in the MTP document. I'll put that on the record".

Jenni interrupted Ken W. immediately in his speech re: the 5 conditions. Ken responded yes, they have met the standards of WL police and TVFR. All of the five conditions have been met/resolved.

Each of the council members at the table took turns stating their appreciation to Ken and the Parks and Recreation team for "all the great work you've done on this" all councilors agreed. The Mayor (John Kovach) asked how we're going to maintain the trails: Ken responded "constituents concerns are not always factual. There's a trail in my backyard, he takes pruners with him and snips it. MS Young Park has a group of volunteers that clean it 6 hours/week. All citizens need to be a part of the "maintenance team".

Ken also stated that "Fire danger and fire risk is a personal risk: the homeowners have to take responsibility for their part". There was general frustration at the BHTNA meeting as we were all told not to go on ODOT property. Robert couldn't say anything in the work session, as there is no public testimony allowed. No one challenged Ken on his information as presented.

There was general agreement (but no vote) that the I-205 trail issues possibly were resolved because possibly all standards have been met on the 5 conditions per TVFR & WL police, as stated by Ken Worcester. There were no documents produced to prove the 5 conditions were met.

There was general agreement at the meeting that we want a "crime prevention plan" so if a crime is committed we want PREVENTION not responding to a crime.

On another note: to get to the City Council meeting you must go through a metal detector. They don't trust the citizens of WL to go to a public mtg! They're not searching the people who walk on the trails behind our house to protect the citizens though.

B Weber: Was there any discussion about Sonnen's firing? Robert Jester: There was no discussion.

Margaret Tolan: What TVFR letter do they refer to? Don't know, nothing was presented Ken just told the council that the 5 conditions are met. (Robert Jester).

Margaret Tolan: I want to talk to the fire/police – have they walked the land?

Steve Garner: Last week he called TVFR (Brian Sherard) “we don’t do risk assessments, we don’t have a fire suppression plan for that hillside”.

Steve Garner introduces Chris Paul from US Dept of Forestry.

How do we tell the city council that what Mr. Worcester says meets the 5 conditions really doesn’t?

Mr. Paul: I’m staying an advisor, outside of the political arena. I’ve walked portions of the trail myself, I used to live in Lake Oswego. The hill is one of the places that he’s been worried about regarding a fire problem.

Mr. Paul has mailed with Kate Stoller (South prevention area) and gave her updates. He hasn’t heard from them yet. In 2000 the federal govt encouraged states to have “community wildfire plans”. Oregon made the plans county to county. In 2005 the community wildfire plan for Clackamas county is a MODEL for how to do it. In 2012 we knew we should renew the plan. In this version we talked to diff. groups of folks and found out about their concerns (losing water supply, losing facilities, then pump stations, etc. evacuation routes, etc). How will I get the equipment I need in the fire area. What are the community values (we like our trees, etc.).

Meredith: we’re maintaining our homes, it’s the ODOT property that will cause the problems.

If you look on Chris’ map “community at risk” fuel reduction projects TVFR designated the hillside as a “community at risk” hillside. Title 3 funds were narrowed down by congress for what you could spend the money on: comm. wildfire plans, search and rescue & one other admin thing. ODOT/City of WL agreed to hire Chris’ group to clear the land.

Garner to Mr. Paul: Mr. Worcester says these 5 conditions have been met: How do we validate that these measures are adequate to protect our homes?

TVFR wouldn’t have a suppression plan in any area. Even he doesn’t have a specific area plan. The bulk of our fires happen in the urban/wild land boundaries. Weather conditions are also huge in how fast the fire moves.

Chris: We’ve got the community Wildfire plan where TVFR said the hillside was an area of concern. This study was done by TVFR in 2012: The concerns were:

- Defensible space
- Access
- Water (lack of)
- Recreationist and transients haven

- Burning
- Preparedness (TVFR & citizens/homeowners)
- Slope

“Light flashy fuels”: 1 hour fuels (scotch broom, grass, small limbs ¼ in diameter); there are 10 hour, 100 hour and 1000 hour fuels. The smaller limbs on a Douglas fir are a flashy light fuel (at the end of the summer it’s the worst).

Clackamas county fire districts plan was submitted to the forest service by TVFR. The “report” doesn’t meet any of the requirements that were laid out in the Master Trails Plan.

Rick: What’s your relationship with ODOT? Why aren’t they involved with this?

Chris: I could write an order saying “you will do this to fix the area to protect various areas”.

ODOT says it’s TVFR’s responsibility to take care of the hillside.

Olmstead: Chris Paul is very honest and helpful. Thank you very much.

Neil Loebner: Fire chief is ultimate decision maker at TVFR – Mike Duyke is fire chief.

We’re going to classify the whole county then ODF decides if it’s reasonable to do that.

TVFR is a contractor to the City of West Linn, thus, have a vested interest in keeping city happy.

Tolan: Thank you for your candor. We don’t want to deal with the political issues, it’s a safety issue.

Chris: I walked around the trail by the creek is: the key is to trim the trees up 10-12 feet, work on the scotch broom issue, if they grade in a road up above and maintain it, that’s a great fire break.

Parks & rec have set up the road or a leveled area of gravel as a “fire break” to address citizen concerns. Is he correct?

Chris: if the fire starts down low, it will be a fire break. If it’s on the hill past the trail, then it won’t be. Chris recommends that another “gravel” road be placed up higher on the hillside and that would be a fire break. With the other recommendations that he made: trim up trees, clear scotch broom, etc. it would be much safer in case of fire.

In California they have the Santa Ana winds. Here we call them the East Winds. The winds are very strong on that hill and it will howl up the hillside, especially in the fall when everything is dry.

Jester: would you put a trail and introduce people into that area? Remember the rest area? You're introducing high risk activity in a high risk area. They closed the rest area due to problems.

Chris: Education campaigns; **engineering, enforcement** (closures, no smoking, etc). The city could make rules about these things and then it would have to be enforced. I'm surprised ODOT isn't requiring a fence to keep people away from the storage area to protect their inventory.

Having a sidewalk/trail up Salamo would eliminate the need for a trail on the hillside (Jester)

RESOLUTION:

Garner: The first page is all background as to why a resolution: we haven't been listened to or taken seriously.

Page 2: the actual resolution. Take a minute to read it.

We want to make sure the City Council doesn't vote on the Master Trail plan WITHOUT specifying the wording say the 5 CONDITIONS must be actually met and agreed to by BHTNA before construction of the trail. This is a city safety issue.

Tolan: to Meredith: did you call Terry Timeus? (NO).

We should meet with Mike Duyke. (Camie Pearson). I could set up a meeting with Mike. What time frame do you need? She will give him a call and see if we could all meet.

Garner: If Mike will allow everyone to come then I can distribute it to the email list. We have to get as many neighbors rallied as soon as possible about the city.

Garner: November 18 the city council meets in open session and they will vote on the plan acceptance at that time.

Tolan 2nded; Neil moved to approve the resolution. Resolution was approved unanimously.

NEIL: It should say "clearly" who is in control" so they can't play pass the buck with responsibility.

Jester: Parks & Rec have 13 days with which to prove the 5 requirements have been met.

Garner: Who will take the action item to go to the City to get the documents that they say meet the standards for these requirements? (Robert Jester agreed).

Garner: He is copying all councilors: certified mail to Kovach, Worcester and Tim Ramis, city attorney.

Cammy Pierson: We own property on Powell hillside, adjacent to the water tower. The city condemned the property because there's such a transient problem up there. There are 3 owners to the private property but the issues we have with the transients are a huge issue. The last 1 ½ years they've been good but the police only will come out during the day, not at night. We have a home there. I'm really concerned because my brother (quadriplegic) lives there. Lots of garbage, needles, etc. I might be able to get Rob to talk to one of them about the transient issues. The last time I was up there, there were 2 campfires! We've even had people go around on ATVs.

Garner: Have them testify on the 18th about the problems we will have if this trail will be built.

Sweetwater trail: They did a big trail clean up by citizens of needles, garbage, etc.

Accumulate neighbors email addresses – we need to build our database. Please show up at November 18th city council meeting. Bring neighbors to the meeting

Steve: Any other remaining issues? Thank you Rick Mishaga, Robert Jester and Meredith for helping me with the resolution.

Let's all meet again next week to (safety committee meeting) re: what we are saying for the meeting.

Steve asked for a motion to adjourn. Neil Seconded Margaret Tolan who issued the motion. It was so moved and seconded.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:24pm.

Documents:

10.14 Community at Risk: Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue

Sign in Sheet

BHTNA RESOLUTION