

Washington Park East Neighborhood Association

November 12, 2019

Board Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present:

Lance Musselman, Tim McHugh and Bill Tracy

Board Members Not Present:

Lee Berkey, Jacquelyn Mabry and Christine Franck

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

Approval of agenda, acceptance of the minutes from the September 10 and October 8, were tabled until the next Board meeting because of lack of quorum.

Introduction of Board members. Approximately 40 neighbors attended the meeting.

Presenters:

Abe Barge, CPD Senior City Planner; Sayre Brennan, CPD City Planner Associate; Aaron Grant, S. Gaylord Merchant's Association; and Brent Fahrberger, Sr. Council Aide for Paul Kashmann.

Recent changes to and future plans for development on S. Gaylord were discussed.

Brent expressed Paul's commitment to keeping changes appropriate to the current architecture, and pointed out that rent hikes in commercial/retail areas were increasing rapidly due to increases in property taxes, which go up as the values of the properties increase, and are passed along to the renters. The city is looking at other retail areas of the city for ideas on how to cushion the impact of property taxes, such as ways to ease the tax rates.

Abe Barge provided a quick overview of city planning and zoning documents, including BluePrint Denver and the Comprehensive Plan 2040. WPE does not yet have a neighborhood specific plan, but will be getting one in the next three years. The zoning for S. Gaylord generally allows two story buildings, the same as the rest of WPE, and a maximum height of 30 feet, with some exceptions for elevator extensions and stairway roof access. When deciding whether to rebuild or renovate, builders have a choice of using old regulations (by keeping at least three of the original walls) or current regulations (by demolishing the building and starting over).

Questions and Answers included:

- What about parking requirements? Parking spots must meet current zoning requirements if building new, and is figured on square footage. Remodels do not have to meet current requirements but must keep existing parking spots.
- Why is there no enforcement of parking limits on S. Gaylord? Public Works is responsible, and will increase enforcement if it receives complaints. If new development causes increased parking in the nearby neighborhood, they may expand the permit parking or install meters.
- Do we want or need meters? Most in attendance felt it was nice not to have meters.
- Why are new buildings approved if they have insufficient parking? How can we tell? Call 311 and they will transfer you to someone who can look up the address and check whether it complies. Correcting a deficiency can be difficult if the building is completed; the city could fine them.
- Can we get special rules for our neighborhood? Yes, if the neighborhood wants to seek an overlay of the zoning requirements for all or part of the neighborhood. Work on a conservation overlay for the NE section of WPE was begun a few years ago but did not get enough support.
- How much of an existing building must be kept to allow it to be classified as a remodel? Three walls, but the rules are complex and allow a great deal of creativity.
- Is there a required ratio of retail to office space? No. Market prevails.
- RINO has a new overlay in place that specifies what percentage of street level cannot be residential. It is currently the only area in Denver that has one.
- How long does an overlay take? One to two years, with help from your councilperson. Planning must be completed, all owners contacted and sufficient support demonstrated before it goes to city council.
- Is it possible to place a moratorium on changes while an overlay is sought? Yes, but the city council must approve.

Aaron Grant owns a building at 1040 S. Gaylord that has been converted to shared workspaces. One quarter of his tenants are nonprofits and ninety percent live within a half mile. The spaces cater to people who work from home but need occasional access to office space. He remodeled instead of building new because he would have needed a total of fifteen parking spaces and he only has eight. He also owns the building which housed Tended Thicket and plans to expand into that building. 1032/34 is also his. The Tended Thicket building will not be demolished but will house at least three new businesses, so adjustments to the front of the building will be necessary.

He also noted that Preferred Properties is moving out soon.

In Boulder, moratoriums were used to delay construction along Pearl Street. In Denver, a moratorium on slot homes (narrow houses facing sideways in the lot to allow additional building) delayed applications until new regulations were completed, and the new slot homes coming on line now were approved before the moratorium.

He repeated Bret's point that increases in property values were generating rapidly increasing property taxes. His taxes increased 30% after the first year and 100% the second year, causing him to increase rents for his properties.

Questions and Answers included:

- Will S. Gaylord become another Cherry Creek North? Mixed use is good for retail and will improve S. Gaylord.
- How could zoning changes for S. Gaylord be completed quickly? Ask Cherry Creek North how they managed the process for their area.

Treasurer's Report:

(Submitted electronically but not reviewed due to time constraints). Bill Tracy reported on revenues and expenses for the past month. The balance of the WPENA bank account is \$12,112.43.

Committee Reports:

Communications: Christine Franck, Chair

(Submitted electronically to the Board before the meeting but not reviewed due to time constraints)

Update on Ongoing Communications Activities

1) Email communications - We have sent a larger, once monthly email again, rounding up news and information for neighbors, including notice of the monthly meeting, links to "Get to Know Your Community" video series, social media links, and contact information. We're also adjusting the imagery of the email to track with the seasons. I have received several "thank you's" for the new monthly email looking "professional."

An ongoing goal is to release the main monthly email a week before the monthly meeting. We did not meet that goal this month.

Additionally, as circumstances require, we have sent out a shorter mid-month email, particularly with any city notices.

At this time, two emails per month seems to be the right level of communications with members.

2) Social Media - we continue to grow likes, follows, shares, and most importantly engagement with social media posts on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Our posts have broken down into A) pictures celebrating the character of our neighborhood, b) sharing news and useful information for neighbors like city notices, the dog park, or solar, or 5G, c) sharing service opportunities and local events neighbors might enjoy, d) publishing historical notes about our neighborhood, e) highlighting our business members with posts thanking them, tagging them, etc., and f) getting to know our community through video interviews.

Generally, each item is posted on all channels, including Next Door, which Tim or Christine post.

3) Get to Know Your Community Video Series - Leslie interviewed John Bardeen the pumpkin carver and Jacquelyn interviewed the Wall Rebuilder (long time business member), so we were able to release two videos this month. We release them on our YouTube channel and then share them as mentioned in Item 2, above.

Leslie, Jacquelyn, and Christine have come up with various ideas for video subjects and we will be working our way through them publishing at least one per month, balancing a focus on business members and general interest stories. We have a year's worth of subjects, but welcome additional topics from the board.

4) Back of House - I am working on filing over 1,000 emails in the Gmail general account, and working on cleaning up the files, images, logos, etc., stored on our google drive, website, and Mail Chimp to make communications more efficient now and in the future.

I am also reviewing the October 2018 - October 2019 list of payments (from Bill) to determine who is and is not current business members. For example, a number of business members are listed on the website who have not renewed their business membership in the past year. I will coordinate with the Membership Committee and the Treasurer to be sure we communicate the current business members on the website and emails, and so the Membership chair can target lapsed business members.

Finally, I believe I have all account information for all websites, email, google profile, email service, social media, everything except the Nextdoor WPENA profile and Nextdoor group. I am still trying on that.

Comments on Future Communications Activities

1) We would like to release stories from the winter print newsletter, and hopes to be able to receive text and images from key stories from Mikki, her time and schedule allowing.

2) We would like to coordinate end of year membership renewals as a campaign via email, social media, and next door. We will coordinate with the membership committee and the timing of the printed winter newsletter and its membership renewal notice. The board is requested to advise the communications committee of any special timing or coordination.

3) The committee would love your feedback on our work and any ideas you have for content.

4) The communications committee chair supports the formation of an events committee to plan and coordinate WPENA events, including Happy Hours.

5) Homegrown Tap & Dough has offered to sponsor the next Happy Hour, which we hope the soon-to-be-formed events committee will take up.

Crime and Safety:

Mike Borquez, DPD Community Resource Officer, warned neighbors about “puffers”, or leaving your car running while it warms up. There have been cars stolen. You can do this if you have a remote start system installed, which locks the car and will stop the engine if someone tries to drive it away. Other problems included:

- Leaving garage doors open
- Not registering bicycles (can do this online with photo of bike).
- Thefts from motor vehicles

Questions and Answers:

- There are a lot of construction trucks in WPE, seem to be casing properties; does DPD track these? No. Report suspicious behavior to 911 if it is in progress, call 720-913-2000 if not in progress.
- How is the partnership with Ring doorbells working? Great. DPD can request videos from Ring doorbells within a specified radius of a crime or suspicious activity and gather evidence.
- Is Neighborhood Watch active? Yes. Leslie MacRossie gave a quick summary of how NW works and how to contact your block captain.
- Can DPD do anything to reduce the nighttime car races on I-25? Yes. DPD is monitoring this and has sent extra patrol cars out to maintain a presence there. Hoping they will go somewhere else if they can give them tickets.

Due to time constraints, the following committee reports and other agenda items could not be addressed.

Zoning: Biddie Labrot, Chair

Park/FANS: Tim McHugh, Chair

Membership: Jacquelyn Mabry, Chair

INC: Tim McHugh and Susan Payne, INC Representatives

Traffic: Bill Tracy, Chair

Old Business:

Lee Berkey: request for leave of absence

Future Speakers:

Robin Kneich, Councilmember At Large

Representative for housing for the homeless

Tim O'Brien, City Auditor

Susan Payne, Census

Rachel Gruber, DIA

Happy Hour:

Oct 17 at Wash Park Grille

Denver Solar Co-Op meeting Oct 23rd:

Marion Parkway Bikeway meeting Nov. 2nd:

Marion Street Trolley Stop:

South High School food bank:

Leslie MacRossie

New Business:

Establishing a new Event Committee, chaired by Leslie MacRossie.

Community dialogue on 4G and 5G cell towers July 23rd:

Dog Park Master Plan Technical Update released Oct 8:

Waste Extravaganza tour:

Annual Report filed with Colorado Secretary of State's Office

Campus Lounge new name:

Recess Beer Garden

Denver Leaf Drop:

French American School of Denver

There being no more business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m. by Tim McHugh.

Lance Musselman

Secretary

Washington Park East Neighborhood Association