

SWNI “Ten Point Plan”

Executive Committee Motion

Approved by the SWNI Board – February 1, 2021

SWNI is committed to the city's values of anti-racism, equity, transparency, communication, collaboration, and fiscal responsibility. **We support activities that address social justice, homelessness and food insecurity.** Every year the objectives of our city contract changes and we actively support the new and older city objectives.

We apologize for any disruption or perceptions that have been created around our stewardship of city tax dollars and the management of our organization. We strive to make the best decisions at all times consistent with our contract and with the awareness and approval of our Board of Directors. We recognize that improvements in our organization can always be made. We are committed to working with the city to identify and implement changes in our management practices as may be necessary.

SWNI also recognizes that relationship between the city and its neighborhoods is changing. We feel that SWNI can have an important leadership role in our community to ensure that transformative planning efforts are inclusive, collaborative, and reflect the involvement of under-represented communities, neighborhood associations, and community-based organizations.

To restore confidence in our organization, SWNI is making ten suggestions for moving forward.

Fiscal Responsibility

1. Commit financially to audits on a biannual basis (with city funding for that purpose) and try to find volunteer treasurers with an accounting or **public funding** background. We completely changed our fiscal and internal controls on the advice of outside accountants in 2011. Our last full audit by the IRS was completed in 2014.
2. Conduct an annual review of our financial and personnel policies and procedures by our Finance Committee, Personnel Committee, and an HR attorney to make sure that current practices are accurately reflected in SWNI policies.
3. Welcome a city auditor/or assigned person from the city to review monthly financial statements with the Finance Committee. We believe our financial policies are not outdated but with an independent review of our internal controls, there may be other choices we can make.
4. Ask for a review of the strength or weaknesses of our internal controls as money is available from the city to perform an internal controls audit. An internal controls audit will measure our financial policy practices against a defined set of transactions.

Transparency

5. When SWNI applies for outside grants, as it has been encouraged to do by the city, it should continue advising our contract manager of what our intention is and what impact, if any, it might have on the use of city funds. SWNI commits to managing outside grants as well as city money in a communicative and responsible manner.

6. SWNI reports to our Office of Civic Life contract officer and asks for advice and approval of many of our budget decisions, which is in accordance with the contract. We file financial reports with the city **on a monthly basis for our BES contract and a quarterly for Civic Life funds**. We have received no reprimands from the Office of Community and Civic Life over the last eleven years, except when we asked to re-purpose some of Civic Life funds last spring to offset the impact of Covid which the director declined.

Equity and Anti-Racism

7. SWNI's Equity and Inclusion Committee, of six years duration, is committed to implementing a strong action plan to achieve the goals of equality of opportunity, fairness in access, and resources for all. The Equity and Inclusion Committee leads organizational transformation planning focusing on diversity and equity. **SWNI revised its hiring practices to place greater emphasis on recruitment of diverse candidates. We adopted a racial equity policy and an equity and inclusion best practices document to meet our equity and anti-racism goals.**

Communication

8. SWNI will maintain its effective communication network for the neighborhoods, business associations, community-based organizations, and SW Portland residents. SWNI has successfully partnered with other nonprofit community organizations as well as our city, county, and regional government partners to publish news or needed information about community resources, events, and opportunities for public engagement in community projects that affect the livability of our area.

The newspaper publishes information about important city initiatives and community events, such as the Southwest Corridor Light Rail project and the West Portland Town Center Plan, so that our residents can attend and have a voice in the decision-making process. SWNI works with city bureaus to publish news bulletins through our newspaper, electronic news, website, and email lists. We forward land use notices to the appropriate neighborhood association contacts and committee members.

SWNI is planning to improve and enhance our communications. We propose to translate our newspaper into as many as five languages to reach a more diverse population based on software available. We are also evaluating social media platforms in order to facilitate greater outreach and a community-wide dialogue on important topics of public policy and community resources.

Collaboration

9. SWNI promotes the work of the city by collaborating with city officials in setting up meetings on city planning initiatives and advertising those meetings. We also identify impacted neighbors who may have an interest in city projects and link them with the appropriate city officials. We strongly support the city's public engagement objectives and look forward to continuing our partnership. We pledge to continue to promote informed citizen engagement at the grass roots level – neighborhoods and community-based groups. **Our newspaper and information network supports community-based organizations in their efforts to advise the Southwest neighborhoods of their goals and issues. Our neighborhoods and committees welcome training for better inclusiveness in their work.**

Staff Reductions.

10. Our executive director of 40 years, along with all of the staff except our bookkeeper, were laid off as of January 15, 2021 due to lack of funds. This was a very difficult decision. With the return of city funding, the Board will hire employees and an interim executive director whose focus will be responsible fiscal management and robust equity, inclusive and diversity practices. **We have a Board retreat planned in February to begin the transformative process for the Southwest Neighborhood coalition.**