

JWN e-News :: November 12, 2006

Timely and concise news and announcements related to the **Jefferson Westside Neighbors**.

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Visit the JWN Web site at: www.jwneugene.org .

Please contact either JWN co-chair (see below) if you have comments or questions.

===== UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS =====

***** JWN General Meeting & Program: THIS TUESDAY, November 14**

7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m

McNail-Riley House on the NW corner of W. 13th Ave. and Jefferson Street.

- YMCA proposal for indoor soccer facility on Fairgrounds
- Neighborhood Matching grants information
- Preliminary discussion of "JWN Planning Team" concept
- Impacts of Em-X (rapid transit) route through Westside neighborhood
- PROGRAM: Enhancing our neighborhood trees and urban forest

See discussion of agenda items and program below.

The full agenda and schedule, as well as information on future meetings is available at:
<http://jwneugene.org/meetings.html>

Coming up!

- December 12 : Holiday party
- January 9, 2007 : TBA

***** JWN Executive Board Meeting: Tuesday, November 21**

The JWN Executive Board will meet November 21

6:45 p.m. to 8:00 p.m

McNail-Riley House on the NW corner of W. 13th Ave. and Jefferson Street.

You can find the JWN board meeting information on the Web at:

<http://jwneugene.org/meetings.html>

***** City Council Public Hearing on
Measure 37 Claim for 1333 W. 10th Ave.**

Monday, November 20

7:30 p.m. Council meeting starts.
This hearing is second item on the agenda.
Council Chamber -- Eugene City Hall
777 Pearl Street

The JWN co-chairs and neighbors near the subject property have worked out a very positive agreement with the property owner to allow a detached, single-family home to be added to the lot in a way that will further the goals of the recently adopted Chambers Special Area Zone.

The family that owns the lot and four apartments at 1333 W. 10th Ave. wants to build a small, single-family home on a vacant part of the lot that's adjacent to the street. Because this lot is in the Chambers Special Area Zone (CSAZ), the lot already had more units than the maximum of three allowed by the new S-C/R-2 standards.

The property owners, nearby residents, and JWN co-chairs worked together quietly over the summer to come up with a solution that's a "win" for the neighborhood, a "win" for the owners, and a "win" for the City. Because this is the only lot in the CSAZ with existing development off the street and a large vacant area on the street (which creates a "missing front tooth" appearance), nearby residents agreed that a small house that met all the S-C/R-2 standards would increase the stability of the block and would improve the character of that area. Thus, residents didn't have to compromise any of their goals for the CSAZ by agreeing to support the owners' request. Under the legal agreement to be signed, the owners will be bound to comply with the S-C/R-2 standards.

The City "wins", too, because this is Eugene's very first residential M-37 claim; and the agreement between owners, adjacent residents, and the JWN neighborhood association establishes a "model" for responding to future residential M-37 claims.

The JWN board voted unanimously to support the agreement.

For more information, see:
<http://jwneugene.org/m37.html>

***** Planning Commission Public Hearing on Protection for Jefferson neighborhood Tuesday, December 5**

5:30 p.m. Planning Commission "Study Session" to review background information
6:00 p.m. Public Hearing
Council Chamber -- Eugene City Hall
777 Pearl Street

At long last, the public process is underway to fix the "redesignation" that exposed a fifteen block, single-family area of the Jefferson neighborhood to R-2 rezoning and grossly incompatible infill.

The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on amendments to the Metro Plan, Jefferson/Far West Refinement Plan, and Eugene Code to designate this area as "low

density".

The JWN voted unanimously at the September 12 General Meeting to support these amendments.

Please come and support this important action to protect our neighborhood.

You can also submit e-mail or written testimony.

For more information, see:

<http://jwneugene.org/jeffredes.html>

***** Upcoming City Council meetings.**

City Council meeting dates and topics are available on-line here:

www.eugene-or.gov

(On left) Quick links: Mayor and City Council

(On left) Navigation: Meeting Information

(On right) Tentative Working Agenda

===== JWN MEETING AGENDA ITEMS AND PROGRAM =====

Tuesday, November 14, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

The full agenda and schedule is available at:

<http://jwneugene.org/meetings.html>

Items on the agenda that may have motion(s) introduced and voted on are indicated below. A vote on any other issue requires a 2/3 vote of the members present to declare the motion an "emergency action."

***** YMCA proposal for indoor soccer facility on Fairgrounds**

At the October 17 JWN Executive Board meeting, representatives from the YMCA presented their proposal to convert the livestock building at the Fairgrounds to a year-round indoor soccer facility. Dave Perez from the YMCA fielded questions from the board about use of the facility, parking, construction and traffic.

The board voted to support the YMCA's proposal and invited the YMCA to present their plans before the JWN membership at our November 14th meeting.

You can learn more at:

<http://jwneugene.org/ymca.html>

This agenda item may have a vote on motion(s) presented by any member at the meeting.

*** Neighborhood Matching Grants

At the November 14 JWN meeting, Beth Bridges, from the City's Neighborhood Services will provide a brief introduction to the Neighborhood Matching Grants program.

Got an idea for a great project in your neighborhood? Need some money?

Then check out the Neighborhood Matching Grants program at:

www.eugene-or.gov

Select: City Quick Links -- Neighborhoods

Select NMG Applications

Pre-review deadline is January 15, 2007.

(No vote is planned on this item.)

*** JWN to form neighborhood planning team

Also at the November 14 JWN meeting, the JWN co-chairs will introduce the concept of a JWN Planning Team, which will be organized over the next few months.

Back in the "good old days" when the City really involved residents in planning for their own neighborhoods, there were two periods when the Westside and Jefferson neighborhoods each had their own planning teams. These teams comprised mostly residents selected by the two neighborhood associations and a few representatives of businesses, churches, the fairgrounds, and neighborhood schools. These two teams wrote the Westside Neighborhood Plan and the Jefferson/Far West Refinement Plan, which were subsequently adopted by City Council. Both planning teams organization structure and processes were approved by the City's official "Citizen Involvement Committee" that existed at that time. Notably, neither planning team had a single City staff person as a voting member. This was true empowerment of residents -- and the two planning teams produced darn good neighborhood plans, too.

The JWN board thinks this is a great idea whose time has come again, and has directed the co-chairs to create a charter (including purpose and objectives) and operating procedures (including election or appointment of team members, meeting rules, etc.) for a **Jefferson Westside Neighbors Planning Team**.

At Tuesday's meeting we'll provide a brief introduction and explain how to be involved in organizing the Planning Team.

If you would like more information or are interested in being on the JWN Planning Team, please contact either co-chair.

(No vote is planned on this item.)

*** Impacts of Em-X (bus rapid transit) route through Westside neighborhood

Last month, without any neighborhood involvement, LTD quietly got City Council to direct staff to study a future route for the Em-X (aka, Bus Rapid Transit) that would run

down some combination of W. 10th, 11th, 12th, or 13th Aves.

Residents have raised concerns over the potential negative impacts that a route on one or more of these neighborhood streets would have on the Westside neighborhood, as well as LTD's lack of resident involvement in planning and decisions.

At the November 14 JWN meeting, Ilona Koleszar will provide a brief recap of what the Council action means and how interested residents can become involved in this issue.

(No vote is planned on this item.)

***** Program: Enhancing our neighborhood trees and urban forest**

What's that tree worth?

Learn about Eugene's urban forest, its value and health at the November 14 JWN meeting.

How can you increase the number of trees in YOUR area of the neighborhood?

Representatives from the Eugene Tree Foundation and the City's Urban Forestry and NeighborWoods programs will present information and answer your questions about our fine, foliated friends ... the trees.

===== NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS =====

***** Viewpoint: Appeal of Planning Director decision reveals Land Use Permits staff undermine process and use misinformation to thwart neighborhood opposition**
by Paul Conte, Co-chair

On September 12, Interim Planning Director, Steve Nystrom, approved the lot partition of 933 W. 13th Ave. In his "[Findings and Decision](#)," Nystrom was dismissive of arguments presented by the JWN and numerous residents. His decision:

- Completely ignored the obvious conflict with City Council's prohibition against creating new alley access lots.
- Allowed applicants' to submit supplemental testimony, but did not properly notify the public or allow residents a chance to respond.
- Measured "lot width" using an absurd diagonal line that doesn't even connect to one side of the lot.
- Entirely disregarded the proposed 4-plex, despite applicants' own reliance on this development as part of their proposal. And then, based on ignoring this evidence, found the lot partition doesn't conflict with the Westside Neighborhood Refinement Plan.

At the September general meeting, the JWN voted unanimously to appeal the Planning Director's decision, and the appeal decision is expected November 27.

We submitted substantial testimony establishing the Planning Director mis-intepreted the law and failed to follow the required legal process. Neighborhood leaders from six other City neighborhood associations submitted testimony supporting our appeal because, if the decision is not reversed, the precedents will dangerously subvert the public process

and the role of neighborhood refinement plans throughout the city.

As part of our efforts, we filed a Public Records request for e-mails related to the application. These e-mails revealed that during the public comment period, staff was providing alerts and advice to applicants about opponents' concerns while withholding information from opponents about applicants' submission of additional evidence just two days before the end of the comment period. (For details, see page 5 of the [October 25 appeal testimony](#).)

We also learned that the planner in charge of this application was e-mailing JWN residents who had submitted opposing testimony and telling them that the proposed partition and four-plex development "will not enable the construction of more dwellings. No buildings are proposed as part of this part of this partition. ..." These statements are blatantly false. Some of the residents who received this misinformation subsequently filed testimony advising the Hearings Official of their concern that staff responsible for keeping the public adequately informed about land use actions would provide this sort of misinformation as a way to deflect opposition.

This process demonstrates an utter disregard for the law, City Council's intent, and the well-being of neighborhood families. It also shows a disturbing lack of professional integrity by the staff and management involved that should not be tolerated by the City Manager.

The JWN co-chairs remain committed to our effort to see that Eugene's land use processes become open and fair and that the Planning Division change its current culture to value and support residents of Eugene's neighborhoods, as was once this organization's philosophy.

Read important additional details about this action here:

<http://jwneugene.org/partition.html>

***** City halts new organization use of McNail-Riley House**

The McNail-Riley House at the corner of W. 13th Ave. and Jefferson Street is used by a number of community organizations, many of which are not specifically based in the JWN neighborhood. For a number of years, a volunteer from our neighborhood has been responsible for scheduling the use of the building. However, when the new JWN board took office in May, we found the meeting and reservation records in complete disarray with double-bookings, defunct organizations still holding reserved slots, and so on. There were also major structural problems that needed repair.

JWN board member Erika Seiferling worked many hours to contact groups, set up a new reservation system, and work with the City facilities management staff to arrange repairs and obtain new tables and chairs.

Once we stabilized the system, we asked the City's Neighborhood Services section to either take over responsibility for scheduling or to let the JWN board charge a nominal fee for providing this service for organizations throughout the City. Providing reservations and fielding all the calls that come from groups who use the building requires significant time and is normally the responsibility of City staff. If the JWN was going to do the City's job, we felt it was fair to raise some funds for the neighborhood by

charging a modest fee.

On October 16, Richie Weinmann, from the Community Development Division of the Planning & Development Department, sent the JWN an e-mail stating: "At this time the City does not have staff available to manage scheduling of the facility. Therefore I'm proposing that no new groups be scheduled in at this time. Attached is a copy of the notice that I plan to put on the door tomorrow."

When the JWN co-chairs went to check the McNail-Riley House the next day, we found the following notice posted on the door:

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The McNail Riley House is going through transitions.

In the past, scheduling has been handled by neighborhood volunteers. This may not continue in the future.

At this time no new users are able to schedule use of this facility.

The City of Eugene owns the McNail-Riley House and is exploring options for the facility's future. There is a possibility it will be closed after December 31, 2006.

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The City essentially summarily decided to no longer make the McNail-Riley House available for use by other groups, rather than pursue either of the alternatives the JWN board had proposed. We've also heard the City is considering selling the McNail-Riley House.

If you wish to express any concerns, please feel free to contact the JWN co-chairs or Richie Weinmann at Richie.D.WEINMAN@ci.eugene.or.us .

***** Process falters for key updates to Eugene's land use code**

The City Planning staff and consulting team has issued another plan for public involvement in the process to make "key" changes to Eugene's land use code.

Wonder why that matters?

Well, the current code has numerous "broken" and detrimental regulations that effect our neighborhood. For example, the whole debacle surrounding the Planning Director's approval of the lot partition arises from the fact that the standards for "alley access", "street connectivity", "frontage", minimum lot width", just to name a few, are so poorly written that they provide the opportunity for contorted interpretations like the Planning Director used in approving the lot partition.

Unfortunately, the latest public involvement plan for fixing the code is no better than the one it replaced. It can be summed up in two lines:

- There will be six public meetings
- Beyond that ... just trust us

The published plan has no schedule, no clear description of how meetings will be conducted or what the outcomes will be, nor any indication of any effort to educate or assist the public before asking for input. You can read the two-page document here: <http://jwneugene.org/documents/CodeUpdateProcess.pdf>

This is unfortunately a familiar Planning Division approach that makes a perfunctory attempt to cover "check-off" items, but doesn't really lay out a thorough, pragmatic plan that will genuinely empower the public to make well-informed contributions and have an appropriate chance to help determine outcomes.

The JWN board will do our best to keep you informed and promote a more effective and reasonable public process. We'll also be closely involved in furthering the neighborhood's interest in fixing major flaws in the current residential zoning code.

***** Reminder: JWN General Meetings to relocate**

The fire code limit on capacity, poor accessibility, and an unsatisfactory general meeting environment led the JWN board to decide the location is no longer suitable for the increased attendance at JWN meetings. The JWN board has voted to find a new location for the JWN's monthly general meetings. We hope to have a new location no later than the first of the year.

If you have any suggestions or preferences, please let the co-chairs know.

***** JWN needs YOU!**

Give a little time and talent and gain a lot in return. Great neighborhoods happen because people who live in them care.

Come join your neighbors and help maintain the Jefferson and Westside neighborhoods as safe, vital places to live.

Some of the volunteer spots that are available include: attorney, publication distribution coordinator, urban planner/architect/zoning specialist, Web wizard, fund raiser, outreach activist, parliamentarian, business relations developer.

For a description of these and other volunteer openings, please see:

<http://jwneugene.org/volunteer.html>

Remember, YOU are Jefferson Westside Neighbors!

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***** Contact the JWN Co-chairs.**

You can send your e-mails to co-chairs@jwneugene.org .

Or contact either one of us directly:

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