

## **WUN meeting May 6, 2004**

Notes by Deborah Healey, secretary

Present: WUN Board members Ron Lewis, Steve Jarvis, Drix, Clark Winston Cox, Steve Baker, and Deborah Healey; WUN neighbors Tracy Anderson and Celina Zárate; and other speakers and interested persons Zachary Vishanoff, Officer Jack Backes, West University Officer Randy Ellis, and Marc Schlossberg.

### **Agenda**

- 1- Housing - building upkeep, building and housing standards
- 2- Marc Schlossberg - possible neighborhood cooperation with a UO class
- 3- Neighborhood look - parked cars, trash, neighborhood image, park
- 4- Neighborhood party
- 5- Media
- 6- Zachary Vishanoff - Riverfront Park/UO development of neighborhood interest

The meeting began at 7:15pm.

Drix passed around the Whitaker newsletter and a kit from the Eugene Neighborhood Leaders Association. His report from the Neighborhood Leaders Group: South Eugene has a historic district to preserve; Mayor Torrey is slowing it down. FEMA is a discussion item for other neighborhoods. The city budget was handed out and is included in the packet. Drix also passed around some newsletters from other neighborhood groups. He noted that neighborhoods get a fixed amount of money for newsletters. Because of budget constraints, the only way to have a larger newsletter is to hand-deliver it. If the newsletter is mailed, it's about postcard-sized. We should think about how to hand-deliver our newsletter so it can be bigger. Could do a nice two-sided one or sell ads.

### **1- Housing**

To establish a city office for dealing with housing violations, the city wants to charge \$6-\$8/year per unit. Drix wonders about other ways to generate money, such as selling street signs. Deborah H.: This type of arrangement is like what that have in Corvallis - it works well.

Randy E: It's not a housing code, it's a minimum building standards code. Where I used to be in Lincoln Nebraska, they ended up putting a bunch of people on the street because of overzealous enforcement.

Zak V: Status quo would let these places go to seed.

Randy E: There's an incentive to keep things livable.

Zak V: There's a ripple effect if a landlord looks down the street and sees four others that are in terrible shape. The University sets its own codes and is a slumlord on its own. The University doesn't want a housing code.

Deborah H.: It gives tenants another route to getting things fixed to a minimum standard.

Randy E: The WUN voted for a minimum livability standard last month.

Steve B: City Council will have a meeting where they will discuss it. We should let the people who know more about the issue deal with it.

Drix: I'd still like to see building standards, like peaked roofs rather than flat roofs. We'll work up to it.

Randy E: We're dealing with a broad spectrum of things. I won't vote for housing standards.

The standard is enforcement and bureaucracy, and I worry about that.

Celina Z: I can see the point of the building standards. I moved in, and found mold in a month.

When it gets cold, the door doesn't close. This is a pretty good apartment, and if this had been disclosed to me when I moved in, I wouldn't have moved in there.

Drix: As it is now, anything goes.

Tracy A: What are the econoboxes?

Zak V: Cheap houses, built as quickly as possible.

General sense of the group: we discussed this at length last time and had a recommendation. We can discuss this further as the process moves forward.

## **2-Marc Schlossberg**

(Passed around color maps and some ideas about the class)

Professor in Planning Dept - doing a class on Applied GIS (Global Information Systems, an advanced computer mapping application). He's teaching students to apply advanced computer mapmaking to social issues, such as neighborhood development. He wants to have students apply their skills in a practical way to benefit a local neighborhood - to get outside the walls of the university.

Marc S: I'm approaching the possible class on open terms. I have some needs as an instructor, the students will have some needs, and I'll be as upfront about those as I can. I'll give you an idea of what could happen, and we'll need to fill in the blanks through dialogue.

Zak V: are these classes a new type of community that might take the place of existing communities?

Marc S: Let's see if we can tackle that as we go through. The class is usually 15 students, a combination of graduate and undergraduate, across disciplines. Some are more attuned to community change and organizing, some aren't. There's a teaching assistant for the class as well. We'd like to do the work both inside and outside the classroom. I got a grant to buy 4 Palm Pilots that you can put maps on and record what you see as you walk around. Goals for students: Teach new skills, engage in real-world collaboration; teach that they can affect the world; have students reflect on appropriate use of technology. Goals for the community: equal and active relationship - whatever data is collected we will discuss; we won't tell the WUN what to do with the data. We'd like joint decisions about what to collect and data analysis; presentation to WUN and possibly to a larger group. Possibly journal articles, hopefully through a collaborative process.

Marc S: My goals are to see if mapmaking together in a neighborhood can strengthen neighborhood ties; to develop a series of maps that form a basis for community insight and change, actions to take; to meet a personal need to publish in an academic journal - I need to have a research part that will result in publishable data. This may mean baseline surveys, topics as yet unknown, and follow-up surveys; maybe focus groups of residents and of students. I view this as 10 weeks. The likelihood of tangible change in 10 weeks is slim. This gives the neighborhood more tools to use in changing their own neighborhood - to build trust, improve relationships. This hasn't been done before. The Northwest Academic Computing Consortium (NWACC) has provided the grant. The university has an incredible number of resources; it's a shame not to make use of it.

Zak V: Is this anti-sprawl? Are satellites important?

Marc S: GIS means that any data can be represented in map form. I think you're referring to GPS satellites - it lets you get coordinates. The data that we have to use, I can help you access. I want to put it into your use.

Steve B: Let me give an example. For a term project, you might look at 8 blocks in the WUN and see how many houses have peeling paint. You then extrapolate that to the neighborhood.

Marc S: Several affordable-housing groups in Flint, Michigan wanted to find out what was in the neighborhood so that some outsider couldn't come in and destroy the neighborhood. A combination of students, residents, and community-based organizations looked at the houses from the outside - roof, paint, heat source, trash in the yard, etc. They took all the rating sheets and made a map. The first colored map shows E. St. Louis property condition, as an example. As a community, you might target the few places on the edge. This was all done by looking from the outside, not by interviews.

Deborah H:: The Portland maps site is wonderful. It gives lots of info. I think this project is a good possible collaboration between the university and the neighborhood.

Marc S: I see this as joint data collection throughout. People in the neighborhood walk the streets with students. If you think there's value in systematically evaluating the neighborhood, make a map, and build community.

Steve B: How about a suggestion or two. We have a series of low-level lights in the neighborhood. No one has looked at where the series of lights begins and ends and how they fit with the over lighting in the neighborhood - lights on houses, lights in alleys. We need to know where more lights would make more sense. We could also map dumpsters and size of dumpsters.

Randy E: I'd like to know how intrusive it is, etc. Then I'll decide if it's a good idea or not.

Marc S: I would need to develop it with the neighborhood. This is an application of this technology for social good reasons.

Steve B: A tree survey could have given us ammunition in working with the city to preserve the 14th Street trees.

Ron L: What's the timeline?

Marc S: It's a fall term class. My timeline would be to start the discussion now. If you decide it's worth moving forward, let's set up a small group to decide together what to look at. It would be good to know by June if you are going to say no.

Randy E: It's a good idea; we should decide whether to do it or not. There may not be many things that can be surveyed out of this class. The students have a vested interest in making this work - they live here and have to deal with poor housing conditions. It shows that the WUN is a real group concerned with the quality of life in a neighborhood.

Marc S: This approach is very rare. The university is not looking to co-opt this.

### **3- Neighborhood look**

Drix: We need to know what the image of WUN is. Right now, we're famous for riots.

Randy E: We've also got the Bijou and the low-level lights

Drix: We should package it in an easy-to-understand way. We have old trees, old buildings.

Let's think about our image. I like the tech coming in, if we map our neighborhood. Other neighborhood images are couches in the front yard, porches.

Drix: Let's think about trash cans. We're the university district, people just toss trash in the yards. A little bit of trash is okay. Our neighborhood flower is a beer cup. A lot of the trash is just stupid. I keep thinking that people need a place to throw it away. People will use trash cans if they're there. Can we have a trash can campaign? People have one in front of their

house that they maintain. Not a big trash can; something that you don't mind if it's stolen, like an old paint tub.

Randy E: You can't use the Sanipac cans for that purpose. We (Eugene Police) just put two more trash cans up. Caroline Mason (midtown bike officer) put one up in front of Eugene Jeans and one in front of Midtown Pipe. So far, Caroline doesn't have anyone to empty hers yet. Mine get emptied by a homeless guy when he's not in jail. I pay him \$20/month. I use 33-gallon cans with 55-gallon trash liners. I couldn't find the old city trash cans that were made of concrete. I pay for that - I just get a tax deduction for a business expense.

Deborah H: Caroline O'Leary was talking about having people paint their cans.

Randy E: We are working on illegal graffiti. We now have enough to indict one of the major taggers in town. We paint graffiti out - we have someone who owes 250 hours of community service, and Forrest Paint donates paint. Having a wall that people were welcome to tag created crime. (They had the spray cans, and they just kept spraying all the way home.) It doesn't solve the problem. If someone wants to sit down and do a trash can deal, we can make that work. Get forgiven, don't get permission. We need to get businesses involved - but do it anyway. I have a theoretical budget with no way to access it. We do creative bookkeeping to make things work in the neighborhood. Come up with ideas of places most likely to need cans, then you go from there. Start small - too many is hard to take care of.

Drix: If we wanted to get decorated trash cans, we could take pictures, have a contest.

Randy E: A good way to do it would be to have a contest. It's hard to paint on vinyl. Metal can's don't work well - I tried them, but they don't work. The pretty cans are prohibitively expensive.

Drix: What about parked cars? Could we get the city to come through about every three months or so to clean the streets and put cones to force people to move the cars?

Jack B: You would need to have an ordinance to allow the city to do that. They can force cars to move if they're doing heavy construction work or for safety. There's no ordinance just for cleaning the street.

Randy E: If a car is parked longer than 24 hours it is deemed abandoned by the city. The system is complaint-driven. We don't have the time of being proactive; it needs a complaint. It's a complex process, since you're taking away someone's property. You need to mark the car, ticket, send a letter. If you want to have something done, call Parking Control - there's a number for abandoned autos. The streets aren't cleaned like they used to be any more.

#### **4- Neighborhood party**

Drix: We need to have at least four meetings with at least 10 people [in addition to the Board] to establish the neighborhood group. It doesn't need to be a meeting like this one. It can be a block party.

Steve B: Last fall we had a neighborhood cleanup and planted trees. We could plan it for October.

Randy E: The city will provide equipment, plants, etc. as long as you're planting trees.

Zak V: What about a history day?

Deborah H:: How about a neighborhood garage sale? Maybe June or September.

Drix: Hazardous substance day - people come from all over

Zak V: How about a gathering to encourage a natural food store in the neighborhood?

Steve J: Start a coop.

Ron L: Put up a big screen TV and watch a Duck football game in the park.

### **3b- Park**

Drix: Re the City Park meeting - they had little groups that talked about different neighborhoods and came up with suggestions. They had a map of WUN that they were writing on. The current park was seen as not easy to maintain. Someone could sell the park and move it to a corner that is easier to protect.

Steve J: Officially, we don't have a park. There are people in the City, such as Andrea Riner, who would like to see a park in WUN. They don't have a new master plan yet.

Steve B: We talked about this in an earlier meeting. The vacant lot nearby would be a better site for the park. This was a brainstorming session.

Ron L: I like that park. It's got trees, etc.

Deborah H: We may like the park, but it's not going to be supported by the city. There are three people here now who were part of the earlier WUN group that voted to close the park because the problems weren't going away, no matter what we tried. We need a place that can actually happen.

Drix: The U of O wants to work with us. In front of the EMU is an old kiosk. They want to get rid of it. Chambers Construction could donate a truck and move it into a neighborhood place.

Drix: Yahoo groups site with calendar - what do people think?

Deborah H:: Good; Steve J: good - let's move forward with it.

Drix: What about businesses with a vote?

Steve B, Ron L: It's still too soon - we need more people.

Drix: Deborah, can you upload the charter to the yahoo group?

### **5- Media**

We need a stable meeting space.

Deborah H: problem with noise at Indigo District; otherwise okay until we start getting a large group.

Ron L: Good to have a neighborhood place with food.

Drix will talk to the owners about the noise.

Newsletter: Steve J: get help from businesses. We can have things that people pick up at stores, that would be one way of distributing.

### **6- Zak Vishanoff**

Zak: They're planning a nanotechnology facility at the research park. Two weeks ago Johnson Hall said that a nanotech business would go in. It's planned to be 60,000 square feet = very large building. Nanotechnology is a new thing that could be a "new Industrial Revolution." Read the packet and consider whether this group should pass a resolution saying the university and the city should not build this building without a hearing. A resolution from this group could cause the Oregon Daily Emerald to say the university needs to pay more attention to this and talk about mitigation. Please analyze the packets - the info is about nanotechnology and what the university may be planning. It's harder to put up a big building if the neighborhood group raises concerns about impact without disclosure.

The meeting was adjourned at 9pm.