

Eastmoreland Historic District “Push Poll” Transcript

Transcribed by an Eastmoreland resident from a recorded call, November 2016

This telephone poll was strenuously condemned by the ENA as “push poll”, a type of poll which is designed not to collect opinions but to deliver negative attacks on a political rival.

Legitimate polls are often used by campaigns to test messaging. According to an article about push polls in the New York Times, “A legitimate survey will identify the call center, although it often does not mention the candidate or political party sponsoring the research because that could influence the results. The survey will contain more than a few questions and generally will ask about more than one candidate or mention both sides of an issue. Demographic questions, such as those on age, race and education, will come at the end of the questionnaire.”

“People can sometimes be confused when hearing negative questions and think surveys conducted by political consultants are push polls. The pro and con options in a good questionnaire are truthful; they may test the best way to say something, but they don’t lie.”

“By contrast, with a push poll it is often very difficult to find out what organization is behind it. Only a few questions are asked, all about a single candidate or a single issue, uniformly negative or rarely positive. Time is not wasted asking demographic questions because there is no analysis being done. And the number of people called is very large, sometimes several thousand.”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/19/upshot/push-polls-defined.html>

By all these criteria, the Eastmoreland historic district telephone survey was not a push poll. Of course, that didn’t stop the ENA from labeling it as such and as a despicable attempt to sow misinformation, fear and doubt over the historic district. Judge for yourself.

(the caller identifies themselves as calling from The Nelson Report, a consulting firm in Salem)

1. What is your top concern in the Eastmoreland neighborhood?
2. Do you trust the current city of Portland planning process to address the neighborhood concerns about demolition and infill?
3. Are you aware that the Eastmoreland Neighborhood Association is proposing to designate the majority of the Eastmoreland neighborhood as an official historic district?
4. An historic district is a group of buildings or properties that have been designated as historically or architecturally significant. Historic districts may require certain criteria or may require adherence to certain historic rehabilitation standards. Would you favor or oppose designating the majority of the Eastmoreland neighborhood as an official historic district?
5. Do you strongly favor that right now or just so much and briefly tell me why?

Caller: “Next I am going to ask you a variety of questions regarding this proposal. For each one, I will give you some information and ask whether, with that information, you favor or oppose.”

6. If you knew that designating the majority of the neighborhood as an official historic district would protect historic homes from being demolished and new modern construction being built in its place, would you favor or oppose designating the majority of the Eastmoreland neighborhood as an official historic district?
7. If you knew the Eastmoreland Neighborhood Association has spent over \$50,000 to designate the majority of the neighborhood as an official historic district before allowing impacted residents to vote on this proposal, would you favor or oppose this proposal?
8. If you knew passage of the proposed historic district would force a property owner to seek approval from the City of Portland above and beyond what is normally required for permits if they want to make changes to the outside of their home, would you favor or oppose the proposal?
9. If you knew that homeowners in the Irvington Historic District in Northeast Portland have reported paying hundreds or thousands of dollars for additional fees and lengthy reviews for some types of remodeling projects, would you favor or oppose designating the majority of the Eastmoreland neighborhood as an official historic district?
10. If you knew that it is nearly impossible to reverse the historic district once it has been designated, would you favor or oppose the proposal?
11. If you knew that designating the majority of the neighborhood as an official historic district would prevent the developers from buying property, tearing down historic homes, and dividing the lots into smaller properties to build massive houses, would you favor or oppose the proposal?
12. If you knew that an Eastmoreland historic district could deter younger families from moving into the neighborhood because of potentially difficult home remodeling restrictions and high costs, would you favor or oppose the proposal?
13. If you knew the only way to stop the historic district beforehand is to have 50% plus 1 of individual property owners submit a notarized objection, would you favor or oppose designating the Eastmoreland neighborhood as an historic district?
14. If you knew that historic district restrictions could prevent homeowners from installing energy efficient windows and solar panels on their home, would you favor or oppose the proposal?
15. If you knew that repairs caused by potential disasters such as a fire, or a tree falling on your home could be subject to tedious and costly historic district regulations, would you favor or oppose designating the majority of the Eastmoreland neighborhood as an official historic district?
16. On a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 representing no trust, and 4 representing a lot of trust, tell me how much trust you would place in the group or individual as they spoke out on this issue:

1. A fourth generation Eastmoreland homeowner who grew up in the neighborhood
2. The Eastmoreland Neighborhood Association
3. A local architect with an Eastmoreland residence
4. A local realtor with experience selling homes in other historic districts

Please answer Yes or No to the next two questions:

17. I value my rights as a property owner. If I want to remodel the outside of my home I should not have to spend additional time and money to get special government approval to do so, so I oppose designating the majority of the Eastmoreland neighborhood as an official historic district.

18. We need to preserve our heritage, the land and the trees in our historic neighborhood. I believe that designating the Eastmoreland neighborhood as an official historic district is the best way to do this.

19. After learning more about this issue, do you favor or oppose designating the majority of the Eastmoreland neighborhood as an official historic district. Are you strongly against, strongly or somewhat in favor?

20. Are you between the ages of 25-34, 35-44, 45-59, or just slightly over 60?

21. How long have you lived in the Eastmoreland neighborhood?

22. Do you plan to make changes or remodel the exterior of your home over the next five years?