

## **Mt. Tabor Neighborhood Association**

Zoom Meeting Minutes, June 21, 2023

Facilitator: Dave Petrozzi

Secretary: Nadine Fiedler

**Board members present:** Nadine Fiedler, John Laursen, Paul Leistner, Brian Mitchell, Dave Petrozzi, Midge Pierce, Bing Wong

**Other attendees:** Cheri & John Belling, Julia Brim-Edwards, David Delk, Allen Field, Mo Klein, Nikki Mandel, Laura Orr, Jim Pierce, Kerry Politzer, Tom Thomas, Theodora Tsongas, Jessica Wolfe

After introductions, the May minutes were approved unanimously. Bing Wong presented the treasurer's report. MTNA's bank balance is now \$5899.29. Income includes pending share of cleanup funds and SEUL reimbursement of \$70 for the CT-12 charitable activities form and the secretary of state filing. Ongoing expenses include Zoom \$12 monthly fees.

### **Neighbor Announcements, Concerns, and Questions**

Paul Leistner shared the final numbers from the neighborhood cleanup, which took in about \$5,000. Paul reported that, after paying the expenses, each neighborhood association would net about \$1,500 from the event. The North Tabor NA gave \$200 to the Unity Church, whose parking lot we used, and Paul moved that we do the same. Nadine Fiedler seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. John Laursen thanked Paul for his work and for managing the collaboration.

Laura Orr requested an update on the reservoirs in the park and said she would like to start a letter-writing campaign. John Laursen replied that reservoir 5 has been filled, and that the water bureau has completed their analysis of reservoir 6. The chief engineer, Jody Inman, told him that the report would come out at the end of June with the cost of reservoir repair, and that he would forward that information to MTNA when he receives it. The voids may not be as bad as feared, but the repair cost could still be considerable. He reminded us that a former city council had delivered a binding promise to keep the reservoirs filled, and he fears what might happen with a new, expanded city council. John has asked Inman to come to a future MTNA meeting, maybe in July. He discussed the deterioration and neglect of the reservoirs, which need to be at capacity for future use. He suggests writing to Commissioner Mapps or the water bureau. Laura said that the water bureau is not updating their website, and Bing Wong said that he and John are on the committee to review the website.

Midge Pierce discussed the proposed new city council districts, which she says are hugely important. She would like MTNA to organize a forum to educate people about how to get their views heard by the city.

Dave Petrozzi talked about progress made by the communications committee. He has drafted a description of the process to invite speakers to MTNA meetings.

Bing Wong talked about the September 1 jazz concert in the park.

A discussion followed about MTNA meetings. John Laursen manages the online meetings, and he will be absent in August and September. Paul Leistner mentioned that the Richmond NA is trying out hybrid meetings and is open to seeing how well that works. The talk turned to possible speakers, and Dave Petrozzi wanted to hear from someone knowledgeable about the new camping ban and safe rest village. Midge Pierce mentioned that our speaker on solar

energy will not appear, since Oregon Solar was taken over by Arcadis, a for-profit organization.

### **Southeast Uplift's New Meeting Rules**

Allen Field, from the Richmond NA, talked about SEUL's recent decision to ban the public from its in-person board meetings, an action that was not voted on by SEUL's board. Members of the public would still be able to view the meetings through Zoom. SEUL is the intermediary between the city and NAs, and NAs send representatives to the SEUL board (MTNA currently has no rep on the SEUL board). Allen said that SEUL's action is a violation of Office of Neighborhood Involvement standards. The reason SEUL gave for their action is the need for social distancing due to covid. Richmond wrote to Commissioner Ryan and TJ McHugh objecting to this action. Allen said that the SEUL meetings are now in webinar format, which means the public can't be seen or participate, which disallows people with no internet access, and when they go back to meeting in person they will bar the public from attending. He asked MTNA to join Richmond to request that Commissioner Ryan ask the city attorney if the public can be banned from open meetings.

Theodora Tsongas asked if we could check with the Multnomah County Health Department to see if covid rules still apply to meetings. Allen said that everyone has declared the pandemic over.

Julia Brim-Edwards supports sending a letter even if SEUL goes back to Zoom, since their action violates the spirit and principle of public meetings. She finds it hard to believe that Commissioner Ryan would support that lack of transparency.

Laura Orr said that public meeting laws can be tough legal issues and that we need to get an opinion from the city attorney, and we can go to the city ombudsman. She will do anything she can to address this legal question. Allen replied that public meeting laws do not apply to NAs or coalitions.

Dave Petrozzi said he is sympathetic but that our letter should be constructive and allow SEUL to save face; this would be more likely to bring people to our side.

John Laursen agreed with Dave but said that our letter should go to Commissioner Ryan and the OCCL. Julia Brim-Edwards then said she would reach out to the commissioner. John mentioned that Ryan had been dismissive about the lack of citizen participation concerning the removal of lampposts in the park.

Paul Leistner will work to craft a communication, since he is familiar with the standards. He asked if the letter should advocate open meetings, transparency, and accessibility. Dave agreed and said we should talk about inclusivity as well.

Allen Field said he had sent a letter to several MTNA board members and will share that with Julia Brim-Edwards and send Nancy Champlin's response to all. He wants to know if ONI standards back up this lack of public attendance.

Bing Wong mentioned the long history of problems and conflicts that NAs have had participating in SEUL.

Nadine Fiedler pointed out that although the pandemic emergency was lifted, covid is not over.

Midge Pierce said that we've all experienced trouble with SEUL, and that transparency is crucial, especially with the current redistricting. She'll pull a solution-oriented forum together to discuss this.

Paul Leistner said that the spirit of the system should be open and accessible, and we should

always move towards that.

Allen Field mentioned that in the last three years ONI's standards have not been actively enforced, and that although SEUL was found in violation of ONI standards, OCCL has not enforced the rules.

John Laursen moved that Paul Leistner should work with Laura Orr to craft an appropriate letter and stay in touch with Julia Brim-Edwards about how to approach Ryan. The letter to Commissioner Ryan and TJ McHugh should ask them to work with the city attorney to give guidance on this issue. The goal is increasing transparency, openness, inclusivity, and accessibility. Bing Wong seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

### **Portland's Critical Energy Infrastructure Hub**

Nikki Mandel presented a slide show about the dangers of this 200-acre-plus tank farm in the industrial area by Hwy. 30. It contains more than 600 tanks, owned by 10-11 corporations, with a capacity of over 350,000,000 gallons, and is on seismically unstable ground. Here are the major points of concern.

- Zenith Energy transfers fuel there and then transports it out, so it's just a pass-through for them.
- The land is subject to liquefaction and is a confirmed seismic risk, resulting in a massive fuel leak in an earthquake. 98% of the tanks were built before the seismic risks were known.
- Other hazards include daily health hazards, wildfire, sparks, and fire dangers from the fuel lines and railroad lines.
- The tanks hold a toxic mix including refined petroleum, crude oil, and gasses. If the tanks would fail, the toxins would go into the ground and the river.
- The city's fossil fuel terminal ban has not been enforced. Other actions to mitigate the risk have been taken by the state, with its Energy Infrastructure Resiliency Act, but companies still need to comply. Community and environmental groups have been active in informing the public of the risks.
- Interested people can learn more and make their concerns known by going to Rumble on the River meetings, reading reports, taking tours, attending or hosting events, and sharing concerns with public officials and the DEQ.
- It is time to require fossil fuel tanks to be relocated to decentralized areas with stable bedrock.

Midge Pierce asked about the most effective courses of action. Nikki mentioned contributing public comments to DEQ about making the tanks resilient, and insisting that government officials be more transparent about this situation. A group called Emerging Coalition has been doing this work, and MTNA can co-sponsor a Rumble on the River event at no cost (contact is at 503-705-1943). Nikki can be reached at [nikkimandel@gmail.com](mailto:nikkimandel@gmail.com).

John Laursen said we should co-sponsor an event, and that the danger is enormous, from the Columbia River all the way to the coast, a massive public health disaster waiting to happen. He moved that MTNA sign on to Rumble on the River as a co-sponsor. Tom Thomas seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Percent for Green Grant for Glencoe School**

Board member Rob Galanakis had requested that MTNA support this grant for improvements to

the Glencoe School playground. Paul Leistner moved that we do so, Dave Petrozzi seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Friends of Mt. Tabor Park**

Bing Wong reported that the next Weed Warrior work party will be Saturday, June 24, 9 a.m. to noon. Kimberlee Ruffu, the park bureau's east Portland outreach coordinator, attended the May 23 board meeting. Vince Moore is the park supervisor for the zone with Mt. Tabor Park. Several trees in the park have been removed or pruned, some not so well. Three city groups are responsible, City Nature, Urban Forestry, and PWB. Urban Forestry removed red cedars and other trees dying or dead from the dog off-leash area.

Mt. Tabor Park received America's first Urban Quiet Park award on May 26.

Chair Steve Law announced he is stepping back on involvement to work on his book.

Summer concert in the park, Thursday, July 13.

Next FMTP board meeting will be on July 24.

### **Reservoir Repair Costs**

John Laursen added more information about funding for reservoir repairs. The city says that funds must come from general funds, not water bureau funds, although the water bureau needs to keep owning and maintaining the property. The city has ignored the binding resolution to keep reservoirs filled to 85% capacity and has indicated that concerns are frivolous. There are many competing interests in both the city and water bureau budgets. Commissioner Mapps has said he might find a way to fund repairs, but he has a lot on his plate. If we have a cost figure from the chief engineer, Jody Inman, that might help in lobbying for repair funds.

Midge Pierce would like this to be one of the topics for possible forums and would like a subcommittee to consider speakers for MTNA meetings.