



www.swhrl.org

Viewpoints

September 2006

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2006-2007 Board

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Quarterly Membership Meeting! Sept 26, 2006 7-9 PM, Ainsworth School Come direct the future of your neighborhood

SWHRL has changed its by-laws to make it more accessible to the residents. That means we will be coming to you 4 times a year to consider strategic directions that the neighborhood should consider. At these meetings we will encourage lively discussions about topics that affect you, your safety, your home and your community.

At this first quarterly member meeting we will be considering a question that may influence the way we interact with the city bureaus and the city leadership. We will consider whether SWHRL should join the Southwest Neighborhood coalition or remain independent. Frankly, it's an important question because it will affect how we go about trying to influence policies that affect our community - from the outside or from the inside.

For 37 years SWHRL has prided itself on being an independent neighborhood association willing and able to take on the city any time it disagreed with policies that were being disseminated into the neighborhoods. At present SWHRL has reaped a harvest of goodwill at City Hall since we settled the boundary lawsuit and actively participated in a number of city-wide forums including the BIP #8 and the selection of the new ONI Director.

But in the long run we will need to establish a consistent and effective strategy to affect change

at City Hall.

On the other hand, if we begin to avail ourselves of all these coalition sponsored services, what's to distinguish us from the rest of the neighborhood associations? The funding support to the neighborhoods goes to support the publication of monthly newsletters and insurance coverage, not to the individual neighborhood associations. Does that mean we can't claim to be fiscally independent once we use the coalition's blanket insurance for events? Are we breaching our independence every time the SWNI News publishes an article on happenings in SWHRL?

Do you feel strongly about these issues? We will have representatives from ONI and SWNI attending, as well as neighbors that represent the full panoply of opinions. Help us understand how the neighborhood wants us to move forward in our efforts to improve our community, and how you want us to address the city administration - by engaging in the existing representational system or by opposing that established process? Let us know how you feel about this subject on September 26th.

Jim Thayer

**Ice Cream Social Sunday
Sept 10, 3:30-5 PM. See
the back page!**

President's Message

Which way will we SWHRL?

Neighbors:

Since its founding in 1969 the Southwest Hills Residential League (SWHRL) has prided itself in being an "independent" neighborhood association. What exactly does this mean and does it still make sense to retain this status?

As many of you know this neighborhood association has seen its share of bitter disagreements. SWHRL's independence from the city's organized system of neighborhood "coalitions" has also been one of those areas of disagreement that continues to arouse passions. So why bring it up at all?

Portland's Office of Neighborhood Involvement (ONI) has announced that it will be reviewing what services it will continue to provide to the "unaffiliated" neighborhood associations. These include the Downtown Neighborhood Association, the Lloyd Center Neighborhood Association, the Pearl Neighborhood Association, the Healy Heights Neighborhood Association and the Southwest Hills Residential League. Of these five districts, SWHRL is the only significant residential neighborhood association that is not part of a coalition. If we were to join a coalition it would likely be the Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. (SWNI) coalition.

If the services offered by ONI to independent neighborhood associations are limited, we may soon be faced with choices that could limit the effectiveness of our neighborhood association. On the other hand it's plausible that by relinquishing our independent status SWHRL might diminish its ability to oppose city policies. The SWHRL board has not taken a position on this issue – that is why we've brought the question to our membership. While it may be advantageous to change our status, it is also possible to defer the issue indefinitely.

So let's consider the pros and cons of joining the Southwest Neighborhood Initiative (SWNI) neighborhood coalition. What advantages can membership in SWNI offer to us?

- By actively collaborating with our neighbors, **SWHRL can extend its influence to impact all the SW neighborhoods.** For example, SWHRL's plans to draft and launch neighborhood guidelines for residential development that would protect the character of our communities would have a much greater chance of acceptance if an entire quadrant of the city demanded it.
- Joining the coalitions **doesn't mean we lose our independent viewpoint.** There is no evidence to support the idea that simply joining into the coalition structure would in any way restrict our ability to "take on the city" over issues important to our community. And there's nothing to prevent us from leaving the coalition if we feel it's not working for us.
- Being part of a coalition will **assure services from both SWNI's and ONI's staff.** It would facilitate requests for street vacations, insurance to cover neighborhood events and liability coverage for association volunteers.
- **Quicker and more reliable access to information** about municipal events or policies. Much of this information does come to SWHRL directly, but not all the bureaus know we exist.
- **Wider distribution of Southwest Hills news** via SWNI's monthly newsletter – in addition to the quarterly *Viewpoints*. SWHRL is firmly committed to publishing its own quarterly newsletter, but with the SW

- News' more frequent and wider distribution our local news will be more easily available.
- Some Land Use and Transportation **issues are intrinsically regional**, and we may be more effective combining the efforts of all our SW neighborhoods to solve them.
- **SWNI's 501(c)(3) status** will allow donors to claim deductions for their donations. This gets more important as we try to raise larger sums of money for special projects.
- **Insurance** to cover public events, such as the planned ice cream social. Covering this insurance burden ourselves will cost us about \$200 per event.
- The Mayor recently appointed **Amalia Alar_on** as the new ONI director. Having worked with her before her appointment, I can unequivocally say she will be an excellent leader for our neighborhood process. I believe that under her leadership SWHRL could benefit from being more closely integrated into the evolving neighborhood structure.

So what are the negatives? These considerations include:

- SWHRL has **historically been independent** and remains the last independent hold-out. Many members have supported SWHRL's independent status over the years and this change would reverse 37 years of independent status. Why should we sacrifice this status?
- Being part of an organization that is partially funded by the city could pose a **conflict of interest** that would diminish our ability to oppose city policies.

- Joining SWNI means **yet another monthly meeting** to attend for SWHRL officers, who already devote much valuable after-hours time to the neighborhood effort. But it adds to the pool of representatives that speak for us at the city-wide level.
- Working in coordination with other neighborhood associations would intrinsically **limit our independence** as we seek a broader consensus around issues that concern us.
- Being "affiliated" **might adversely impact our ability to gather contributions**. Members might feel that since we are indirectly receiving city money, they do not need to contribute.

At the September Membership meeting we will open the floor to discussion about this issue and will invite members of the community to express their views about whether SWHRL should join the SW Neighborhoods, Inc. coalition. After due consideration of the testimony of all residents and interested parties we will submit a draft resolution for membership vote at the January membership meeting. We want to enter this debate with an open mind, but emerge from it better informed and decided in our choices.

Neighbors, we need to decide this question soon as it will affect how we proceed to develop the goals we've set for our Southwest Hills community. Whether its land use guidelines, transportation changes or changes in the city charter we seek – we must decide whether to build bridges to achieve our goals – or go it alone.

*Jim Thayer
President, SWHRL*

Committee Reports

Transportation:

At its first meeting the SWHRL transportation committee set a broad goal: Improve neighborhood livability by maintaining SWHRL as a safe pedestrian and bike friendly area.

To reach this goal we plan to: Identify needs by surveying the membership; Prioritize needs; Use SWHRL's resources to support transportation options; Work with PDOT and Multnomah County; and broaden committee representation.

You, the members, play a vital role in this process. We need your input. Please complete the Transportation Survey included in this missive or the one available on-line. If you'd like a more active role, we welcome participation in the committee.

Transportation Committee members: Alan Bacharach, Julia Harris, Andrew Holtz, David Margolis, Tom Miller, Richard Seton, and Alice Stolzberg.

Julia Harris

Land Use:

Set up and expand Land Use Committee: Recruit members from as many neighborhoods as possible within the SWHRL area, so small teams can be called upon to respond to land use issues in their area (unless there would be a conflict of interest).

Educate Ourselves as Land Use Committee Members: Recommend that each member attend the course on "how to be a land use committee member" / how to deal with city agencies, etc.

Develop a list of experts, such as land use attorneys, planners, landscape architects, etc., that SWHRL neighbors can consult on issues.

Respond to land use issues in a timely and effective manner.

Establish path for incoming notices of land use issues: identify who receives notices, assign who should follow up.

Nancy Seton



Your Opinions Wanted!

The SWHRL transportation committee would like to hear from you, our neighbors, about your satisfaction with the transportation infrastructure in the South West Hills. We'd also like to hear about what works well and what you think needs improvement. We have created a short survey, which is linked to the SWHRL web page at <http://www.swhrl.org/>. This survey will be available from September 5th through to September 15th.

In addition, the survey is printed on the next page. Please take a moment to fill it out. Then cut out the page, and either fold, stamp and mail it, or bring it to the Quarterly Membership Meeting on September 26, 2006 at Ainsworth School. Copies of this survey will also be available for members to fill out at the meeting. Please make sure that we receive your mailed copy by September 26th.

We will take this and other input, and create a plan for improving our roads and trails. We encourage everyone to participate - the more participation, the better the results.

Richard Seton

SWHRL Transportation Survey

The SWHRL transportation committee would like to hear from you, our neighbors, about your satisfaction with our current transportation infrastructure, and what you would like to see improved. It is very important that everyone participate – the more responses we get, the more effective our efforts will be.

For the following questions, a 1 means that you are very dissatisfied or not often; 5 means that you are very satisfied, or often.

1. Please rate your satisfaction with our current transportation infrastructure, and how it supports the following

	1 ☹	2	3	4	5 ☺
Driving					
Bicycling					
Walking					
Public Transportation					
Other (Please specify)					

2. How important are the following transportation options?

	1	2	3	4	5
Driving					
Bicycling					
Walking					
Public Transportation					
Other (Please specify)					

3. How often do you use the following transportation options?

	1	2	3	4	5
Driving					
Bicycling					
Walking					
Public Transportation					
Other (Please specify)					

4. What is working well and should not be changed? Please describe.

5. Please describe the major transportation infrastructure challenges being faced by the residents of the Southwest Hills today.

6. If you had to make one change to our system of roads / paths, what would it be?

The following questions will be used for tracking & calibration purposes:

What street do you live on? _____ What is your zip code? _____

Thank you for completing our survey. Your comments are helpful to us and the neighborhood.

SWHRL Sponsors the West Willamette Corridor Restoration Project

Our neighborhood forests are overrun by English ivy and other invasive plants.

To combat this, the Three Rivers Land Conservancy, a charitable non-profit, has formed a partnership, the West Willamette Corridor Restoration Project (WWCRP), with Friends of Marquam Hill Park, Friends of Terwilliger, OHSU, and the City of Portland.

The focus is the wooded corridor extending from Forest Park south to Tryon Creek Park. The first project will be ivy removal and eradication through hired and volunteer labor. In addition, each resident is asked to cut and remove ivy from the base of trees on their property.

SWHRL has been asked to become a

sponsor, as have other neighborhood associations, government and corporate entities, and individuals. These groups will form a Core Funding Group, each donating \$3,700 for a year for three years to pay for professional management, to increase community awareness and involvement, and map and treat plant infestations. The SWHRL board has committed \$3,700 to support this effort this year.

Further donations will be considered by SWHRL based on progress evaluations and funds available to the league.

Further information is available on the Three Rivers Land Conservancy website, http://www.trlc.org/projects/westwillamettecorridor/PloneArticle_view

Alice Stolzberg

Stamp

SWHRL
PO Box 1033
Portland, OR 97207-1033

If you've moved, please fill this out. If not, give it to your neighbor!

SWHRL Membership Application
Southwest Hills Residential League P.O. Box 1033 Portland, OR 97207
info@swhrl.org www.swhrl.org

SWHRL is organized as a charitable, nonprofit organization, and the League's purpose is to preserve and enhance the generally residential character and livability of the neighborhood.

Every resident or a person representing a business or property owner within the League's boundaries qualifies to be a Member of SWHRL. In addition, someone who resides within any previous SWHRL boundaries may become a Legacy Member, subject to Board approval, and accorded the same rights and privileges as Members. Interested persons not fitting either of the previous definitions may become Associate Members, but may not vote or be granted the same privileges as Members.

To apply for membership, you must complete this form and return it to SWHRL.

Name _____

Address _____ Zip+4 _____

Telephone _____ (home) _____ (work)

*Email _____ Fax _____

**SWHRL only uses your email and other information for League business, not for distributing to other organizations.*

Please check one of the following: I am applying for/renewing:

Member _____ Legacy Member _____ Associate Member _____

Contributions are voluntary. Generous voluntary contributions have enabled the League to remain an independent neighborhood association since 1969. Suggested Member Contributions:

_____ \$35.00 _____ \$50.00 _____ \$75.00 _____ \$100 _____ Other

Construction scams "drift" into town this summer

It's like clock work. When the weather improves, the scam artist strikes. And they usually strike the person that appears most vulnerable.

"Older adults tend to be targets because of mobility issues," says Gina Fox, Public Information Officer for the Construction Contractors Board (CCB). "They may not be able to climb on the roof or crawl into a crawlspace to look at problems or repairs."

They also tend to be more trusting.

"Always check on a contractor's license", says Fox. "Make sure your contractor is actively licensed, which means they have a bond and liability insurance, and check their complaint history."

The CCB is a state agency licensing more than 42,000 contractors. Anyone who is paid to repair, improve or build a home must be licensed by the CCB. Consumers can verify a contractor's license and find other helpful tips at www.oregon.gov/ccb and clicking on Consumer Help. Consumers can also call 503-378-4621.

*From an Oregon State Contractors Board
Press Release*

SWHRL Ice Cream Social



In Brief:

Join your neighbors for a delightful Sunday afternoon of ice cream and camaraderie on Sunday, September 10th, 2006 from 3:30- 5 PM at Portland Heights Park, the park right next to Strohecker's at 2855 SW Patton Road.

Our thanks to Strohecker's for their generous assistance in making this event a reality.

- SWHRL member Dana Cress contacted SWHRL in July, asking for our assistance in defending against a Measure 37 claim that she viewed as hazardous to her neighborhood. SWHRL board member Darroch Cahen attended a preliminary meeting at her house. SWHRL Land Use Chair Nancy Owen testified at a city council hearing. The result – the claim was unanimously denied. Dana told SWHRL that she felt that we did exactly what a neighborhood association should do, in assisting her in the matter.
 - Board member Darroch Cahen reports on the success of his block party on Neighborhood Night out. A fire engine visited, and a good time was had by all.
 - SWHRL member Margaret Smith has alerted the board to a rash of vandalism and car break-ins in the Fountain area. To check out crime statistics in your area, visit this website: <http://www.portlandonline.com/police/index.cfm?c=29795>
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