

## ***CAPITOL NEIGHBORHOODS, INC.***

### **MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING HELD AUGUST 25, 2015.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Vercauteren (President), Kamps, Warman, Ingebritson, Cooper, Ostlind, Negrin, Plotkin, Broughman, Mohs, Brabender, Fisher, Skrentny, Montes-Tydrich, O'Brien, Sup. Mary Kolar, and Ald. Verveer.

**GUESTS PRESENT:** Madison Police Officers Sean Kelly and Dan Hamilton; Elaine and David Glowoski.

I. **MEETING CALLED TO ORDER** by Vercauteren. There is a quorum.

II. **DOWNTOWN POLICE REPORT.**

Officer Kelly assigned to the Langdon district, and Officer Hamilton, a member of the Central District Policing Team, gave the report. Police are in the process of re-educating newly arriving students about safety precautions, preventing break-ins and alcohol issues. This was a good summer, but there have been a few incidents in the last couple of weeks. Plotkin asked about police service calls at Bethel. Hamilton believes the number of calls near the homeless shelter there are down recently, while the volume of calls at the City-County Building persists. He said police anticipate the movement of problems away from Philosopher's Grove into different areas. There were drug problems at Bethel in the late winter and spring, he noted. Those problems may pick up again as the weather changes. This is in the block across the street from Bethel between Carroll and Johnson Sts. There was a "huge decline" in calls there during construction, but police anticipate possible migration over there and loitering in the coming months.

Ingebritson asked whether there have been police calls to the picnic table area at MATC. Hamilton was not aware of any. Kelly pointed out that campus security would mostly take care of problems there. Kelly reports that police have initiated several projects to combat drinking, drug use and loitering that have helped. Kamps asked whether there are still issues with the Central Library. Kelly answered that there will always be because the library has become a de facto daytime shelter. Ostlind asked about the removal of seating space there. Hamilton answered that this means there is one less congregation area there, but people are now congregating at 100 N. Carroll St. near the Veteran's Museum. Kelly stated that drug dealing became easy at Philosopher's Grove but noted that complaints went down as several big arrests were made. Mary Kolar asked if there is any documentation of the number of people coming from out of town. Kelly answered that the "word of mouth" is that people are being dropped off here. He added that some are people who are let out of jail with no resources to go anywhere else. Hamilton added that Madison is also a regional hub.

Cooper asked about increased police resources on weekends. Hamilton answered that the Downtown Central Policing Team (DCPT) will have five extra bodies on duty around the 500 and 600 blocks of State St. and University Ave. from 7:30 p.m. to 3:00 a.m. on weekends, and they will provide "boot-fill" for the entire downtown. The Downtown Safety Initiative will also add officers especially on football weekends. Kelly said pamphlets with basic information are now being given to students. One suggestion is for residents to write down the serial numbers of valuables such as bikes in case they come up for sale on Craig's List, or something

similar. Kelly told us to let police know what they can do to help by direct contact or e-mail. He encouraged residents to report suspicious activity, use “no trespassing” signs, lock doors, talk to tenants and neighbors, and call the non-emergency number or use the “self-report” feature on line at MadisonPolice.com. Kelly noted that persistent neighbors in the Jenifer St. area helped bring about recent drug arrests there.

III. MINUTES of the July EC Meeting (with one change noted by Ostlind in the Bassett report, and to reflect the correct the spelling of the name Steve “Schooler” of Porchlight), are APPROVED; on MOTION by Plotkin, SECOND by Brabender.

#### IV. REPORT OF THE COUNTY SUPERVISOR.

County Supervisor Mary Kolar reports that there will be a program co-sponsored by CNI tomorrow (Wednesday August 26) to discuss issues related to homelessness. The focus will be on the availability of downtown services. The county has proposed a day services center, not a shelter she explained, at the site of Bellini’s restaurant (the old “Monastery”) on E. Wash. and S. Hancock St. This project might include the two houses next door to Bellini’s as well. Over a year ago, the county approved a day shelter on Martin St. in the Town of Madison, but the town sued and won. In July the county board approved \$2 million for a downtown day center. Bellini’s is an option, but it is not definite because there are many issues that still need to be worked out. For instance, the bathrooms in Bellini’s are not ADA compliant. The Fairchild garage was looked at as a possible overnight shelter, but it probably will not happen, she said.

Fisher asked why the day service center could not be placed inside the City-County building. Kolar answered that there is no room. Mohs described what he sees as a fundamental question: do we make downtown Madison a “shopping center” for the homeless by concentrating all the resources here, contrary to the desire of many to make downtown Madison a great place to live? He believes the resources need to be dispersed throughout the community. Mohs also asked whether there will be a platform for people to express themselves on this issue. Kolar answered that tomorrow’s meeting will provide an opportunity, with follow-up questions to the service providers after their presentations. She also pointed to the good turnout and interaction with residents at the recent Bassett district meeting addressing these issues, noting that Steve Schooler from Porchlight was there and answered questions. Kolar explained that the purpose of a day homeless resources center is not for those who hang out at Philosopher’s Grove. It is for those homeless who are seeking jobs, need to do laundry and have other basic needs met. Vercauteren explained that the main purpose of tomorrow’s meeting is not to make a decision or make value judgments, it is to make people aware of the various proposals. O’Brien asked why this all seems to be happening so fast. Vercauteren answered that they had been working on this meeting since July. Kolar added that after the Bassett meeting, she asked if CNI would be willing to host a program on this topic.

Vercauteren said that the two main proposals have slowed down at this point. Skrentny asked what would prevent a day resource center from becoming a de facto shelter. Kolar answered that it will be a resource center with counselors and it will involve people from “Shine 608.” She added that the county will need to provide funds from its capital budget to purchase the property and funds from its operating budget to hire counselors.

Skrentny next asked what would prevent it from becoming a neighborhood hangout. Kolar answered that residents should feel free to call police if problems arise. Skrentny believes that, rather having residents get police involved, there should be staff on the premises capable of regulating things. He also noted that Bellini's is within the First Settlement Historic District and any exterior changes will require approval by Landmarks. Kolar answered that, yes, Bellini's is within the historic district, and the houses might also be. Mohs is concerned that this may become a "slippery slope" making Madison the "best place for this lifestyle" by creating a permanent facility where people can store their belongings during the day so they can sleep in the neighborhood during the night. We are telling them: "This is the place to be!" Mohs said he would hate to do this to the downtown and agrees that Martin St. was a great site. We should resist this, Mohs concluded, because it betrays the hopes and dreams of those who live downtown.

#### V. TREASURER'S REPORT.

Plotkin reports a bank balance of \$14,421.36. Vercauteren reports that MG & E has renewed at our new \$500 membership level.

#### VI. NEW BUSINESS.

**Membership Growth Strategy.** There are multiple parts to our strategy for increasing membership, according to Vercauteren. These include: improving our promotional materials and how we present ourselves by updating our materials and pointing out our accomplishments; improving outreach to other groups and organizations; improving outreach to condominium owners and apartment managers, as well as (as suggested by Cooper) to cooperatives; and improving outreach to downtown businesses.

Warman asked whether we will develop a team to perform these tasks. He is willing to help if we do. Vercauteren answered that the goal is to find EC members willing to take on these tasks. He believes the most immediate task is to develop new materials and to document what we've accomplished. Warman offered to help with outreach to apartment buildings in Miffland. Brabender will also help with outreach to apartment buildings. Kamps offered to help with outreach to condo associations. Montes-Tydrich will help with outreach to apartment buildings, as will Negrin. Skrentny will do outreach to condo owners in First Settlement. Ingebritson offered to help with outreach to co-ops.

Broughman solicits CNI memberships at the Farmer's Market every Saturday and said that people have expressed to him the importance of having membership meetings on a regular basis. He commented that it is hard to hand out membership applications when we don't have regular meetings. Skrentny answered that it is challenging to get people to come to meetings on a regular basis and it is difficult when you organize a meeting and two people show up. People will attend meetings when an important issue arises in their back yard. Skrentny added that the question he gets from people in First Settlement is: what value is there in belonging to CNI? Broughman said he answers that question by telling people they can interact with police and developers. They have a voice and can make a difference. Vercauteren emphasized that we have many new residents with new energy and new interests. Ostlind noted that they tried outreach to condo owners and apartment dwellers in Bassett. It takes a lot of effort to keep the lists up to date and maintain contacts.

Vercauteren suggested building relationships with apartment building managers and condo associations, and keeping in touch with them via e-mail. Cooper pointed to the recent increase in attendance at Bassett meetings. One reason for that was establishing contact with Capital Lakes, resulting in the announcement of CNI meetings to residents in their in-house newsletter. Outreach is exactly what we need to do, Cooper added. Vercauteren believes that outreach will be made easier with the recent membership system and website upgrade. Members will now get e-mails and reminders to renew. Broughman believes that regular attendance of the alderperson at meetings makes a big difference as well, citing Ald. Verveer's regular attendance as an example. The regular attendance of police at meetings would also help increase attendance. Cooper agrees, and said he regularly tells people that the alder is almost always there. Vercauteren also agreed, noting that Ald. Zellers almost always attends Mansion Hill meetings. Verveer noted that the "Downtown Condominium Network" consists of condo association presidents who have established a network through which they regularly communicate and have a closed listserve that they keep updated with the names of residents. This might be an avenue for outreach to condo owners. Verveer offered to forward anything we want to post on to their closed listserve.

Vercauteren asked who is interested in working on developing new content for new membership materials. Vercauteren, Broughman and Mohs volunteered. Vercauteren will include Davy Mayer in this group as well. Mohs commented that it is important for us to create a vision - a dream - for the downtown that we want in the future, citing its benefits and providing examples of its successful communities and historic districts. He added that it is hard to be enthusiastic if you do not have a vision of success. Vercauteren summarized who will do what: Those charged with outreach to condo associations are Kamps, Skrentny (First Settlement) and Vercauteren. Those charged with outreach to apartment buildings are Warman, Brabender, Montes-Tydrich and Negrin. Those charged with outreach to cooperatives are Cooper and Ingebritson. Those charged with outreach to downtown businesses are Montes-Tydrich, Brabender and Vercauteren, who also decided to include Bert Stitt in this group. Vercauteren directed those working on new membership material content to put together a draft before the September EC meeting. The other groups are to put together a list of contacts for now. We will keep this on the agenda each month to keep it on track.

## VII. OLD BUSINESS.

**Membership/Communication System Update.** According to Vercauteren, Mayer will provide a status report on the website/membership upgrade later this week. It will soon "go live," assuming no glitches. Plotkin said that he and Scott Kolar will be entering the names of members manually. Once we get e-mail addresses, we can store them on-line for the future. It will take a "good year" before we can fully rely on the new system, Plotkin added. Until then, we will be operating in the half-old/half-new system.

## VIII. DISTRICT REPORTS

**James Madison Park.** According to Montes-Tydrich, although they haven't met recently, they will soon. She reports they cleared off the median at Mifflin and Franklin Sts. that people want to see removed. She reports that at a recent meeting at Gates of Heaven, Cliff Fisher discussed his proposed development of a 40-unit or so apartment building with smaller, affordable units. There was a good turnout and many expressed support for the

project. A steering committee is being formed to study the proposal. Montes-Tydrich said she told Ald. Zellers that she wants to serve on that committee.

**Mansion Hill.** Mohs reports that he and Ald. Zellers met today with the manager of the Edgewater to discuss problems with loud music. The approval process allowed the hotel to have music outdoors until 11:00 p.m. It is disturbing to have in a residential district, Mohs remarked, and noted that the Edgewater was rezoned as “Office - Residential.” People living at #2 Langdon next door can’t sleep and two long-term residents have moved out of the Kennedy Manor. Mohs said the manager has promised to be more sympathetic, but they make a lot of money with the music. Mohs noted that in his apartment buildings, residents are not allowed to make noise that can be heard outside their units. Now, they must deal with this loud music. Ingebritson said she called police two weeks ago when she could hear the loud music on Wisconsin Ave. The music was supposed to stop at 9:00, but went to 9:24 p.m. As for the tall street lights about which residents have complained, the manager does not like those either and will look into having them removed. Mohs has brought these problems to Mayor Soglin’s attention. Verveer noted that the Edgewater’s original liquor license stated that they had an agreement (a “Public Access Management Agreement”) that superseded any ALRC conditions. He suggested asking Ald. Zellers to have the city attorney research this.

According to Verveer, the city council recently approved a resolution put forth by Ald. Zellers calling for “Mansion Hill Historic District” street signs. This is very promising and, he hopes, this pilot project will encourage others who want to be part of historic districts and have similar signage to act. The resolution was supported by City Traffic Engineering. Verveer believes TIF funds could be used for this purpose in Mansion Hill. He also reports that Rabbi Mendel is going ahead with renovation of the house on W. Gilman adjacent to the Buckeye Lot. Verveer described the rabbi as a “prince” and very cooperative. Money for the renovation is coming from the Goodman Foundation.

**Miffland.** Kamps reports that the removal of the Philosopher’s Grove stones has temporarily resolved the behavior issues there but residents have noticed people congregating at the top of State St. He said that this has been the topic of much discussion in the district. The bus shelter at the top of State St. is being removed and the stop will now be at the shelter on Carroll St. around the corner. There do not seem to be as many issues with loitering and smoking at the entrance to the Central Library. Kamps reports there was a serious discussion of homelessness at the last district meeting. They discussed the “housing first” initiative that has been successful elsewhere. You will hear more in the coming months, he said. Vercauteren reports that the second phase of the “housing first” initiative is stalled and they have applied for a WHEDA grant.

Kamps reports that DMI sponsored a recent open house and tour at the “luxurious” new “Ovation” apartment building. There was also a recent tour of the renovated AT & T building at 300 W. Wash. Kamps said the top two floors are occupied by a gaming company, while the first three floors are still being completed. He said the building looks “nice,” but there will still be sidewalk access issues for the next few months.

There is a proposal by the Madison Development Corp. to build a four-story affordable apartment building in the 400 block of W. Mifflin. An ad hoc committee is now working on it. A neighborhood meeting to discuss the proposal will be held in a month or so. Kamps believes it

will be a good addition to the Mifflin area, providing housing affordable for people in the service industries and the arts.

**Bassett.** Cooper reports that homelessness was discussed at the July meeting that had a packed agenda and was attended by 75 people. The August meeting drew 20 people, still more than double what they drew a year ago. Publicity is important in getting attendance, he added.

**First Settlement.** Skrentny reports that the August meeting with the development team for the King Hotel was positive. They will submit the proposal for city review in the next few months. Skrentny said he is quite excited by the project. Skrentny reports that he has been contacted by concerned residents about the proposal to turn Bellini's into a homeless resource center. They are concerned that it will turn into a homeless shelter and a "destination." Skrentny is concerned that the only way suggested so far to prevent dangerous and bad behavior around the facility seems to be for neighbors to call police, which is not much different than how Philosopher's Grove was handled. While Skrentny said he is not opposed to a resource center, the county's track record so far is poor and problems linger. There is a lack of confidence among district residents that this will be anything more than just moving the problems down to Bellini's. Residents are very concerned about their investments in properties within the district. Residents want to see the city and county take this seriously and engage the downtown in a conversation. Skrentny said he shares some of Mohs's concerns expressed earlier.

The steel frame for the new apartment building at E. Wilson and S. Hancock Sts. is going up. We will see how the new building will affect the view corridor on Wilson St. Verveer said the construction site for the new building on E. Wilson has been a challenge for city traffic engineering because they have violated street occupancy permits.

Fisher asked how many bars will be in the King Hotel. Skrentny counted four or five located from the basement to the top floor. Mohs remarked that with all these bars, it's not a hotel. Fisher added that he believes the building is too tall for that corner; it should be three stories and not as tall as the GEF buildings. Fisher also believes the hotel will add to the current trash issues. Right now, he said, there is trash pickup six days a week on his property and businesses bring their trash there from all over. The businesses are charged for it. Skrentny agreed that the difference in size of the building is "quite striking," but there has been a lot of positive reaction to the proposal so far.

#### IX. ALDERPERSONS' REPORTS

Verveer reports that city staff is working on finding a site for a new park in the Miffland district on Mifflin St. He expects resistance from property owners if condemnation is utilized. There is enough money to purchase the land and develop the park due in large part to impact fees paid by developers. Verveer credits CNI activists with helping to move this along.

The proposed use of the city's Fairchild St. garage as a drop-in shelter has been postponed indefinitely but the city will continue to research the feasibility of providing services there.

Verveer reports that Davy Mayer has agreed to serve as the Chair of the steering committee for the Judge Doyle Square project. Land use approval has been delayed and still needs to be worked on. The design is still up in the air. The earliest the project could go before the UDC is October 7th. It will also have to be approved by Landmarks and then by the full city council. Last night, the Board of Estimates approved TIF funding for the project but with five conditions that must be met or it will be referred back to the Board of Estimates: (1) finalize the purchase agreement; (2) provide reacquisition rights for the city; (3) there will be no first right of refusal for the parking garage that would give owners a veto power over city Parking Utility leases; (4) provide a "Labor Peace" agreement; and (5) at the request of the city TIF Coordinator, answer questions still outstanding about TIF in writing by next Monday (8/31) . Verveer said that Bob Hammes will get in touch with the steering committee soon.

The Mall Maintenance project covering State St. and the Square will expand September 1 to include several more blocks around those areas. Work will go all the way to Lake St. and to University Ave. They are hiring more staff. Light poles on State St. and on the Square are now being repainted. In response to a question by Kamps, Verveer said the Lance McGrath proposed high-rise development on E. Wilson St. next to the Marina condos is still in litigation brought by Marina owners even though McGrath has now purchased the property.

MEETING ADJOURNED

**NEXT EC MEETING: Tuesday September 22, 2015, 5:15 p.m. Central Library, third floor.**

**AGENDA for the Sept. 22 EC meeting.**

- I. CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM (Vercauteren).
- II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AUGUST 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 Outreach/Growth Strategy Next Steps;**
  - Possible CNI Role in Improving Building Design Quality;**
  - Other.**
- VII. OLD BUSINESS
  - Update on Website/Membership/Communications System Upgrade;**
  - Madison College Downtown Campus Update;**
  - 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.**