

CAPITOL NEIGHBORHOODS, INC.

MINUTES of Executive Council Meeting Held January 27, 2015.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Queensland (Vice-President) chaired the meeting in Vercauteren's absence. Cooper, Ostlind, Warman, Ingebritson, Plotkin, Fabick, Stitt, Fisher, Mayer, Skrentny, Kamps, O'Brien and Ald. Verveer.

GUESTS PRESENT: Adam Brabender, Samantha Negrin, Rosemary Lee.

- I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER by Queensland. There is a quorum.
- II. MINUTES of November EC Meeting (there was no meeting in Dec.) are APPROVED; on MOTION by Ostlind, SECOND by Cooper.
- III. DOWNTOWN POLICE REPORT. No one present due to police training. There will be a new Central District Lieutenant, Amy Schwartz. She replaces Lt. Kelly Donahue.
- IV. TREASURER'S REPORT. Plotkin reports a bank balance of \$13,571.16; consisting of \$4,838.68 in checking, and \$8,732.48 in CDs.
- V. NEW BUSINESS.

Period Garden Grant Application. Plotkin reports that Joe Bonardi wishes to apply for a neighborhood grant for signage in Period Garden Park that would describe the history of the park and of Mansion Hill. Bonardi intends to apply on behalf of CNI and needs EC approval to do so. Ostlind asked whether this grant would involve matching funds. Plotkin answered it would not, but we would front him the money and get reimbursed with the grant money. Stitt asked whether CNI's name would appear on the signage. Plotkin did not know. Stitt believes it is important that both CNI and Mansion Hill be recognized. Plotkin will tell Bonardi that the signage should recognize CNI and Mansion Hill.

A MOTION by Plotkin, with a SECOND by Stitt, that the CNI EC authorize Joe Bonardi to apply for a neighborhood grant to fund signage in Period Garden Park, with the condition that the signage recognizes CNI and Mansion Hill, is APPROVED.

- VI. OLD BUSINESS.

CNI Communication System Upgrade. Mayer reports that he met with Vercauteren and Scott Kolar to discuss upgrading the current website with Wild Apricot software. In November, we approved a \$700 budget item to subscribe to the Wild Apricot membership processing software. We would also explore the cost of website conversion. Mayer said a decision will be made before the next EC meeting. Cooper asked why there are no recent Bassett meeting minutes on the website. Mayer did not know. Plotkin noted that the Finance Committee was to consider website conversion using Wild Apricot, but would also seek input from other vendors. Finance committee will meet with Mayer, Jeff and Scott about this.

VII. DISTRICT REPORTS.

Bassett. Cooper introduced guest Bassett resident Samantha Negrin who is considering filling the vacant neighborhood representative seat in the district.

Two weeks ago, the Board of Estimates approved TIF funding for the Anchor Bank project. Last week, the full city council referred approval to the next city council meeting due to some confusion as to what the TIF would involve.

The Inn on the Park redesign is going through the city approval process now. They have received a zoning variance for the ninth floor, a small part of which infringes on the Hamilton St. view shed. The infringement might be accommodated by rounding off the corner on the front of the building, Cooper said. The project may go before the UDC a second time tomorrow (1/28). Queensland noted that they are on the UDC agenda for tomorrow (under “unfinished business”).

The Delta Storage owners want to combine and rezone the properties they own in the 600 block of W. Main and W. Doty Sts. from DR-II to UMX. This has raised concerns because one parcel abuts Fourth Ward Lofts. It is not clear why they are moving forward with this when they insist they have no plans at present to develop the properties. Skrentny observed that, if they get rezoning to UMX, they could sell the property at a higher price without developing it.

First Settlement. Skrentny reports that the 6-story, 30-unit apartment proposed for 300 E. Wilson has received final approval. The developers made design changes that received UDC approval a second time after the Plan Commission had initially rejected the project but then approved it with the changes. Construction is expected to begin this spring.

There is a neighborhood meeting tomorrow (1/28) at the Majestic, 7:00 p.m., to discuss the proposed hotel on the site of the parking lot at King and Webster Sts.

James Madison Park. Fisher reports that the North Central Group has come up with a new design for the Pahl Tire site. Queensland noted that this is also on the UDC agenda for tomorrow (1/28). Ostlind reports the developers have made significant changes. They have doubled the parking and moved the drop-off from the curb and opened up the ground level. The top two floors will have a bar and restaurant open to the public. There is, however, still an issue of shading of the Lamp House. In response to a question by Cooper, Ostlind is not sure whether these changes have made the number of rooms smaller.

Fisher reports that his home was recently broken into, the rear door was kicked in, and items were stolen from the second floor. Skrentny reports that he also had packages stolen from his front porch. He is considering installing a camera. Fisher said he has now installed a camera, motion lights and an alarm. This was the first time since the 1970's that Fisher has had a break-in. Queensland commented that these “quality of life” crimes really matter to downtown residents. Protective measures such as those taken by Fisher are necessary and send a message. It is important that we as residents tell police how important this is to us.

Mansion Hill. Ingebritson reports that many issues persist with the bright exterior lighting at the Edgewater, and the matter has now been turned over to the City Attorney. In response to a question by Queensland, Ingebritson explained that the Edgewater had until October 4 to address the lighting issues but hasn't done so.

Ingebritson also reports that the Landmarks Ordinance Review Committee has been hard at work and will have an all-day meeting this coming Saturday (1/31) at room LL-110 in the Municipal Building. All are welcome to attend. She said that Mary Mohs is recovering at home from serious heart surgery and is doing well.

Plotkin reports that, at the urging of Ald. Zellers, preliminary discussions are underway regarding neighborhood signage for Mansion Hill similar to what was done in First Settlement. This discussion started in Tenney-Lapham, and Zellers brought it to Mansion Hill's attention. Plotkin also announced that the 200 and 300 blocks of N. Pinckney St., between Dayton and Gorham, will be reconstructed next summer over a 3½ month period. This will include undergrounding of utilities, water and storm sewer work, tree removal (and replacement, hopefully), and more. He noted that the 300 block is in a TIF district that will pay for undergrounding of utilities. Ostlind added that the city has a policy where it will pay for part of the undergrounding and the homeowners on the street pay the balance. Plotkin believes the city will pay up to \$1,000 per homeowner. In response to a question by Stitt, Plotkin said this would be period lighting similar to what is in Bassett.

Mifflin West. Kamps thanked district resident Adam Brabender for joining us tonight. Kamps thanked Ostlind for his work with the group reviewing the AV Ventures development proposal for the container site at Bedford and Mifflin Sts. The developer has been sensitive to neighborhood input and is far along in the process. A final neighborhood meeting to discuss the process with the development review group will take place February 16 or 17. Kamps commented it is "refreshing" that the process has worked "admirably well."

Demolition has begun for the "Johnson Bend" project by Les Orosz at 400 W. Johnson. It will include four levels of underground parking with an elevator system that is the first of its kind in the upper Midwest. It allows for a better use of space. In response to a question by Ostlind, Kamps said the entry and turnaround area in the project was a significant issue that Verveer had said may be resolved, but Kamps doesn't know what has happened with it.

The State Historical/Veteran's Museum proposal for the top of Mifflin St. is back on track. Permanent improvements to the Philosopher's Grove area are on hold pending what will happen in the coming months with the museum site. Stitt asked about the "footprint" of the museum site. Kamps answered that it includes properties on the block between Fairchild and Carroll Streets. They include the "Silver Dollar" tavern, the State Historical Museum building, and the two adjacent buildings on the Square owned by Fred Mohs. Ostlind noted that the state is also negotiating with Hovde to get some sort of a condominium lease arrangement. Cooper added that there could be some residential space in the project. According to Cooper, both the Veteran's and the Historical museums have had design work done and might combine on the site. Hovde is in the process of hiring an architect. The owners of the

“Silver Dollar” say they are not interested in selling. This might end up with eminent domain if they do not sell. Mayer is a member of the Downtown Coordinating Committee looking into solutions for the Philosopher’s Grove area. Despite the recent developments with the adjacent museum, there may still be physical changes to Philosopher’s Grove even if work on the museum proceeds. He added that the artist has consented to let the city do what is necessary to make the space work.

Brabender referenced a recent *Capital Times* article reporting that County supervisor Mary Kolar voted against a \$5,000 grant to the Dane County Sheriff Dept. for marijuana interdiction.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS. Nothing to report.

IX. REPORTS OF THE ALDERPERSONS.

Verveer reports there is a meeting tomorrow night (1/28), 7:00 p.m., at the Majestic to discuss the proposed hotel on the parking lot site at King and Webster Sts.

The \$13.3 million TIF request for the Anchor Bank property has been referred by the city council because the recommendation for approval by the Board of Estimates was defective; it was not applicable to ULI and Anchor as drafted. Verveer said it will be corrected and presented again at the next council meeting. Verveer believes the request is not controversial even though it would be one of the largest TIF grants. The SIP for the apartments on Doty St. is on hold while ULI works out issues with the neighboring Baskerville residents. They hope to submit the SIP within the next few weeks. Verveer suggested that this be included on the February Bassett meeting agenda. Fisher asked why ULI can’t cover the cost of parking when they will own 75% of the office space. Verveer answered that he is relying heavily on the analysis done by the TIF director and staff. Stitt remarked that “it’s a game,” to which Skrentny added, that the TIF money comes from the schools.

Verveer expressed appreciation for Cooper’s letters regarding the Inn on the Park redesign.

Verveer reports that Les Orosz has been unable to secure demolition permits for the “Johnson Bend” project at 429-35 W. Johnson because the staff signoff process is still proceeding. One major issue is the plaza in front of the building. City Planning is focusing on design and landscaping, whereas traffic engineering is focusing on traffic, parking and delivery issues. Verveer has encouraged the two agencies to communicate with each other. Kamps said he will ask for an update at the next Mifflin West district meeting Feb. 4.

The Chicago-based developers of the “Hub,” scheduled to open on State. St. this summer, may propose a “Hub II” across Gilman St. on a vacant site owned by the Mullins family where Gorham turns into University at Bassett St. The proposal would be for a 12-story tower that will add to the “canyon effect” in that area. The developers are working with Vander Walle and Associates. They plan to market toward Epic and professional residents. A neighborhood meeting will be scheduled soon, perhaps in the second week of February. The project is in the State/Langdon district. According to Verveer, the developers have been unable to get hold of State/Langdon President Chris Hoffman. They may come to CNI for assistance. Ingebritson asked whether this lot was supposed to be set aside as a park. Verveer

answered that the city had approved construction of a large apartment building on that site by Mullins in the early 90s and they could still erect a building there. The Mullins no longer want to build there, but are selling the property to someone who will. As far as parkland is concerned, Verveer said the city council approved a resolution directing city staff to negotiate the purchase of land in the area of Bassett and Johnson Sts. to be set aside as park land. The city has budgeted \$7 million in segregated park acquisition funds and it was made a high priority in the downtown plan. The problem is finding a willing seller. Orosz and Mullins have already declined, he noted. Stitt suggested that the city require a developer to include a pocket park as part of a development. If people make it clear to the city they want a park, the city could then say it won't sign off on a development unless the developer does it. Stitt asked whether there are enough people at "ground level" willing to hold their ground on this. Stitt is concerned about the low level of energy at tonight's meeting on these matters. He encouraged young people with the energy to get involved and hold their ground on these matters. Verveer answered, it is a point well taken. Warman suggested that a negotiable point would be to not charge developers city park fees in exchange for their agreement to include park space in their developments.

The Board of Estimates approved a new RFP last night (1/26) for Judge Doyle Square. The current committee will be "moth-balled" and the Board of Estimates will become the hotel committee, according to Verveer. It will go before the city council next week. There are still controversies centering on TIF money.

Verveer reports that North Central may be interested in a second hotel downtown in addition to the one on the Pahl Tire site. The belief is that the new hotel rooms will be absorbed, just as the hotel rooms that have come on line recently have been absorbed.

Mayer reports that the public toilet location committee has been meeting every two weeks and has discussed various options. Mayer said he favors setting up porta-potties in several areas downtown with usage meters to determine where the greatest need is to guide future decisions. Another option is to consider the feasibility of including public toilets when a new building is proposed. Mayer said State St. businesses presented at the last meeting, and the committee will meet with the homeless at the next meeting.

Verveer discussed the State Street Planning Initiative. City committees are considering a resolution for a two-year planning process with the objective of maintaining a healthy retail mix on State St. They may consider issues such as removing buses from State St. and making State St. a national historic district. If the resolution is approved, the city would create a special committee that would include CNI members.

Liquor license applications have increased due in part to the Mayor's desire to put a moratorium on liquor licenses on State St. in favor of more retail. The ALRC considered seven new license applications for State St. and the Square last week alone. There were six new applications, and the license for Johnny O's is being sold. Stitt said the issue for the city is how we maintain the character of State St. that is so essential to the health and well-being of the city, when market forces favor more alcohol. The market could change over time. Instead of political posturing, we must have a serious

conversation about it. According to Stitt, retail shopping areas in some university towns have maintained their integrity while others have not. He cited Chapel Hill, North Carolina as an example of a town where integrity has not been maintained and it has become “a mess.” Stitt discussed CNI’s history in addressing alcohol-related issues affecting downtown. We succeeded in getting some limitations in place for several years. Unfortunately, CNI’s initiatives became highjacked by a group that was anti-alcohol. Stitt urged the committee to look worldwide to see how other university communities have maintained their integrity. He noted that state law puts limits on the number of liquor licenses in any community based on population. He believes the city of Madison should put limits on the number of licenses in any one geographic area of the city. This is a reasonable quality of life issue. Queensland thanked Stitt for his comments. In response to Ostlind’s question, Verveer said two of the applications are not for restaurants, whereas the others are. Verveer noted that the Alcohol License Density Ordinance (ALDO) passed in 2007 exempted restaurants, defined as having at least 50% in food sales. The ALDO was allowed to “sunset” last summer except for the 500-600 blocks of State St., University Ave. and adjoining streets. According to Verveer, the mayor is opposed to the 130 craft beer bar proposed for the “Bop” retail site and the Quaker Steak and Lube site on State and Gorham Sts. It will be 55% alcohol, mostly beer. The mayor wants to keep the “Bop” site retail. A craft beer bar and restaurant called “New Brews” was also approved for the new “Ovation” building. A “Collectivo” coffee shop is opening up on State and Frances Sts. Skrentny asked whether the mayor would veto liquor license applications for what was previously retail space. Verveer is not sure, but believes the mayor cares very deeply about this. The mayor appeared at the December ALRC meeting, he said. Stitt commented that the “bottom line” for downtown is its residential character and livability. This requires taking a multiplicity of small stands. We must get coordinated and be clear.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

At Mayer’s suggestion, the meeting concluded with a discussion of the upcoming mayoral candidates forum sponsored jointly by CNI and DMI at which Mayor Soglin said he will be unable to appear due to a scheduling conflict. The conference is Jan. 29, 6:30 p.m., at the Concourse. Cooper believes it is unacceptable that the forum does not include the current mayor. It makes us look “ridiculous.” Ingebritson remarked that this can’t happen again. She added that some people believe we did not include the mayor because they think we don’t like him. It makes us look incompetent, she believes. Kamps said he is very unhappy with how the mayor and his campaign handled this. He believes the mayor should have made the effort to be here, but chose not to. Queensland concurred, noting that the mayor was scheduled to be at a planning conference in Baltimore that runs from Wed. through Sat. but he planned to return on Friday. It is “disappointing” that he was unwilling to be flexible enough to make it a priority to be back for Thursday night’s forum. Queensland noted that DMI is involved in the forum, too. At the forum, Vercauteren and DMI President Dan Lee will ask questions of the candidates. Mayer, as a past-president of CNI, knows how difficult it was for Jeff to organize this; you just don’t have enough time, he said. It is easy now to second-guess, but it can be “like herding cats” to organize an event like this. It is unfortunate that the mayor could not make a different choice with his time, Mayer added. Stitt agrees with Cooper’s comments. Regardless of who is at fault, we don’t want this to happen and one would think the mayor’s office wouldn’t want this to happen either. What matters is our

integrity and credibility. Stitt also found to be “very disturbing” the lack of diplomatic language in the various e-mails that went back and forth. Stitt suggested that we put this item on the agenda for our next EC meeting with Mayor Soglin.

MEETING ADJOURNED (on MOTION by Warman, SECOND by Plotkin).

NEXT EC MEETING: *Tuesday February 24, 5:15 p.m., Central Library (third floor).*

AGENDA for February 24 EC Meeting

- I. CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM (Vercauteren).
- II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF JANUARY EC MINUTES.
- III. TREASURER’S REPORT (Plotkin).
- IV. DOWNTOWN POLICE REPORT.
- V. ACTION ITEMS/NEW BUSINESS:
- VI. OLD BUSINESS

 Report on 1/29 Mayoral Candidates Forum;

 CNI Storage/Office Space;

 CNI Website/Membership Changes (“Wild Apricot”);

 Other.
- VII. DISTRICT REPORTS: **Mansion Hill, Bassett, Mifflin West, First Settlement, James Madison Park.**
- VIII. ALDERPERSONS’ REPORTS.
- IX. PRESIDENT’S REPORT (Vercauteren).
- X. COMMITTEE REPORTS: **Program (open), Membership/Media/Development (open), Policy (Vercauteren), DROC (Ostlind), Finance (Plotkin), Physical Linkages (Mayer), Garden (open), Education and City Issues Monitoring (open), Judge Doyle Square (Plotkin).**
- XI. ADJOURNMENT.

***Agenda subject to change by Vercauteren.**