

Boise Neighborhood Association General Meeting
April 11, 2016 7-9 pm – Q Center

Attendees:

Board members: Katy Wolf (Communications Chair, Secretary, Safety & Livability Chair), Stephen Gomez (Land Use & Transportation Chair), Kay Newell, Sarah Cantine, David de la Rocha, Garner Moody (Acting Chair), JP Castiaux, Ted Buehler

Absent: Karis Stoudamire-Philips (Treasurer)

Non-board members: Nan Stark (NE liaison for Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability), Alem Gebrehiwot, Fawn Alberson (NNEBA Outreach Coordinator), John (NNEBA Vice Chair), Ken Doswell (NNEBA Chair), Dave Cole, Stacy (last name?), Michael Hoffman (sp?), Ross Danielson, Fito Roberts, Annabelle Snow (Williams Vancouver Business Association), Orlando Simpson, Dominic Anaya, Lisa Watts, Ruthie Harper, Matt Hogan, Donna Kelly, Kirsti Munn, Dianne Bocci, Simon Ingham, Howard Patterson, Andrine de la Rocha, Carolyn McKay, Eugene Madson (sp?), Christian Kaylou, Ptery Liegat, Janetter Bradley, Tatyana Polyakovat, Michael Pearo

Agenda:

7:00 Introductions

7:05 Chair's Opening Remarks

7:10 Intro to zone change - Stephen Gomez

7:20 Guest speaker: Alem Gebrehiwot - Application for zone change

7:30 Guest speaker: Nan Stark: NE District Liaison

7:40 Open comments

8:25 Vote on zone change

8:30 Homeless camp follow up - Stephen Gomez

8:40 Vote on homeless letters

9:00 Adjourn

Minutes:

7:06 Stephen Gomez - Land Use & Transportation Chair - Introduction to meeting topic
The BNA was contacted a couple weeks ago by a concerned resident, about the zoning proposal for Fremont between Mississippi and Williams. The petition that the landowner, Alem Gebrehiwot, submitted to the City has 17 homeowner signatures. Stephen reviews the substantial amount of development already in planning or construction phases along Williams and Vancouver and lower Mississippi, with large maps as a visual aide. Stephen distributes a 4 page handout, which is an excerpt from the Comp Plan map (the Map App), showing the proposed zoning change. The initial proposal to the City was a rezoning from Mississippi to Vancouver along Fremont. The rezoning has been scaled down to three property blocks with 16 properties: The PCRI "L Roy Gardens" property (18 Section 8 units) between Albina and Borthwick on the north side of Fremont; the south side of Fremont between Commercial and

Gantenbein south of Fremont; the north side of Fremont between Haight and Gantenbein. The Boise-Eliot Community Garden would go away.

Further context - There is a hierarchy of street classifications: Fremont is classified as a “local street”. Vancouver is a “Community Corridor”. Williams and Mississippi are “Neighborhood Main Streets”. MLK is a “Civic Main Street”. Currently the zoning is R1.

	R1	CM2
Height	45 feet	45-55 feet 45 within 25 feet of R1
Density	1 unit per 1,000 sf of land	2:1 to 4:1 sf of building per sf of land
Parking	0 < 30 units, 1 per 4 units > 30 units	0 < 30 units, 1 per 4 units > 30 units
Building coverage	60%	100%
Landscaping	20%	0%
Front setback	3 feet in front	0 feet
Side/rear setback	5 ft	10 ft by R1

If the area is rezoned, it affects everything, including houses that exist today. A house could build within that zone with no setback, unless it abuts a residential zone. The neighborhood association recognizes that parking in the neighborhood is already a challenge, and we are working with the City on parking issues and a plan moving forward.

Statement by Alem Gebrehiwot

Alem has been the owner of small business in the neighborhood for many years - Queen of Sheba International Foods. He is a longtime resident of King Neighborhood. He came here over 30 years ago as an Ethiopian refugee. He saw great opportunity in the neighborhood. He is not an investor. Always seeks to give back to community he loves. Has acquired a variety of properties, which uses to impact lives in positive way. Employed 6-15 employees who live in the neighborhood, and have been with him from 10 - 23 years. He owns an apartment complex on Russell Street where he is proud to have kept the rent affordable. His properties have contributed to livability. He let his land be used for Boise-Eliot Community Garden for many years, and paid property taxes while the community used it. His building on Ivy Street - Liberty Hall - was an African Community Center in the 90s. He made available to non-profits who used it for a variety of community work. Alem was part of community visioning which brought about improvements on Mississippi and MLK. He recognizes that change is inevitable. This change

has been long overdue. This proposed change is fair and equitable. His plans for development are rooted in community value. He is looking for the BNA to support the zone change as submitted in the Comp Plan proposal. His plan is to develop to include small business and affordable housing.

David de la Rocha: What kind of program do you plan to use for affordable housing? What will you do to make sure the housing is affordable? We have had lots of developers who have stated that the costs are prohibitive for affordable housing.

Alem: I have held my property for 20 years. I have a vision. I have tried for the last 7-8 years on the [affordable housing plan]. It's too early now to say what [my specific plan is]. My opportunity to get the area rezoned is now, because the Comp Plan is happening now. Pathway 1000 is a PCRI program that Alem has had conversations with PCRI about.

A resident says that he has a house that's in the zone for proposed rezoning. He lives in a house two houses away from Alem, and asks why Alem didn't approach him about the petition. His house would be blocked by the future building. Alem replies that he has a point, but that he didn't know what they would decide ultimately with what he was proposing, and what would impact the properties around him.

Dave Cole lives next to L. Roy Gardens. Some developments have already started to block out his home. To have taller developments at PCRI would block out the sun completely in their yard. The property value would go down, even though he doesn't plan on moving away, but he is against the upzoning proposal.

A resident has concerns about traffic increasing on Fremont. There are children walking across Fremont every day to BEH School. Her worry is more traffic increase without assurance for safety of children. Alem says that the BEH School is looking for more students and does not see anything bad about the proposal. Alem thinks that it makes sense to connect the same kind of zoning from Mississippi to Vancouver, and accept the growth.

A resident is an owner of a nearby property and also a real estate broker. He owns 3436 at Commercial on Fremont. He didn't sign the petition but would sign it now. He thinks that commercial zoning can be a positive thing for a neighborhood, and for individual property owners.

Sarah Cantine: Agree we need more density and affordable housing. Sarah is on the City's Residential Infill Committee. They are always looking for more opportunities. Question is that current zoning is R1, which is an affordable way to build. Putting commercial on the ground floor increases traffic patterns. If the end goal is housing, it's easily met by R1. If other retail areas nearby couldn't justify the increased traffic pattern to the City, and were told to change retail to office, then why do we need this rezoning? Alem: The neighborhood needs more small businesses.

Nan Stark (N/NE liaison, Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability)

Nan has been to the BNA 3 times in the past few years to talk about the Comp Plan process. Lots of people show up to BNA meetings about land use issues. Alem came to Nan and said he was interested in looking at the Fremont corridor, and he also talked to City Council. Nan thought it was a pretty big proposal. The Mayor and one Commissioner were interested, so they talked to the managers at the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, and pared down the proposal to what we see now. Typically when there is a change like this being suggested, they looked at the depths of the lots being adjusted. They typically add commercial to both sides of the street. One manager suggested the PCRI property which looks like an opportunity site to turn into something bigger. More context: OR State legislature recently reversed the ban on inclusionary zoning, which will make it easier for the city to mandate that new developments over 20 units have affordable units, and make it easier for developers to put in more affordable units than before. Previously getting affordable housing was a hurdle to developers, but it is now mandatory for 20 or more units and is easier to do even for fewer units. There are two upcoming opportunities to testify about the amendment package (M42) and proposed change (1471):

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/569930>

April 14, 2016, 6 p.m.

Portland Building Auditorium (2nd floor)

1120 SW 5th Avenue

Portland, OR 97204

April 20, 2016, 2 p.m.

Council Chambers

1221 SW 4th Avenue

Portland, OR 97204

The testimony period will close next week (the 20th). You can also submit written testimony to City Council. City Council testimony is limited to 2 minutes. It doesn't necessarily help to have people give the same testimony. If you're going to have lots of people show up, give different points.

Resident asks why the area doesn't connect to Vancouver, and leaves an R1 island between the two commercial zones. Nan says they looked at the pattern and that's what made the most sense.

A resident is from the Open Door House of Prayer church, which has been there since 1962, and they want it to stay there.

A resident asks how many residents this could bring. Stephen says with 150,000 - 200,000 square feet of buildable space, so roughly 150 units.

Sarah asks what the rationale is for the City to increase the friction between residential and commercial. Nan states that Fremont is capable of handling mixed use.

David de la Rocha asks about process - isn't everyone within 400 feet supposed to be notified? Most people don't appear to have been notified. Also, when Marathon did their application, the transportation analysis on Fremont said that the morning hour count was too much, so they were limited to 70 vehicles per hour. The analysis was done from a worst case scenario standpoint. The current transportation analysis is 42 vehicles. If you go to CM2, it goes to 616. They were concerned that retail on Vancouver would bring the impact up too high. The Marathon use will be offices, retail and residential. Nan defers to PBOT, she is not a transportation expert, she is a planner. She wouldn't compare the EX zone to this Comp Plan change, because it's a lower scale. To answer about the process: when someone asks the City for a zone change, then all neighbors within 400 feet would be notified. This was a "legislative" process which is different, so unfortunately they don't have the resources to send out notification as they would in a land use case. They don't have the resources to do that many mailers, across the city. They expect that people will get the letter, talk to their neighbors, or Land Use Committee would find out about it. You do have to be somewhat tuned into the process, or if you're affected by it, you find out about it through your neighbors. JP says that BNA found out about this from neighbors who found out from rumors. We were not notified. Nan says that she usually sends an email to the coalitions, who send it to the neighborhood chairs. However in this case, NE Coalition was not notified about this proposal. Nan says that they did make sure that the property owners found out via postcards.

Ken Doswell (NNEBA chair) owns a business on Williams. Ken defends Alem, who is a local property owner, that has donated property for community use for years. We may not know the other developers impacting the neighborhood, but we know Alem.

Garner brings up PCRI. An attendee says that she represents PCRI which owns and manages L Roy Gardens. There are lots of PCRI units in Boise. There was a commitment from the City to the community at the time of the Interstate Urban Renewal Area that they would create affordable housing units, and immediately they remediated on that commitment which directly led to displacement of historic residents.

Ted Buehler comments that zoning exists to protect livability, and whether the developer is a long time resident or not doesn't really matter. Encourages the board to vote in terms of what is good for the neighborhood in the long term.

Kay Newell comments that Alem has been talking with her about this idea for development for last 20 years. We hear all the time that people have been pushed out of the neighborhood. As far as zoning, the people along Williams, Vancouver and Mississippi have already experienced this. This is an enormous plan. She has lost sunshine in all her buildings as density has increased. What we had is gone. This proposal will connect our neighborhood. She supports this because it will benefit the community.

Dave Cole asks how the rezoning will help the L Roy Gardens residents. The woman representing L Roy Gardens/PCRI says that the residents of the Gardens aren't worried for themselves and want what's best for the neighborhood.

A resident comments that there currently isn't enough infrastructure (trash pickup and cops) for the amount of people in the neighborhood now, much less adding thousands more people.

Howard, a newer resident, recognizes this neighborhood is becoming more dense, but is concerned on these impacts on livability to the residential streets nearby.

A resident expresses concern for the church members. It will be too hard for the people to park to get to church. A resident who is a member of the Open Door church, and says that an emergency vehicle recently couldn't get through to a victim of a heart attack at their church, on Fremont. The church members don't have parking space. She wants to keep it the way it is.

Ken Doswell says he recently turned down a guy knocking on his door with a large cash offer, but he turned them down. He comments that we can support someone driving positive change, rather than reacting to change being pushed upon us.

Another resident highlights that there is a Section 8 building within the rezoning area. She commends Alem for wanting to build in the neighborhood, as a woman who lived pre-Civil Rights. But she also sees cars going through Gantenbein, seeing traffic backed up from Mississippi going to Vancouver because people are not using I-405, but Mississippi instead. She recognizes what Alem is doing and that change will happen, but she doesn't want to rush the change.

Another resident has been remodeling his house for the last 20 years, and now he is being told that the neighborhood is being pulled out from under him. He thinks that Alem can develop his land, but thinks that there will be a feeding frenzy. Alem thinks that people have history, but the houses are not historic.

The meeting end time requires that the board make a vote, since the comment period ends on the 20th, so if the board is going to write a letter for or against the proposed changes, the board needs to vote on it at this meeting.

David declared to the board a possible conflict of interest in voting on any position the board may take on the CM2 proposal, as his house property abuts one of the properties that would be rezoned in the proposal. He stated that he would like to vote and asked for the board's advice as to whether he should be allowed to vote. Several members of the board expressed support for him voting, and JP stated that he thought there was a conflict of interest. With the objection noted, David decided to recuse himself from the vote.

Stephen makes a motion that the BNA oppose this proposal to make a change to the Comp Plan map and rezoning. Sarah seconds the motion. Stephen, Sarah, Katy, and JP vote in favor of the motion. Garner and Kay oppose the motion. David and Ted abstain. (Karis is absent.) (Amended by board vote on 4/18/16)The abstentions do not count in the motion. 4 votes for the motion; 2 votes against: motion passes.

9:00 Meeting adjourns.