

Washington Park East Neighborhood Association

January 14, 2020

Board Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present:

Lance Musselman, Tim McHugh, Lee Berkey, Bill Tracy

Board Members Not Present:

Jacquelyn Mabry (resigned from Board of Directors on January 7, 2020)

Christine Franck

Quorum: Yes

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

The Board accepted the resignation of Jacquelyn Mabry.

Lance Musselman made a motion to appoint Leslie MacRossie to the Board of Directors; Lee Berkey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, including a proxy from Christine Franck exercised by Tim McHugh.

Approval of agenda.

Introduction of Board members. There were 14 neighborhood residents present at the meeting.

The minutes for the September 10, 2019, October 8, 2019 and November 12, 2019 meetings were reviewed and accepted.

Presenters:

Antonio Pacheco, DPD Community Resource Officer

WPE crime statistics are level or slightly reduced overall. Neighborhood Watch training continues as more neighbors sign up, and this seems to be helping keep crime down.

Robin Kneich, At-Large City Councilperson

Robin's main topics were homelessness and affordable housing. She has been active in several areas, including Denver's laws on minimum wage, which will raise the minimum next year to more than fourteen dollars an hour. The amount needed for one adult living alone is nineteen, and more for families.

After the recession of 2008-2012, new construction in the city began to come back, and Denver is supporting an apprenticeship program in construction to support and continue this. Efforts to help people avoid eviction are important because it is very difficult to rent another apartment after that occurs. Eight new tiny homes were added to the tiny home project recently, bringing the total to nineteen. Problems with the project have been minimal and it has been well received by the neighbors. Support services are being expanded for the homeless as well as day-work programs.

In addition to homelessness, Robin discussed energy use. Commercial buildings are the largest users of energy, and a recent project that publishes energy use by commercial users has fostered competition to see who can decrease their usage the most, resulting in an overall reduction of five percent.

Seeking to improve transparency and citizen involvement in neighborhood improvement, the city has begun a program called participatory budgeting. Neighborhoods are invited to participate in directing how funds for their area will be used.

Questions and Answers:

- What are the main reasons for homelessness? Cost of housing, personal injury or loss (life changing event), lack of adequate support services, mental health issues.
- What are the changes the city is making to how it defines a household? The city now limits the number of unrelated people living in one household to two. The new limit would be eight if the regulations are changed, allowing more people to live together and share rent costs in the same house. There is no limit on the number of family members living together, so why not give others the same advantage?
- Is there a limit on the number of cars per household? No.
- City Center park has too many tents; is there a property available for them to use? The tiny home projects will expand. Fewer than one thousand people are on the streets on any given night, mostly because of the lack of enough shelters. But the shelters are not the whole solution because they lack privacy and there is little security for women and families. The scale of supportive housing needs to increase, and the city needs to support more rapid re-housing for those who have lost their apartment. Regulated encampments are also being discussed.

Paul Kashmann, City Councilperson

Paul noted that he is just beginning his second term representing District 6; all eleven districts have about 60,000 residents each. He is on committees for Safety, Flood Districts, Pedestrian Advisory for Transportation, Behavioral Health, Climate, development of the Comprehensive Plan for zoning and development, and the Youth Violence Prevention committee.

Place Bridge Academy, a K-8 school for new refugees (80% speak ESL), has a twelve-acre site on the property which is the subject of possible development. Currently occupied by a solar array, it has been proposed for housing for refugees or affordable housing. January 28th is the next scheduled meeting with the neighborhood.

Youth violence is increasing, with seven hundred involved last year alone in gun violence. City committees are meeting to discuss areas to develop as countermeasures, including increasing the number of school counselors. Also a need to educate the public to not leave guns in the car. Many of these get stolen each year.

Paul weighed in on the minimum wage discussion, pointing out that one adult needs to earn at least \$12-13 per hour just to survive.

Caring for Denver: thirty-plus million per year for mental services and support, coming from the bonds passed last year.

The brick pillars near the entrance to Wash Park near Arizona and Franklin will be repaired. Paul will fund out of his discretionary funds if necessary.

Paul recently toured all the city shelters, which are run as non-profits; the newest is Crossroads. Forty percent of the homeless work 32 or more hours per week. One of the latest options being looked at is repurposing old hotels.

RNO's (Registered Neighborhood Associations) such as WPENA are responsible for keeping the neighborhood informed about the city and the city informed about neighborhood needs. As such, the RNO's do not receive any support from the city.

Questions and Answers:

- Do the homeless have access to services if their lives fall apart? Yes, including DHS, CCH and United Way (call 211).

Treasurer's Report:

Bill Tracy reported on revenues and expenses for the past month. The balance of the WPENA bank account is \$11,826.95. Bill stated that the balance would increase later this year because the Fourth of July event falls between fiscal years, with the revenues coming at the end of the year and revenues reported the following. For the first time, the number of membership dues paid via PayPal equaled the number paid by check. The report was accepted.

Open Discussion:

Scott Baldermann, the new DPS Board member, announced that he is in the process of attending all the RNO meetings in his district. He discussed the Rosedale school issue. The Diocese wants to purchase or lease the school to use as a private high school.

Steven Woodrow, a candidate for State House District 6 updated everyone on the upcoming political milestones on the Democratic side. Lois Court is retiring due to health reasons and Chris Hanson is seeking appointment to the vacancy. If he is appointed, his replacement will be elected in the June 30th elections. Caucuses are March 7th at Merrill.

Committee Reports:

Communications: Christine Franck, Chair

Tim reported that Christine had sent a report to the Board members to update them on committee activities.

The Committee Report covered the following:

- Regular communications via the website, email, Facebook, Instagram, Next Door, Twitter and You Tube, including:
 - Get To Know Your community videos
 - A Holiday Décor Contest
 - Notice of local events
 - City updates
 - Posts boosting our business supporters, advertisers and neighborhood.
- Special content regarding:
 - The Holiday Décor contest, holiday posts, special documents regarding 5G and zoning;
 - FANS, tree recycling and wrapping paper, neighborhood news about Bonnie Brae coffee shop, Campus lounge, the trolley stop, business members, Colorado Gives Day, gym membership renewals, landmark houses in the neighborhood, the food drive for South High, and celebration of Veterans Day.
- Leslie MacRossie's participation in the committee
- Update on Goals and Actions
 - Completed:
 - Set up schedule, gained access to all social media channels, added Instagram and Youtube.

- Ongoing:
 - Keeping website up to date on advertisers and supporters.
- Both ongoing and completed:
 - Keeping members up to date on association and neighborhood news, civic actions and opportunities, provide images, oral and written histories, business member and neighbor features.
- In the planning stage:
 - Developing a neighborhood poll for neighbor input.
- Proposed Communication Schedule
- Usage reports on communications platforms

Zoning: Biddie Labrot, Chair

Tim reported that the zoning committee met concerning four Board of Adjustment variance requests. One on S. High St. involved a request to merge two lots into one – approved. One on S. Williams St. involved an air conditioner too close to the property line – approved. Another on S. High St. involved a replacement garage that did not have an exit onto the alleyway – approved. The fourth involved a request to build a two story garage – not approved.

Park/FANS: Tim McHugh, Chair

Planning continues about what to do with the old basketball court beside the city ditch. Some want a pickle ball court or soccer field, and the city is thinking about putting grass and tables in there for picnicking.

Work is in progress on repairs to the historic Eugene Field House in the park.

Membership:

With Jacquelyn’s resignation, a new membership committee chair is needed. A neighborhood resident, Jennifer Doherty, has indicated an interest in this. Tim will contact.

Traffic: Bill Tracy, Chair

No report.

INC: Tim McHugh and Susan Payne, INC Representatives

The hot topic at INC is rent control. Sure to be controversial.

Crime and Safety: Joanne Asher, Leslie MacRossie

Leslie attended the last CAB meeting and brought crime data to the meeting. She reported that the DPD has designated their patrol stations as Safe Trade Zones, so people can meet to buy and sell items advertised through Craigslist or Ebay.

Puffers remain an issue, as people warm their cars up unattended in the cold weather. Drag racing on I-25 is being monitored; call the nonemergency number if you hear or see them. Same with porch pirates.

New Committee:

A new committee was created. Lance Musselman made a motion to create an Events Committee; Lee Berkey seconded and the motion passed unanimously, including a proxy from Christine Franck exercised by Tim McHugh. The new committee will be chaired by Leslie MacRossie and will be responsible for:

- Happy Hour (quarterly)
- the South High food pantry drive (quarterly)
- the Holiday Décor Contest (Christmas)
- Additional events in the planning stage such as an Easter Egg Hunt, End of Summer Picnic and a Garden Club contest.

Old Business:

Future Speakers:

Feb: A Little Help - home sharing (Leslie will check)

March: Sunshine home Share (Tim will contact)

Tim O'Brien, City Auditor

Census (Susan Payne will check)

Happy Hour:

Will be coordinated in the future by the new Event Committee, chaired by Leslie MacRossie. The next HH will be in February or March.

Marion Street trolley station

Lee reported that the restoration is being done by the Historic Corp, with help from Denver Parks and Recreation and Denver Community College. Finding parts and materials for the old station was difficult and some had to be fabricated.

New Business:

Food Pantry at South High School

Leslie MacRossie coordinated; Recreation Center pickup, home pickup

Holiday Spirit Photo Contest/Holiday House Decoration Contest

There were five submissions, and the winning address was 679 S. High St. (Caleb Matthews). The winner gets a gift card for \$100.

Dog Park technical plan update

The latest plans are to create a new dog park, not to install one in Wash Park. The city may expand Vanderbilt Park in the Baker neighborhood, adding a dog park. See plans at denverparksandrec/dogparkmasterplan.

Denver – Get The Lead Out

A meeting is scheduled January 18, 2020 to present information on brain development and lead.

Cell phone towers for 5G

They're coming. Plans are to put them in around the alleys to avoid putting them in front of houses.

Camping ban rescinded by court

Deemed cruel and unusual punishment by the courts, Denver is still enforcing other ordinances such as blocking sidewalks, health and safety issues, cleanliness.

Campus Lounge will be renamed.

A couple of possible names were mentioned, including the Recess Beer Garden or something incorporating the Campus Lounge name, along with the signage.

Annual Report to the Secretary of State submitted – RNO renewal completed.

There being no more business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:48 by Tim McHugh.

Lance Musselman

Secretary

Washington Park East Neighborhood Association