

Summary of Friends of Rock Creek meeting, September 16, 2008

Our First Community Meeting

It was hot. Two fans, warm water in the drinking fountains, and 90-degree heat... and yet an estimated 375 people turned out to learn how they could help defeat the Rock Creek Country Club owner's effort to remove the open space designation and develop the golf course into high-density housing.

Terry Krause opened the meeting by introducing the Friends of Rock Creek team, and reminding the crowd why Friends of Rock Creek was formed:

Friends of Rock Creek, Inc. is organized as a nonprofit community organization devoted primarily to preserving the community's traditions, land use, zoning, and open space designations by representing it before local legislature and administrative agencies that have authority over such matters. The goal of the corporation is maintain and enhance the quality of life in the Rock Creek Community.

The Rock Creek Country Club ownership group has petitioned Washington County commissioners to remove the Open Space designation from the golf course thus opening the land to development.

Commissioner Strader

Terry then introduced Commissioner Desari Strader, who spoke of the need for this open space, her commitment to continue to oppose this item on the work plan, and what a tough fight we have ahead of us. District 2 could not be better served; Commissioner Strader fully understands what this open space means to this community. She even convinced Commissioner Andy Duyck to come along, and as she put it "be more knowledgeable on the subject tomorrow."

Friends of Rock Creek Strategy

Once Commissioner Strader had established how hard we would have to fight, Political Strategist Roger Gray outlined the plan of attack:

Kill it before it has a chance to establish roots by having the text amendment removed from the 2009 County Work Plan. Failing that, Friends of Rock Creek will implement a multi-faceted plan of attack to defeat the amendment.

We need three Commissioners to refuse to consider the text amendment in order to kill it. This would remove it from the work plan, and the golf course owners would have to resubmit the proposal again. We are working to compel the Commissioners to vote in our favor.

Introducing Our Lawyer

Crucial to our success is top-notch legal representation, and after an exhaustive search the core team has chosen John Junkin to lead the legal battle. Mr. Junkin has decades of experience in land use planning, having served as Washington County Counsel for 14 years, and specializing in Real Estate and Land Use law for the firm of Bullivant Houser Bailey since 1996. During his time as County Counsel, Mr. Junkin advised and represented Washington County in a variety of matters, including the establishment of the Washington County Comprehensive Plan element for the Sunset Corridor area of Washington County. He has been involved in planning for Washington County since the beginning, and no one is better qualified to preserve a plan than the lawyer who was instrumental in drafting it.

Commissioner Duyck Gets In On The Act

A short question and answer session followed, and Andy Duyck showed his mettle by taking the microphone and answering some pretty tough questions about the process, the plan, and the reason for the positions the Commissioners have taken. He was impressed by the turn-out and the enthusiasm, and if we didn't change his mind, at least we made him think about it. Now it's time to keep the heat on, and turn it up under a couple of other Commissioners.

Dr. Paul Blaylock and Jim Van Dyke Rally The Crowd

When two of the most respected residents in the community get up and testify as to why they are so passionate about saving Rock Creek, people listen. When they pull checks out of their pockets, people notice. And when they ask a crowd to help out, people rise up, put pens to checks and graciously contribute to make sure we win. There was some consideration to having one of the core team conclude the evening, but there was no need- no one could have outlined the reasons we live here, the reasons we will fight to preserve our way of life, and the reasons we need everyone to help out as well as these two gentlemen. The meeting ended on a very positive note with a sense of solidarity in the room, 375 proverbial Davids facing a Goliath banded together to become one huge David; Goliath didn't have a clue what he was up against when he picked this fight!

What Friends Of Rock Creek Has Been Up To

What, exactly, has the core team and the Friends of Rock Creek been up to over the last 8 weeks?

- Established ourselves as a non-profit group, properly filed with the state, and adopted a budget
- Developed (and continue to improve) our website to facilitate communications with the community at large and to aid in fundraising activities
- Ongoing research into all aspects of community planning and this particular plan to make our case
- Researched and retained the best legal counsel to win our battle
- Communicated our message throughout the community with the help of a large and hugely motivated corps of volunteers
- Developed a political strategy to influence key elected officials
- Established a bank account and oversight procedures to properly fund this mission

It is not too late to help out!

We have only just begun this battle, and while the community support has been tremendous, we can always use more. The Friends of Rock Creek planned annual budget is \$177,000... thanks to the generosity of many who attended the meeting, we are off to a great start. However, this is going to be a long, drawn-out process requiring hours of work and thousands of dollars. We need your help.

If the golf course is converted to housing, the loss of property value is estimated at 30%. Think of how much equity you have built up in your home, then take away a third... that is a sobering number, isn't it? A contribution of \$500 pales in comparison to that loss.

The bank has agreed to cash checks of all sizes, so please send what you can to:

Friends Of Rock Creek
3300 NW 185th Ave #259
Portland, OR 97229

Or, go to <http://www.friendsofrockcreek.com> and donate on-line via PayPal or Visa/Mastercard

Watch your email for updates and notifications of upcoming media coverage and events. It is my mission to keep you informed and, most importantly, *involved*.

Questions? Please email all questions to rhurlbert@friendsofrockcreek.com and I will answer them as quickly as possible.

Ryan Hurlbert
On behalf of FORC