

CAPITOL NIEGHBORHOODS, INC.

MINUTES of Executive Council Meeting Held September 22, 2015

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vercauteren (President), Plotkin, Mohs, Cooper, Kamps, Fisher, Ingebritson, Warman, Mayer, Montes-Tydrich, Ostlind, Brabender, Stitt, O'Brien, Ald. Zellers, and Ald. Verveer.

- I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER by Vercauteren. There is a quorum.
- II. MINUTES of August EC meeting are APPROVED without change; on MOTION by Cooper, SECOND by Mohs.
- III. DOWNTOWN POLICE REPORT. No one present.
- IV. COUNTY SUPERVISOR'S REPORT. Sup. Mary Kolar not present.
- V. TREASURER'S REPORT. Plotkin reports we have a current bank balance of \$13,023.05. We donated \$100 to Tenney-Lapham for the James Madison Park ash tree fund. This came out of funds in the 2015 budget designated for James Madison Park District. Plotkin reports that work will begin soon on the CNI budget for 2016. All are welcome to participate.
- VI. NEW BUSINESS.

Proposed Membership Growth Strategy and Talking Points.

Vercauteren distributed two handouts: one discussing CNI membership growth strategies, and the other listing membership talking points that highlight CNI accomplishments. There are five growth strategies: (1) Develop new promotional materials; (2) Outreach to condo associations; (3) Outreach to Apartment Building Managers; (4) Outreach to Co-operatives; (5) Outreach to downtown businesses.

The first growth strategy is to develop new promotional materials in electronic form. Mayer will help to develop more visually attractive promotional materials. Lupe Montes-Tydrich (herein "Montes") commented that the talking points could be used when we make our pitches to prospective new members. Mayer agreed, stating that they help answer the question: "Why should I join?"

With respect to the five growth strategies, Vercauteren said, those who volunteered to work on each should meet and discuss next steps for developing a strategy. Each group should then report back to the EC for further discussion. Montes asked whether we have any membership brochures to hand out now. Only the old ones, Vercauteren answered. He added that those brochures are already included in the new resident welcome bags handed out by the downtown BID. Vercauteren offered to scan the current brochure and send it out by e-mail. Warman suggested that each team identify a leader to facilitate the meetings. Warman offered to facilitate for the team working on outreach to apartment building managers. Kamps will check with the others on the condo association outreach team: Broughman and Skrentny. Cooper noted that Ingebritson has already taken the lead with respect to outreach to cooperatives. Vercauteren said he has already volunteered Bert Stitt to work on the business outreach team along with Plotkin. Ostlind suggested that the rest of us could help

the teams by submitting names of contact persons in condo associations, apartment managers, etc. Kamps said he has already begun compiling a list. Vercauteren wants this kept on the agenda.

Warman asked when we will have new materials to hand out. Vercauteren answered that we hope to do a lot of this electronically, but have the budget to do printed materials as well. Mayer agreed that we should still have printed materials available, at least for awhile. Stitt described the new materials as the beginning of a marketing program. We should budget for a new design, he added. Zellers pointed out that we hired a graphic designer years ago to design the old brochure. Vercauteren suggested using up the remaining 500 or so old brochures and hire Mayer to work on a new design. Mayer said that his company could “perhaps” do it. Stitt also suggested that we develop an RFP for marketing. Mohs cited as a good example the newsletter distributed in the historic “Old Town” triangle in Chicago. He described the feeling of “clubbiness” in Old Town it helps to portray. He believes it is important to develop a feeling about the neighborhood where we live that drives it. Mohs suggested developing a strategy that will make our neighbors feel more involved in the neighborhood. He believes many people are less interested in the downtown than they might be. In response, Stitt noted that he and Linda Stitt hosted social events in their home in the past, as has Ald, Zellers, to help get CNI started. Montes believes we are headed in that direction. There is more of a “vibe” as more people move downtown and become interested. We need to become included in more sponsored events, she added.

As action items, Vercauteren directed Mayer to think about how to put new materials into paper and electronic format. Each team should develop ideas for each of the outreach strategies. For now, we will use the old brochures but with the new membership information. With respect to the section of the talking points listing CNI’s various contributions to the quality of life downtown, Stitt suggested adding First Settlement’s work with the Water Utility on improving Crowley Station. Montes suggested adding James Madison Park District’s work on the park garden terraces. Cooper noted Bassett District’s work on developing Brittingham Park at Proudftt and North Shore. Stitt mentioned the dog park in Bassett. Vercauteren mentioned CNI’s work on neighborhood signage. Vercauteren will amend the list and send out the final version via e-mail.

With regard to outreach to businesses, Stitt asked how we want businesses to interact with CNI. He noted that some businesses have expressed concern about not being able to vote because we limit voting to residents. In response to Vercauteren’s question, Plotkin said it would require a change in our bylaws to let business members vote. Vercauteren also noted that businesses could become more involved by signing up for the new “Neighborhood Partner” membership category. Mohs noted that when Stitt was CNI President, we enacted the provision that only residents are allowed to vote.

Proposal to Coordinate with Marquette Neighborhood on Urban Design Workshops.

Vercauteren and Gary Tipler have discussed CNI coordinating with Marquette Neighborhood Assoc. to host workshops on good urban design. He suggested that we might also include Tenney-Lapham in this. Ostlind noted that the Development Review Oversight Committee did something similar in the past and it required much effort by those involved. Ostlind is willing to take part in it. Zellers added that this proposal goes beyond the program

we hosted years ago about what the Urban Design Commission. Vercauteren asked whether we should move forward on this. When there was a relatively lukewarm response, Vercauteren said he will tell Tipler we are willing to help but will let Marquette take the lead on this.

CNI Holiday Party Planning.

Our venue for the past few years, Kennedy Manor, is no longer in business so we need a new venue for the December CNI Holiday Party. According to Plotkin, we have budgeted \$1,000 for the party. This pays for the venue, food and entertainment. Fisher suggested holding it at either the Rigby or Argus. He will check with those venues. We should plan for 50-60 attendees, Vercauteren said. Montes will check out a couple of other places as well. Brabender asked about having the party at the Overture Center. Vercauteren answered that catering by “Food Fight” there would be expensive. Stitt suggested asking “Food Fight” to become a member and then ask for a deal from them. The Central Library is another possible venue, but we would have to deal with Underground Catering there. Kamps pointed out that we can provide our own food at the library, but “Underground” must still be hired to pour beer and wine. The party will take place on the second or third Thursday of December. Fisher and Montes will work on finding a venue.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

Membership/Communication System Upgrade.

Mayer reports there have been some delays and a few remaining items to be worked on with regard to the website upgrade. In response to Vercauteren’s question, Mayer said that in the long-term Scott Kolar will be able to upload newsletter articles directly to the website. In response to Ostlind’s question, Mayer said we can also upload development proposal materials to the website. Zellers noted that Tenney-Lapham has development materials on its website and it is heavily used. Mayer agreed with Vercauteren’s suggestion that there be a website training session for district members.

Downtown Homeless Services Forum Follow-up.

Vercauteren reports that the recent forum on homelessness at Capitol Lakes, co-sponsored by CNI, was well-attended. Things have changed in the past three months and the question regarding possible locations for a shelter and for a day center is a “moving target.” Warman was pleased with the opportunity to hear from all of the agencies at the forum. It showed the disconnect between what is actually being done and what is in the newspaper. Warman added that we missed an opportunity to increase membership by not having membership materials available. We should also promote the various homeless agencies such as Porchlight and Bethel with articles in our newsletter. We could encourage those agencies to write the articles. Lupe Montes called that a “great suggestion.” Vercauteren agrees. Mohs remarked that we should also have articles discussing the other side of the story: what is not being done to address homelessness issues. “Something is wrong,” he said, when people are sleeping on the steps of the City-County Building. Mohs believes we have made it more attractive for the homeless to come here and we have encouraged behavior that he should not be tolerated. Vercauteren said that his next President’s Column in the “Downtown Dialogue” will address the issues of homelessness and behavior. He added that we are not

going to solve the social issues that lead to homelessness. We must be active and engaged in the discussion of the two potential homeless facilities still being discussed in or near downtown.

VIII. DISTRICT REPORTS

Bassett. Cooper reports that demolition of the parking garage has begun as the first leg of the Anchor Bank redevelopment project on Main and Carroll Sts. Later this fall, work will begin on the Inn on the Park redevelopment. AT & T has sent a legal notice to the FCC of its intent to construct a 200 ft. tower atop its building behind the Inn on the Park on Main and Fairchild Sts. Mayer explained that the tower would be 200 ft. from the ground up. Cooper noted that residents of Capitol Lakes are lobbying AT&T to remove equipment already atop its roof because it blocks their Capitol views and AT&T has been less than cooperative. Verveer explained that, at a meeting today, the lobbyists for AT&T said the legal notice they filed with the FCC was only to register what is already on their roof and they have no plans to add a tower or anything else. It is paperwork that should have been done years ago. But, Verveer added, they do not want to remove anything that is already there.

According to Ostlind, the contractor for the Anchor Bank project sought permission from the city Forestry Dept. to cut down all of the trees on Carroll St. that were planted only 5-6 years ago and City Forestry was about to allow it. Concerned residents complained to Ald. Verveer. Now, ULI has told the contractor to save the trees. According to Verveer, the contractor (Findorff) wanted to remove 30 trees to create room for the crane. Now, ULI agreed to only remove the trees where the excavation work is being done. Mullins has made a similar request from City Forestry to remove trees on their corner at the Inn on the Park. Verveer said their request is pending. Cooper noted that there are three ash trees on Main St. at the Inn on the Park. Verveer commented it is frustrating that City Forestry would be so willing to allow tree removal on construction sites. At least, he added, the supervisor now notifies him when tree removals are approved. Forestry has also approved the removal of healthy ash trees from the front yard at 403 W. Doty St. Ald. Zellers agrees that this happens too often; City Forestry is too willing to accommodate contractors' request to remove trees, and citizens must get in there and object to tree removals. She noted that there was nothing in ULI's approved plans for their project that included tree removal. Cooper noted that the contractor for the Freedom From Religion Foundation building project backed off from a request to remove a tree during construction and agreed to remove only a major limb from that tree. Cooper was told when he complained to City Forestry that they have no enforcement mechanism to get contractors to protect trees. Mayer added that residents had to keep bugging the Planning Dept. to protect trees during construction at Eric Minton's project on W. Wash. Zellers noted that trees are also often in jeopardy when there is street reconstruction.

Verveer reports that the owners of the owner-occupied house at 403 W. Doty St. were given a "cease and desist" order for illegal front yard parking by the Zoning Dept. On July 27, the Plan commission granted their application for a variance with the condition that they install a driveway apron and relocate the MG&E pole. The Plan Commission then reconsidered and last night (9/21) reached a compromise. They agreed to move the parking to the other side with the condition that the parking would only be for owner-occupants. Mayer asked what will happen if they sell to a landlord. Verveer answered that they could not park there.

Verveer added that the owners fought the owner-occupancy condition. The Plan Commission said the owners would not have to replace the curb cut if it later becomes no longer owner-occupied.

First Settlement. Stitt reports that an encouraging and productive relationship between the neighborhood and King St. businesspeople has been formed during the discussions about the proposed King Hotel. The owner of Merchant has committed to attend First Settlement meetings. The owner of Madison's has also expressed interest in becoming more engaged with the neighborhood. Verveer said the King Hotel developers have not yet filed their formal application with the city.

Plans continue for reconstruction of the Progressive Building. Stitt reports that the Hawks & Quindell law firm has been good to work with during this process. The construction will take 1 ½ years to complete and it will include adding a third floor to the building.

Stitt is pleased that there are plans to install a stop light at E. Main and Blair Sts. He believes there must also be a four-way stop sign at Main and either Franklin or Hancock Sts. Verveer notes that the stop light at Blair and Main is being installed in conjunction with the Wis. Dept. of Transportation.

Stitt reports that the new apartment building on E. Wilson and Hancock Sts. is going up. He is not comfortable with how it looks so far; it is "oppressive-looking." Kamps asked whether there are any new developments regarding the intersection at Blair, John Nolen, Wilson and Williamson Sts. Stitt answered that it will be a "hairball" for a long time. Verveer agreed that it is on hold because the Wis. DOT is "scared" of some of the more drastic solutions suggested. Stitt commented that aesthetic treatments could help ease the problems there.

Stitt, Mayer and Ostlind met with a representative of Hammes Co., Matt Morris, to discuss Judge Doyle Square and they have another meeting scheduled with him Thursday (Nov. 1) if the project is approved by the City Council next Tuesday (9/29). Mohs said he will attend as well.

James Madison Park. Fisher asked whether there are any plans to remove the roundabout at Franklin and Mifflin Sts. Zellers answered there is nothing in the budget. Fisher complained that it is hard to see around it when there are parked cars. Fisher also said that bikes come flying down the hill on Mifflin from the four-way stop on Butler St. Fisher also discussed the possibility of installing statues from a local artist's collection in James Madison Park. Fisher and Montes took photos of the statues. Zellers said they could speak with Tenney-Lapham and the Parks Dept. if they think the statues would look good in the park.

Mansion Hill. Mohs said noise from the Edgewater continues to be a major issue for residents, but it is less than what it once was. The lights are still a problem. They have lowered the brightness but, he added, the fixtures spoil the lake view. The good news, according to Mohs, is that the appearance of N. Carroll St. has really improved. The ALANON house on Carroll has a new porch and has been repainted. Steve Brown is also doing a good job of painting and fixing up the houses he owns on N. Carroll St. Mohs also reports that the Mullins family is doing a good job repairing the Breese Stevens House on Carroll and Gorham Sts. The old Jackson house is also being repaired. This is all wonderful to see, Mohs remarked.

This is important because Carroll St. is widely used entrance to Mansion Hill. Stitt called this a “fabulous story” that should be written up. This shows the meaning of a healthy community. Developers who got wealthy from constructing new buildings have used their wealth to preserve these older buildings. Mohs agreed this is a great story about historic preservation. Ingebritson commented that Mohs helped move the Mullins’s along to improve their properties. Vercauteren notes that the city has brought an enforcement action on Williamson St. in the Third Lakes Historic District under the new “demolition by neglect” ordinance.

Miffland. Kamps is pleased to report that plans for a new city park in the district are moving along. Although many will lament the loss of student housing, Kamps believes this is a great compromise that will expand park land downtown. Zellers notes that those who own the houses to be condemned for the park strongly oppose the plan and, she added, the loss of affordable housing is “troubling.” According to Verveer, the Plan Commission approved a resolution to move this proposal forward through city committees and the full council. Zellers has asked the City Attorney to explore the criteria allowing the Plan Commission to approve this. Fisher asked why the park could not be located on the site of the container company at the end of Mifflin St. Verveer answered that it is too far away and city staff felt stymied by all the new development in the area. He believes this process will drag out for a couple of years.

Kamps reports that the Madison Development Corp. has proposed constructing a four-story affordable housing apartment building across the street from the proposed park. A steering committee has formed and a full neighborhood meeting is scheduled for October 8th, 8:00 p.m., at the Senior Center. The “Johnson Bend” project is halfway completed and the Friends Co-op next door may relocate, he said.

IX. ALDERPERSONS’ REPORTS

Zellers reports that the county is now looking to locate the homeless day center at the Mesner building in the 1300 block of E. Wash. The Madison Development Corp. is considering affordable senior housing at Mifflin and Butler Sts. Dean Loomis of Homeless Initiatives is working with them to provide housing alternatives aimed at getting people off the streets and putting them into residences. Zellers said they have a good reputation. Zellers reports that “The Langdon” may be turned into apartments.

Zellers reports there is a proposal to install specially-designed street signs at fourteen intersections in the Mansion Hill instead of district entryway signs. Cliff Fisher’s development proposal on Blair St. is going forward, Zellers reports, and a steering committee is being set up. A “Chat with the Chief” (Police Chief Koval) is scheduled for October 1st at Union South/

Verveer reports that Freakfest will take place on Halloween Day, Saturday October 31st. An informational meeting is scheduled in the Central Library for Oct. 6th at 3:00 p.m.

The downtown post office may be moved out of the Municipal Building early next year. There have been negotiations with Hovde to relocate it to the AT & T building. They are also considering relocating it to the sub-station on 700 E. Wash. Verveer believes the post office must be within two block of the Capitol Square. The credit union in the municipal building might double as a neighborhood ;post office. This is all uncertain for now, he added.

MEETING ADJOURNED (on MOTION by Mohs; SECOND by Plotkin).

NEXT EC MEETING: Tuesday October 27, 2015, 5:15 p.m., Central Library, Third Floor.

AGENDA for the Oct. 27, 2015 EC meeting.

- I. CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM (Vercauteren).
- II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 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;
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.**