

***CAPITOL NEIGHBORHOODS INC.***

**MINUTES of Executive Council Meeting held Tuesday September 22, 2009**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Plotkin (President), Megan Christiansen, Yarborough, Fisher, Patterson, Steakley, Skrentny, Stitt, Mohs, Devitt, Berger, Mayer, Phelps, and O'Brien. GUESTS PRESENT: Brendan McGrath, Madison Police Lt. Brown, Rick Broughman, Joe Schnick, plus representatives from "Taste of Madison: Rita Kelleher (President of Madison Festivals, Inc.), Scott Smith, James Patrick and Christe Flanagan.

I. Meeting called to order. There is a quorum.

II. TREASURER'S REPORT. Christiansen reports a balance of \$13,540.02; consisting of \$8,107.36 in CDs, and \$5,432.06 in checking.

III. REPORT ON SAFETY/CRIME DOWNTOWN.

Lt. Brown reports that the crime rate downtown is down, but concerns persist citywide over residential burglaries while residents are sleeping. Police analysts are mapping "screen-cutting" burglaries and police are working with businesses such as pawn shops to help catch people trying to sell stolen goods. According to Mohs, one of the fraternities has complained about homeless people camping at the end of Henry St. The fraternity believes they might be responsible for break-ins at the fraternity house. Brown said the neighborhood officer is working on this. Brown would like to see a press release urging residents to keep doors and windows locked. This remains a big issue citywide, not just downtown, Brown added.

Zellers notes that the security guard at Period Garden Park has reported an increase in drinking in the park. Brown said police are watching this with a plainclothes operation that resulted in 12-15 tickets for public drinking last week in the area. Police plan to extend this operation into the night shift hours. Brown explained that a small number of homeless people are responsible for criminal activity, including burglaries; they go through the "revolving door" of the criminal justice system. He again urged residents to lock doors. Patterson suggested, in addition to a press release, that police go door-to-door urging residents to lock doors and windows. Brown answered that police may do this in conjunction with UW police.

Skrentny suggested that, in addition to mapping burglaries, police "map" all criminal activity downtown in a form that is publicly accessible allowing neighbors to figure out patterns of activity. Brown noted the police department's website lists "calls for service." Zellers added she gets this list e-mailed to her.

IV. MINUTES of August EC meeting, AS AMENDED to reflect in "Action Items/New Business: EC Changes," that "Lynn Phelps wishes to remain on the EC mailing list" are APPROVED: on MOTION by Mohs; SECOND by Patterson.

V. ACTION ITEMS/NEW BUSINESS.

**Taste of Madison.**

Rita Kelleher distributed copies of the report on this year's "Taste of Madison." It was very successful, having raised around \$55,000 for United Cerebral Palsy of Dane County,

which provided some 800 volunteers, while 22 youth groups raised another \$10,000 for their causes. According to Kelleher, they have decided that expanding the festival to 9:00 for the first time this year was too late; there's not enough time to clean up. They intend to return to the former 8:30 closing time next year. Plotkin observed that at 6:30 Sunday night beer was still flowing and people were still "stumbling around." He also observed people carrying beer beyond the "no beer past this point" signs. Zellers reports she saw no bad behavior on Saturday night but was disappointed with the condition of the streets and the quantity of grease after the event. Kelleher noted that merchants are required to clean up grease or lose their security deposits (which then pays for a cleaning service). Mohs reports there was no litter on Wisconsin Ave. as there has been in the past. But he suggested power-washing the streets especially when, like this year, there is no rain. Devitt reported litter in the 200 block of Pinckney St. and also suggested having a separate clean-up afterwards. Stitt reported a "fair amount" of litter on Main St. He suggested they do a "sweep" after the city is done cleaning but he commended the "Taste" for doing a much better job than in the past. Stitt would like to see it "Disneyland clean" after the event, adding that this is an issue for the city and the BID district as well, commenting that Main St. between Webster and the Square is a "mess." We should acquire equipment to clean it up, he added. Stitt was quick to point out, however, that his remarks were not meant to discourage the event and he thanked the "Taste" representatives present for putting the event on.

Kelleher would also like to see the "Taste" do a better job than in the past. She agreed to Plotkin's request that they come back to meet with us before next year's event.

### **EC Retreat Update.**

Plotkin has not been able to select a satisfactory retreat date. He will send out a new list of dates from which to choose.

### **New CNI Farmer's Market Table.**

Rick Broughman wants to improve the display at the CNI Farmer's Market table. He reports CNI had a table at the Market 9-10 Saturdays this year and he was disappointed in the low number of people attracted to it. But he believes it is important for CNI to be there. Broughman has a number of suggestions to improve the display for next year: he wants to update the banner and make it more colorful; to get a better, more professional-looking card table or a "portable kiosk;" to re-design our membership cards; to have current issues of the "Downtown dialogue" available at the table; and to have table staffers prepared to give the CNI "party line" as to what we represent.

Stitt noted that a portable kiosk allows us to incorporate whatever "face" we want, it could be used elsewhere, and we may not need a banner if we have a kiosk. It could be a \$1,500 item. Stitt commented that the kiosks currently used by the BID are "trashy" and are not a good representation of Madison. Skrentny added that we could "switch out" parts of a kiosk as CNI changes. Stitt suggested that Broughman develop a plan and a budget. Christiansen cautioned there are Farmer's Market permit restrictions on the footprint a group uses and they might require using a card table. Mohs asked what we want to accomplish: to get new members or to inform the audience about us? Mohs believes the "best news" is that Broughman is willing to do this. Patterson noted the old banner had a large map. He suggested changing that image to one of people doing things

downtown. Yarborough added we should stress the concept of neighbors and neighborhoods over that of the “Capitol.” Devitt knows someone who has a used display device we might be able use.

Plotkin encouraged Broughman to work with Stitt, Patterson and Devitt to come up with ideas and make a proposal to the Finance Committee.

### **Demolition Protocol.**

Ostlind has nothing new to report on the possible development of a CNI demolition protocol by the Development Review Oversight Committee.

### **Parking Subcommittee.**

Devitt has nothing to report.

## **VI. DISTRICT REPORTS.**

### **James Madison Park.**

Steakley reports the steering committee for the APEX development proposal for the 300 block of E. Mifflin St. met last night (9/21) at Gates of Heaven. The committee is chaired by Erik Paulson and Pee Ostlind serves on it. There was a “full house.” APEX representatives made a presentation describing plans for a development on top of the McCormack ramp and on Mifflin St. According to Steakley, the tone of the discussion was “critical,” with Capitol Point residents complaining about the loss of lake views and sight lines. Attendees expressed concerns about demolition and historic preservation on Mifflin St. Steakley said this is the first step in an ongoing process. In response to a question by Plotkin, Steakley said he is not sure how serious they are about developing the McCormack ramp. The proposal so far for Mifflin St. is to demolish houses along Mifflin St., to re-position the Lamp House, and construct two towers with a walkway connecting them. There would be 104 or so rental units. He said there are now three different proposed designs for Mifflin St. The developers were not prepared to address engineering issues raised at the meeting and they might start with one part of the plan, with the rest occurring years from now.

Mayer commented that APEX is at a very preliminary stage, as they are with their other project downtown. Mayer believes they might not yet even have control of the properties. Plotkin agreed, noting that Eric Minton still owns one of the properties. Steakley noted that Minton was present at the meeting, as were the owners of the other three properties involved and Brenda Konkel.

### **Mansion Hill.**

Devitt reports there is a meeting tomorrow night (9/23) to discuss the Edgewater Hotel proposal.

### *Holy Redeemer*

Devitt reports there was a meeting last night (9/21) at Holy Redeemer for parishioners to discuss the parish’s proposal to lease their parking lot for construction of an apartment building on Gorham St. The new building would then be donated to the church after 33 years. The building would house subsidized low and medium income residents. Some 40 parking stalls would be lost. The primary focus of this meeting was

how it would affect the parishioners. Devitt described the developer as “forthcoming” and willing to stay within the 50 ft. height limit. He said there will be another meeting next week with the neighborhood. Zellers reports that a vote was taken of those who attended and most were strongly opposed to the project. She said the developer hopes to attract families, including church parishioners, with 1, 2 and 3 bedroom units. Devitt suggested at the meeting that the parish consider opening a school downtown, like the Waldorf School in Milwaukee, to help attract families. Devitt said concerns expressed at the meeting included: the lack of green space, the perceived “greed” of the Catholic Church, the loss of parking spaces especially for seniors. Patterson agreed that green space is needed to attract families; suggesting a modest parking ramp with a “green” roof as a solution.

### *The Edgewater*

The Edgewater saga continues, according to Mohs. He reports there was a meeting with developer Bob Dunn last Friday at the Municipal Building where Dunn proposed removing the top 20 ft. of the 1970s-era addition to the hotel that, Mohs said, would dramatically improve the view. The 1940s era Edgewater building might be changed into condos. Cars (and perhaps busses) would drive down the hill and enter a parking lot. It sounds good, he said, but there could be access issues and there remains the issue regarding the height of the new hotel building to the east. It would rise 90-100 ft. above the Edgewater building to the west. Dunn is considering constructing a large central heating station for everything on the block. Dunn has also developed a plan for the entire block which would include the demolition of the Guardian Life building and every house on the block except for Devitt’s. Mohs asked how this will all fit in to the new zoning code and into the existing historic district.

Mohs reports further that he and others had a model, constructed at the cost to themselves of \$10,000, containing the proposed new building within the entire area between Carroll and Pinckney Sts., and Gilman to Lake Sts. According to Mohs, the model shows the proposed high-rise hotel to be “shockingly – grossly huge” and its impact is “breathtaking.” It belittles everything around it. Devitt added that, just like the model done for the Quisling 12-story tower proposal years ago, this model shows that the proposed building is “massive.” Hammes Co. refused to build a model, Devitt noted. This shows why, according to Devitt, we should always encourage construction of models. This model can be re-used for future development proposals in Mansion Hill. While Mohs concedes the new proposal provides an improved view and reveals more of the 1947 building, it is still out of balance. There is another meeting with Dunn set for tomorrow night (9/23) to discuss this further.

Mohs described the discussions as “civil.” Many other factors will influence this project, including any demands that the chosen “flagship” hotel might make. Mohs believes there is still “a long way to go.” They intend to show the model to several influential individuals including the Mayor, as well as fraternity leaders to point out the implications for their fraternities. There will be a showing of the model at Fred Mohs’ home on Friday (9/25) at 5:30 p.m. Patterson suggested showing the model to the press. Mohs said that will occur when the model is finished. Stitt suggested putting it on display in a public building such as the lobby of the U.S. Bank.

Zellers commented that John Martin has helped in providing access to the “real” plans as opposed to the “fantasy view.” Mohs notes that former Mayor Joe Sensenbrenner has formed another group called, “Don’t put a mustache on the Mona Lisa.” In response to a question by Stitt, things changed when the neighborhood, with the help of John Martin, pointed out discrepancies in the proposal to the Landmarks and Urban Design Commissions. Zellers added the developers would need to go through Zoning Appeals for approval because of the request for a variance of the lakeside setbacks; this could end up in circuit court, she added. Zellers also noted that Hammes hosted fraternity leaders in the company’s private sky box at a recent Packer game. Mayer commented that recent developments in this saga show we are not “crack pots;” the developers could have saved a lot of money and effort had they worked with us from the beginning.

Stitt reports the Downtown Living Tour is in good shape, with ten properties so far, along with ten “places of interest” on the tour in Mansion Hill and James Madison Park districts (i.e., Period Garden Park, Gates of Heaven, Masonic Temple, etc.). There are 50 volunteers so far, and more are needed. The tour is Sunday Oct. 4, from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Registration is at the Mansion Hill Inn courtesy of its new owners, Trek Bicycles. Stitt commented that John Cerniglia of DMI has been “wonderful” to work with. Plotkin thanked Stitt and Cooper for all of their work on this.

Plotkin reports district residents will meet with city staff to discuss the downtown plan. There is still time for public comment.

#### **Bassett.**

Mayer reports the neighborhood cleanup, organized by Brendan McGrath, will take place Saturday October 10th from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

According to Plotkin, Verveer has made it clear to the developers that the community room must remain part of the Badger Bus site proposal. The prospective tenant, CVS Pharmacy, will not be allowed a liquor license, but they may try to get an exemption when the alcohol density plan comes up for renewal.

The steering committee for the APEX project met two weeks ago with another scheduled for next week. The project is moving slowly and is “nebulous.” According to Mayer, APEX has never been involved in a project of this size. He added they have backed off their aggressive timetable and will now not submit a formal proposal until January.

#### **Mifflin West.**

Yarborough reports the scheduled Sept. 10th meeting was adjourned at the suggestion of Verveer so that the district could consider the effect of the downtown plan on W. Mifflin St. The plan includes a proposal for changing the height limits on Mifflin St., from 2-3 stories to 4-6 stories. Yarborough said there are “mixed feelings” about this. Verveer wants the district to take a stand on the height proposal before the plan goes into effect on January 1, 2010. Anyone who wants to comment on the plan should go to the city planning department or send them an e-mail explaining what you want in the plan. Yarborough suggested getting a grant for a Mifflin West entrance sign similar to Bassett and First Settlement. Patterson suggested contacting Findorff who helped design the Bassett sign. He also suggested encouraging the use of the existing housing stock on Mifflin St. as part of the plan; he wants the city to look for alternatives to demolition.

Yarborough reports that developers are interested in developing the corner of W. Wash. and Broom St. Roundabouts have also been suggested for the intersections at W. Wash and Regent and another at W. Wash. and Park St.; something she calls a “terrible idea.” Berger added the plan is not yet a “done deal.”

### **First Settlement.**

Skrentny is also concerned about proposals in the downtown plan to allow for ten-story buildings in First Settlement. District residents intend to express their concerns to the Planning Dept. and meet with representatives, to explain the incompatibility in the city’s plan with the historic district and the neighborhood plan. Skrentny described the maps as “contradictory,” believing there is one map for developers and one for the neighborhood. This will all have to be done in the next few weeks, he added.

According to Skrentny, the district supports the Cardinal Bar liquor license application by Ricardo Gonzalez, who has retaken ownership and control of the bar. A letter of support was sent to the ALRC. He notes that Ricardo has had a good relationship with the neighborhood in the past.

There will be bi-monthly district meetings. They hope to use the CNI listserv to promote the district and link to a map showing criminal activity downtown (as discussed earlier). He will discuss this with Phelps.

The Gebhardt Co. wants to move forward with their proposal for the old O’Cayz Corral site on Franklin and Wilson Sts. The height proposed is lower than the Cardinal building, but it is opposed by residents of Germania Condominiums. The district wants a high level design for this “gateway” property. A steering committee will be formed.

Problems continue with tenants at the 14 S. Franklin St. residence. Police are working with neighbors. Joe Schnick, a neighbor, reports some progress but it is a matter of opinion whether it is enough. Skrentny said residents must continue to put pressure on the owner and on authorities to emphasize that this is a problem.

Skrentny announced that Joe Schnick, a First Settlement resident on Franklin St., has agreed to fill the district representative vacancy on the EC on an interim basis. Schnick said he is willing to serve. A MOTION by Mohs, with a SECOND by Skrentny, that Joe Schnick be appointed to fill the First Settlement Neighborhood Representative vacancy on the EC on an interim basis, is APPROVED.

## **VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS.**

### **Education and City Issues Monitoring.**

Patterson has nothing to report.

### **Garden.**

Yarborough reports the committee is being formed.

### **Program.**

A presentation by members of WORT-FM radio station: Thursday, Sept. 24, 2009, 7:00 p.m., at Capitol Lakes retirement Center, 333 W. Main St.

Sheridan Glen will provide a Postcard Glimpse of Madison Architecture and History at the Thursday, October 22, 2009, program, 7:00 p.m., at Capitol Lakes.

The CNI Holiday Party is Thursday, December 3, 2009, 7:00 p.m., at Kennedy Manor, 1 Langdon Street.

A new committee chair is needed now that Patsy Baynard has moved to Texas.

**Downtown Living Tour.**

See above.

**Finance.**

Christiansen has nothing to report.

**Development.**

The attorney has received another IRS inquiry regarding our § 501(c)3 application. Plotkin reminded everyone to contact their alders soon with any concerns about the downtown plan.

**Zoning Code Re-Write.**

Zellers has nothing to report.

MEETING ADJOURNED.

**NEXT EC MEETING: *Tuesday October 27, 2009, 5:15 p.m., State Capitol, Rm. 415 NW.***

AGENDA\* FOR OCT 27 EC MEETING

- I. CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM.
- II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF SEPT. EC MINUTES.
- III. TREASURER'S REPORT.
- IV. REPORT ON SAFETY/CRIME DOWNTOWN.
- VI. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS:
  - EC Retreat.**
  - CNI Demolition Protocol (Ostlind).**
  - Farmer's Market Table (Broughman).**
- VII. OLD BUSINESS:
  - Housing Inventory (Glen).**
  - Parking (Devitt).**
- VIII. DISTRICT REPORTS
  - Bassett, Mifflin West, Mansion Hill, James Madison Park, First Settlement.**
- IX. COMMITTEE REPORTS.
  - ASM Student Liaison, Program, Membership/Media, Development, Finance, Development Review Oversight, Garden, Downtown Plan, Zoning Code Re-Write, Downtown Living Tour, Education and City Issues Monitoring, Physical Linkages, President's Report.**
- X. ADJOURNMENT.

\* Agenda subject to change by Plotkin before and at the EC meeting.