



Win/win for precinct deal

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By Lee Perlman

Multnomah County may have come up with a deal that would give the Southeast Precinct back its parking, and give developer Ken Moholt-Siebert land he could develop with parking in it. Moholt-Siebert jolted city, county and neighborhood leaders earlier this year when he revealed that he had purchased part of the garage of the County's Penumbra Kelly Building, which houses the precinct, and planned to redevelop it as housing. As a preliminary, he ordered the police to cease parking on the parcel, displacing spaces reserved for patrol cars. The county has temporarily "loaned" the city 17 spaces under its control. As Moholt-Siebert and the County's Mike Sublett told the Center Neighborhood Association last month, a proposed land swap would return the garage to the County and give the developer an adjacent parcel of land at the intersection of Northeast 47th Avenue and East Burnside Street. Moholt-Siebert said that he didn't know how many units he could create with the new plan, but that it would include underground parking for about 25 cars. His previous plan called for 16 units with no off-street parking. He will be asking for a code adjustment for a 45 foot height limit. This is the limit of the property across the street, zoned R1, but the "swap" property's C2 zoning has a limit of 30 feet. "Is there any part of this that's a deal killer?" Moholt-Siebert asked Center. "I don't want to go to all the work of developing this and then be shot down." Board members Judy Kennedy and Cameron Clemons were upset by the height and what they thought was an inadequate amount of housing in the second alternative. "I feel like I'm being bullied, and I don't like it at all," Kennedy said. Center chair Robert Jordan argued that the alternative proposal was, at worst, the lesser of two evils. He pointed out that the original plan was allowed by code. "Does anyone have heartburn about the height of the building?" He asked. "It's the same size as across the street." "I do, but no one else cares," Clemons said. The board voted to support the swap with the two dissenting votes. Sublett said he would seek the input of other neighborhood associations before taking the proposal to the Multnomah County Commission.