

Washington Park East Neighborhood Association

March 12, 2019

Board Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present:

Tim McHugh, Bill Tracy, Lance Musselman, Lee Berkey, Jacquelyn Mabry

Board Members not present: Joanne Asher

The Board meeting was brought order by Tim at 6:45 p.m. at St. John's

Approval of agenda.

The minutes for the February 12, 2019 meeting were reviewed and accepted.

Board members, guests and speakers were introduced.

Jim Lopez, DPD

There has been a seven percent overall decrease in crime reported, but an increase in license plate theft. The DPD is giving out free anti-theft license plate screws. A question was raised about scooters and how the city is dealing with them. Jim said that better weather will increase the problems and that there is likely to be new legislation coming. Scooters have GPS, which can be used to limit where and how fast they can go, so regulators are looking at that as a way to deal with some of the problems. People are also using them instead of cars after they have had too much to drink, leading to problems with traffic and pedestrians. Theft of a scooter is usually a civil matter, not criminal, because the scooters are rented.

Paul Kaufmann, City Council

Paul noted that the city council just raised the minimum wage for employees of city contractors to \$15/hr. over the next three years, and a similar move is being prepared for city workers. A question was asked whether the city is looking at cost of living increases for city workers, and Paul stated that the city does this annually.

Candidates for Denver Clerk and Recorder:

Sarah McCarthy

Sarah has been involved in shaping public policy at the State level, supports affordable housing and worked for the League of Women Voters. Her priorities for the office include preserving the integrity of public records, which she accessed extensively for her book. Security is important for elections as well as maintaining the public trust, keeping campaign funding clean and concentrating on issues of verification, accuracy and turnout. The Clerk and Recorder must keep up with technology and public laws, and be knowledgeable about city departments, neighborhoods and city programs. She has a Master's Degree in Public Administration, has managed public funds and supports effective government.

Peg Perl

Peg is a public interest lawyer who has worked to increase transparency in government. She has worked for a nonpartisan organization to maintain a level playing field for everyone, and as an attorney for the House Ethic Committee investigating lobbyists. When she first moved to Denver, she discovered how difficult it was to access information about government services and remains involved in efforts to increase access to information and services by the public. She has been involved in the election process as both a field worker and in the ballot counting room, and helped change Denver's ordinance on requiring digital records. The City Clerk and Recorder is a conduit between the citizens and the government.

Councilman Paul Lopez (no show)

Questions and Responses:

1) What is Denver's risk of vote hacking?

PP responded that the city is on top of the newest technology and the risk is low, in large part because of reliance on paper ballots, which cannot be electronically altered. She would audit election results to validate their accuracy.

SM would keep close to paper, reducing the possibility of electronic hacking, and maintain voting places for people to vote.

2) Why are differences between neighborhoods important?

SM said that what works in one neighborhood might not work in another, and maintaining voter turnout in all neighborhoods would be her priority.

PP partnered with communities, assuring that all had a voice in the process by providing input as stakeholders.

3) What is your background in technology security?

SM is a policy budget analyst by training, used to analyzing.

PP has received training in technology and once had a top security clearance.

4) What about the Denver Election Commission?

SM said that the commission was removed in 2006 along with the change from an appointed position to an elected position for the Denver Clerk and Recorder.

PP said that one Board carried over from the Commission days, with a purely advisory capacity.

5) Would you support Saturday voting?

PP said that the current voting laws allow voting for 15 days, which includes a Saturday, but she would like to add more evening and weekend hours.

SM thought that adding a Saturday would help, citing evidence that most unaffiliated voters wait until the last day to vote.

Debate on Ballot Initiative 300: Right to Survive

Support: Diane Thiel.

Diane is part of the Denver Right to Survive, which gathered twice the required number of signatures to get on the ballot to allow homeless (and anyone else who wants) to sleep in public parks, sidewalks and outdoor spaces (when available). Not a solution to homelessness, the initiative is based more on a right to dignity, and would eliminate the “sweeps” performed by police to move them off public property. Shelters are inaccessible to the disabled, couples are separated, there are no public restrooms available to them. Sixty percent of the homeless work. The initiative would allow the homeless to sleep in their cars, pitch tents or sleep under tarps. Police would be prohibited from seizing the property of the homeless (4647 were “swept” in 2017).

Opposition: Dominic Berrerra.

A spokesperson who lives and works downtown, Dominic has experienced homelessness and is opposed to the initiative. The 5000 signatures collected to get the initiative on the ballot represent a very small percentage of Denver’s population. The initiative does not provide funding for the support services such as mental health counseling or alcohol and drug recovery services, and will prevent service providers from contacting the homeless. The initiative would discourage the homeless from being moved or evicted from parks for scheduled events.

Questions and Responses:

1) Who else is doing this?

DT responded that Denver would be the first city to be successful in passing an initiative that does this. It was conceived by a homeless advocacy group.

2) If passed, can people camp and party in the park?

DT said that their interpretation is that park curfews would still apply, and thus prevent anyone from sleeping overnight in the park. (Susan Payne stated that another source says that curfews will not apply).

3) Can homeowners be sued if they approach a homeless person and they feel threatened?

There were many responses, most of them conflicting with each other, to this question.

4) What will the outcome be if a person decides to rest in place?

DT said that when personal belongings are confiscated during sweeps, it causes extreme stress for the homeless, along with lack of sleep and loss of important papers.

5) Is Initiative 300 too strong?

DT said that the purpose is to protect constitutional rights and to prevent the City Council from simply passing a law to interfere with them.

6) Should 300 be titled as the right not to be harassed?

DT felt that this is similar to an effort last year at the State level.

7) What is Denver doing?

DB noted that Denver is growing fast and there is a lack of affordable housing.

DT stated that the settlement from a recent lawsuit against Denver established a requirement for Denver to provide support for the homeless, and that the judge is meeting with stakeholders, including homeless, to determine the level of support needed.

8) Are there any studies of the consequences of this? Will homeless in Colorado Springs move to Denver? Will homeless move from one backyard to someone else's?

The general consensus seemed to be that there is no experience with a program like this because no one else has done it. Homeless in Colorado Springs are probably not going to move to Denver, and the initiative prohibits them from occupying private property.

Treasurer's Report:

Bill Tracy presented the report on revenues and expenses for the past month. The balance of the WPENA bank account is \$8998.50. The report was accepted.

New Business:

- 1) Should WPENA support INC Education Committee and request review of spending priorities for Merrill Middle School by the Design Advisory Group?

Motion: Lee Berkey

Second: Jacquelyn Mabry

Discussion:

Amy Duclos, INC, presented the issues to WPENA for support. The DPS organized an Advisory Group to recommend how to spend some of the bond money on improvements to the Cory Merrill Middle School without consulting parents or neighborhood residents. Approximately \$1M of the \$3M total funding was then recommended for renovation of a 2200 square foot of- fice space. The Cory Merrill RNO wants DPS to concentrate on key problems like air condition- ing, bigger gymnasium, more learning spaces, updated library and technology.

Vote:

Passed, 4 yes, 1 abstention.

- 2) Should WPENA endorse the Denver Internet Initiative?

Motion: Lee Berkey

Second: Lance Musselman

Discussion:

There are currently two internet providers for Denver – Comcast and Century Link. This would allow Denver to begin a feasibility study of whether Denver should provide internet broadband.

Vote:

Passed unanimously.

- 3) Promotion of April 9th Mayoral forum.

The April WPENA meeting will host candidates for Mayor in the May elections. Four of ten can- didates have agreed to appear. The forum is being organized by Ann Shiveley, a WPE resident.

Open Discussion time:

No questions or topics were presented.

Committee Reports:

Communications:

Newsletter:

No report.

Monthly emailer:

No report.

Website:

No report.

Crime and Safety: Joanne Asher, Chair

No report.

Zoning: Biddie Labrot, Chair

No report.

Park/FANS: Tim McHugh, Chair

No report.

Membership: Jacquelyn Mabry, Chair

After discussion, it was decided by consensus to send thank you postcards for membership renewals in November to thank those who have paid. Bill will send Jacquelyn a file with the names of former members who have not paid for follow up.

INC: Tim McHugh and Susan Payne, INC Representatives

No report.

Traffic: Bill Tracy, Chair

No report.

Old Business:

Future Speakers:

May: Beth McCann, Denver district Attorney; Jeff Martinez, DPW Street Sweeping; discussion on sidewalk inspections; Jerry Tinalow, Chief Sustainability officer; Jo Donlin, DORA Director of Regulatory Outreach and Education.

April: speaker for the proposed Olympics.

Happy Hour:

April 11th from 5:00 till 7:00 at the Campus Lounge; sponsor is Barb Perrucio.

There being no more business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 by Tim McHugh.

Lance Musselman

Secretary

Washington Park East Neighborhood Association