

Mt. Tabor Neighborhood Association

Zoom Meeting Minutes, September 20, 2023

Facilitator: Paul Leistner

Secretary: Nadine Fiedler

Board members present: Nadine Fiedler, Rob Galanakis, Paul Leistner, Brian Mitchell, Midge Pierce, Bing Wong

Other attendees: Verna Burden, Nancy Chapin, Lt. Hill, Rich Dreasher, Mary McWilliams, Ute Munger, David Raphael, Ellen Rubenstein, Katelyn Weakley

After introductions, the August minutes were approved unanimously. Bing Wong presented the treasurer's report. MTNA's bank balance is now \$7269.10. Ongoing expenses include Zoom \$12 monthly fees.

Portland Police East Precinct Report and Follow-Up on August Safety Meeting

Lt. Hill, filling in for Cmdr. Crooker, talked about the three main missions of East Precinct:

- Their stolen vehicle mission, in conjunction with other county agencies, has resulted in a 20% reduction in auto thefts and driven down the crime rate. It also results in getting people off the street and finding drugs and stolen guns.
- Their focused intervention team has recovered twice as many guns as last year.
- Their retail theft mission teams with Multnomah County, TriMet, and the parole and probation offices to mitigate and prevent retail theft crime organized by fences.
- Other missions are mostly focused on 82nd St., dealing with prostitution and solicitation and offering services to people in that lifestyle and dealing with those who force them into that life.

East Precinct has added three public safety crew members who can take calls and references from 911.

Brian Mitchell asked why the number of vehicle thefts are down. Lt. Hill replied that there are more proactive missions and resources now. They use a scientific algorithmic method to gain information and indicators of stolen vehicles, and people know the mission is running.

Bing Wong was grateful for the return of his e-bike. He noted the new security measures at Fred Meyer and asked if thefts had moved to another store. Lt. Hill said he's not seen an uptick in other stores, but noted that Nike in NE closed due to theft.

Paul Leistner talked about goods being stolen from the store where his daughter works on MLK. He asked if the Bureau of Labor & Industries offers a training video for employees that tells them it's not worth their lives to confront thieves. Lt. Hill replied that it has to do with the policy of the store itself, but some stores do have trainings, and you can check with the DA to find out if a store is eligible. He said Paul's daughter can reach out to N. Precinct.

Midge Pierce asked for more information on the focused intervention mission. Lt. Hill said it's the unit that helps mitigate and investigate gun violence to help solve crimes such as homicides. Midge also asked if Lt. Hill has neighborhood crime statistics, and Lt. Hill said he can email them. She added that people are confused about who to call when, and the city needs to address that. **Mary McWilliams** said that she calls the new 311 line. Lt. Hill said that 911 should be used for immediate emergencies. **Paul Leistner** asked who to call if you find someone down on the sidewalk; Lt. Hill that's 911 if you don't know what condition they're in, and they may send the Street Response Team. Although the team will not come if the person is armed or combative, they may call other resources or ask for a mental health check if needed.

Bing Wong said that criminals are now booked and released quickly, and asked if there was a change in the DA's office about getting defenders for people. Lt. Hill said that is a county issue,

and that the current DA is working hard to adjust to community concerns and keep people accountable. The plethora of reasons why people are released quickly include the low level of some crimes, the need for better response, lack of jail space, and staffing. This issue is being actively worked on.

Midge Pierce asked if staffing numbers have improved. Lt. Hill said that they are about to hire 40 more officers and are working on different solutions. The police force is up to about 870 sworn officers, up from about 700 last year. Police training takes 18 months. Midge also asked about the effect of Police Chief Lowell stepping down, but Lt. Hill had just heard of it today.

Paul Leistner mentioned that there used to be much more community involvement with police, like trainings for neighborhood watches. He's interested in what we can do to take care of each other and not feel isolated. Lt. Hill said there are no longer any neighborhood watches, but there are citizen academies led by the Police Training Division that are the closest to hands-on training, and which advise on how to make homes safer.

Mary McWilliams noticed in the safety meeting that some agencies were not aware of what others were doing and how the mayor's assistant said that state and federal laws tied their hands, and hoped that the charter change would stop this kind of siloing.

Midge Pierce and **Paul Leistner** stressed the importance of police presence at meetings.

David Raphael asked if we should restart neighborhood watches given the upturn in vehicle thefts and damage in the neighborhood, and if we should hire patrols or get police protection. Paul Leistner responded that it's a good topic for MTNA to look into.

Communications

Paul Leistner recommended putting off talking about MTNA using Slack for internal communications. He has checked out different methods for hybrid meetings and will do more research and put together a proposal about using the OWL camera and screen. Also, MTNA will table at the International Peace Celebration on September 21.

Reservoir 6 Update

From **Bing Wong**: On September 1, PWB chief engineer Jodie Inman emailed the members of the Mt. Tabor Reservoirs Preservation Committee (John Laursen, Kim Lakin, Bing Wong) good news and a copy of the executive summary report on Reservoir No. 6 stabilization. The reservoir has been empty for two years when it was drained and cleaned. To meet relicensing, safety and leaks, the reservoir underwent a GPR study, with initial reports of voids detected under the concrete basin. Further studies were done to determine the size and scope. Initial repair cost estimates were very high. But the August 8 consultant report was an estimate of \$42,000 to repair the three critical voids, remove sediment in the outlet gatehouse, and calibrate the underdrain sump flow meter. The water bureau and the commissioner supported making the repairs and is in the process of getting a contractor to complete the repairs this fall. If all goes well, the reservoir will be refilled by the end of the year. The committee members will be informed of a contractor hired and a timeline for the repairs to be completed. He passed on the news to a FMTP visitor center volunteer lead a few weeks ago, as they field questions about the empty reservoir regularly.

Transportation Safety

Rob Galanakis reported that he is still gathering information about the Rose Lane proposal.

Paul Leistner said that extending the Rose Lane further north on Cesar Chavez is not an active proposal, but the Richmond NA is taking it up in their neighborhood. **Bing Wong** said there are many traffic problems, including narrow lanes and sidewalks. **Paul** said that the neighborhoods must work together with the city for a good outcome. **Rob** noted that the Sunnyside NA had a

forum about traffic safety, and he will work with them and Richmond.

Mt. Tabor History Panels

Paul Leistner has scanned the Mt. Tabor history panels that used to be up at the park's visitor center to post on the website. Jan Caplener will help pay for the \$400 needed for the scans, and Paul asked if MTNA can help pay. Paul and Bing Wong had the panels at the Community Fun Fair and wondered if we can put them back up in the visitor center. Paul talked with the Cully NA, which has a history researcher, and he's talking about an oral history project with people who grew up in Mt. Tabor.

Transformation of City Government

Paul Leistner is concerned about a new city proposal to get rid of the Office of Community and Civic Life, made with no real understanding of community engagement and support. He's seeing people in the NA system getting organized and asks if we can have a voice. He wonders if the city can keep the C & CL office for a year for better transition. Neighborhood coalitions would be reduced in number to correspond to the new districting. He said we need to tell the city what is useful and what we want to see. **Bing Wong** added that the coalitions are crucial for providing funding and insurance to NAs, and Paul said they also provide leadership training and support. **Midge Pierce** asked if Paul can pull these ideas together so we can send a letter on behalf of MTNA. Paul agreed to do so and said cities are strongest when NAs and the city work together.

Friends of Mt. Tabor Park

Bing Wong reported that the next Weed Warrior work party will be organized with the Nature Conservancy on September 30. This work party historically is well attended with a limit of 80 staff and volunteers.

The Montavilla Jazz Concert with some Mt. Tabor Park-themed composition on September 1 in the park for the first time was well attended.

FMTTP members annual picnic was held on September 11 with a good turnout of members and new friends. Some brought their young children. Raffle prizes were given out to lucky winners.