

Mary Jo Morelli Interview on Forest Grove and Friends of Historic Forest Grove history

Recorded August 4, 2025 at the Friends of Historic Forest Grove Old Train Station Museum

Interviewer: Elle Griego, History and French undergraduate student at Pacific University

Note on the text: This transcript was made through AI in 2025 with manual corrections. We recommend checking this text against the audio recording before quoting the speakers, as it may contain errors.

Elle Griego 0:00

Greetings. I'm Elle Griego behind the camera, and I am here with Mary Jo Morelli. This is my second interview session with Mary Jo. Originally, I recorded an interview session with her and her husband David. Today is August 4, 2025, and we are at the Friends of Historic Forest Grove, Old Train Station Museum. Today, we'll continue talking about Forest Grove history as well as the history of Friends of Historic Forest Grove. First, I wanted to talk a bit about... going back to the history of Friends of Historic Forest Grove, you just showed me some newsletters, which I thought were really interesting, with how people gathered. There was mention of a Founders Day celebration, or like holiday parlor events. Do you remember other events like that that don't exist anymore? Or could you tell me a bit about those, if you can recall those?

Mary Jo Morelli 1:03

Just having read some of the old minutes, you know, we were in the formation, and we hadn't even gotten to the point of bylaws and those pieces of it, but we did start having gatherings. We had agreed to meet on alternate months, rather than every month. And at each of those meetings, there was some kind of presentation by somebody from outside the organization, usually, but Eric Stewart was one person who was always involved with pictures and would do slideshows, and I do mean slideshows. And many of those slides exist either... both, some of them here with Friends of Historic Forest Grove, and some of them in the Eric Stewart room at the Forest Grove library, because he had most of those slides made. So we would have presentations on various subjects that... because a lot of -- not all new families, but there had been a surge of new people in old houses here in Forest Grove. And so that was part of our motivation, is to get people together, you know, discuss the woes and the successes that we were all having with our historic houses. And it created quite a good network. And because of the density of the houses within what you know was, at that time, referred to as Old Town Forest Grove, it really was a good time, and to bring people together. And we did it in one another's homes. We didn't, you know, have any kind of facility. Eventually we were able to have those in the Forest Grove library, and they would make that... that was made available to us at no cost. And we did a lot of presentations, if not monthly, semi-monthly, and just periodically. I do remember one specifically that we did on the logging industry. And we had so many people attend, we had to turn people away because it maxed out the capacity. And the Rogers room at the library was new then, and I guess, maybe even smaller than what it is now, and we had to turn people away. And so we scheduled... we immediately, that night, made the decision to schedule another night because there were still enough old timers that were part of that logging industry, because it was such a huge economic factor in the city of Forest Grove. So, diverse range of things. And as I told you earlier, several of the people who were founding members -- charter members, as we pointed out -- of Friends of Historic Forest Grove, had had some involvement in the historic surveys that were being done in the late 1970s and into the 1980s and up. There were more even done in the 1990s, and so those people, a lot of them, had historic houses and it just built and expanded the network it all became a part of to build the organization.

Elle Griego 4:44

Yeah, so it seems like Friends of Historic Forest Grove, as a nonprofit, its two goals are historic preservation of historic buildings and homes, and then sharing free historical resources with the community. Would you

say... or, let me take a step back. I asked a bit off camera, and I think we talked about this at our last interview. Could you talk a bit again about how Friends of Historic Forest Grove was founded? It sounds like there was members on the... is it the national?

Mary Jo Morelli 5:27

No, it's just the Historic Landmarks Board, the Forest Grove Historic Landmarks Board, which was a... actually, the landmarks board started as a result of a statewide land use planning goal, which was goal five. And I happened... trying to remember the year of that... we had been gone, but it was a time of a lot of changes, and this is when a lot of the zoning things that have affected Oregon for the last close to 50 years, at least close to 50 years, and so that's when doing historic surveys really built, and the momentum of that built interest. And I was one of the people involved in what was at that time, the Historic Preservation League of Oregon, and has now evolved into Restore Oregon, came and spoke to us, the, you know, as the founding group, about the importance of not only surveying, but then doing some some designating of structures, and I spoke to this in what I have just submitted for the next Friends newsletter, so... and I haven't seen where that is in publication, but we're seeing examples right now, currently, in places like North Plains, and in particular Banks, where in in that time period I'm referring to, '70s and '80s, there were lots of surveys going on. And lucky for us, I mean, really, the fact that Friends of Historic Forest Grove, enough people got together and created the organization and brought in people to speak, because we took the next step with combining the efforts of the Historic Landmarks Board and their relationship the State Historic Preservation Office and then Friends of Historic Forest Grove, that that we did the designation process that a lot of other communities never got to. And so it's a whole momentum that started, and we've gone through rises and falls in the whole thing as not just the economics, but cultural changes have gone on, and it's changed the dynamics of that, and it's made it much more difficult currently to save houses that are really significant. And I just had an experience of this yesterday in Cornelius, a spectacular house that's been for sale for an extended period of time, but no one's been willing to invest in what it's going to take. Luckily, somebody recently bought the Benjamin Cornelius house and is making the investment there that's going to protect and preserve that, because just recently, the protections of National Register structures was almost removed by the state legislature. [Griego: Wow.] And that was changed, that piece of it that not having to review National Register designation was taken out of the legislation because there was so much opposition, that we need -- it's the only protection, really, that National Register structures, and not even just National Register, were challenged by that constantly here in Forest Grove.

Elle Griego 9:20

Yeah, it's interesting. You brought up Cornelius. From my understanding, Cornelius and Forest Grove, they kind of were these two farming towns that grew up together, but Cornelius doesn't have as much historic buildings. And I don't know if that's anymore, it sounds like there's not as much work done to preserve buildings, and, of course, there's a lot more newer development. Is that something that's happened in the last 40 years or so, or has Cornelius just lost a lot of their historic buildings, or?

Mary Jo Morelli 9:55

You know, I was surprised yesterday, driving through certain neighborhoods, how many houses still actually exist there. But there's not been that momentum to save them, and a lot of them have gone through all the different reconstruction... some of them may have been surveyed at one time, but only a couple have any kind of specific designation. I know the one I saw yesterday is a National Register structure. It's a really huge lot. It's really threatened by, you know, who's going to want to make the investment in protecting this really magnificent house? It really is, versus -- and this is one of the phrases that I learned early in preservation, is demolition by neglect. So we'll let that kind of [Morelli laughs] a little bit.

Elle Griego 10:59

That's too bad. Going to my question with friends of historic Forest Grove. I know there was the founding members, or charter members, which it sounds like there was a group of, I don't know if it was just women, specifically you, Carol Drew, Gladys Haynes, the kind of established Friends as it is. Are there any other?

Mary Jo Morelli 11:23

Eric Stewart was a really big influence, and he came to Forest Grove in his retirement. He had been a federal employee, but he was a photographer by, you know, just he loved photography, and he got involved with the Landmarks -- he was on the Landmarks Board too. And there were several men on the landmarks board who then became some of those charter members of Friends. But a lot of the momentum came, you know, from the women. But David and Eric were elected the first two co-chairs of Friends of Historic Forest Grove, co-presidents, I guess. And I can't remember how the minutes exactly phrased it, yeah, but they were the co to... because they were so much a part of the momentum.

Elle Griego 12:22

Yeah, that makes sense. Of course, there's the A.T. Smith house, but were there any other historic buildings or homes in Forest Grove that were threatened when Friends was formed, or perhaps ones that are now gone, that kind of disappeared before Friends was formed that kind of maybe inspired the organization to form?

Mary Jo Morelli 12:44

There were certainly some that I always, you know, heard of that but never saw. Certainly, there's an area just in the northwest section of downtown that was being looked at for some redevelopment that would have taken out a lot of the historic buildings, the Stephen and Parthena M. Blank House being one of them, and that's the building that we refer to as the Old Stagecoach Stop, because it was a stopping point for the stage on its way to the coast. And within the block it's on, it's actually been moved, and it's on the market right now in 2025, and being an 1860s or so... and now I'm trying to remember, I don't remember the historic date on it, it was as early as 1858, as I think through the different... it's early, early, and it has a great need, but it's such a wonderful little building. But it has managed to still be there because it was scheduled for demolition. Oh, a great example of what you're asking is... so right around in the 1890s it must have been that the stagecoach stop was moved from its original position around the corner to face A Street instead of what's now 21st Avenue, and a large home was built on that site, on the corner there, right around 1900... before 1900 I guess. And I can't remember the name of who built it, but it became the women's club house, so you're familiar with some of this. And it was scheduled for demolition or removal. And the couple who wanted to purchase it became members of Friends of Historic Forest Grove. Tremendous amount of effort that went into them, you know, trying to figure out what to do with the house. And in the end, they were prepared to purchase it, but it was demolished, but they had taken so many dimensions, photos, drawings, that they built a replica of it outside of Forest Grove, about six mile -- not even six miles -- into the south of Forest Grove. I know, I wave, because I'm geographically oriented, and, gosh, I just ran into her recently, and I don't know, I just, I know they still live in that house, but the house that they, you know, the original was demolished, on the corner of where there's a parking lot now, so.

Elle Griego 15:45

And why...? I mean, perhaps this is a dumb question, but... I feel like it's pretty straightforward in a lot of... it's obvious that one should do so, but why preserve these houses and buildings, or why preserve this history?

Mary Jo Morelli 16:03

Because it tells the story of where we've been and how we lived. If, to me, it's as simple, it's really as simple as that. And one of the things that I talk about when I do, if I should say, do or did historic walking tours, is that they tell a big part of the story of the social as well as economic changes over time. And I just feel that that's really an important thing for young people now to understand and have some knowledge of. A simple thing that I use as an example for kids is to ask them if they see any chimneys on a house, because chimneys were an essential part of a home, and most houses no longer have chimneys. Majority of them no longer have chimneys. And so there are some things like that in... I wish we did a better job of using those physical elements to teach about our past. But that's just... it tells a story of the buildings, tells a story in the transition of where we've been and then a perspective of where we are now and where we will go in the

future. Did that answer you?

Elle Griego 17:47

Yes, it does. That was a wonderful answer. Thank you. I was just thinking, of course, you know, my research for this project is on the Gay Nineties. I was thinking, you know, of course, it wasn't completely about historical education, but it was really a way for the school children to learn about, kind of about Forest Grove's history, and how it was a bit about the era of when it was really established and growing with 1890s... did you ever go to the Gay Nineties festival in its later years? I know you weren't here for the early years, but the final, final years.

Mary Jo Morelli 18:29

We did. Some of the downtown events, we attended some parades, and we were in one parade. And I hope to, one of these days, be able to dig into my old pictures, because I do visualize... I mean, I have them. It was raining that day in March. I mean, that was considered one of the problems with the timing of the Gay Nineties, was the early spring -- I mean, barely into spring, it was in March.

Elle Griego 18:56

Yeah. A lot of people bring that up.

Mary Jo Morelli 18:57

Yeah. And the weather was just a tremendous challenge. And everybody in their long, long dresses -- women in their long dresses, and things like that. What I remember really specifically is that this huge collection of the costumes, because when people would, you know, get older and want to get rid of the clothes they used, there was a place for them to go. And I don't even know the details on who managed that, who took care of those costumes, but it was a huge room, and it was actually, when I went to it, in what was the left of the basement of the old high school on Elm Street, and it was full of just sorted clothing, and you could rent it for next to nothing, just next to nothing, and whatever you wanted. And that really inspired my interest, but also partly because, remember, in 1959 was Oregon's state centennial, and I was a child in school in those years, and we all had our pioneer dresses, and I remember exactly what mine looked like, and, you know, I wasn't in Forest Grove. I was in Gresham at that time, and we went to the state capitol and did square dancing, and a presentation there. So, that had built interest, and that was in the time when the Gay Nineties was forming. So I think there's a relationship there...

Elle Griego 20:40

That makes a lot of sense.

Mary Jo Morelli 20:41

For the nostalgia of those early times, just really developed in Forest Grove. But Forest Grove had the intact history, the density of the old structures that weren't appreciated, maybe until after that time, and people got looking more and, "Oh, this goes back to that specifically." There's a thought that just just came to me.

Elle Griego 21:14

Yeah, no, that is fascinating. No, that is super interesting. I wonder if we'll do anything next, next year. There's a really long word for it that I cannot remember, I think it's the 250th?

Mary Jo Morelli 21:29

Bisesquicentennial or something. Is it bisesquicentennial, maybe?

Elle Griego 21:33

Probably. That sounds like that really long word. I bet it's that.

Mary Jo Morelli 21:38

I don't know if that's right.

Elle Griego 21:40

Yeah. In Forest Grove, as we talked about the newsletters, just going through them, and what I've always found fascinating about Friends of Historic Forest Grove is the way that it's neighbors and friends gathering for these... it's a different way for people to gather in the community and get to know their neighbors and get to know the people they live with in this town. Have you noticed that maybe, whether in the context of Friends of Historic Forest Grove, or just the town in general? Has that changed over the years, like civic engagement or people gathering in similar ways?

Mary Jo Morelli 22:19

There are, I think that there are some, some groups that continue to try to do that engagement. I think it's a, you know, there's a lot more... they're smaller and more specific, I think, than they used to be. And, you know, every event that I'm aware of has really been transitioning over time, and even... the Corn Festival? Is that what... I don't even remember... [Griego: The Corn Roast, yeah.] the Corn Roast is what we've spent all -- and we talked about that when David was with us last time that when we first moved here, it was held on a farm on the edge of town, which that farm still exists, basically, but it's all surrounded by residential development. And at some point -- and it was specifically to welcome teachers into the school district, and eventually we were here when it transitioned to being held on the Pacific University campus, and then including campus faculty. But I mean, look at how the school district has expanded, which incorporated -- the school district incorporates Cornelius, and so that becomes immediately larger than Forest Grove. Fewer of the faculty now live locally, and the faculty has expanded so much as the university has grown, and so it's become a very different event than it was, and Rick Read and I collaborated on some of the organization of that. We co-chaired several years. And I guess I do have my files on those. [Morelli laughs.] [Griego: Yeah. Oh, I'm sure.] And the theme that he and I chose was on common ground, and I still really like it as a theme.

Elle Griego 24:26

Yeah, that is a wonderful theme.

Mary Jo Morelli 24:31

And yeah, we use that. And we brought people, we tried... and Friends of Historic Forest Grove always had a booth in those years. And it was a very different event than what it is now. It's just, so much has changed culturally, the size of the community, there's so many changes. And just... and COVID. I have to bring that up, because what a tremendous difference. We're still trying to get back to having Old College Hall. And I say we because having been a docent prior, when I worked there, I was at Pacific. I was a docent. After I left Pacific, I remained a docent. COVID stopped everything and now reinitiating, you know, all community events, everything, in my years of involvement with City Club too, and having trying to maintain events during that. I was one of the people who, you know, there was no community parade, and through City Club and the Chamber of Commerce, we decided to try again, and that's when we chose a holiday light parade. And it, again, is challenged to some extent by weather, but it can be accommodated more easily in the 2000s [Morelli laughs] than it was in the 1900s, even towards the end of it. So the holiday light parade has been a good -- and one of the things about it, and this may change because I'm no longer... since COVID, I haven't been so involved with the holiday light parade, but we really tried to focus it on history in all ways. But we could never really get -- we wanted to get a group of people going around dressed in costume and singing, you know, old fashioned Christmas songs and engaging people. And it's just never taken off in that way. People want to do more of a, you know, Frosty the Snowman walking around town and waving and those kinds of things, rather than the more traditional holiday things.

Elle Griego 27:03

That is too bad. Would you say -- you brought up such a lot of interesting points, or food for thought. Would you say people today know less about Forest Grove's history than when the organization was started?

Mary Jo Morelli 27:19

Absolutely. And partly because our focus, you depended more upon the news media, as it was with newspapers. We didn't have the internet. We didn't have this broad, you know, access to any and everything, and our local community was where we engaged, much more intensely than what we do now. And it was the role of newspaper and was really a significant factor in community engagement. I'm not sure if I got off track.

Elle Griego 28:01

No, that was a wonderful answer. Along those lines, I know you have a lot of children and grandchildren, and now a great grandchild, congratulations. And you've always been really close with your grandchildren, and so with these different generations. Have you noticed that raising a child in Forest Grove has changed or, I guess I should rephrase that as, how has raising children in Forest Grove changed, if at all?

Mary Jo Morelli 28:39

A lot of different ways, because we couldn't track our children, when I was raising... when we were, David and I were raising ours here, and it would be a challenge in a different kind of way. We had the boy who I asked to check in with his mom and use my phone, and he had the new touch tone phones, and we still had a dial phone, and he didn't know how to use it. And we're talking in the, you know, around, like, right around, between 1990 and 2000. In that era, you know, he didn't know how. So we were, we were transitioning, even then, you know, you need to check in with your mom, and you can only do it. One of my middle son's friends had a pager, and so I could track him through his friend's pager if they were supposed to be together. Our, just, communications were so different, and it was safe for kids to be out and about for the most part. There were always risks, but it was pretty safe, whereas my grandchildren, who have all spent a large period of their lives now in Forest Grove, we monitor really regularly, and because there are just so many more risks out there, and it's been very, very different from having raised boys, and they're not as outdoor oriented, as my three boys were. They were very out and about, whereas now the kids want to be, you know, on social media. Makes a difference. And now I get to try the next generation.

Elle Griego 30:38

All right. So just generally, have you noticed the changes in the types of people who live here in Forest Grove now versus in the past? You mentioned loggers, and I'm curious, do you remember when the tech industry started to really expand in the nearby towns?

Mary Jo Morelli 31:00

And in Forest Grove, some tech industry started coming in. And that goes back again to those land use decisions that were made in the 1970s and as the population grew smaller, the, you know, we talked, I think, initially, with David, about how, you know, Forest Grove was kind of isolated, it was kind of its own little island with so much rural surrounding the agricultural base here, whether it was logging or other types of agriculture, were part of its, you know, the settlement times. Alvin Smith was a big part of that. And then as it expanded, and the railroad coming in, all of those steps, and the huge agricultural base that was Washington County. And even though the university was here, it still was pretty isolated for so long. And I think there was a certain almost freezing in time during the Tillamook burn, because that followed right on the depression, which slowed the economy drastically. And then one of the, not founders of Friends of Historic Forest Grove, but an early and long, long term member was my friend, Marie Mather, and she wasn't born here, but her family came when she was very young, and she grew up during those years with the Tillamook Burn and the smoke, the intense smoke in there, just depending on the wind direction, and just

little things that, you know, you did. You got out of high school and you got a job, not usually in high school, some during high school, and you'd get a job in one of the local businesses and, you know, or go off to college. But it was just these kind of set. But there was a long period where Forest Grove didn't change very much because of the economic factors that are part of history, larger history and local history both combined. But then, as the tech years came, and we're still, now, we're seeing that so drastically with the data centers. And I won't go into that right now, but I have some really strong opinions on how the city should be addressing those. And I think there's been a big transition of local people, you know, our people in city staff, all ranges of city staff, used to be local people, and so they knew the community going into work. Now we're part of this, you know, put out this job opening nationwide. [Griego: Really?] And we have people come in who know nothing, absolutely nothing, about the community, and I know specifically of jobs that the people who were hired in knew nothing about historic preservation.

Elle Griego 34:21
That's worrying.

Mary Jo Morelli 34:23
It's very, very worrying. And a year and a half ago, they almost disbanded the Historic Landmarks Board.

Elle Griego 34:32
Really? That's scary!

Mary Jo Morelli 34:34
Not even knowing, because the people who'd been hired did not know that it was a state land use law, and I called the State Historic Preservation Office when I heard it, and the response I got was, "They can't do that!" I said, "Will you please tell them that they cannot do that?" Because our city staff didn't know they couldn't do it, and so they proposed to the city council, and the city council members didn't know, because there's been such a huge transition in them, and so we do still have a Landmarks Board. Its use and effectiveness has been reduced over time, but I still believe that it's a really important part of our city, but it was going to be abandoned completely because "Gotta develop, gotta develop, gotta grow," all these economic factors. You touched the button with that question, didn't you? [Morelli laughs.]

Elle Griego 35:44
Yeah, that was a good question. My next one was going to be, has there been any big political or civic debates in town? And that sounds like...

Mary Jo Morelli 35:50
Not enough of them. [Griego: Yeah.] And from my point of view, there have not been enough. There have been some, but...

Elle Griego 35:56
It seems like a really prominent issue.

Mary Jo Morelli 36:00
Well, right now because of that Oregonian article a month or so ago about the data centers... and if you don't know about it or have access, I can forward the link to you.

Elle Griego 36:10
That sounds good. I've just, I've read a bit of it, about the data centers on Facebook, and how there's some

people trying to push back on that, but I don't know, you know, I'm uninformed about what the plans are for that. I know that there's...

Mary Jo Morelli 36:23

Well on my, on my to do list today is to contact one of the city council members to discuss exactly that issue. So anyway, there was an article that I didn't even know about, because I don't read newspapers for the most part, anymore, and my sister, who lives in Wilsonville, sent me a link to the article.

Elle Griego 36:46

Yeah, I can remember if we talked about this, but I was talking about this someone recently... is the lack of local newspapers, it's a big issue.

Mary Jo Morelli 36:53

And there's somebody who's been trying.

Elle Griego 36:55

I know who you're talking about.

Mary Jo Morelli 36:56

But I've never met him, and I would like to support and promote that, because we don't have local -- and we even see it in the Advantage magazine, there was an insert on, you know, Forest Grove business people, most of them were from Hillsboro.

Elle Griego 37:13

Exactly. No, I noticed that, too.

Mary Jo Morelli 37:18

Yeah, but I know that the Advantage does their issues for communities throughout the region. And they just... some of it's all the same, and then some of it, they customize to the local one that they're sending them to.

Elle Griego 37:35

Yeah, I'm grateful for the magazine, but it's true that there's a lot less local publications. I mean, you look at the old Forest Grove News-Times at the archives, the Pacific Index, even, and there's just a lot less of that. Now it's just Facebook, which is a big corporation, or, you know, Portland news, cable news, and it's less and less local.

Mary Jo Morelli 37:58

Yeah, and I've seen some improvements, finally, in customer service with local businesses. But then last week, I had a really bad negative experience. I haven't decided how I'm going to address it in an appropriate way. And people here in small towns still, I mean, we've tried, to some extent, to keep some of the large, large businesses out of here, but it's getting harder and harder, and that's partly because our land use regulations are 20 to 30 years out of date. And that's one of my things that I have on my radar to just talk with one of the city council members.

Elle Griego 38:55

Yeah, that's good to know. Another question I have, kind of to wrap things up. Is there anything about the

old Forest Grove from 40 years ago or so that you miss? Are there any changes that you are glad to see?

Mary Jo Morelli 39:09

I miss knowing the people I see on the street and people being willing to make eye contact, which I... there's, you know, there's such a different thing, you know, as far as familiarity, and I love it, though, when there are people that aren't part of Forest Grove and who do make that effort to contact. It's places that... Maggie's Buns used to be one of those places, and Slow Rise is becoming very much that, because we met a man in there a couple weeks ago who's not from Forest Grove, and he's from someplace up in Washington, but he comes through regularly, and when he comes down here, that's one of the places he stops and he engages people while he's there. And. We and husband, we lost Saturday. We saw quite a few people that we knew, and really mucked up our day time-wise, because we stopped and we visited with him. We didn't make our schedule for the day our highest priority, and that's one of the things that is part of community. When you make time, take the time. Take the time. Rather than making a schedule you have to stick to. And there's so much momentum now of getting things accomplished, but... and I'm terrible about being timely, so because that's one of the... I miss that connectedness in the community. And are there better things now? Our sidewalks are not as -- being negative again -- because there was a time when it was a matter of pride, and a shop owner would sweep his or her sidewalks every morning. And our growth, there's an intersection, and the concrete, there's weeds growing all over inside the concrete, and I've been on cleanup party crews throughout the downtown, where we a club or something goes out and cleans the streets. What is this about? And it's not what I expect within the community. I'm trying to think of the positives, and I'm having trouble with that one. I'll have to get that some more thought.

Elle Griego 41:45

Yeah, I know you have them.

Mary Jo Morelli 41:46

I know, I do have them.

Elle Griego 41:46

I understand, it can be difficult. Let me see. Here's a fun question, as a founding member, in terms of Friends of Historic Forest Grove, if friends had like a giant, like unlimited budget. What would you hope to see happen if there wasn't natural restraints?

Mary Jo Morelli 42:10

Well, if there were not financial restraints, the A. T. Smith house would become a focal point, not just as a historic structure, but as an activity center for the larger community. And I've heard people, and I've had people I've worked with who say it should really be the heart, the heart for the community, not even though it's separate from... and Pacific being a really important part of that connect between the city and the university, could really, you know, benefit our whole community. I don't know if I answered your question.

Elle Griego 43:03

You did.

Mary Jo Morelli 43:04

Sometimes, I don't know, I just start...

Elle Griego 43:07

I was gonna say for... in terms of the positives. Perhaps another way to rephrase that, is there anything that you hope future generations will remember or learn about the Forest Grove of today?

Mary Jo Morelli 43:23

Well, the the retention of some of the his of the history that shows the evolution over time, if the main street program develops successfully, could be a really positive impact on the city, if it's done well, and I just, you know, I personally need to not let my attention be drawn away from what I want to see at the Smith house, because I've been involved there a long time now, but there's so much to do. And I also really want to have a transition within the Smith House project for somebody else, who will take on the outside, the grounds pieces of it, and really be dedicated to that, so that I can focus on what needs to happen with the house, because that's... it's all part of one, in a sense. But what is needed, the decisions that need making on the house, the fundraising that needs to happen for that... so many aspects. I'd like to be able to focus there and really expand that. If somehow the city would make some sort of agreement with us, and that lot next to it could be expanded in different ways. If the Indigenous community could become interested in both our property and the cities because of its view over the wetlands, and the heritage that that represents of the Indigenous people. I mean, just that, for me, would really draw a lot of pieces of the past and the present and reconcile maybe some of the issues. And even, I mean, the reason why Smith came, that's a touchy subject for a lot of people, but I have just my vision. I'd like to just really be able to make that -- dedicate more to that than, you know, some of the downtown and community things, but yet, I know that those community things going on, like data centers, impacts exactly what's going on out there, and some decisions that have already been made for adjacent land out there are a threat to not just the house and its position, but I think, to the larger community.

Elle Griego 46:14

Yeah, exactly. Well, that's very insightful. Do you have any more final, concluding, concluding thoughts?

Mary Jo Morelli 46:21

I think that's a good place to... because you did get me to transition, I think, out to there. [Griego: I think so, too.] Of the importance there, and you know, then we know we have this building, but that could change anytime, because Woodfold Manufacturing owns this building, and they could make some business decision at any moment, and then what happens with everything that's here? And that could be of huge consequence to the organization. So if funding was unlimited, we would have, you know, a museum building out by the Smith house that would complement it. We might have some other structures out there that would complement and tell the larger story of the history of the overall community. Without being in the center of the community, we can still do those kinds of things.

Elle Griego 47:23

Yeah, perfect. Well, thank you so much! This was very insightful.

Mary Jo Morelli 47:26

You're very welcome.