



King Neighborhood Association

September 10, 2013

Dear Mayor Hales:

The purpose of the King Neighborhood Association, in pertinent part, is “to enhance the livability of the neighborhood and Portland by establishing and maintaining an open line of communication and liaison among the neighborhood [and] government agencies...” Pursuant to this purpose, we are writing you today to communicate our continuing concerns regarding the impact of Last Thursday events on the livability of our neighborhood and to ask for your help.

Last Thursday on Alberta Street, unlike other large-scale events in the city, has been allowed to avoid meeting regulatory requirements. Last Thursday is set apart due to its unstructured, non-formulaic nature that is seen as spontaneous, creative, and unique.

Fifteen years after it began, Last Thursday is now a monthly street fair, but a street fair whose loose structure and unmanageable crowd size invites visitors to expect tolerance of street drinking and to enjoy an anonymity they exploit to behave badly. While those who have been drinking may spend more freely, it is the residents who bear the cost.

With every Last Thursday, neighbors must prepare for as many as 15,000 people who come to the Alberta Corridor. Before 8:30 p.m., Last Thursday appears to be a manageable and friendly event. As the evening wears on, however, the event turns less so and transforms into a noisy alcohol-fueled party that carries on late into the night. At that point it is no longer a family-friendly event and not always a safe environment for city and county staff to do their jobs.

Office of Neighborhood Involvement statistics gathered by ONI staff during June’s Last Thursday indicate a sizeable contingent of folks who are ‘visibly intoxicated’ wandering the event. Problems for neighbors related to public drunkenness continue, and we encourage the city in the strongest possible terms to come to grips with an event that purports to be an arts celebration but all too frequently serves as an opportunity for people to drink in the street. You are undoubtedly aware of incidents which received rather more publicity, at Last Thursday this summer. This simply is not what we signed up for, insofar as we have had any say as a neighborhood in how Last Thursday develops.

We find ourselves unsure who to turn to for help in keeping our neighborhood safe and clean during Last Thursday. We ask that you help us find the answers.

Sincerely,

Russ Eisenberg, Chair, King Neighborhood Association

King Neighborhood Association
King Neighborhood Facility, 4815 NE 7th Avenue