**King Neighborhood Meeting**

April 11, 2018 at 6:30pm in the NECN office – 4815 NE 7th Ave

Board members present: David Kennedy, Emily Leuning, Diego Gioseffi, Christen Cannon-Nugent, Andrew Neerman (6:43pm)

Neighbors present: Sara Wolk (STAR voting), Margaret O’Hartigan, Rob Branch-Dasch (Alberta co-op board), Linda Branch-Dasch, Libby Deal, Anna Leuning, Prentice Onayemi, Catherine Chao, John Kim

**Agenda (*“time permitting items in italics”*):**

6:30pm: Intros & check-ins (5-10 min)

6:37: STAR (Score Then Automatic Runoff) Voting: Equal vote – current system has biases and makes voting less than democratic. STAR voting is cutting edge of voting reform. Gets to root of problem – 0 to 5 star system. 5 stars is full support, 0 stars is no support. Currently, bad candidate can win even if opposed by the majority. With STAR voting can show your preferences between candidates – don’t need to have a primary and general election. Vote once in November between all candidates. Right now primaries have huge impact but are usually lowest impact. Pilot project with Multnomah County.

Margaret says basic democratic principles are 2400 years old – one person one vote, secret ballots, the framers of the constitution – we’ve got a long history of how we vote. Where has a scheme like this operated? Does it actually increase turnout?

Sara says one person one vote is the idea that everyone’s vote should count- currently that’s only the case if you have two candidates in the race. This is legal, constitutional – in Oregon we have tried alternative forms of voting. 100 years ago we had ranked ballot/scoring system. First choice vote received a certain number of points, second choice fewer points, etc. This is a new system in Multnomah County – this specific model hasn’t been tested.

Margaret asks where has this worked and how has it made voting cheaper?

Sara says by skipping the primary and only holding a general election- that would save the money of holding the primary election. She met with the director of elections and he says this system is viable, they would just need to draw up a different ballot. Ranked choice voting also skips the primary and has one ballot in November – can look to San Francisco for data. Looked at different systems of voting – STAR voting came out on top of list in terms of accuracy – the system that makes as many voters as possible as happy as possible with the election outcome. Current system has a score of about 70 while STAR voting (on a 0-5) scale has a score of 98. STAR voting would benefit folks who are currently overlooked/disenfranchised, greater equality. Upgrade to the system currently used in Australia and Ireland, but this is new.

Looking for endorsements/volunteers, can sign the ballot initiative.

Need 30,000 signatures by mid-July.

David asks if anyone has an issue with KNA taking a position on this topic.

Margaret says the people she knows who are the most disenfranchised are felons.

Rob points out that ex-felons are eligible to vote – not in federal elections, but can in local elections. Vote by mail and not using voting machines keep our system safe – a system like this is a big step in the right direction.

David asks for straw poll: who is in favor of supporting putting this on the ballot? Majority of neighbors approve putting on the ballot.

7:01pm – Alberta Abbey discussion

Andrew: Alberta Abbey: affordable housing project being proposed – surface parking lot across the street from Alberta Abbey. Developer is proposing a project that is 100% affordable housing – community development partners – requesting a zoning upgrade (spot zoning) as part of the project. City staff favors R1 which is a slight upgrade (28 units with no commercial space) if they get CM2 there would be 50 units including family sized units and commercial on ground floor managed by BICEP.

Libby lives three doors down from this parking lot – she’s a nurse, sees effects of lack of affordable housing, loves the fact that there would be affordable housing. Why commercial space on ground floor if the project is just affordable housing? Folks opposing projects are being unfairly branded as anti-affordable housing. She supports affordable housing, not CM2 designation. R1 designation protects the church more – if developer sells the lot, a new person could do whatever they want with the space and the church wouldn’t be protected.

John says there are homes around this lot – would be in the shadow of this building. It’s great to see something happening. Not a problem with the intention of the building, it’s the scale. Multi-generational families who have been here forever.

Libby says one of the things she really opposes is that you can build right up to the property line.

Andrew says he thinks it’s socially irresponsible to not provide as much affordable housing as they can.

John says Alberta is not a commercial corridor. It’s a narrow street - wouldn’t do well as a commercial corridor. Killingsworth and 30th has a similar building which is one story shorter than the proposed building.

Catherine: they’ve put together a brief overview of what’s happening. Think it is a great organization – they appreciate the perspective of adding diversity/inclusion in past projects they’ve worked on. Have worked on Veteran housing/low income housing. View rights/light rights/right to access/amenities – reason for the rezoning isn’t malicious – trying to create affordability. Alberta Abbey leases to artists at affordable rates – even with R1 or R2.5 designation, many Abbey uses aren’t allowed. Trying to create best possible solution for the neighborhood. Genuine commitment to neighborhood.

Prentice: one thing that hasn’t been said that is super cool about this project: grants to arts and culture orgs. Partnerships in place for this project are super collaborative, the combination of non-profit and for profit orgs. Libby asks whether neighbors can be involved – says that’s 300% the goal. Development cycles and change happen – there’s a great opportunity right now with this project. Excited to collaborate and involve community. Need to figure out what’s possible – get sense of what’s possible.

Margaret says that she finds it ironic that with all the talk of involvement the developer couldn’t be here. Has concerns about the letter Andrew has drafted. City’s process is broken – we have empty buildings on MLK, Vancouver, etc.

Andrew says it would be affordable commercial space. Would be more inclined to compromise on this issue if the Natural Grocers development had multiple stories of housing above it. This would have affordable housing and family housing.

Libby says yes we have a moral obligation to provide affordable housing and protect the art space. Has questions about how many units would actually be built. Almost seems like it’s too late for neighbors to be involved since vote on re-zoning is this month.

Prentice says this is not the last time to weigh in – this company relies on public funding to do what they want to do. This conversation is just about voting – will be a long process to figure out what’s actually happening.

Libby says the zoning change concerns her – single family homes are next door. Doesn’t seem reasonable to have a giant building next to a house.

Even with R1 artistic ventures aren’t in danger – says BPS will allow continued use of Alberta Abbey. Thinks neighbors would be opposed to such a huge development – would be an us vs them

Rob – where can we go proactively to get more info?

Christen says that she appreciates the discussion that is happening – yes it’s controversial but it’s good to bring neighbors together who care about the neighborhood. Thanks for coming – please don’t let this one topic be the last we see of everyone.

Sara says she also thinks the discussion is great – has been to lots of meetings recently and this seems like a good functioning neighborhood.

Catherine says she’s an architect – grew up in Houston (no zoning) practiced in Brooklyn, Berkley, etc. – lots of different experience with development, aesthetics, etc. what is the balance – how do we find it?

John says he likes the company - Rich Rodgers knows the city process, has been involved with various city councilors, mayor, etc. in the past.

Libby says BPS seems to believe that CM2 isn’t good for sustainable development.

Catherine says city is doing a wider overhaul – R1 designation is changing to become more dense anyway.

Margaret asks if we can invite the developer to come to the next meeting? Yes we can but our next meeting is after the city council vote.

John says info has been changing – was asking for R1 then CM2. Rodgers is a little too slick.

7:42pm: Bylaws and boundary change discussion

David says Boise and Humboldt and King have been in talks about changing the western boundary of the neighborhood to Garfield. Incorporate the two current blocks west of MLK into Boise and Humboldt. Walnut Park plat would then be in a single neighborhood. King would add a one block area currently on the SW corner of King.

Rob asks whether given the interest in tonight’s meeting – there seems to be a lot of interest about Alberta Abbey, do we potentially want to cede that area?

Andrew asks whether he thinks neighbors would support a parking permit in the neighborhood? John says not likely. He lives on Rodney near Ocobock house. What if it was city wide? Maybe. Andrew says free parking on public right of way is a huge subsidy. Andrew says why not have the neighborhood border go all the way to MLK? Might be beneficial to have all three neighborhoods invested in the street.

Humboldt already has Mississippi/Albina/Williams/Vancouver – were not super eager to take on another major street.

Margaret clarifies that the west side of Garfield would then be part of a different neighborhood. Houses between Alberta and Sumner would be part of King and would be surrounded by commercial and their neighbors across the street are part of a different neighborhood. Could the dividing line go down Garfield til Sumner, then to the alley then back? David says the alley doesn’t exist there.

If Humboldt has voted to extend their boundary westward tonight, the two blocks would then be part of both neighborhoods til King changes theirs as well.

Libby asks who she should work with on the Alberta Abbey issue – which neighborhood does she belong to now?

Rob asks what has brought this up? Cleaning up weird corners in the boundary, Diego says MLK is a big natural neighborhood separation.

Libby asks what is the identity of the King Neighborhood Association then – density and development no matter what?

David says he likes that the proposal is 100% affordable housing and he would feel differently if the project was not 100% affordable housing. Does not unequivocally support development no matter what.

Diego says it is a huge improvement that neighbors are in support of the affordable housing project – a few years ago would have been neighbors against building any affordable housing project.

Andrew says he doesn’t like being called pro-development, his personal politics are between anarchism and communism and hates capitalism. And he does support affordable housing – some arguments sound like NIMBY-ism.

Margaret says she lived on the street for several years – when people talk about affordable housing, the income levels are a joke. Is not affordable for the working poor, this is not a great boon for the neighborhood or our homeless.

Prentice says that Home Forward and JOIN will work with the developer to lower the income threshold as low as they possibly can. Margaret says there are no numbers or proof.

Catherine says most affordable housing developments have been disappointing but this project is different – that’s why she is supporting this project so much. This issue is huge and government is not going to be able to solve it. Homelessness is a state of emergency in Portland – some homeowners trying to do ADUs on their lots one at a time, but that in itself won’t solve the issue.

Libby asks whether some of this is still possible at R1 zoning? Yes, but not everything. Is it because of profit? Prentice says

John says a building this size would be a blight on the neighborhood, neighboring property values would go down (many of the neighborhood’s last remaining African-American residents live in the area), a lot of their wealth is tied up in their homes, would be more units than R1 is currently. Pepper the city with small scale affordable housing.

David says the issue will likely need to be taken up with Humboldt NA since the neighborhood boundary is likely changing.

Margaret says where did the initiative for changing the boundaries come from? Folks may have lost their opportunity to voice their opinions on this issue.

Rob asks where the recent meeting minutes are – David says we didn’t have quorum at previous meetings to approve the meeting minutes. Also, no meeting was held in March.

Diego says we could upload draft minutes.

Libby says thanks for the conversation and she’s interested in being involved.

John says the board seems thoughtful – better tone than the last meeting he attended.

8:20pm - adjourn