

**Minutes of special meeting of the GPNA Association, Tuesday,  
February 21, 2017 at 7:00 pm. Grant Park Baptist Church, 2728 NE 34<sup>th</sup>  
Avenue Approved**

This special meeting was called to discuss the impact of the Grant High School (GHS) modernization on Grant Park and the surrounding community.

In attendance for the GPNA were Ken Peterson, John Prell, Patrick Schmidt, Stacey Tipp, and Ron Laster. Absent were Mary Cal Hanson, Jane Comeault, and Brian Cefola.

Ken Peterson called the meeting to order. The members of the GPNA Board were given name placards and were then introduced.

A motion was made to approve the agenda, which was approved unanimously.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the GPNA Board meeting of January 17, 2017. The minutes were approved without any corrections, changes or additions.

The Project Director for the GHS remodel, Michelle Chariton, assisted by Jamie Hurd of Portland Public Schools, came to the microphone with Ken Peterson to address the questions and concerns of the GPNA and the neighbors in attendance at the meeting.

These issues included:

- 1) The radio tower and a potential increase in its height. Michelle said that there is a contractual relationship with AT&T until 2021. At the end of the contract, the tower will come down. There will be no increase in the height of the tower.
- 2) The plan to remove the bleachers by the track. Michelle said that the bleachers will be removed because there will be a walkway where they are currently located. However, they will be replaced by portable bleachers that will be set up for different sporting events. In response to a question, Michelle noted that the bleachers will be locked in place when not in use. Ron Laster expressed frustration at the lack of community involvement in the modernization planning, especially in regards to the impact on the park. Michelle noted the extensive process of community involvement (workshops, etc), but noted it was not perfect and some issues, such as the removal of the bleachers, had not been covered. Michelle also conceded that the focus of the community involvement had been on changes to the school, rather than the effects on the surrounding neighborhood.
- 3) As part of the modernization, approximately 30 parking spaces will be lost from the campus. Ken Peterson expressed concerns that the school remodel and its increased capacity would likely mean more events and cars coming into the neighborhood. This concern was also expressed by Patrick Schmidt and neighbors in attendance. Michelle noted that the capacity of the school was much higher in the 1980s. Neighbors pointed out, however, that traffic and congestion in general has become much worse in NE Portland since that time, with the large influx of people moving to the area. Michelle also said that neighbors should not be surprised by the elimination

of the parking spaces because it was addressed in the community involvement part of the remodel plan. The community approved removing the spaces from the center of the school by the library. The new configuration of the parking lot is safer for students, allows access and a turnaround for emergency vehicles, and diverts water in a more environmentally sound way. However, Michelle acknowledges that the loss of the 30 spaces will put even more pressure on the surrounding neighborhood. She is willing to help neighbors work with the Portland Bureau of Transportation on solutions to the parking and other issues (e.g., the unsafe roundabout at the SE corner of the campus\*). Solutions might include permit parking, and, as Laurene Mullen, a neighbor noted, perhaps a system like that at Portland Community College, where there is a relatively wide area around the campus where parking is not allowed for students, who then have to walk into the campus from a more widely dispersed area. Ken Peterson noted that the City of Portland is currently in the process of revising its rules for parking permits for neighborhoods. He further suggested a GPNA sub-committee to study these issues. No action was taken at this meeting to establish such a sub-committee.

- 4) Part of the GHS remodel involves adding a softball field for girl's softball, which will be overlaid on, and slightly larger than, the existing soccer field at the northeast end of the campus. The GPNA and neighbors are concerned that this will impinge on the existing off-leash dog area (Option B). Michelle said that she did not think that there will be a conflict if dog owners adhere to the schedule of posted hours for off-leash area use. Ken Peterson and others, noting the high usage of the park for school sports, rec leagues, and general recreation, feel this proposition is unrealistic. He emphasized that a dedicated and fenced off-leash dog area would avoid all potential problems (e.g., folks letting their dogs run on the softball field, which will not be fenced, and the dogs defecating there). This then led into a more general discussion of the issue of the off-leash dog area and other potential sites in the park. Ken Peterson provided everyone with the interim report of the GPNA Dog Off Leash Area (DOLA) subcommittee, dated February 20, 2017. Brett Horner, from Portland Parks and Recreation, came up to the microphone to help lead the discussion. First, Brett noted that there is no plan to fence the softball field or Option B. Further, he noted that the Parks Dept. will be carefully monitoring the potential conflict between sports field users and off-leash dog users. Ken Peterson questioned whether the City had enough rangers to effectively police the park. Brett said there are about 19 park rangers in the city. Brett seemed to appreciate the DOLA report, and said that he wanted to investigate other potentially viable DOLAs. He further stated that Parks would make, "a decision in the next few months." A neighbor questioned why Option A had been taken off the table. Brett said it was because the area was too close to neighboring homes, and that the residents of those homes had threatened legal action if Option A went ahead. Ken Peterson then gave a summary of how and why the DOLA subcommittee was formed. Basically, the GPNA has not been able to get answers or input from Portland Parks about which other areas of the park might be suitable as a DOLA\*\*. When the GPNA learned about the new softball field, and the way in which it would impact the current DOLA, the subcommittee was put together almost as an emergency action because of a closely scheduled January land use public hearing (though this public hearing was eventually rescheduled for March 22). Some neighbors were frustrated by not being given the option to join the subcommittee or get input into the new areas identified in the

subcommittee report (D and D2). One neighbor who wanted to join the DOLA subcommittee is Dr. Sarah Geenen, who lives in a home adjacent to Option D, and accused Ken Peterson of keeping her “out of the loop” in GPNA work on the DOLA issue.

It was then suggested that perhaps neighbors should try to bring up issues of permit parking and the DOLA at the March 22 land use public hearing. There was no consensus on this, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:40pm.

\*It was noted that there is some \$760,000 available for traffic safety improvements in the neighborhood;

\*\*The Parks Dept. has also stated in the past that all costs of a fenced DOLA in Grant Park would have to be paid for with private funds. The City will not pay for the cost of a fenced DOLA, despite the system development charges levied on the construction of Grant Park Village and other new developments

Respectfully submitted by Stacey Tipp, acting Secretary in the absence of Mary Cal Hanson.