

**Mt. Tabor Neighborhood Association DRAFT**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**August 19, 2020**

**Board Members Present:** Cliff Cox, Nadine Fiedler, John Laursen, Sam Noble, Nancy Norby, Cassandra Rosenthal, Stephanie Stewart, Bing Wong

**Board Members Absent:** Barb Gamelgard, Brian Mitchell

**Others Present:** Mary McWilliams, Ute Munger, Jim Pierce, Leland Slaughter

**Welcome, Introductions, Approval of Previous Minutes:** The Zoom meeting opened with introductions led by Cliff Cox. The minutes from the July 2020 meeting were approved as amended on a motion by Nadine Fiedler, seconded by John Laursen, and passed with a unanimous oral vote.

**Treasurer's Report:** Tabled.

**Announcements:** Cliff Cox announced that board member John Laursen has been honored with a Governor's 2020 Arts Award.

**Call for Announcements of Neighborhood Issues and Concerns:**

*The SEUL board is considering the removal of a duly elected NA representative*

John Laursen opened a discussion about the fact that some members of the board of Southeast Uplift (SEUL) are mounting an effort to expel a NA representative, and to do so over the objections of the neighborhood he represents. His understanding is that the removal effort is based on unsubstantiated and challenged allegations against the NA representative and is proceeding without due process. SEUL's bylaws say that a neighborhood representative can be removed only with a two-thirds vote of the SEUL board and then only with the consent of the representative's neighborhood association or other organization. Some members of the SEUL board apparently want to change the SEUL bylaws so that a neighborhood association or organization no longer has veto power over its representative's removal by the SEUL board. The SEUL organization exists solely to serve the community involvement groups of SE Portland, and the SEUL board of directors is by design made up of representatives from these groups. This bylaw change is antithetical to the underlying intention of the structure. This structure ensures that the resources of SEUL respond to, rather than drive, community initiatives and that they do so with a cross section of communities and their initiatives. The MTNA board does not believe a reasonable assessment of the events of this case in any way warrants this action.

Sam Noble, the MTNA representative to the SEUL board, filled in some of the back story, which includes allegations, which have been challenged, that this person disrupted a meeting at the SEUL building and that as a result someone claimed to have felt unsafe. He said that the SEUL executive committee had asked the NA in question to send a different representative. Sam asked MTNA for guidance in how he should vote on this matter.

John stated that there should have been a great deal more effort to reach a thoughtful, negotiated resolution, possibly including outside mediation. Jim Pierce said that HAND had sent a letter to SEUL, also expressing grave concerns for what is now transpiring, that would be a good model for a response from MTNA. Stephanie Stewart noted that the actions proposed to be taken against the representative seem to be the result of biases developed over time, and appear to be an effort to squelch dissent rather than a good-faith effort to resolve a problem.

There was consensus that it would be a bad precedent for any organization, SEUL included, to change its bylaws in order to free itself to act punitively against a single individual. If this effort is successful, then membership on the SEUL board would become a popularity contest within that board, with representatives serving at the pleasure of other SEUL board members rather than being free to represent their neighborhood association or other organization. MTNA board members agreed that we should oppose this undemocratic outcome.

After a discussion of what actions MTNA might take, John Laursen moved that Sam, as our representative, should convey to the SEUL board our strong feeling that 1) the SEUL board should not vote to remove the representative; 2) they should not vote to change SEUL bylaws to facilitate removing this representative; and 3) given the heightened feelings that have been allowed to develop around the situation, it should be resolved through independent outside mediation. If there is a vote of the SEUL board, Sam is directed to vote in accord with the MTNA's position. Nancy Norby seconded, and the motion passed with 9 votes for and 2 abstentions.

#### *Peace Poles at Mt. Tabor Neighborhood Entryway*

The Portland Hostel, which is going out of business, has spoken to John Laursen, designer of the Mt. Tabor neighborhood entryway at 50th and Hawthorne, about their hope to relocate three peace poles and a land acknowledgment plaque from their property to the entryway. The poles are sponsored by an international peace organization, which will pay for the installation, including concrete footings. MTNA maintains the entryway, which is in a public right of way, and has permission from PDOT to do landscaping. After some discussion, John moved that MTNA accept the offer of the peace poles, for which he will negotiate the location. Bing Wong seconded, and the motion passed with 10 votes for and 1 abstention.

#### *Interpretive Signage Project in Mt. Tabor Park*

Stephanie Stewart and John Laursen updated the group on the history of MTNA's involvement with the interpretive signage project in the park. The City Council had mandated in a resolution that the Water Bureau should collaborate with the MTNA on this project, but the Water Bureau has ended the collaboration and reduced the MTNA team's role to simply being advisory. The MTNA team feels that the project has strayed so far from what was intended that the interpretive signs, instead of enhancing the park experience, will be a desecration. Stephanie will send an information packet to all MTNA board members so that the conversation can move forward.

**Neighborhood Crime Issues:** Tabled.

**Land Use:** Tabled.

**SEUL:** Tabled:

**Friends of Mt Tabor Park:** Tabled.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, September 16, at 7 PM via Zoom, with a social time starting at 6:50 PM.

For more information, please visit [www.mttaborpdx.org](http://www.mttaborpdx.org).