

**St. Johns Neighborhood Association
General Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 9th 7:00 p.m. St. Johns Community Center
Minutes by Denis C. Theriault, Secretary**

Board members present: Shamus Lynsky, Emilie Saks-Web, Justin Sundling, Denis Theriault, Josh Leslie, Ben Poe

About 40 other community members were present.

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm by Shamus, the night's presiding officer.

The minutes from February were not presented. The print shop used by SJNA closed early the day of the meeting because of illness. The minutes will be presented at the next meeting.

THE TREASURY

Adam was out sick. There was no official report. Shamus says we've approved four expenses since last month's meeting: \$500 for the Bizarre, \$150 for our corporation renewal, and some expenses related to the March volunteer soiree.

LAND USE UPDATE

Josh presents and says the land use committee will be revived, in hopes of attracting input on projects. He said the meetings would be held the second Thursday of the month, starting April 12, from 7 to 8 pm at the Main Street office. A meeting was planned the Friday after the meeting with the owner of the Baowry and the property next door for details on what's next with plans to develop the land.

SJNA and Main Street have put together a letter to the city on the comprehensive plan, the massive document meant to guide development and growth in Portland for the next few decades.

Some land use notices had been presented. One was a cell tower on Lombard across the street from Pier Park. Another was a project on N Cecilia that involved a request to put in 21 residential units on a very small lot. That one's going to require a response from SJNA because the site is currently zoned for employment. Neighbors must review how that might impact the area and then contact the developer to discuss whether it's nonetheless going to be a good fit for the neighborhood.

Donna Cohen asks if the notices for the land use meetings can be posted somewhere public. Josh says the committee is working on updating the SJNA website. Josh is interested in posting things there once that happens.

Shamus makes sure everyone knows what the comp plan is and says the deadline for comments is Friday, March 13. Residents were encouraged to give personal comments through the city's online map app.

A reminder on SJNA's role also was provided: We're the official voice for the neighbors in city hall. If you want us to take an official stand on a project, work through the land use committee so that your voice can be amplified by SJNA's access and megaphone. Shamus suggests connecting with Josh if land use interests you.

PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATE

The officer attending says crime more typical of spring and summer crime has arrived earlier this year with the fine weather. Car break-ins are up downtown and near Kelley Point Park, and the advice is not to leave stuff out in your car, whether or not it's expensive.

Residential burglaries have ticked up in the past month, but officers think they know who might be responsible. If you're home during the day and see suspicious things, they'd like you to call the police. If you see someone going into your neighbor's house, breaking a window, that's clearly worth calling 911. But if someone's up and down the street and looking suspicious, it's better to call the nonemergency line. "But please make those calls," the officer says.

He also says gang issues have flared of late, which means North Precinct cops have been pulled from some of their usual beats to help handle that. That's left things a bit short. He says he hasn't seen anything that's jumped out as unusual otherwise.

Shamus asks about the guy on the bike with the ax... the "ghost." (He was famous on the St. Johns Facebook page for a few days.) The cop said he didn't know much about that. "I'm not a ghost hunter," he jokes. "He's not headless. That's the good news."

A man asks the officer to characterize how far the gang strife roams. The cop says modern gang strife isn't so much about turf. He says gangs now run more like mafia families than like traditional street outfits. Members and associates live in every corner of the city. Some, he says, really do live out here and do business out here. But the worst mayhem, like shootings, hasn't been seen out here in St. Johns. But it's still come back out to North Portland beyond St. Johns. When he started 15 years ago, things were "hot and heavy."

"There is no area where you can say, 'This is where our gang problem is,'" the officer says. "They live all over the city and they look for each other all over the city."

Someone asks about the Columbia Villa Crips. The officer says they used to be a gang set but they're no longer as tied geographically to the area around New Columbia. He knows about a half-dozen CVCs who live in Rockwood now.

THE PROPOSED APARTMENTS AT RICHMOND/CHARLESTON/LOMBARD

Emilie says the mixed-use facility (replacing the Huk/Weir's building, church, and hookah lounge) will be bumped back from the street so it can have substantial sidewalks, with plans to redo the entire intersection by shifting the large traffic island north to make a plaza and reconnecting both directions of Lombard. The same owner controls Posey's and Signal Station, plus some buildings in SE Portland.

SJNA EVENTS

Volunteer soiree! Shamus says 25 or so nonprofits will table at The Colony, giving people a chance to volunteer for the group whose mission fits their fancy best. Roosevelt's Key Club offered child care and various local businesses donated raffle prizes and food.

The neighborhood cleanup! The neighborhood successor event to Trash 2 Treasure successor will be at the St. Johns Christian Church on May 16, Emilie says. It's the parking lot across from the Bachelors Club. It's large! With areas to turn around and plop recycling trucks.

Shamus and Emilie remind the room that SJNA and other NAs receive money from the city every year for cleanups. For the past six years, they say, SJNA has passed its allotment over to St. Johns Swapnplay to help fund the large and complicated Trash 2 Treasure. But T2T got to be such a successful event, growing and growing, that it crept in on Swap's mission. So they've stopped this year to refocus their work, and the NA is taking back responsibility for the cleanup. "They've done such a fabulous job."

Acceptable stuff at the cleanup? Clothing! Recyclables! Building materials!

Unacceptable stuff? Anything you'd put in your curbside bins. Just don't. And no hazardous waste like paint or batteries.

A detailed list should be ready by the next general meeting. There might also be a small clothing/household goods swap and even free compost for pickup, along with a plant sale.

"It's going to be much more pared down," meaning, basically, the Goodwill Bins-style swap meet aspect of the event's on hiatus. There might be free compost to pick up and maybe a plant sale.

SJNA summer event? It's still unplanned. Ideas like a barbecue contest have been kicked around.

St. Johns Bizarre! It's 10 am to 7 pm May 9, featuring bands and 70-plus craft and food vendors. The music will pause for a couple of hours, at noon, to allow for the technically unaffiliated St. Johns Parade.

Friends of Baltimore Woods plant sale! It's their 4th year of a native plant sale, set for 10 am to 3 pm Saturday, March 28, in the plaza. Bargain prices! And it's 50 percent bigger this year.

SAFETY AND LIVABILITY TEAM UPDATE

Ben says the committee lost its original venue, so its work petered out. It shall resume the first Tuesday of April, at 7 pm at the Main Street office, and continue that way. SALT covers subjects ranging from crime to traffic to air quality to water quality to gentrification to schools.

“Any issues that affect the safety and livability of this community,” Ben says.

Shamus reminds people about the October forum where gentrification was defined and discussed. He says Josh, land use chair, has “taken the torch” on planning another forum, this time on affordable housing. A panel will attend to discuss affordable and subsidized housing and how both can combat displacement in St. Johns.

DAN MARCHAND FROM TRIMET

Some good news! Trimet is working to restore service cut during the recession, “which is a good thing.” By this fall, he says the agency is planning on having restored frequent that had been lost service, specifically on Sunday. Trimet's also buying new buses.

He's here to talk about service enhancements on the bus system. His zone is north/central Portland and he's left brochures with his card. What works? What doesn't? What kind of new service would you like to see? “We're in the outreach phase,” he says. But Trimet's also almost done with outreach and wants a draft plan out this spring, followed by a final plan before the end of the year.

Some 330 responses to a recent survey came from St. Johns, he says. Most of the respondents were bus riders. They want later — and more frequent — service in the evening. “We hear that most people think the bus takes too long,” partly why some say they don't ride.

The two most common responses to the question of what respondents would like to see? Quicker trips to NW Portland. And to have bus traffic moved from Lombard, through downtown, over to Ivanhoe.

Babs asks how many comments supported those points. Dan said he didn't know. Someone asks about extending service past Pier Park and Dan says he's not seen that requested in the results. Dan also says Trimet has struggled to generate rides west or north of Pier Park.

Denis (the author of this here thing) asks about rampant late arrivals on lines like the 4 and 44, but calling the 4 in particular “atrocious.” Dan says Trimet's spent money

restoring service on the 4 and that the agency has considered breaking the route in two in downtown Portland, instead of having it run from Gresham to St. Johns and back. “Then it would be more reliable,” Dan says.

One man asks about schoolkids clogging the lines during certain hours, and delaying buses, and wonders why Trimet doesn’t add more buses then. Dan says Trimet deploys so-called “school-tripper” buses around 3 pm to take some pressure off affected routes. He says some bunching can’t be helped but also stresses that it’s not meant to be an excuse, just an explanation.

COMMUNITY OF HOPE

Linda Jo Devlaeminck provided an update on Community of Hope, the shelter for single woman and their children operating at the Red Sea Church and its companion Hub building. They served 12 families last year, with women staying four to six months on average. Fifty-eight percent moved out to more permanent homes and with jobs. A quarter found a different program. About 17 percent didn’t think the program was a good fit and left. In the last quarter, all of the women who moved out found work.

Community of Hope is moving entirely into the Hub this year, with a four-year lease that offers them the space for free. They’ll pay for utilities and maintenance. The space has mostly been used for their daytime activities, with clients bedding at the church at night. They’ll now have room for as many as eight families and shower facilities.

The shelter, however, must apply for a conditional use permit before making changes and moving in. Linda Jo asked neighbors for support and made clear, to assuage concerns, that families using the shelter and all volunteers are subjected to background checks. Clients are welcome so long as they’ve been sober for at least six months (and promise to endure random drug tests during their stay) and aren’t involved in active domestic violence situations, which Community of Hope isn’t equipped to handle. “We can’t protect them,” Linda Jo says. “We encourage them to head somewhere else.”

The overnight clients are monitored and have curfews. “We’re very careful about making sure they’re supervised,” Linda Jo says. “We don’t take people who aren’t willing to change or improve their lives.”

The Red Sea pastor has told Linda Jo that transients have been less likely to hover around the church since Community of Hope arrived, with less camping and drug use and no break-ins. The clients also are asked to pick up cigarette butts and to be quiet and respectful of their neighbors.

Emilie asks what the shelter needs from neighbors. Linda Jo asks for a letter of support, sent to the city, backing the shelter’s request for permitting relief. Ben motions SJNA draft that letter, Josh seconds, and the motion passes unanimously.

ROOSEVELT’S REDESIGN

Donna Cohen gives an updated on a longstanding dispute: Accusations that Roosevelt and Portland Public Schools are making a mistake by splitting the new school's science and technology lab (STEM) into two separate units.

She says advocates for a contiguous space found in better-funded and more prestigious schools have filed a civil rights complaint hoping for an investigation of wrongdoing, on the grounds that a poor design of the space at Roosevelt will disproportionately impact minority students given the school's demographics. The advocates have also sent PPS administrators detailed questions about the STEM facilities' budget and cost estimates.

PEMBINA UPDATES

Jason Fydirchuk, the communications specialist from Pembina Pipeline, is back for a visit to talk about the intensely controversial plan to build a liquid propane terminal adjacent to Terminal 6 in the Port of Portland. He was here several months ago to introduce the project. But since most people here today weren't at that meeting, he's dusting off his newly updated slide show and offering to sum up the project again.

He's also brought some other officials from Pembina to answer questions, noting progress in providing details but also that the whole thing remains a "conversation."

"We want to make sure folks leave with answers tonight," he says before a presentation, covered by KGW/Channel 8, focused on safety concerns and risk assessments.

He begins with an overview schematic. The propane comes from "natural gas processing." It's not an oil sands product, but it may involve some fracking as well as work obtaining propane through straightforward drilling. Every two days, a train from Alberta would arrive. It's propane would go from one small tank through refrigerated pipes to another, larger tank. The propane would then be sent to loading pumps along the river and put on a boat and sent to Asia. They don't have a customer in place just yet.

Next is a birds-eye view of the planned facility. It's adjacent to Terminal 6. It's a fairly narrow piece of land already zoned for industrial use. The trains would reach the site along the Columbia River from the east/southeast. The piping that leads from the tanks to the berth on the Columbia wouldn't be underground but would sit on a trestle. That still needs city approval. The riverfront is protected by a conservation zoning code that prevents the transportation of hazardous materials except by truck or train.

Jason shows examples of the kind of loading racks and storage tanks expected to be used. One would be 170 feet across and 130 feet tall. It would be a tank within a tank, essentially, and monitored.

Marine loading arms would be placed the berth, which already exists and once was used to unload cars, and those arms would load the propane onto the ship. The ships would also be double-hulled.

He lists several safety features:

- Brand-new equipment for this site, “customized, essentially.”
- Double-walled tanks.
- Fulltime pressure monitoring, outside the tanks and inside.
- A 50,000-gallon firewater tank “almost dead center” within the property.
- 24-hour onsite control room operators and operations staffers who’ll be hired during construction of the terminal so they’ll be intimately familiar with the equipment.
- The site’s under Homeland Security supervision.
- Backup power for all control systems and emergency equipment. But if the site did lose power? There’s a “flare stack” that will allow for the controlled release and burning of propane. The site will have “fire eyes” that look for flashes and flickering. The fire eyes are so sensitive that camera flashes can trigger them and shut down the site.
- All the software systems are segregated so if one fails, it won’t take down the rest.
- A “site specific” plan will be drafted and trained on.
- A gas detection system and an automatic shutoff with safety valves. Any part of the system can be shut down to prevent trouble from spreading.

Jason also said that when Pembina does disaster drills, they’re usually by surprise so that officials can study the response and then debrief. Most workers have no idea it’s not live.

What about this site?

They’ve done a lot of seismic examination, Jason says, some 40 explorations down to 150 feet deep to study the stability of the ground. He also says the terminal would meet 2014 seismic requirements, to survive 9.0 earthquake on the coast or a 7.0 temblor in Portland. The ground below the tank would be fortified with a 120-foot-wide, 100-foot-deep, 3,000-foot wall. “It’s no small undertaking. We are going to stabilize that ground.” Large pilings, three feet across and 160 feet into the ground, would hold the tanks. “It’s rooted very deeply to hold that tank in place,” Jason says.

What about the rail cars?

Jason says they’re not the same kind that have been in the news, connected with oil trains and associated conflagrations. He says they’re thicker-hulled and designed for propane. He also says they’re leased from manufacturers who service the cars, too. They’re average life is six years. “We don’t have old cars running on the rail,” he says.

The risk assessment.

That’s in process, Jason says. Pembina has hired a European company, DNV-GL, established in 1864 and focused on energy and marine infrastructure projects. The assessment identifies potential calamities and the consequences of those calamities. And it reports the risk of those potential calamities to those who’d be affected.

So far, though, they're studying just the facility, the ship route, and the dock. Not the rails.

The results will "enhance facility and equipment system design as necessary." Basically? The study will help test current safeguards and help Pembina make any needed adjustments. The site's emergency response plan will be drawn from this assessment. "You can't be liable," Jason says. "You can't build something that's not safe. You can't put people in harm's risk."

They'll quantify "risk" by looking at worst-case scenarios, he says. Most seem to involve an explosion of some kind. They've studied seven scenarios, guided by federal rules. Then they'll factor in how they're planning to address each scenario. What can you do to mitigate? What can't you plan for? Then they'll determine the size of the "hazard zones" flaring out concentrically from the site. Zone 1 is death. Zone 2 is severe injury without shelter. Zone 3 is the maximum extent a flammable cloud of vapor.

Shamus asks for a map. Jason says Pembina is still working through that.

They've finished the first phase, the studying of scenarios (under the assumption that all safety measures have failed). For this phase, analysts needed to know how and where Pembina is planning to build.

The seven scenarios were listed:

1. Total failure of the large tank.
2. 48" hole in the large tank
3. A rail car rupture on site
4. A rail car explodes because its propane has overheated
5. A rupture in an unloading tank
6. An explosion of the tank
7. Failure of 24" loading pipe to ships

They're in the second phase, in which the frequency of those failures is studied (Jason says they've never had anything like that before) and in which probabilities are assigned.

On March 10, the day after the meeting, Pembina was scheduled to attend a technical workshop to go through its final study of the second phase of the assessment. Port of Portland officials, fire bureau officials, city staffs, community members, other stakeholders, etc., all were invited to be walked through the details. Ben was tasked with representing SJNA.

Jason explained that this kind of public involvement was an unusual step. Normally these reviews are for technical experts. The city and the Planning and Sustainability Commission are expected to hire their own experts to review the risk assessment. It's due by spring.

Jason also restates some of Pembina's community "commitments," some of which are meant to answer concerns that a propane facility falls out of line with the city's Climate Action Plan.

- The purchase of renewable electricity to offset the substantial power demands involved in cooling propane 24 hours a day.
- Enhancing shoreline habitat
- North Portland hiring preferences when it comes to filling 340 full-time jobs and 60 to 800 construction jobs.
- Work with small businesses for supplies and ongoing needs.
- Union labor
- No subsidies
- A "Good Neighbor Agreement" worked out between Pembina and chairs of various North Portland neighborhood associations
- A "Community Advisory Committee" meant as a forum to help guide and oversee the project.

Community questions

Shamus asks about similar facilities. They exist, more than half a dozen on the Gulf Coast. The safety expert Pembina brought to the meeting says no double-walled tank has ever exploded or otherwise been destroyed.

What about their general safety record? Any spills? Pembina says it's not had any spills. Nor have they had any train incidents in their yard. But the company also makes clear that the trains are owned by third parties and that they're not willing to speak for what happens with trains when they're not in one of Pembina's yards.

Babs Adamski asks if any facilities are located in similar earthquake zones. Eric Dyck, vice president of Pembina's marine terminal subsidiary, says in Alberta, where Pembina's based, but there have been some minor quakes. But Eric says building codes here are strict.

Someone asks about the risk assessment and whether it accounts for transportation to Portland. Eric says the rails are governed by state or federal regulations. "We expect them to follow those same rules," he says. "When I get in a plane, I'm not responsible for my safety on the plane. We hold rail operators responsible. We pay attention before it leaves. We pay attention when it gets here. In between, we're paying for a service."

It's noted by the audience that the proposal would bring long, 100-car trains through the neighborhood every other day.

A spokeswoman for the Port of Portland says ODOT's been mulling over enhancements to the rules governing hazardous cargo and that some legislation has been proposed this session.

Another Pembina official, meanwhile, questions an audience assertion that all of the propane for the terminal would be obtained through fracking. (Fracking is a controversial means of extracting fossil fuels otherwise unreachable through traditional drilling; chemicals associated with air and water pollution are pumped into drill holes to break up rock formations deep in the earth and free up smaller pockets of gas and/or oil.) The official said fracking-produced propane is “a possibility.” But he also said some might come from natural pools of natural gas reached by drilling.

One woman spoke to say she lived in what she says would be the blast zone around the planned facility. She pointed to a pamphlet prepared by local scientists and engineers that showed death and destruction radiating over much of St. Johns and North Portland in the event of a worst-case explosion of propane.

“I have many, many question about all of this and am terrified by the whole thing,” she said, demanding a study of more than just the storage tanks but also the ships up the Columbia and the rail lines coursing across Portland and Oregon. “This facility would be a prime terrorist target.”

Eric says “the key here is you take a look at scenarios,” and they’re looking at many of them. “What’s missing on your handout is frequency,” implying that most have never happened and aren’t ever even remotely likely to happen.

Another woman worried about the rail lines shipping the propane. She also noted that Pembina had never operated its own marine terminal before. Eric says “that’s true.” But he also said Pembina’s been shipping to Portland for 15 years. “So far, you haven’t heard about Pembina. And that’s a good thing for us. Everything but the marine berth we’ve been doing today.”

The Port official in attendance followed by saying that, as the landlord, “we’ll be reviewing everything they’ll be doing. We’ll be hiring a third party group.”

Then an audience member said she had a different worst case-scenario, that “you’ll ship all the gas to China, where it will be burned.”

Eric says Pembina will be presenting something at the planning commission about the ways propane might be used in China (perhaps in plastic production and not as a burned fuel). It’s seen by some as a cleaner-burning “bridge fuel” that helps industry avoid burning dirtier fossil fuels.

A woman asks Pembina whether they’ve polled neighbors for support yet. “I don’t want it.... And several of us agree.” She remembers reading comments from Pembina’s president, in the *Oregonian*, in which he said Pembina wouldn’t come if Portland didn’t want it.

“We picked Portland and we hope Portland picks us,” Eric says, noting that getting zoning approval for its pipeline is among “the first few steps.” “Next is getting permits over the next year. We’ll follow the process.”

A man says he’s been hearing about “minute” risks for neighbors but still not any benefits. Eric says Pembina will spend \$500-\$600 million total, half of it directly in Portland, on what he says would be the largest project here “by a factor of two over the past 30 years.” Eric also touts the jobs totals mentioned earlier along with an anticipated \$12 million in annual property tax revenues plus ongoing spending. He says critics could call Pembina’s other neighbors for their thoughts.

“We’ve been a good neighbor for a lot of communities for 60 years,” Eric says. “I’m very confident.”

Another man in the crowd points out that some potential catastrophes are so bad that it doesn’t matter what the likelihood of the risk is. He invoked Chernobyl and reminded the room that “we’re in the biggest earthquake zone in North America.”

“I can only build it to your code,” Eric says.

“No, you can build it better than that,” the man replies.

Eric then says the project probably will exceed local seismic codes after all.

A woman asks about the flood zone around the proposed terminal, whether it’s set for 100- or 500-year floods. Eric says they’ll be planning for the worst case flood. He says the risk assessment will be a key document in applying for the eventual development permit from the city.

Donna asks if Pembina has ever lost a lawsuit. “We’ve never had a lawsuit, I believe,” Eric answers.

Shamus gets in the last word and says NA chairs from North Portland already are working on the good neighbor agreement and encourages neighbors to get in contact with their chairs to talk about their concerns.

There is no open forum, owing to the length of the Pembina presentation, and the meeting adjourns at 8:42 pm.