

# Washington Park East Neighborhood Association

February 13, 2018

## Board Meeting Minutes

### Board Members Present:

Bill Tracy, Lance Musselman, Joanne Asher, Butch Clark and Lee Berkey.

Board Members not Present: Tim McHugh, Monica Brisnehan, Ana Quintana and Ryan Shultz.

The Board meeting was brought order by Bill Tracy at 6:48 p.m. at St. John's.

The minutes for the January meeting were reviewed and accepted.

Board members, guests and speakers were introduced.

### Presenters:

Chris Hansen, State Representative

The current legislative session began January 10<sup>th</sup>, and the legislature is discussing how to spend the extra funds that will be available because of two factors: 1) the economy is up and the Tabor cap has been removed, resulting in an additional \$300M, and 2) the tax changes will bring in an additional \$300M because some deductions relating to state and local taxes have been limited. However, these windfalls will not address the estimated \$10B of additional funds needed to catch up to years of underfunding in education, transportation and capital assets.

Chris is sponsoring bills to encourage energy storage, to set the age of marriage at 18 and to provide net neutrality. There is no current minimum age to marry in Colorado, and an estimated 125 young girls are married each year, usually to older men.

Questions included issues about fracking, for which a bill is being considered that will address so-called orphan wells which have been abandoned by bankrupt companies, by increasing the mill levy to provide a fund that can be used to clean them up. Mines are already covered by bonds that are posted by mining companies.

Expansion of mental health facilities is being addressed with proposals to renovate and/or expand Ft. Logan and to address the salary schedule there and at Pueblo, which is 15% below comparable.

A question about a plan to allow drilling in the Stapleton area was discussed. A request for a permit has been received by the Land Board, which manages the land for the benefit of education. The Land Board will consider the request later this year but is not expected to approve it.

There were also questions about the future of State funding and the effects that Tabor has had on reducing revenues. Chris described a current lawsuit which is seeking to overturn Tabor on the basis of the rights of the State.

Jim Lopez, DPD and Teresa Driscoll, DPD

Jim Lopez told the Board that traffic – speeding in particular – continues to be the big issue in District 3. He urged everyone to report details of speeding events to the PD – time of day, intersections, days of the week – so that a patrol car can be assigned for spotting. The DPD has a new Traffic Unit to address this issue.

He urged everyone to use the online Virtual Neighborhood to access services and information. The PD is also using social media to access information and feedback.

Joanne expressed concern about a theft she witnessed from a construction site across the street. Other concerns addressed included tagging (most of it in WPE is from high school students, not gangs), RVs parked in alleys (call the city, they will ticket if in violation) and homeless responses (a homeless outreach team is based in district 6 and is trained to respond to these reports).

Paul Kashmann, City Councilman

Paul reviewed the ongoing planning process for DenveRight, which includes parks, transportation, pedestrians, trails and a rewrite of the 2002 Blueprint Denver, which identifies areas of change. He announced a meeting on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 6 p.m. at the District 3 police department building.

As Chair of the Safety Council, Paul stated that the city is reviewing its policy of visitation at the city's two jails. Supervised face-to-face contact ended several years ago because of problems of contraband, but the city is considering whether, and how, to reinstate this, probably for low risk inmates, in view of research that shows the importance of maintaining contact with family and other support.

A committee is looking at the pros and cons of whether to propose a bid to host the 2030 Olympics in Denver. Denver has 17 of the required facilities in place of the 30 that will be needed. And, unlike the 1970's when Colorado turned down a chance to bid, the Olympics now fronts most of the funds needed to prepare - \$950M in this case – and hosts are not expected to build permanent structures for the venues but can erect temporary or recyclable structures.

The bond projects are slated to begin construction in six months, creating even more competition for qualified construction employees in the area. And the increases in prices for construction materials will also complicate the process.

The opioid crisis continues in Denver, with an average of one overdose every 36 hours. It appears that the supply of prescription pills is decreasing, thanks to increasing awareness by doctors and hospitals of the dangers associated with pain prescriptions, but users are turning more

and more to street heroin. The city does not have enough treatment slots, and is considering the use of supervised injection sites as a partial remedy to reduce deaths.

The District Attorney will host a two-hour presentation on April 18th, at 10 a.m., on human trafficking. About half the trafficking is for sex workers and the other half for laborers.

#### Treasurer's Report:

Bill Tracy presented the report on revenues and expenses for the past month. The balance of the WPENA bank account is \$8052.47. The report was accepted. Bill also noted that we had 80 member renewals this year. Discussion about the new calendar year interpretation of membership led to discussion about business memberships. Lance stated that business memberships have always been treated separately from household memberships, and that business members expected their logos to be displayed for a full year after they paid dues. It was the consensus of the Board that business memberships would continue to be regarded as beginning with membership payment, not tied to calendar year.

#### Committee Reports:

##### Communications: Monica Brisnehan, Chair

There was discussion and consensus to support allowing WPENA to provide pro bono marketing of St. Johns food truck events in the newsletter, monthly emailer and website. The feeling of the Board was that it is a community event and that we are supporting the church, with which we have a relationship. Although there is no proposed quid pro quo from the church for sponsorship, we do receive a free meeting place for our Board meetings (although we pay a small amount for the evening supervisor to remain on premises).

##### Zoning: Biddie Labrot, Chair

Request for Variance: appeal of denial to erect a pop top addition to a single unit dwelling encroaching 5 ft. 4 in. into the side interior setback in a U-SU-C zone. Zoning committee met with owner on Feb 7<sup>th</sup>. Zoning committee members recommended approval of the request.

##### INC: Susan Payne, INC Representative

Susan stated that INC data show there are 90 member RNO's and 34 associate members, representing 338,000 households, over 2/3 of city total.

The March 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of INC will address the issue of an Olympics bid, providing information and differing points of view. INC is also preparing an online survey about the Olympics, and there are several others already online.

Another upcoming issue is the appearance of more so-called slot homes – small side-by-side apartment buildings, one behind the other with only one visible from the street. Developers are buying multiple adjoining lots and combining them to build these units, which can be several stories tall and are allowed under current zoning laws. Susan proposed that the WPENA consider creating a special committee to study whether WPE should develop a Neighborhood Plan, which would prevent the city council from approving changes the neighborhood doesn't want, such as requests to combine multiple lots, which allow high rise apartments to be built on multiple existing lots. The wording in the Plan must state specifically that no such requests may be approved. Without this, it could be possible for such a request to be made and approved in WPE.

Also in Susan's report was notice that the city has given approval for new cell towers to be built almost anywhere, including the right of way in front of homes. Susan suggested that we find out how to get notification of such plans and ask that they be placed in out-of-the-way location such as alleyways.

The Transportation Committee has proposed the development of a low cost or free pass for low income people, like the youth pass.

Susan also reported that there is a push for a ballot issue to allow the election of Denver's Sheriff, which is currently an administrative position appointed by the Mayor.

Traffic: Bill Tracy, Chair

There were two suggestions for improving traffic in WPE:

- 1) Lee is concerned about the absence of any pedestrian crossings of Alameda east of Franklin, suggesting a crosswalk with flashing lights.
- 2) Joanne feels that a "No Turns" sign on University at Arkansas is necessary to prevent cars from turning into the neighborhood on Louisiana.

Crime and Safety: Joanne Asher, Chair

Joanne attended the CAB meeting last month. District 3 is the largest enforcement management area in the city and the increase in population and resulting calls for assistance – particularly domestic violence – are increasing response time.

### **Old Business:**

Future Speakers:

March: Grace Lopez Ramirez

April: Ken Hopper, Lawn Bowling in Wash Park

May: City Auditor Tim O'Brien?

**New Business:**

Newsletter ad for the annual House Tour:

Lance asked for Board approval to trade a mid-size ad in the newsletter for a free table at the House Tour's annual Street Fair, held during the house tour at Steele elementary. WPENA will give out information about the association and try to get more residents to pay dues. Lance made the motion, seconded by Butch, to approve the free ad in return for a free table at the House Tour. All approved.

Shredding event and fundraiser:

Bill described a joint fundraising event that has been proposed to WPENA by University Park RNO to provide paper shredding (and possibly including electronics recycling) through an existing provider. The fundraising for the RNO's would be accomplished by allowing paid members (and residents could pay their dues at the event) to shred/recycle for free, while non-members would pay the shredder/recycler. The Board consensus was to approve.

There being no more business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:53 by Bill Tracy.

Lance Musselman

Secretary

Washington Park East Neighborhood Association