

CAPITOL NEIGHBORHOODS, INC.

MINUTES of Executive Council Meeting Held Tuesday July 28, 2015.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vercauteren (President), Plotkin, Mohs, Ostlind, Cooper, Queensland, Brabender, Stitt, Warman, Broughman, Ingebritson, Devitt, Negrin, Mayer and O'Brien.

GUESTS PRESENT: John Morgan, David Harris, Elaine and Dave Glowoski (from Nichols Station).

- I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER by Vercauteren. There is a quorum.
- II. MINUTES of both the May EC meeting and the June Annual Membership Meeting are APPROVED without change; on MOTION by Ostlind, SECOND by Mohs.
- III. TREASURER'S REPORT. Plotkin reports a bank balance of \$13,678.78. He said we are on track for the year with regard to expenses and revenues. Stitt asked why we have a balance over \$13,000. Plotkin explained that the balance has been steadily increasing and that it went up when we recently cashed in our CDs.
- IV. NEW BUSINESS.

Annual Election of EC Officers. Vercauteren announced that Steve Fabick has temporarily moved out of the neighborhood and is, therefore, no longer able to serve on the EC. We now have 20 EC members. Vercauteren urged us to invite anyone who may be interested in filling one of the vacant district representative seats.

Vercauteren opened the floor for nominations of candidates to serve as officers on the EC for the next year.

President – Stitt nominated Vercauteren to serve another term as President; SECOND by Mohs. There were no other nominations.

Vice-President – Queensland announced that he will not seek a second term as Vice-President due to recent life changes, including the birth of his son. He said it has been a privilege and an honor to serve. Vercauteren thanked Queensland for his service. Brabender nominated Fred Mohs, but Mohs declined. Mohs is, however, said he is still willing to serve on the EC.

Plotkin nominated Samantha Negrin for Vice-President; SECOND by Brabender. Negrin agreed to serve. There were no other nominations.

Treasurer – Queensland nominated Adam Plotkin to serve another term as Treasurer; SECOND by Cooper. Plotkin agreed to serve another term.

Secretary – Stitt nominated Dan O'Brien to serve another term as Secretary; SECOND by Ostlind. O'Brien agreed to serve another term.

A MOTION by Warman, with a SECOND by Mohs, to approve the slate of officers as nominated for the next year, is APPROVED. Accordingly, the following officers are chosen to serve for the next term:

President – Jeff Vercauteren;

Vice-President – Samantha Negrin;

Treasurer – Adam Plotkin;

Secretary – Dan O’Brien.

Strategic Plan for the Next Year.

Vercauteren summarized last year's accomplishments. We approved a strategic plan that he believes was implemented well. Membership was a big part. There were three main priorities: Membership upgrade; website upgrade; and increasing communication and coordination with other entities. We have now laid that foundation.

Vercauteren believes that the priority for this year should be to find ways to increase membership. We can use our new website and look for ways to improve outreach toward that end. This is a good time to focus on membership with the significant growth in downtown residents. Negrin suggested that we also focus this year on more input from and outreach to members. We can do so by making more resources available to residents. Stitt added that if we are to focus on improving membership, we should invest money in it. Mohs commented that we need to take a leadership role in addressing downtown problems, including issues related to homelessness. We should ask whether we like the way things are and, if not, how we can improve them. We could take a position and invite open discussion. We must decide whether to take this on. Vercauteren noted that yesterday (7/27) DMI invited us for input into a draft statement regarding the establishment of behavioral standards for downtown, similar to standards already in place for the Central Library and the Senior Center. He added that this would give us an immediate opportunity to take part. Stitt said the focus of the discussion at this point should be on membership. Mohs responded that if we take on topics and propose solutions that appeal to people who live downtown, we will help increase membership. Stitt believes that we would have to invest money to see whether our constituency would support our positions on these topics. Vercauteren noted that we are already building a record of taking a leadership role on important downtown topics such as the MATC downtown campus and the audible Metro bus signals.

Stitt then commented on the recent proposal to locate a homeless shelter at what is now Bellini's restaurant on E. Wash. and Hancock Sts. Residents first learned of it in newspaper headlines. Stitt commented that there is a protocol to be followed and it was not followed here. Residents were not invited into that conversation. Vercauteren believes there will be a neighborhood meeting in August, adding that there are many pieces to this. Cooper reported that a topic of discussion at the July Bassett meeting was the proposal to open a homeless services center at the city maintenance building on Fairchild and Doty Sts. This discussion, he noted, also came about in response to a newspaper article

about that proposal. It spawned many questions. Present at the meeting to discuss it were County Supervisor Mary Kolar, Ald. Verveer and Steve Schuler from Porchlight. It was a nice discussion, Cooper added. He said the takeaway from the meeting was that nothing is happening immediately. He believes that once neighbors learned at the meeting more details about what may happen, their comfort level increased. Like Stitt, Cooper believes we should hear about these things sooner rather than later, and we should be at the table early on. Devitt agrees that they should come to us first before they announce these things. The next district meeting on August 26 will include all three downtown alders, two county supervisors, Steve Schuler of Porchlight, Jim O'Keefe from the city Economic Development office, and representatives from Grace Episcopal and the Salvation Army.

Mayer suggested that we take part in the Mayor's Design Awards next year in an effort to encourage better and exceptional building design. This is an important issue. He cited as an example a new building in the 900 block of Williamson St. that was approved without an exceptional design. Stitt suggested that CNI sponsor a program with experts on residential and commercial design to educate the community on high quality design and to raise consciousness about good design. Guest David Harris suggested that we host a design sharette. Stitt agreed and suggested that we contact the UW-Milwaukee design school. Ostlind commented that architects act according to what the UDC likes and will accept. If we have such a program, Ostlind suggested that we include developers and UDC members to learn what could be done to liven things up. Vercauteren suggested Michael Rosenbaum, who is moving from Landmarks to UDC, as an interesting guest to discuss his views on good design in historic neighborhoods and changes that can be made. Stitt suggested that our newsletter regularly feature examples of good contemporary design. The focus would be on good design as the positive message, encouraging more of it downtown. Vercauteren and Cooper cited current examples of good design in Bassett. We can discuss what we like about the design of new buildings and what would make them better. Devitt suggested engaging UW in this process to discuss the design of new buildings on campus. Guest Morgan noted that some campus buildings were designed as "fortresses." Devitt agreed, noting that such design was in response to the 1960s campus riots. Ostlind pointed out that the Development Review Oversight Committee (DROC) held similar design discussions regularly in the past. This would require several programs and we would have to bring in experts. Mohs said the Hovde Co. brought in five nationally-recognized architectural firms to design the new State Historical Museum. The objective, he said, was to create a dignified, permanent building that would look good next to the Capitol. According to Mohs, their models were amazing. Stitt commented that this is a great story that should be on the front page. Cooper noted that there will be a series of programs next fall through the spring at Monona Terrace sponsored by the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. He suggested that CNI become a co-sponsor and get some input into the programs.

Vercauteren will try to capture all of this and come up with a list of ideas for this coming year's projects in a document that he will circulate before the August EC meeting. People can decide what they would be interested in and willing to work on.

Proposed Changes to Membership Levels.

The Finance Committee proposed changes to our current membership levels. The committee proposed creating new categories for students (\$10) and non-profit organizations (\$50), and changing the name of the old "Sponsor" category to "Neighborhood Partner." In response to Ostlind's question about increasing advertising rates in the newsletter and on the website, Vercauteren pointed out that in the future we may not have a paper newsletter and these membership levels will help continue financial support even if there is no newsletter advertising revenue. We will have sponsorship even without newsletter sponsorships. But, he added, we could also have both, where a company would sign up as a membership partner but would also sponsor a specific event in the newsletter.

Mohs was "cool" to the idea of a student membership level because they tend to come and go. Harris believes that engagement with students would help us long-term. We can learn from them, he said. Vercauteren pointed out that, as Mayer had suggested, we could make student membership electronic only. This would save money, he added, because the newsletter is our largest expense. Mayer added that we could make student membership free if the goal is to attract members and participation. Devitt added that students now have more of an interest in living downtown after they graduate. He believes that it is our job to reach out to students and change their attitudes toward the downtown as other communities have. Vercauteren would like to see the State/Langdon district back in the fold. Stitt pointed out that Scott Resnick, when he was a student, was very active in getting the State/Langdon district out of CNI and it now does not exist. He added that it is difficult to keep students engaged and loyal. Brabender suggested that we have categories for both students and low income people. Vercauteren would not favor free membership. Stitt would favor a \$10 student level along with a level for self-identified "low income" people. Ostlind noted that, technically, one could obtain all of our services for free if they wanted. Vercauteren favors the proposed \$10 student fee and would like to come up with a better term than "Low Income." Mayer suggested "Sliding Scale." Mohs suggested that if people have trouble paying, we just waive the fee. Mayer added that we could sponsor them. Morgan supports the \$10 fee if we think it is fair. Devitt agrees we should charge a fee. Stitt suggested including an optional "Pay What You Want" line on the membership form. Mayer and Plotkin pointed out that there may be technical limitations with some of these suggestions, but they will check with Scott Kolar.

A MOTION by Cooper, with a SECOND by Stitt, to adopt the membership levels suggested by the Finance Committee and to explore options for a low income/sliding scale membership mechanism, is APPROVED. As a result, the following membership levels are approved:

Individual - \$20;

Household - \$30;

Student (on-line only) \$10;

Flex Member* (on-line only and open to anyone unable to pay the full rate);

Non-Profit - \$50;

Business - \$100;

Neighborhood Partner** - \$250;

Community Partner** - \$500.

*The Flex Membership level is only proposed at this time and still requires EC approval.

**The Neighborhood Partner and Community Partner levels are for businesses who want to provide support above and beyond the standard business level. The benefits at these levels include putting their logos on the CNI website, and giving them recognition in the newsletter and at the Annual Membership Meeting.

V. OLD BUSINESS

Madison College Update. Mohs has nothing new to report on the July meeting of the college's Board regarding their proposed move out of the downtown campus.

VI. DISTRICT REPORTS

Bassett. Cooper reported on the July district meeting. There were around 75 attendees. As noted above, the proposed relocation of the shelter for the homeless from Grace Episcopal to the city maintenance facility at Fairchild and Doty Sts. was a major topic of discussion. The city facility would not become a day shelter but would become a facility for homeless services. Now, he said, the discussion is turning to moving the day shelter to the Bellini's Restaurant location on E. Wash. There will be an RFP in the fall. The discussion was good and it was important that residents had a chance to discuss this, he added. Ostlind noted that Grace Episcopal wants to relocate the shelter there due to planned remodeling at the church. They are also planning ahead for the impact of the Hove project nearby. He added that the shelter at Grace is "pathetic." Cooper explained that Grace was never designed to perform that function. He added that only a small portion of the city maintenance building would be used for homeless services; mostly "dead space." Police vehicles would still be parked there.

According to Cooper, the new building at 425 W. Wash., housing an optometrist's office, apartments and a health club, did not conform to the approved design. There are many small issues that the city wants resolved. The steering committee met with the building's architect, John Sutton, to address these matters. There was also a tour of the building today. Cooper said that Sutton would not discuss the non-conforming exposed HVAC vents on the advice of counsel because the city has taken him to court over it. Ostlind added that on today's tour, they saw patios that did not conform to the approved design, windows that did not go in as approved, vents and a rear fence that were not approved, and the HVAC issues. These changes were all rejected by the Plan Commission when the developers went back to request approval after-the-fact of these design changes. Cooper also noted that the developers were granted an extra story for "exceptional design." He believes the extra story would not have been approved now with all of these non-conforming issues.

Vercauteren reports that the Plan Commission at last night's meeting (7/27) approved, with district support, the request for a parking spot on Doty St. by the Funks, the owner-occupants of the former rental home across from Scott McConnell's home (who also supported it).

First Settlement. Stitt reports that the developers of the proposed King Hotel on King and Webster Sts. have been “wonderful.” An early neighborhood meeting was more in the nature of a “sales meeting” to present concepts and was not focused on the neighborhood. But, with Stitt’s encouragement, they have agreed to neighborhood meetings that will focus on how this project will affect First Settlement. The next neighborhood meeting is August 11, 7:00 p.m., at the M G & E Annex on Railroad and Blair Sts.

The law firm that owns the Progressive Building is proposing to redesign the building and add a third floor. Stitt believes that the developers and residents have come to a sense of understanding and are moving forward with great attention to details.

With regard to the proposed homeless day shelter at Bellini’s, Stitt believes that First Settlement residents may be more receptive to the idea, but the neighborhood has not been engaged in the process. Residents first learned of it in newspaper headlines and are “pissed off,” he said. Stitt believes that a homeless shelter can be located anywhere, but must be properly designed. It is a big challenge, he acknowledged. According to Vercauteren, a month ago the County Board budgeted \$2 million for a day shelter. Stitt noted that neighbors in the past defeated a proposed night club for the Bellini’s site and, as he told the developers of the King Hotel, Stitt does not want a project that will devalue properties in First Settlement.

Stitt also noted later on that, during the discussions about the King Hotel, some business people expressed concern that they are not permitted to be voting members of CNI. Cooper responded that they can still participate in district meetings. Stitt also would like to see King Street have its own Business Improvement District (BID).

James Madison Park. Elaine Glowoski discussed the ongoing construction at Nichols Station. The new apartments are scheduled to open in August and are no longer advertised as “luxury” units. Originally, they were to be condos but are now apartments. Glowoski is excited about the project and believes the building will look very nice when it is done. She hopes it will help increase the value of their property.

Mansion Hill. Devitt reports that he recently met with the engineers working on the street construction in the 200-300 block of N. Pinckney St. They have encountered a number of problems but hope to be done next week, he said. According to Devitt, they did not contact property owners when the water main broke. He told Ald. Zellers that the city’s construction contracts should require that engineers contact property owners when problems like this occur. Devitt reports that the Steensland house recently moved from the Bethel property will be ready for occupancy in August. The MATC flag was finally put back up. Finally, Devitt commented on the current apartment craze at the expense of condos. Based on his experience over thirty years, Devitt believes that this trend could change back to a preference for condos in three years or so because there will be a glut of apartments.

Miffland. Broughman reports that Madison Development Corp. is proposing a low income development at 400 W. Mifflin. It would be four stories with 40-50 units to open in 2016-17. The architecture fits in with the rest of the neighborhood and it includes front porches. Ostlind noted that it

is next to a site where a large apartment building was proposed in the past but, instead, a house was torn down and replaced by a new house. The new proposal would require demolition of three houses. The proposal was changed from five to four stories due to cost, he said. Mohs said he would oppose porches, citing homes on Schroeder and Gammon Rd. where a low income housing project with porches had many problems including drug dealing and prostitution. Ostlind responded that there is already a low income property in the 600 block of W. Mifflin without problems. Stitt added that management of such properties is very important and porches are important. It is all about who is in charge, he commented.

According to Broughman, the AT & T building is “a big mess” but they have tenants on three floors. The sidewalk is ruined. The project is taking shape but looks poor at this point. There are plans for a restaurant but the front won’t be done until October. Vercauteren said the windows look good and he suggested that we go on a tour of the building. Broughman noted that the developers offered to do a tour. Mayer added that they reopened the rear generator on Mifflin St.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership/Media. Mayer reviewed the new website as he projected it on a screen at the meeting. He expects that the new website will be launched by the end of the week. People can now sign up for memberships on-line. It has neighborhood maps that one can zoom in on. The chairs of each district can add information. One can pull up external sources to share. The newsletters have been archived. Information can be shared on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. In response to a question by Ingebritson, Mayer said the website has the capacity to carry district slide shows. He added that the bylaws can be easily searched in their actual text. Broughman asked whether the website includes our mission statement. Mayer agreed that it should be included. In response to a question by Vercauteren, Mayer said our contact information is not on the site as yet and will have to be added. Mayer encouraged everyone to go to the website, browse it and let him know of any issues.

MEETING ADJOURNED (on MOTION by Ostlind; SECOND by Brabender).

NEXT EC MEETING: *Tuesday, August 25, 2015, 5:15 p.m., Central Library (third floor).*

AGENDA for August 25 EC Meeting

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

CNI Membership Levels – remaining issues;

Other.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

Update on website/membership/communications system upgrade;

Madison College Downtown Campus update;

Update on recent and upcoming CNI programs;

Other.

VIII. DISTRICT REPORTS:

Mansion Hill, Bassett, Mifflin West, First Settlement, James Madison Park.

IX. ALDERPERSONS' REPORTS.

X. PRESIDENT'S REPORT (Vercauteren).

XI. 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).**

XII. ADJOURNMENT.

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