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# The Southwest Portland Post

Southwest Portland's Independent Neighborhood Newspaper

**INSIDE:**

South Portland neighbors get together for summer concerts in the parks  
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Complimentary

August 2011

## Former SWNI employee Virginia Stromer indicted on 11 counts of theft by deception

By Lee Perlman  
*The Southwest Portland Post*

In July, the Multnomah County District Attorney's office indicted former Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. Operations Manager Virginia Stromer on 11 counts of "theft by deception"



Virginia Stromer (Multnomah County Sheriff booking photo)

relating to her work with SWNI. The indictments covered Stromer's employment from 2003 to 2010, and the funds involved amounted to \$130,000.

The indictment capped a nine-month investigation by the Portland Police Bureau following Stromer's abrupt resignation after 15 years on the job.

After an arrest warrant was issued, she surrendered to authorities, pleaded not guilty to the charges, and was released on her own recognizance. No trial date had been set as *The Post* went to press.

SWNI Executive Director Sylvia Bogert told *The Post* that her first indication of problems occurred on October 5, 2010 when a check drawn from a SWNI account bounced because of insufficient funds. A quick check revealed other financial problems.

Bogert left a phone message for Stromer after work hours saying the matters needed to be discussed. The next day Stromer sent an e-mail saying that, on the advice of a lawyer, she was resigning due to "some major errors and me." Stromer later sent one of her sons to take her personal property from the office. Bogert said she hasn't spoken to Stromer since then.

Stromer worked in the office since 1995, and had responsibility for book-

keeping, the SWNI newsletter, *The Southwest Neighborhood News*, and communications with neighborhoods. "For most of those years we were a three-person team" (with Leonard Gard, program manager) Bogert recalled.

"Ginny was a very hard worker, always the first one in the office. She seemed to love her job and the people she worked with. She had first-hand knowledge of how hard volunteers worked to create a better community. She seemed very excited about the projects we were working on."

She had no indication, Bogert said, that Stromer had a desperate need for funds. "What I saw was a hard-working mother of two," Bogert said. "She took on a paper route in addition to her job here to bring in extra money. But I had every indication she was a trustworthy employee."

At times in tears Bogert, who herself has worked for SWNI for more than 30 years, said of Stromer, "It was inconceivable to me that the individual I knew and trusted could betray not only my trust and the office's, but the community's, that someone who saw firsthand how hard people worked to raise funds could be involved in something like this."

In addition to reporting the matter to the police, SWNI consulted with a lawyer, Katherine Heekin, and a forensic accountant, Bill Douglas. The two have also been working on seeking a theft insurance claim on SWNI's behalf.

This was complicated by the fact that SWNI changed its insurance coverage during the period in question. On SWNI's behalf, Heekin is seeking a claim of about \$72,000. "We went back as far as our policy would allow and the data could support," Bogert said.

Bogert shared the revelations with her board and, although it wasn't as personal for them as it had been for her, they too were shocked. Lee Buhler of South Portland said, "I knew Ginny personally, and I would never have expected this." Don Baack of Hillsdale said his dealings with Stromer were "very pleasant. There was no reason to suppose there was a problem at all."

The board quickly mobilized to deal with the situation. They set up an ad hoc Finance Committee to make the best use of remaining resources. Their actions "allowed us to pay all our bills and meet all of our obligations," Bogert said. "All of our scheduled events came off

(Continued on Page 3)



Public officials pose at the groundbreaking of the new Portland to Milwaukie light rail line. (Post photo by Lee Perlman)

## Groundbreaking ceremony kicks off Portland to Milwaukie light rail line

By Lee Perlman  
*The Southwest Portland Post*

With some funding details still to be worked out, TriMet and its partners officially began work on the Portland to Milwaukie Light Rail project.

The \$1.5 billion venture will extend the existing Green Line from its current terminus at Portland State University through downtown into the South Waterfront to a station at Southwest Moody Avenue and Porter Street.

From there it will cross the Willamette River via a new bridge serving rail transit, buses, bikes and pedestrians to a station at Southeast Sherman Street near the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI).

It will continue southward through the inner southeast into Clackamas County. It will have 10 new stations.

The project was delayed to some extent by some late second-guessing about the location of the bridge.

It was initially proposed to cross at Caruthers Street. However, there was strong lobbying to bring the west terminus further south, near the Oregon Health and Sciences University's proposed aerial tram and its proposed future development.

Another issue occurred when the Federal Transit Administration agreed to provide funding to the project, but at only 50 percent of its cost rather than the hoped-for 60 percent, leaving a gap of more than \$100 million.

Since then TriMet and its partners have both identified new funding sources – including a new charge on new development near the line – and cuts to elements of the project. One of these is a connection between the terminus of the new streetcar extension at OMSI and the new bridge.

Proponents are seeking to restore this to the budget, arguing that it would cost twice as much after the bridge is completed.

The project began life in the 1990s as the South-North Line, a single project linking Vancouver to Clackamas County. A series of statewide public

votes on both sides of the river killed this venture.

However, persistent lobbying by transit advocates kept the concept alive. Today the Yellow Line extends north from downtown to the Expo Center near the Columbia River. The link to Vancouver is an element of the proposed Columbia River Crossing Project.

At the June 30 groundbreaking ceremony at OMSI, near the east side approach of the bridge, several speakers mentioned the project's history.

Metro Councilor Carlotta Colette, who lives on the edge of Milwaukie, said her neighbors have been calling for light rail since she began her career as a neighborhood activist and, quoting Jerry Garcia, said, "What a long, strange trip it's been."

Mayor Sam Adams said, "The route is pretty straightforward, but the route to get here took a lot of twists and turns. It's taken persistence. We were required to come up with more resources at the end, it put the project in jeopardy, but we came through."

Congressman Earl Blumenauer, referring to the project's history, said, "Build no line before its time. There were bumps along the way, but it meant that when it happened, the community was ready."

Congressman Kurt Schrader, referring to redistricting processes then under way, said, "Welcome to the other side of the river, which I represent – for now. I wondered when the south side would get its turn."

He credited State Rep. Mary Nolan with securing state funding for the project. "It was not at the top of the list of most people's things to do, but this was a critical project," said Schrader.

"There were occasions when (former Gov. Ted Kulongoski) pushed back pretty strongly, but we prevailed. I hope this will show that infrastructure spending is not just spending, but creating the future."

Gail Acterman of Oregon Department of Transportation noted that her agency is no longer just concerned with highways. "We will really build (Continued on Page 3)

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# Community invited to contribute supplies, donations during Multnomah Days

The Multnomah Village Bloc's Initiative and Neighborhood House are inviting you to join us at this year's Multnomah Days Festival on Saturday, August 20, for a great celebration of our community.



We are asking for donations of non-food items that are in short supply for those in need. Additionally, we are asking you to contribute a suggested \$2 donation that will be applied to installing lighting in Multnomah Village during the "Green Street" redevelopment of Capitol Highway between Southwest 35th and 36th avenues. Just think of the impact that we can

make to our community if each person or family could donate a box of diapers, paper towels, toiletries and or canned/boxed food goods. This will help those at most risk in our community.

Also think of how much better Multnomah Village would be with more and improved lighting. We have a unique opportunity to build out our lighting infrastructure at a very low cost with the pending Green Street redevelopment.

We won't have to tear up newly built roads or sidewalks as would be done during the sidewalk and street construction.

Donation collection points will be set up at the major entrances to the street fair prior to the parade start and we will also have a donation location near the center of the fair after the parade has ended.

Multnomah Village gets between 5000 and 8000 visitors during the Multnomah Days Festival. It is one of the longest-running street fairs in Portland and is hosted by the Multnomah Village Business Association.

Randy M. Bonella  
Executive Director  
Multnomah Village Bloc's Initiative  
rmbonella@moblocs.org

## Maplewood slated to receive \$200,000 in ped/bike improvements

### FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

More than 90 folks attended a neighborhood meeting at the West Hills Friends Church on July 11 to find out about plans for a once-in-a-decade traffic-calming project in Maplewood. Mark Lear and Greg Raisman of the Portland Bureau of Transportation led the meeting.

The city has set aside \$200,000 to deal with a unique neighborhood with no sidewalks. For starters, the state legislature has agreed to allow individual cities to create new 20 mph zones to increase safety.

As part of the city's new neighborhood greenway program (formerly bike boulevards), they're planning to turn a ditch along the side of busy Southwest Maplewood Road, 52nd Avenue, and Vermont Street into a walkable/bikeable gravel trail with a culvert underneath.

The city is working with the Safe Routes To School folks, along with the Bureau of Environmental Services.

The City is trying to create a safe network for getting people in Maplewood to places like West Hills Montessori

School, Maplewood School, St John Fisher School, Garden Home Recreation Center, the Southwest Community Center in Gabriel Park and Multnomah Village.

There are some steep slopes involved that may make traffic calming trickier. But traffic speeds in Maplewood are consistently 5-10 mph higher than the city wants. And the new trails should make walking and biking more attractive options.

A number of new speed bumps are planned, as are new flashing beacons at crosswalks. There is the possibility of a new rubber curb along Vermont. Also, plans are in the works for an expanded trail to April Hill Park.

What's next? A follow-up meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 17, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Multnomah Center. Information about proposed improvements is available at [www.portlandonline.com/transportation](http://www.portlandonline.com/transportation). Click on the link to Maplewood. If you'd like to comment on proposed plans contact Mark Lear via e-mail, [mark.lear@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:mark.lear@portlandoregon.gov).

- Don Snedecor




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web address: [www.swportlandpost.com](http://www.swportlandpost.com)

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# Multnomah Boulevard paving and construction projects continue

By Stephen Sykes

Thank you for your patience during the past year of sewer infrastructure projects on Southwest Multnomah Boulevard. The construction that began in June 2010 on Multnomah Blvd was a sewer replacement project.

That project impacted the water delivery system in the same areas and required the replacement of water main and services. The sewer component of that project was completed in December 2010 and the water component was completed in March 2011.

Based on a change in the pavement restoration scope, the roadway between Southwest 31st and 45th avenues will

be repaved full width before this project is fully completed. Currently the contractor is preparing the pavement for grinding of the existing asphalt and installation of new asphalt.

The current work involves lowering the tops of utility heads in preparation for asphalt grinding. The contractor expects to grind asphalt the week of August 1 and repave the week of August 8.

The construction activities that you are seeing between Southwest 31st Avenue and Barbur Boulevard are related to an upcoming sewer reconstruction project that is related to the one mentioned above.

The Burlingame Trunk sewer reconstruction project will officially begin next week with signing of the project's

12-month contract. In advance of the sewer work that will replace a 50-year-old trunk line, a variety of utilities will be relocating their facilities to accommodate the sewer work.

The Portland Water Bureau has been working in the vicinity of the 2600 block recently. This sewer project will also impact utility lines owned by Northwest Natural Gas, PGE, and Level 3 (telecommunications); each of these companies will spend time in the near future relocating their facilities.

This project will include the closure of the Interstate 5 on/off ramps to Multnomah Boulevard for 45 days. The ramp closure is necessary to accommodate sewer bypass equipment and construction equipment and is expected

to begin in mid-September.

The Burlingame Trunk project will upsize the gravity segment of sewer that takes wastewater flows from the Fanno pressure sewer.

Finally, a smaller third project got underway on Multnomah Boulevard this week. The Multnomah Boulevard Stormwater Facilities project will install five stormwater facilities at various locations on Multnomah Boulevard between Southwest 40th and 69th avenues.

The contractor began working at Southwest 45th Avenue this week. Comparatively, this project will minimally impact traffic as each facility will be constructed within a few weeks and much of the work will be performed off of the roadway.

Nonetheless, there will be impacts to travel lanes at times. The contractors, and the city staff that are managing these projects, are coordinating the construction and traffic control plans accordingly.

Here is the website that contains the most information about the Fanno Basin Sewer Improvements projects: [www.portlandonline.com/bes/fanno](http://www.portlandonline.com/bes/fanno).

I am in the process of updating this site to incorporate information related to the paving restoration, upcoming stormwater projects on Southwest Multnomah Boulevard and the Burlingame Trunk Sewer Replacement. Please let me know if you have additional questions about these projects.

**Contact: Stephen Sykes, Portland Bureau of Environmental Services, 503-823-7898, [stephen.sykes@portland-oregon.gov](mailto:stephen.sykes@portland-oregon.gov).**

## Virginia Stromer Indicted

(Continued from Page 1)

without a hitch due to our volunteers."

The non-profit developed new financial policies and practices. Some board members, especially Baack, Buhler and Sharon Keast of Arnold Creek, put in hours at the office that helped to offset the loss of a staff member.

"From the very first minute the board came together and worked as hard as they could," Bogert said. "Every board member put in additional hours. No one walked away from the table. Their commitment to maintain the livability of Southwest remained strong."

Of his own work Buhler said, "Things were in a shambles, and someone had to do the work. It was an awful thing, but all the people bringing support - I did enjoy that."

Marianne Fitzgerald said, "We tried to turn a tragedy into an opportunity.

We learned our lesson - we had done so well with our staff that we really weren't paying attention. Being on a board like this is a responsibility, and we all have to pay attention."

For Baack, it was too much, too late. "The board was largely responsible for this," he said. "On two occasions I strongly suggested a financial review, in 2009 I called for an audit, and nothing was done."

According to Baack, "Companies go broke because they fail to do these things. Now the board's gone overboard on financial controls. There are all kinds of new rules that are largely problematic. Energy will go into bean counting, not projects."

Baack did concede, "A lot of people did step forward to right the ship, to support Sylvia, and that's fantastic."

Amalia Alarcon is executive director of the Portland Office of Neighbor-

hood Involvement, principal funder of SWNI. "As soon as SWNI knew what was going on they took swift and very aggressive action," said Alarcon. "We're working system-wide to help all coalitions manage themselves effectively and implement some best-practices."

## Light Rail Line

(Continued from Page 1)

the transportation system we need for the future, as an alternative to the car," she said.

Acterman also said she liked the fact that the train will be designated the Orange Line, and noted that Orange is both a combination of green and yellow (part of the route to Vancouver) and the color of her alma mater, Portland State University.

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## A BIG hole on SW Naito Parkway

During July, Portland Water Bureau construction work near the intersection of SW Naito Pkwy. at SW Harrison St. dug a huge boring pit -- more than 16 feet wide and 40 feet long -- to insert a protective pipe casing under the Portland Street Car tracks.



The two northbound traffic lanes on SW Naito Pkwy. had to be closed around the clock as the pit was too large to place a steel plate over it. With these lanes closed, traffic was channeled - with the help of flaggers stationed 24 hours - into one of the south bound lanes to get around the work zone.

The work caused some commuters to have to wait five minutes or longer to get through the intersection. Motorists blocked the intersections of SW Market and SW Clay streets causing delays in other directions.

The Water Bureau engaged more traffic flaggers to help keep intersections clear and had left turns restricted

to further improve traffic flows. The boring work was part of the second phase of the Portland Water Bureau's Westside Header Project that will install 5,000-foot of large diameter steel water mains to replace a critical but aging supply pipeline.

The new pipe installation is slated to start in mid-September on SW Naito Pkwy. at SW Clay St. This work will take place at night. Crews will lay pipe south, about 100 feet per day in a rolling work zone.

Day work will occur on other affected streets: SW Caruthers St., SW Water Ave., SW Baker St., SW Hooker St., and SW 1st Ave.. The project will be completed by January 2012.

The Portland Water Bureau encourages commuters and bicyclists to find alternate routes, if possible, to avoid delays to their destinations. The public's patience and cooperation are appreciated as the bureau works to upgrade the city's century old water system.

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# South Portland neighbors get together for summer concerts in the parks

By Polina Olsen  
The Southwest Portland Post

It's free for all, and the music is grand at this year's South Portland Summer Concert Series. Held in Willamette Park on Southwest Macadam and Elizabeth Caruthers Park on Southwest Moody Avenue, evenings start with neighbors finding spots on the grass for children, picnic baskets, dogs, and portable chairs. Get ready for dancing. There's plenty of space near the stage.

On July 20, *Vagabond Opera* enter-



Mira Solis and Caire Elton blew bubbles to the tunes of the *Vagabond Opera* on July 20 at Willamette Park. (Post photo by Polina Olsen)

tained the crowd. Lead operatic tenor Eric Stern and his troupe bring klezmer, Balkan and "neo-bohemian cabaret" to audiences throughout the United States and Europe.

"Things are great, always great," said Ken Love, chair of the South Portland Neighborhood Association, the group that hosted the event. Joined by Portland Parks & Recreation and with the help of sponsors like OHSU, the Portland Water Bureau and Northwest College of Naturopathic Medicine, the program has gone off without a hitch for the past four years.

"We've never had a band that was disappointing," Love said. "We just have one more concert at Willamette Park, *Malea & the Tourists*. Next month we have two concerts in Caruthers Park in South Waterfront."

Sylvia Bogert, executive director of Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc., chatted with SPNA board members Lee Buhler and Jennifer Daneluk. "I love to see all the neighbors walking to the event," Bogert said. "It's a nice function when neighbors get together. And, the weather is perfect."

Also owner of the Ross Island Grocery & Café at 3502 SW Corbett Ave, Daneluk's nearby booth provided fresh barbecued cheeseburgers and other treats for those who preferred buying



The *Vagabond Opera* performed July 20 at Willamette Park. (Post photo by Polina Olsen)

their picnic.

Other vendors and non-profits lined the perimeter like Meghan Sperandeo from the College of Naturopathic Medicine. "We're here to get the word out to potential students and potential clients," she explained to Leigh Broussard, who brought Captain, her Great Pyrenees, along for company. "He's a small one," Broussard said. "He only weighs 115 pounds. His parents came from a working sheep ranch in Eastern Oregon. He guards my chickens."

Talk turned to the neighborhood. Did everyone hear of a new café next to the Corbett Fish House? "They serve breakfast, lunch and Stumptown coffee," Sperandeo said. Meanwhile young

artists mobbed the Portland Parks & Recreation children's booth.

"They're making spectacular flowers, bugs and crowns out of pipe cleaners, chop sticks and their ideas," teacher Kathy Karuoc said. Portland Parks & Recreation hires artists to teach and create art with children at all the park concerts. Tonight, Karuoc and Spanish speaking Blanca Vazquez led the charge.

**Coming soon to South Portland...**

**August 2 National Night Out Potluck Dinner:** Enjoy visiting neighbors to the tunes of The Wicky Pickers, whose Celtic traditional sounds com-  
(Continued on Page 5)

## Multnomah Days Festival is August 20th

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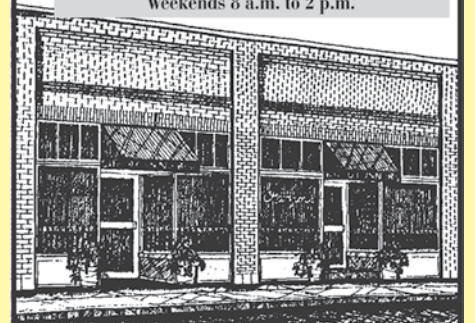
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**NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS**

By Lee Perlman  
The Southwest Portland Post

**Neighborhood coalition awards volunteers**

Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. recognized some of its finest helpers in June at its annual Volunteer Appreciation Night. The following were the award winners, and the people who nominated them:

Marcel Rodriguez of Arnold Creek. Jack Klinker of Ash Creek. Clair Coleman-Evans of Bridlemile. Prakash Joshi of Collins View. Jim Uri of Crestwood and the SWNI Parks and Community Centers Committee.

Janet Hawkins of Hayhurst. Michael Reunart of Hillsdale. Alicia Colson of Homestead. Debbie Benke of Maplewood. Lynda Troutman of Marshall Park. Randy Bonella of Multnomah.

Leah Benazzi of Marshall Park and South Burlingame. Sharon Fekety of South Portland. Jim Thayer of the Southwest Hills Residential League (SWHRL). The SWNI Crime Prevention Committee and Southwest Hills Kiwanis. Terri Freeg Riggsby of the Watershed Center.

SWNI also gave awards to its officers: president Brian Russell, treasurer

Tom Schaper, first vice president Ken Love, secretary Lee Buhler. There were awards to Sharon Keast from the Communications Committee, and to Jim McLaughlin from the Transportation Committee and West Portland Park. Congratulations to all the winners.

**Speaking of awards...**

The Portland Office of Neighborhood Involvement has extended the deadline for nominations for Spirit of Portland Awards to August 22. The awards are given out annually to individuals or groups that contribute to the city's livability.

A citizen jury under the direction of ONI selects winners from among nominations submitted by the public. Nomination forms are available from Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. or from ONI. For more information call 503-823-3881 or e-mail Patrick.philpott@portlandoregon.gov.

**Concerts in the Parks**

*(Continued from Page 4)*

bine with blues and swing. Bring a dish to share. 6 p.m., Willamette Park.

**August 19, Water Tower Bucket Boys:** Is it folk, bluegrass, punk rock, Cajun? Transcend boundaries with this Portland-based and nationally-known group. 6 p.m., Elizabeth Caruthers Park.

**Movies in the Park include ET, North By Northwest, Toy Story 3**

By Don Snedecor  
The Southwest Portland Post

Looking for free and fun activities for the family to share this summer? Want to enjoy the beauty of your own neighborhood? Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) is again bringing the annual Movies in the Park to locations throughout the city through Saturday, September 10.

Animated features, classic films, and recent hits are among the 46 movies to be presented on a giant, 268-square foot screen with a state-of-the-art sound system.

Bring a blanket and a lawn chair, a picnic if you like, and have a great time!

All movies will begin at dark (between 8 p.m. and 8:45 p.m.), and are

weather permitting. A rainout will be called by 5 p.m. and will be posted at the park. Prior to each movie, attendees can enjoy a variety of free entertainment beginning at 6:30 p.m.

This year Movies in the Park will focus on emerging local bands as part of the pre-movie entertainment. Films that follow will be shown this summer at Southwest Portland locations.

For a citywide schedule of outdoor movies visit the Portland Parks and Recreation website.

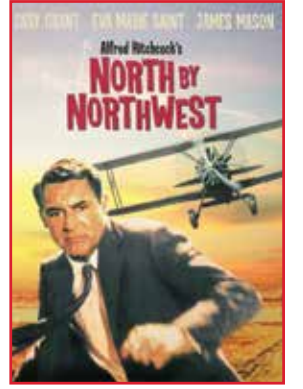
Thursday, August 11, Elizabeth Caruthers Park. ET The Extra Terrestrial.

Saturday, August 13, Dickinson Park, James and the Giant Peach.

Thursday, September 8, Elizabeth Caruthers Park, North By Northwest.

Friday, September 9, Multnomah Arts Center, Toy Story 3.

Saturday, September 10, April Hill Park, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang.



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**10 a.m. Biggest Little Parade** including musicians, street performers, cars, pets and more.

Blaze, the Portland Trailblazers mascot, is grand marshal. Begins at the viaduct and goes through the Village to SW 31st Avenue.

**10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Street Fair** featuring more than 100 vendors showcasing art, food, crafts, and other unique merchandise.

**11:30 a.m. Get A Life Marching Band** leads off the Live Music on the Main Stage through out the day.

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## St. Luke's Lutheran Church allowed to expand via street vacation

By Lee Perlman  
The Southwest Portland Post

After struggling with pedestrian access issues, as the Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. Board had before them, the Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission voted on June 28 to allow St. Luke's Lutheran Church to vacate two public rights of way to allow for an expansion.

The church at 6835 SW 45th Ave. has a congregation of 1,300, giving it the largest Lutheran congregation in Portland and the second largest in Oregon, church officials testified.

The church is straining the resources of its current building, built in 1960. The expansion could best be accommodated, they said, by vacating the unimproved Southwest 46th Avenue between California and Vermont streets, and the public right of way along Southwest Florida Street.

Among other things, this would allow expansion of the kitchen and fellowship hall, and allow the Sunday School to meet in quarters contiguous to the building rather than across the parking lot.

Wendy Collie of the Portland Bureau of Transportation said that the 46th right of way currently has a six-foot ditch for

storm water runoff next to a ten-foot gravel path.

The church has pledged to provide a new public pedestrian path elsewhere on the property when development occurs, Collie said. Regarding the Florida right of way, Collie said, "There's nothing there now that would make you think it's a street."

Representatives said that the church is active in community affairs. It provides space for 300 meetings a year, including those of the Southwest Trails Committee. It regularly provides food for the needy, and is host to the annual Grauer Back-To-School Project, in which backpacks full of supplies are

given to hundreds of needy school-age children.

Elise Moentmann said the church was "dedicated to environmental stewardship" and "being a good neighbor." She added, "Until the time comes for development, nothing will change." When change does come, "We believe both the church and the community will benefit."

Some critics thought that this was not enough. Hillsdale activist Glenn Bridger, and Roger Averbek on behalf of the Willamette Pedestrian Coalition, called for better and more assured pedestrian connections, especially running east and west on Florida.

Averbek noted that the intersection of Southwest Vermont Street and 45th Avenue represents the sort of "hub" of commercial activity that the planning concept of "20 minute neighborhoods" is based on, yet streets leading to it lack sidewalks. "This makes connectivity here extremely important, and we don't want to lose this opportunity," he said.

Transportation planner Lance Lindahl said that the parking lot of St. John Fisher Catholic Church, which is likely to remain indefinitely, stands in the way of Florida Street's right of way.

Commission member Irma Valdez called for granting the vacations. Opponents made "good points," she said, "but this is the church's site, and they're trying to do good things on a limited site."

Another Commission member, Don Hanson, agreed, saying, "I'm a huge fan of retaining rights of way, but here it would be a huge taking. This is a community service facility in many ways."

Commission member Chris Smith held out for stronger guarantees of future pedestrian connections, and cast the sole dissenting vote on the motion.

## State legislature passes trails liability waiver; New law allows work on trails to resume

### SOUTHWEST TRAILS

By Lee Perlman  
The Southwest Portland Post

On June 28, Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber signed into law a new trails liability waiver that will, among other things, allow the Southwest Trails network to resume operation and maintenance work.

HB2865 states, among other things, that neither public bodies nor private property owners are liable for injuries suffered by hikers while using "comuter" trails.

Such liability waivers already existed for "recreational" trails in parks and public lands. The new law extends this immunity to the Trail Network, which makes use of streets, public and private property, and public easements across private property that allows people to walk through areas lacking conven-

tional sidewalks.

The potential threat of lawsuits was a concern to private property owners that made them reluctant to allow their property to be used for trails, it halted volunteer trail maintenance work, and threatened to destroy the trail network, the product of decades of volunteer work.

The new law allows for safe use of the trails, and the resumption of maintenance and development work.

Although the main sponsor of the bill was Rep. Chris Garrett (D-Lake Oswego), former Southwest Trails Committee chair Don Baack gave strong credit for its passage to Sen. Ginny Burdick (D-Portland).

"She did what was necessary to get it through the legislature," he told *The Post*. "I'm very pleased that it's been passed." Burdick, in turn credited Baack and Hillsdale activist Glenn Bridger with giving "very effective testimony" for the measure during hearings.

### Baack resigns from Southwest Trails Committee

Hillsdale activist Don Baack, founder of the Southwest Trails Committee and its longtime chair, announced last month that he is resigning from both the Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. board and as chair of the Committee.

To *The Post*, Baack complained of "harassment" by some other SWNI board members that he said made it impossible for the Committee to do its work. He said he intends to form an independent trails group that will continue to carry out the vision of creating and maintaining a trails network.



Don Baack and his dog.  
(Post file photo by Poulina Olsen)

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# Opponents of proposed North Macadam jail are running out of time

By Lee Perlman  
The Southwest Portland Post

Not that they necessarily need it, but developers of a new Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facility, with detention cells, in the South Waterfront area may be saved by the bell.

City of Portland Hearings Officer Gregory Frank held a public hearing on a request for a Conditional Use permit for the facility at 4310 S.W. Macadam Ave. on July 6. At the hearing's end he brought up an important procedural issue – the 120-day clock.

By state law, a local jurisdiction must complete its review, and either grant or deny an application for a land use process, within 120 days of receiving a "complete" application.

City officials often ask applicants to waive this requirement or extend the time limit, with the implication that if the applicant insists on an immediate reply, it will be a denial. However, the applicant can insist on adherence to the timeline.

As a Type III procedure Frank's decision can be appealed to the Portland City Council, and the South Portland Neighborhood Association, which is opposing the Conditional Use, can bring such an appeal for free. However, Frank pointed out, the 120-day deadline is September 6.

Jim Davis of South Portland requested that the record be held open for additional testimony for seven days, and Lindquist Development LLC, the applicant, has another five days to submit rebuttals. Frank has another 17 days to issue his decision, which will probably be August 4.

If the decision went against Lindquist, and the applicant wished to appeal, the applicant could waive the deadline at

will. If South Portland lost, however, given the time needed to schedule a Council hearing and provide mandatory notice for it, they would have little time to make the deadline.

Suggesting "hypothetically" that he ruled against the neighborhood, Frank told board member Bill Danneman, "There's an idea that the more time an opponent takes, the more screws you drive into the developer. This time the screws could be driven into you. You might want to file an appeal immediately after receiving the decision to give yourself a fighting chance."

Lindquist plans to add on to an existing vacant bank storage facility, with a total of 114,000 square feet. The Portland Design Commission approved the design earlier this year, and City Council upheld it in the face of a South Portland appeal.

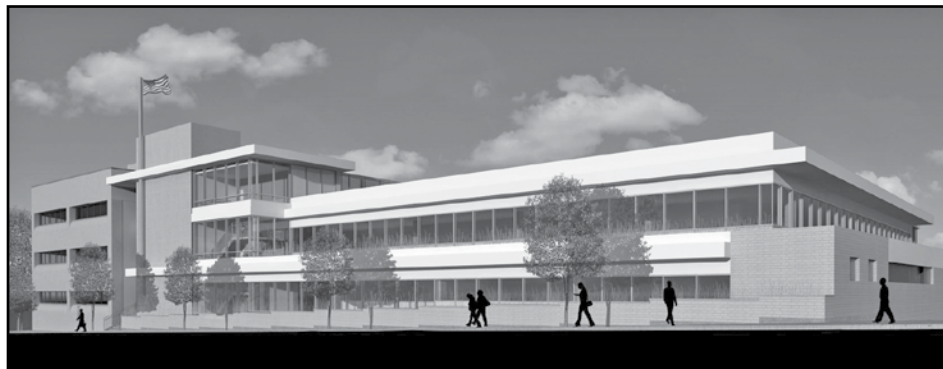
However, City Council also found that about 5,300 square feet of the building constituted a detention facility, and required a new approval process with a new set of criteria.

The issues, as argued between applicants and critics, were the safety of nearby residents, property values, the effect on local traffic, and the suitability of placing such a facility across the street from the new Southwest Charter School.

ICE representative Elizabeth Godfrey said ICE has operated in the Pearl District, at 511 NW Broadway, for years with no complaints. Inmates would be brought in and out by secure vehicles out of public view, she said.

For the most part they would be taken to Tacoma, Wash., for temporary incarceration; if not, they would go to a county jail; under no circumstances would they spend the night in the South Waterfront.

According to Godfrey, about three



An artist's rendition of the proposed ICE detention facility. (Courtesy Keith Skille, GBD Architects)

people a week would be released, none considered to be "a threat to public safety." If necessary they could be provided with a bus ticket, and "not left stranded in an unfamiliar area."

Davis responded that incarcerated people would be held there, "and if they tried to escape they could be shot. If that isn't a jail, I don't know what is." He protested that the development team refused to provide information about the holding cells.

Danneman said that the facility is located on Southwest Bancroft Street, "the only entrance to a very geographically constrained area," and that ICE's prediction of two trips a day by large buses was "very optimistic."

Bob Haley of the Portland Bureau of Transportation did not deny that the facility might have an impact on traffic, but said that it would be far less than a far larger facility that could locate on the site by right.

Scott Matson of the federal General Services Administration conceded that agency guidelines call for ICE facilities not to be located within 300 feet of a school.

However, Matson said, GSA signed its lease for the property before the Charter School signed theirs. (At a

community meeting two weeks before the hearing, asked why the GSA is not supposed to locate near schools, he suggested that there was no practical reason other than to assuage public concerns.)

Christian Pearlman, chair of the Charter School wasn't fully aware of the ICE facility's purpose until late in the process. At that point, he said, "We had no other option; we either moved forward or we wouldn't have a school."

In a story in The Oregonian, Pearlman charged that a clause was inserted into the school's lease that allowed it to be terminated if the school attempted to interfere with the ICE siting.

Several community members testified that the facility would detract from the neighborhood's livability and desirability.

Architect and resident Fred Gans said that South Waterfront, the creation of a new community, is "an experiment, and a rare one. It's in a really fragile state. People are watching to see what will and will not work." To put such a facility close by is "unconscionable," he said, and to put it "within a frisbee throw" of a school is "absolutely nuts."

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**Dear EarthTalk:** I'm looking for the best places to search for green jobs but am having trouble locating them on traditional job search sites. Where should I look? —H. Jenkins, Biloxi, MS

With the environment now high atop the public agenda, green jobs are more popular than ever. Defined by eco.org (a leading green jobs website) as any job in any company where the primary focus is on reducing the impacts of our activities or products on the environment, green jobs serve to maximize efficient use of resources while minimizing degradation of the planet from pollution and waste.

"Eco-jobs can range from engineering a photovoltaic solar cell to designing a building for more energy efficiency to landscaping a yard to minimize erosion to finding more sustainable forestry techniques," reports eco.org.

While you may be hard-pressed to find environmental job opportunities on general employment search websites, sites like eco.org that specialize in green job listings can make your search easy. Also, many general environmental sites have employment sub-sections.

Green job seekers and employers alike use these websites to find each other and get their work done, whether in the non-profit or for-profit worlds.

Eco.org prides itself on hosting a wide range of listings from colleges, environmental and other nonprofit groups, media outlets and government agencies.

With Google and Bing listing the site first for the search term "eco," the website generates hundreds of thousands of page visits per month from thousands

of green job seekers and employers, and also keeps its audience engaged through social networking.

Another leader in the field is the nonprofit Green Jobs Network, which provides online services including a green job board and a 20,000-member group on the professional networking site LinkedIn.

The group also uses its GreenJobs.net website as a platform for webinars, and is the home of the frequently updated Green Collar Blog, which provides career resources and information on the green jobs sector.

Environmental Career Opportunities (ecojobs.com) is another tried and true source for green job listings. Some 50,000 targeted job seekers subscribe to the company's bi-weekly newsletter that contains unique green job opportunities. Still other places to look for green jobs include EcoEmploy.com and the Environmental Career Center.

Another site, Greenjobs.com, focuses on job opportunities specifically in the renewable energy sector. Jobseekers can use the website to apply for jobs, post their resume, obtain guidance on finding and applying for jobs, gain background information on the renewable energy sector, and access a directory of relevant companies and organizations. Employers can take advantage of the firm's recruitment services.

Browsing job listings at other more general environmental websites could also turn up that perfect opportunity. SustainableBusiness.com and the U.S. Green Building Council feature extensive green job listings as sub-sections of their websites.

And yet another way to find a green job is to sniff around the website of a company, organization or institution in your field of interest for specific job listings—or better yet, call them on the phone to find out if there are any openings.

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## Ash Creek neighborhood denied on water tank appeal to City Council

By Lee Perlman  
The Southwest Portland Post

A majority of the Portland City Council last month sided with the Tualatin Valley Water District, against the Ash Creek Neighborhood Association.

The ruling upheld Hearings Officer Gregory Frank's approval for a new 2-million gallon water tank for the district at 6217 SW Garden Home Road, and denied Ash Creek's appeal of the decision.

The new tank will replace two 500,000-gallon tanks that have been on the property since 1962. The Water District contended both that the existing tanks are unsafe, and that they need more capacity to meet current and future needs.

Ash Creek did not oppose a new facility on the property, but argued that the one proposed was incompatible with its surroundings due to its size and lot coverage.

Planner Sylvia Cate, relaying Frank's decision, said that he had found that "on balance," the new tank "will be compatible." At 46 feet, it is only a foot taller than what it will replace, she said.

The Water District is committed to adding new landscaping on the west side, as well as other amenities. They do plan to cut down some of the 100-foot-tall Sequoia trees along one side, but will save as many as possible.

It is the trees, rather than the tank, that account for most of the shading of adjacent properties, Cate said. She quoted Frank as saying that the tanks are "not required to look like a house."

Ash Creek chair Dean Smith argued that the tank would nearly fill the 0.6-acre lot and said, "Nowhere else in the city is there such a large facility on such a small lot."

Smith particularly attacked one aspect of Frank's decision: his interpretation of the structure's floor area ratio. This is a measure of density, and is usually a comparison between a structure's total floor area and the lot size.

In this case, Frank decided that the tank had a single "floor" 46 feet high, and therefore a small FAR. "This is not the intent of the code," Smith said.

District consultant Mark Knudson said the agency currently serves two million customers in Washington County, making it the state's second largest water district.

Their water supply is insufficient now, he said, and they expect significant growth in the future. In addition, he said, the existing tanks "are at the end of their economic life" and do not meet current seismic standards.

In the face of strong neighborhood opposition at the original February 16 hearing, Knudson said, Tualatin Valley asked that the record be held open for additional written comments for an additional 60 days to allow them to work with the neighbors to find common ground.

Smith countered that no such meeting occurred; the District simply held an open house during which they showed new plans for screening and amenities. He added that whether the facility is needed or not is not a standard for whether it is compatible.

Nine Ash Creek residents testified, all in opposition. Laura Ghonea-Smith said, "I've always been proud of my street and my neighbor's (Dr. Charold Baer) roses. I dread this project and what it will do to my property values."

In voting to deny the appeal, Commissioner Dan Saltzman said, "I feel the replacement is compatible with the neighborhood," and Mayor Sam Adams said, "It meets the letter of the law."

Addressing Smith's point, Commissioner Randy Leonard said, "I think the FAR argument would have had some weight if the existing tanks were significantly smaller, but they're just as tall and almost as wide."

Commissioner Amanda Fritz seemed persuaded by the floor area argument. "I believe that the (zoning code) criteria are not met, and this is not compatible," she said, casting the sole dissenting vote.

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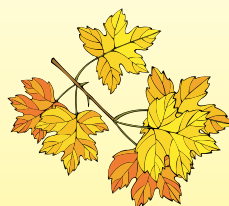
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