

# Neighborhood Task Force

March 25, 2008  
Meeting Notes

## Member Attendance:

Chuck Bennett  
Dan Dorn  
Levi Herrera  
Don Homuth  
John Lattimer

Dave MacMillan  
Rick Massey  
Brad Nanke  
Pamela Schmidling  
John Shepard

Sam Skillern  
Thomas Smith  
Kate Tarter  
Laura Tesler

## Staff Attendance:

Jan Calvin, Neighborhood and Community Services Manager  
Debbie Kees, Staff Assistant

## Guests:

Eunice Kim, Statesman Journal

### 1. Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review

Guests and members introduced themselves, and Chairperson Nanke reviewed the agenda. Since there was no quorum of the membership, the group met as a committee of the Task Force.

### 2. Appearance of Interested Citizens

None noted at this time.

### 3. Approval of Minutes

No quorum.

### 4. Review Input from Open House on March 20

Calvin distributed notes from the March 20 open house as well as a draft of the preliminary recommendations, with changes based on the outcome of that meeting. She reviewed the recommendations and noted any changes that had been made.

### 5. Discuss Preliminary Recommendations and Finalize

Regarding recommendation #1 (notification area), specifics are needed on the budget to allow for NA mailings on land use issues. Shepard noted that Planning staff had provided the Task Force with estimates of increased costs associated with expanding the notification area to 500 feet. Since the Task Force is recommending to keep the notification area at 250 while allowing associations to notify additional people, perhaps that money could be used for this task. Tarter wondered which method would be best to allot money for the NAs' use--to distribute it evenly among associations or to distribute it among land use proposals. Schmidling suggested a pilot project establishing \$10,000 from which neighborhood associations could draw to print and mail land use notifications, with no one mailing exceeding \$500 and no NA exceeding two mailings per year. Calvin suggested changing the stipulation that no NA could exceed \$1,000 for their total number of mailings, to which the committee agreed.

Tarter noted that the timing of this mailing is crucial, since a land use application has up to 120 days before it must be heard and sometimes the public hearing is actually sooner than that. This does not give NAs enough time to send the notices, meet to discuss the issue, and prepare for testifying. Calvin said that Planning staff mail notice of the application to applicable neighborhood association(s) within a week of the application being complete. Schmidling wondered if it would be more effective to schedule the hearing for a date after the next meeting of the neighborhood association, to give them time to discuss the issue before the hearing. Perhaps the hearing could be guaranteed to be scheduled no sooner than 60 days after the application. Tarter cautioned to make sure the notification does not slow down the developer's process either. Calvin suggested the staff report discuss the intent of the recommendation, and staff can respond. She reiterated a request for any specific questions the Task Force has for the Planning Commission so they can be prepared to answer by the tentatively scheduled public hearing of June 2.

Regarding recommendation #2 (signs for public input), Nanke pointed out this will have a budget impact due to more signs being used. Calvin replied that the staff report for the June 2 public hearing will include specifics on projected costs for the recommendations.

Regarding recommendation #3 (signs for public input), Calvin asked for specifics regarding "larger and more readable" notification signs. She also said the intent of the signs is to attract attention so a passerby would come back to get specifics from the sign if needed. Nanke said the staff contact information should be in a larger font, as well as the specific issue to be discussed. Calvin noted that the signs currently being used meet the sign code requirements; therefore, City Council adopting this recommendation may result in the code being changed.

Regarding recommendation #4 (notification format), Nanke noted that the phrase "more understandable and inviting" refers to writing the information in layman's terms, although "inviting" is subjective. Lattimer suggested something along the lines of "this is a land use action for X activities at X location" or "a proposed change from X to X".

Regarding recommendation #5 (encourage contact with NAs), Calvin noted that the Planning staff believe they do this already. Nanke asked if this was codified anywhere Shepard asked if the intent was to appoint a specific person on the Planning Commission or among the Planning staff to encourage developers to contact NAs, and would that be enforceable. Nanke thought a flyer to the developer would suffice. Tarter suggested combining recommendations 5 and 6 into one. Homuth suggested adding a statement of principle to the developer's application packet which would encourage contact with NAs and state why this is of value. The Task Force agreed to the following statement of principle:

"The City of Salem recognizes, values, and supports the involvement of residents in land use decisions affecting neighborhoods across the city. Salem's neighborhood associations are the recognized body for discussion of proposals, sharing of information, and development of recommendations to the City.

Therefore, the City of Salem strongly encourages anyone requesting approval of any land use proposal to contact the affected neighborhood association(s) as early in the process as possible."

Regarding recommendation #6 (information provided to developers), the above statement would be sufficient to act as "an explanation of the interaction associations have in the community and important role they play in land use decisions."

Regarding recommendation #7, 8, 9, 13, and 16, Calvin noted they were unchanged from the last draft.

Recommendations 10, 11, 12, and 14 were slightly reworded for clarity.

Regarding recommendation #14 (civic involvement goals), Lattimer took issue with requiring NAs to set goals as a condition of their continued status. Schmidling wondered whether the process would have any value without some sort of measurement of progress made on the goals. Calvin stated that one good outcome of the NA goal setting would be to reaffirm that, while associations are recognized by the City as the citizens' involvement venue with the City, NAs take the opportunity to state their ideas of involvement. Nanke said that goals may be very minor compared to those of other NAs. Staff will understand the difference when annually reviewing the NA's status.

Regarding recommendation #15 (cultural competency), Shepard noted that a lot more information needs to be developed before this issue can be addressed. Calvin asked whether a subcommittee of the Task Force would be charged with identifying challenges and opportunities NAs have in connecting culturally diverse populations, or with identifying solutions to these challenges and opportunities. Tarter said the subcommittee could address both, and bring results to the Task Force when it reconvenes in 2009. The Task Force agreed that the subcommittee should identify best practices and resources to bring back to the larger group. Calvin noted that the subcommittee would likely consult with the Human Rights and Relations Advisory Commission, and Tarter suggested including that in the recommendation.

Regarding recommendation #16 (reconvene the TF), Nanke said that the reconvened Task Force needs to address the administrative rules previously recommended.

## **6. Discuss Flex Team Concept**

Calvin read from the original Neighborhood Task Force to Council a recommendation to "establish a flexible interdepartmental team that can work with neighbors, neighborhood associations, businesses, churches, schools, and others to address one specific issue at a time." Schmidling added that the intent is to address the specific issue and get it back in the hands of the neighborhood, rather than relying on City staff to solve the problem. Calvin distributed notes from March 4 meeting, which included a recap of a similar discussion.

Calvin opined that the issue is what it will take to get partnership from the City, sooner in the face of an issue, in order to be a better problem-solving partner.

Tarter noted that, in Portland, non-profit agencies band together to help neighbors solve local problems. Shepard wondered if what was needed was a City staff person to rally other staff and citizens, or would the neighbors need to come up with money themselves to fund the effort. Nanke said it would be difficult to say without nailing down the exact issue.

Calvin said the issue comes down to who decides when an issue needs attention, and which issues will get that attention. When does it rise to the level of City response or Council policy? How do citizens get the help they need? Lattimer stated that it is the role of City Council and the City Manager to address these issues, and there is no need for a separate entity to deal with them. Calvin noted that there were really two issues being discussed: how to get the City's attention, and mobilizing or engaging neighbors and other partners in a response.

Homuth described a project in West Salem spearheaded by the neighborhood association, which contacted the City to ask for specific help in specific ways. The project had a distinct beginning and end, and was quite successful. Shepard wondered if training would help neighborhood representatives be more proactive in discerning when help was needed in their neighborhoods and asking the key City staff for that help. He wondered if the neighborhood association was empowered to be a problem solver; Lattimer said it depends on the problem. Shepard suggested providing training so NAs are better equipped, so the chairperson understands he/she is also an activist for the neighborhood.

Homuth suggested dropping this recommendation and coming up with a different way to do business that would solve these issues. Calvin said the Task Force could recommend to Council that, when the City works with neighborhoods, it goes beyond the basics of identifying a problem to identifying the resources and staff available to the neighbors to solve the problem. Homuth stated that neighborhood associations ought not expect the City to solve their problems for them and take all the responsibility.

Nanke said the roles of the association need to be better defined before addressing this topic. Schmidling suggested readdressing the concept when the Task Force reconvenes, which was agreed to by acclamation.

#### **7. Land Use Network Meeting on March 26**

Nanke reminded the Task Force of the Land Use Network meeting the following evening. The recommendations--as revised from tonight's discussion--will be presented to the representatives from neighborhood association land use committees. He asked that any Task Force members attending the meeting be prepared to help explain the recommendations and answer questions.