

## **7/18/07 Ardenwald/JC Neighborhood Meeting Minutes**

### **Introductions**

Cheryl Ausmann-Moreno, David Vidan, Danyelle Calcagno, Patsy Daigle, David & Tanya Filbert, Terry Leckron, Edward Smith, Rune Simard, Pam McGraw, Opal F. Price, Katheryne Wolf, Jim & Sally McDonald, Dave & Judy DeWeese, Becky Telherow, L. Watk, Burrell Palmer, Norm Scott, Joe Campbell, Jerry Hermann, Michole Jensen, Brandan Brookee, G. Ritchie, Ronn Palmer, Lisa Gunion-Rinker, Laurie Wells, Rune Simard

The Meeting was called to order at 7:02pm when a quorum of the Pres. and the Secretary were in attendance as per by-laws.

### **Oxford House**

Information concerning the Oxford House was initially presented by Terry Leckron, Chairperson of the Recovery Association Project. Terry explained that Oxford House is an organization for people who are recovering alcoholics and drug users that helps people by providing them with housing and job training. People become part of the Oxford House system because they are recovering and trying to get their life back on track. Oxford House is good for them because it removes them from a problem area into another community where they can start over and experience living in a community as it should be for everyone. Oxford House works by acquiring housing in safe communities where people can get out of the cycle they have been in before. Oxford House seeks out homes throughout Oregon to house people throughout various communities so they can reenter society and get their life back.

She further explained that this gives people a chance to experience what a community feels like so they can cross barriers when they usually don't have the opportunity to do so. It also helps keep the people in line, and do what they should to keep their life in order. She stressed that just because someone may want to live in an Oxford House does not mean that they will be allowed to live in an Oxford House. There are rigorous requirements that they must pass and keep passing to be considered for housing in an Oxford House. Terry introduced Edward Smith who is an Oregon Recovery Homes Outreach Coordinator.

Edward Smith stated that the primary goal of Oxford House is to serve 1200 residents in Oregon, 300 of which are children. He stated that there are currently 152 Oxford Houses open in Oregon. He stated that he was an addict and grew up near Ardenwald neighborhood and had a jaded past. He explained that once he got into recovery and sought treatment he found that he really didn't know anything about how to live. He wasn't organized enough to pay bills, clean up after himself, or get a steady income. He said that he wasn't accepted by his family or others in the community and found it really difficult to effect change in his life. He stated that Oxford House saved his life, and with their help he was able to get on track, and keep his life on track which is an opportunity that everyone should experience.

Ed stated that Oxford Houses are all over the state. They would like to have an Oxford house in this neighborhood because he knows it very well and knows that there is a need for such a house. He stated that Ardenwald/JC neighborhood has a huge drug problem, and that Oxford House would serve the neighborhood and community just by being here. Ed stated that the house will look the best on the street it resides on and all bills will be paid promptly and the property will be well maintained. People who move in to Oxford Houses must: 1) make sure they are clean and sober, 2) make sure that they understand the democratic process, 3) make sure they understand that every member holds every other member accountable, and 4) really want to get their life back on track. Ed stated that Oxford House has a great success rate and gets addicts and alcoholics into recovery who generally live in a larger house. He stated that 6 or more people will hold each other accountable a lot more than just a few people and will ensure that people keep their schedules as they should. He stated that no one has decided if Oxford House will move into the Ardenwald/JC Neighborhood, and that they haven't decided if they did whether it would be a house for men or women. He stated that this is information that will be given at a later date. At this juncture Terry stated it is discriminatory to prohibit Oxford House from moving into any neighborhood.

Terry explained that the organization goes by need, and that Clackamas County needs are increasing rapidly. She stated that Oxford House is nationwide and houses over 2000 people. They follow regulations set out by fair housing acts and HUD housing. There are currently 3 existing Oxford Houses in Milwaukie already. At this juncture Jim MacDonald stated that since there are already 3 existing Oxford Houses in Milwaukie why doesn't Clackamas County place some of these houses in Lake Oswego or West Linn? He felt that Milwaukie already has it's fair share of HUD housing and etc. Other attending neighbors agreed with Mr. MacDonald's opinion and felt that it seemed like Milwaukie carried a heavier burden of this sort of housing that other cities in Clackamas County.

At this point Cheryl Ausmann-Moreno stated that she would like to address some of the questions that she has heard from people and clarify that Oxford Houses are beneficial to communities that they serve and that just because people would be moving into this house in the Ardenwald/JC Neighborhood does not make them a danger to this community. Cheryl went on further to describe the positive side of the Oxford House environment and became upset when other attending neighbors did not agree with her viewpoint. Ron tried to redirect the situation, and asked Cheryl to please stop talking. Cheryl stood up and walked over behind Ron, and did not stop talking. Ron regained control of the meeting and Cheryl interrupted him several times. Ron asked Cheryl to stop or she would be asked to leave the meeting. Cheryl stated that the discussion made her mad, and Ron stated that if she was upset she should go for a walk.

Jim McDonald stated that as a landlord himself he understands why the Ironhorse Property owner, Rune Simard, feels it a good investment to lease his property to Oxford House. He understands being able to pick up property at a lesser expense and then rent it out for a profit. He has no problem with that. He did feel that as a landlord himself he needs to go through the proper permitting process as required by law, and that other property owners should have to meet the same requirements that he does. His concern is that the same legal

requirements are not being made of the IronHorse Property under discussion.

David Vidan stated that recovering alcoholics and drug addicts are a concern in our society. He wondered why, if Oxford House is not a concern moving into the Ardenwald/JC Neighborhood, it was kept a secret from the neighbors. He stated that no one was notified before contract work began on the property in question until neighbors started asking about it. He stated that he is also concerned that the value of his property will go down if an Oxford House goes in our neighborhood near his house.

Ed Smith responded that property values will not go down. He explained that in the case of this particular property things went very quickly, or more information would have been disclosed to the neighborhood earlier in the process. He stated that during his addiction, he used to go over to the property in question and buy dope. He stated that he knew the person, Marty, that used to live there so there is no denying that there is a drug problem in this neighborhood. A neighbor responded that while they are extremely glad to be rid of the people who were living in the house before, they do not want something potentially worse moving in in it's place. Ed stated that screening is done to ensure that sex offenders are not allowed in an Oxford House. He also stated that methadone users are also not allowed to stay in Oxford Houses.

A neighbor asked if Oregon Laws are different than Washington Laws in this matter? She stated that in Kelso, Washington the funeral home was changed into an Oxford House and the house was destroyed. She wondered if the same things will happen here, and if there is any way to stop it from happening. Ed stated that the state of Washington has the largest number of Oxford Houses in the nation, and that the state of Oregon has the second largest number of Oxford Houses in the nation.

David Deweese asked if the people who move into this proposed Oxford House are accountable to a supervisor/manager or anyone? Ed responded that every house is democratically run and that all members of a house are accountable to each other. He explained that members who have achieved great success in the program lead new members in a house by example. They help new members by leading by example, so new members understand what is expected of them and understand what will help them, as individuals, to stay on track. Ed further explained that each house belongs to a Chapter and State Association like a fraternity, and is essentially what would be considered an upside down pyramid.

Tanya Gilbert asked if it was common to have an Oxford House so closely located to a school? Ed stated that it was common as there are many children who attend schools in communities where Oxford Houses are located. Tanya then asked how many visitors are allowed to be at the house and how long these visitors can stay? Ed stated that the general guideline is that visitors are allowed, but each house is set up a little differently depending on the people living there. In other words the members living there determine how many visitors are allowed at one time and how long those visitors can stay. In many instances the visitors are children and spouses visiting their parents/significant other at Oxford House. Ed said that cars will not be an issue as most people who will be living at Oxford House cannot afford to

own a vehicle.

Laurie Wells asked if there was no on-site house manager to help with difficult situations or drug testing to ensure that members are staying clean/sober? Ed stated that there is no house manager, but that house members must submit to drug testing by urinalysis. He stated that the process is randomly done and if evidence of drug/alcohol use is found an eviction notice will be given within a 24 hour time period. He stressed that there is accountability existing within the house, and people who work with the chapter and with the state. If people are screaming late at night or playing loud music, they will be held accountable to other house members.

Tanya Gilbert asked that if it is so common for Oxford houses to be within 3 houses of a school, what will protect children from coming in contact with people who will be in the area visiting the Oxford House, and potentially bring drugs to kids here? Ed stated that he doesn't have an answer to this question, but if people are seen where they shouldn't be or act how they shouldn't they will be reported. The neighborhood will also become part of the solution and help the Oxford House members towards success.

Sally McDonald asked how long men/women stay in the Oxford House Program? Do they stay in it forever or is there an average length of time? Ed stated that the average stay is 2 years, but that there are some people that stay longer. Some veterans in the program have been in for 10 years or more.

David Vidan stated that his opinion of the Oxford House has nothing to do with the children of the parents. He understands that the children are innocent and deserve help. His concern is about the parents, and how they will be held accountable if something does go wrong with how the house should be running and how neighbors will be involved in this process.

At this juncture Ron Palmer asked Rune and Terry and Ed for a description of the relationship between the landlord of the property and the tenant of the property, Oxford House? He asked this question to get a general sense of how things will be handled if issues do come up at the property.

Rune stated that this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Oxford House that he has been involved with, but that he does own 15 properties total. He said that ten of his properties are a major headache, but that he has never had any problems with the other 2 Oxford Houses he currently leases to. He also stated that before he decided to work with the Oxford House Organization, he did his research with the city and with the county. He called a 15 page list of landlords of Oxford Houses before signing on to this venue. Before there is approval, it will cost him a lot of money to get the house in shape to meet Oxford House requirements. These are core members – who are experienced in the system, and he feels they are good people.

Cheryl Ausmann-Moreno stated that people who live in an Oxford House are under a microscope. They want to get their lives in order so they can move out. Cheryl further emphasized that most people who live in an Oxford House cannot afford cars, but use the transit system instead. She stated that she has spoken with Milwaukie Police Chief Kanzler,

and that he has never had any problems with Oxford House residents. She stated that she has also spoken with Sheila Shaw, the new Ardenwald Principal, who also has no concerns. Cheryl stated that one of our neighbors went through the Oxford House program and had no problems, however, her daughter was harassed by other kids whose parents still have drug problems or deal drugs in the neighborhood.

A neighbor stated that the City of Milwaukie has had problems with Oxford Houses in the area. He has friends who are police officers here and he has a list of 4 police calls to an Oxford House located on 32<sup>nd</sup> and Harrison. Cheryl Ausmann-Moreno stated that there was no Oxford House on 32<sup>nd</sup> and Harrison.

Danyelle Calcagno stated that methamphetamine has been made in the proposed Oxford House on 39<sup>th</sup> and Wake, and that the chemicals from the process have seeped into the house. She stated that the house including the foundation will need to be completely redone.

Ronn Palmer stated that there was methamphetamine being made in the house and bombs were being made as well. He explained that all veterans know that an explosive is an explosive no matter what it's composition. We are fortunate to have that element out of the neighborhood.

Danyelle Calcagno wanted to know why construction was being done on this house before the house was tested if methamphetamine was used in this house? She further questioned why contractors are building and painting over it? Rune stated that work has begun on this house, and he was not aware of any methamphetamine use on his property.

Jim McDonald asked the owner why there wasn't an inspection by the EPA or DEQ or if anybody was notified of the drug situation before people entered this house to work on it?

Ronn Palmer asked Rune if he would be willing to have an EPA or DEQ inspection? The owner of IronHorse Properties said that he would be willing to look into the problem/issue.

Sally MacDonald stated that whoever the contractor was that is working on the house knew that there had been methamphetamine on the property. Rune stated that the contractor's name was Duane, and that IronHorse Properties recorded that vandalism has occurred at the site in question, but was not sure how much if any drug use was involved with the site.

Danyelle Calcagno stated that she was concerned that the chemicals from making the methamphetamine drugs has seeped into the foundation, and asked the owner if this will be addressed?

Jim Macdonald stated that the paid contractor told him that drug making material was being and has been removed from this site and this process with leasing to Oxford House is basically a done deal. He stated that neighbors were left out of the loop concerning this issue, and there is no use denying what has already happened here. The question he wanted answered was what was going to happen now. Rune stated that the house still has to meet Oxford House requirements and that he personally went and talked to neighbors in the area

about the house becoming an Oxford House.

At this point many neighbors became upset stating that they had not been notified in any way about the proposed Oxford House. Ronn Palmer redirected the group to focus on a more civilized discussion.

The neighbor with the location of the Oxford House where police calls were recorded by Milwaukee Police stated that the Oxford House was located on 32<sup>nd</sup> and Washington. Terry stated that that Oxford House no longer exists. The neighbor asked if that was because of police calls or if the lease had lapsed. Terry answered that the lease had lapsed at that site and was not renewed. The neighbor asked if it was allowed to lapse because of problems at the site.

Ed Smith responded that, just like anywhere else, there can be problems, but in the Oxford House system things are handled immediately and police are called usually by members in the house. He stated that he would never say that there is never any police contact because at any time there could be a police contact.

At this juncture, Ronn Palmer told neighbors that because of time constraints he would allow three more people to ask questions concerning the Oxford House and the property on 39<sup>th</sup> and Wake.

Tanya Gilbert stated that there are many questions that neighbors have, and that neighbors do not know what to expect out of Oxford House. She asked that statistics concerning recovery rates of members, police contact rates, how fast neighbors have been responded to once contact is made, and who a neighbor should contact if any problems or issues do occur be given to neighbors for their information and review.

Another neighbor asked what the process/criteria was for determining if the house fit the standard Oxford House Requirements, how permitting would be given/taken care of, what the lease length would be, and determining if men or women would be housed at the site?

Ronn Palmer joked that the standards include that the place looks better than Jim MacDonald's house at all times. Ronn emphasized that there are typically no problems from police/etc. at Oxford Houses, and that he wanted to ensure that Oxford House is committed to being a part of the community and part of the solution. He asked that they live up to the mission statement of the organization.

Jim MacDonald asked the property owner as a property owner, why he hasn't had to meet the same standards that he is required to concerning property with a drug history involved? His sentiment was that if the property owner doesn't care about other people in the neighborhood or the neighborhood, why should he receive our support?

David Vidan asked Oxford House to provide statistics on property values before and after Oxford House has moved into a neighborhood. He also asked if people who are fugitives are allowed in Oxford Houses, even as visitors? He also asked if Oxford House performs a

criminal background check on members before they move into an Oxford House?

Ed Smith responded that he doesn't have the statistical numbers on property values, but he will get them for the neighborhood. He stated that a felony can be a wide variety of things and that fugitive is different than a felony. He stated that people who are visitors to Oxford House members do not go through any kind of background check, and that criminal background checks are not performed on Oxford House members, but that a sex offender check is performed. Ed also emphasized that people who are on methadone are not allowed to be Oxford House members or live in an Oxford House.

In closing on the Oxford House discussion, Ronn Palmer asked Oxford House Representatives what they expected from the neighborhood?

Ed Smith stated that he expected the neighborhood to give Oxford House a chance to prove that they can be a good neighbor, and that neighbors will allow Oxford House Members to be able to live life in grace and dignity.

Jim MacDonald stated that the Oxford House Organization appears to sneak in under HUD housing so they do not have to tell anybody in our neighborhood that they were planning on moving in. He stated that neighbors feel they have been misled because the property owner is already improving the house and spending money on egress windows because he will be able to recap his cost. Better for him to either sell or rent the house as is.

Terry responded that the owner is doing these improvements to make the house safer for people moving into it, and that she takes exception to the word sneaking.

Ron Palmer stated that assuming Oxford House does decide to move into the neighborhood, that the neighborhood expects them to have a representative member attending the PTO meetings and a representative member attending the neighborhood organizational meetings. He thanked Ed and Terry for their time and asked them when the neighborhood can expect the information requested at this meeting? Ed responded that as soon as he gets the information from the minutes and such he will get the information to the neighborhood as quickly as possible.

Ron stated that discussion concerning the Oxford House has now officially ended, and that new business will be starting concerning other things going on in the neighborhood and that people could leave or stay depending on their interest in the topics listed on the agenda.

### **Membership Committee Meeting**

Pam McGraw stated that from the first membership subcommittee meeting this month tasks were assigned to people during the set-up and take-down of tents at the summer concerts and set up a schedule for people to work at the community booth and membership booth during the concert events. She stated that the goal of the membership committee is to get more involvement from people in the neighborhood.

## **TSP Committee Meeting**

Michole Jensen reported on the TSP Meetings and said that there is still an opportunity to review the neighborhood information listed and make and send comments to the city on the City of Milwaukie website. Michole stated that this is important as it will determine how people will move through the Ardenwald/JC Neighborhood.

Cheryl Ausmann-Moreno asked Michole about the Johnson Creek Blvd. widening issue and if he had more information on that.

Michole stated that he has an email into the city regarding this issue. His understanding is that at the beginning of the process Johnson Creek Blvd. was not included in the plan, but now is. Neither were stoplights at 42<sup>nd</sup>, 36<sup>th</sup>, and 32<sup>nd</sup>. He stated that something is not right, and he will work on this particular situation. He understands that the goal right now is to improve traffic flow on Johnson Creek Blvd., not to increase traffic flow on Johnson Creek Blvd.

## **Railroad Quiet Zone**

Ron Palmer discussed the proposal to upgrade the 3 major railroad crossings at Oak Street, Harrison Street, and 37<sup>th</sup> Street. He said that it is an all or none package, and that \$500,000 has been allocated to introduce a quiet zone in the area in and around our Neighborhood. Ron said that mayor Bernard has asked that all upgrades be accepted as presented as this is an all or nothing deal. One of the upgrades will allow vehicles to travel into the car wash on Harrison without causing traffic problems such as crashes. It was suggested that this also allow or include access to Mike's Drive Inn as the same issues occur at that site. Cheryl stated that by having a quiet zone right there next to train traffic, it may impact traffic safety there. Ron explained there is no compromise on this upgrade, and reiterated that this is an all or nothing package. Jim MacDonald asked what this proposal was really for and Ron explained that this process will ensure that no train whistles will be allowed at these crossings which impact not only our neighborhood, but others across from us that receive the doppler effect.

## **Norm Scott Property for Park**

Norm Scott, who lives in Ardenwald down off of Springwater Trail, has been working on different projects the last few years in the process of developing the land he owns, but would prefer a park there. He owns approximately one and a half acres that he would like to either develop or turn into a park and has a proposal that he wants to submit to Metro and wanted to let us know about it. He explained his background, that he is a teacher at Sellwood and has 4 children and a wife. He explained that his children are active at Milwaukie High School, and that he also hosts a foreign student. Norm introduced Jerry Hermann of the Earth Crusaders' River Resource Museum and past member of Metro's Green Ribbon-Green Space Committee who will inform the neighborhood about the proposal.

Jerry Hermann explained his background and that he has worked to develop and implement

practical responses to environmental concerns through education, demonstration, and action over the past 30 years. He has his degree from PSU and is a past founder of the John Inskeep Environmental Learning Center at Clackamas Community College and worked on the first planting at that site.

Jerry Hermann stated that he became interested in the Three Bridges Project and started working on bringing the Queen of the West to area in the next month or so. Jerry described the proposal as also linking the stormwater detention and water quality enhancement facility – The Roswell Wetlands – to the Springwater Trail. Jerry stated that the Roswell Wetlands facility is a one of a kind environment funded by Metro and the City of Milwaukie that exhibits a unique natural appearance. Its purpose is to resolve previously severe water quality impacts to nearby Johnson Creek and East and West Moreland and Ardenwald Neighborhoods.

Jerry described the historic interest of the land indicating that the property was Ardenwald Railroad Stop for the 1850's railroad magnate Ben Holliday's Willamette Valley Southern First North-South railroad in Oregon. He stated that the interurban trolleys ran East and West along what is now the SpringWater Corridor Trail. He stated that the old 449 passed through the old Goodwill site on the way to the river. Jerry stated that it would be nice to have a rest area for travelers off of the Springwater Trail near this area. He stated that part of the money for the site would also go towards purchasing and installing bridges and interpretive signs in the Roswell Pond area. He stated that the ScottLand Yard Plan combined with the Roswell plan will be sent to Metro for funding. Jerry stated that this area has history, wetland, is a beneficial area to Johnson Creek. He reiterated that this proposal plans to turn this 1 and a half acre property into a wayside area that traveler's could enjoy from the trail.

Norm Scott stated that Joanne Herrigal at the City of Milwaukie will endorse a letter for this site from the City and that Carlotta Collette also supports this proposal if the neighborhood agrees. Money for this proposal will be coming from Portland for Metro to approve, and Milwaukie would provide the Roswell Pond money and Portland/Metro would pay for the rest of the property. Norm asked that he would like a letter of support from the neighborhood.

Ron thanked Norm and Jerry for their information and stated that we do not have enough board members here to vote for approval on such a letter, but that he would be interested in talking with Norm and looking at the site in the proposal soon..

## **PSAC Meeting**

Cheryl Ausmann-Moreno gave her information from the PSAC meeting and stated that 40<sup>th</sup> Street will be turned into a skinny street to lower speed rates, and that will mean that the lines will be taken off of SE 40<sup>th</sup> Street. Cheryl stated that there have been more things happening at Willow Court and asked everyone to please report things they see to the police when they occur.

Ronn thanked everyone for attending the meeting, and the meeting adjourned 8:35pm

Written by: Lisa Gunion-Rinker  
Member-At-Large, acting Secretary for this meeting.