

**CAPITOL NEIGHBORHOODS, INC.**

**MINUTES of Executive Council Meeting Held November 24, 2015**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vercauteren (President), Ostlind, Plotkin, Negrin, Warman, Ingebritson, Mayer, Cooper, Brabender, Kamps, Stitt, O'Brien, Ald. Verveer, County Supervisor Mary Kolar.

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER by Vercauteren. The meeting opened with just short of a quorum.

II. COUNTY SUPERVISOR'S REPORT. Supervisor Mary Kolar reports that County Executive Parisi signed the county budget today. It includes an \$0.87/hr. raise for county employees, as well as a smaller raise for human service providers for the first time in a long time. There are budget provisions for the Clean Lakes educational initiatives and for efforts to address racial disparity. The overall increase will be \$34 for the average county household. Negrin asked about recent publicity regarding county funding for the Tenant Resource Center. Mary Kolar responded that the county requested an RFP and the Community Action Coalition won out over the Tenant Resource Center. In response to a question by Stitt, Kolar said this was not a political decision. Rather, the RFP process needed to be done and, Kolar believes, it should be used more frequently in the future to avoid the appearance of a political decision. Kolar said she was not involved in that process.

The County Board also approved the purchase of the Messner Building on E. Wash. to open a homeless day resource center on the site. It is on a bus line and still near to downtown. This has been in the works for four years. Kolar clarified that it will not be a shelter, but a center for homeless services. She acknowledged that this is a solution that calls for more communication with neighbors, especially the Tenney Nursery on E. Mifflin St. There will be a security plan for the center. In response to a question by Mayer, Kolar said that this is the only site under consideration now but, she added, if there is a better building out there, let the county know. This will initially cost \$1.4 million, and perhaps another \$1 million to bring the building up to speed. Stitt commented that the county must take public engagement in the process seriously and explain to the public why it is so important to have the resource center. Ingebritson agrees, adding that this is a walkable neighborhood where children walk right past the proposed center. This is risky when you do not know who the provider will be. The neighborhood must be involved, she insisted. Kolar noted that those issues are included in the resolution and it will have to go through the city's conditional use permit process for approval.

[There is now a quorum]

III. MINUTES of October EC Meeting , with corrections to the James Madison Park report noted by Ald. Zellers, are APPROVED; on MOTION by Stitt, SECOND by Brabender.

IV. TREASURER'S REPORT. Plotkin reports that CNI's current bank balance is \$13,573.95.

V. OLD BUSINESS.

**Update on Membership Growth Strategy.** Vercauteren reports that Scott Kolar has proposed putting a box on the website for individual or business memberships. Mayer will

discuss this further with Scott. We are making progress in the transition from paper to electronic membership. Vercauteren reports that 15% of members surveyed said they prefer paper membership renewal rather than on-line renewal.

Scott Kolar has asked about our long-term plans to phase out the newsletter and phase in an electronic replacement for it. Vercauteren asked whether we are at that point yet. There remain issues to address and we might have to form a small group to work out the details. Stitt noted that the Brady Street Neighborhood Association in Milwaukee produces its newsletter in electronic form. According to Plotkin, we discussed this during the 2014 budget process and concerns were expressed at that time about not having a hard copy of the newsletter in hand. Cooper believes there could be cost savings from going electronic, but asked whether we will lose advertising revenue. Vercauteren answered that one possibility is to do an electronic version of advertising. Cooper asked whether that would be acceptable to our advertisers. Plotkin noted that advertising revenue from our newsletter is a big part of our income. We distribute 350 copies of the newsletter each issue. Warman believes it will be difficult to increase membership numbers electronically because people often do not read e-mails from organizations they do not know. Warman added that he personally would be less likely to read an electronic version of the newsletter on line. Stitt believes we should do a numerical assessment of how many will read an electronic version. Cooper suggested giving people the option of receiving the newsletter electronically or in paper form. Vercauteren asked whether we would utilize a newsletter software program, or just do a PDF? Mayer answered that there are several things to look at and the printed newsletter requires a lot of work from Scott Kolar to produce. He suggested going to a “slimmed down” version of the printed newsletter, or a postcard, that at least would give people something physical. Ostlind pointed out that our printed newsletter is included in the packet distributed to new downtown residents. He believes the printed version would be better than giving them a web address. Vercauteren pointed out that the Willy Street Co-op gives members the option of receiving their newsletter electronically. Cooper commented that this may reflect a generational divide, and it is something we must take into account when determining our target membership. Brabender prefers having something he can show people.

Vercauteren believes it is best to refer this to a smaller group, or to the Finance Committee, with Scott Kolar involved. He decided to refer this to the Finance committee to come up with a recommendation for the EC.

Mayer reports that the website upgrade is essentially “done.” He is now able to post newsletter articles on line. Mayer will update the website for free throughout 2016. We can still use and print out the existing PDF forms, including membership applications. According to Vercauteren, the “talking points” flyer to help recruit new members is still being worked on.

**CNI Holiday Party.** The CNI Holiday Party is set for **Thursday, December 10, 2015, at Rigby’s** on E. Main St., from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Vercauteren will confirm this with Cliff Fisher and Lupe Montes who are coordinating the event. He is not sure whether there will be live music. An announcement of the party will also appear in the upcoming newsletter.

## VI. DISTRICT REPORTS

**Bassett.** Cooper reports that representatives from ULI gave a presentation at the district's November meeting about their proposal to construct an 88-unit apartment building at Bedford and Doty Sts. It will include one level of underground parking. Negrin added that there will still be some above-ground parking. The project will replace a one-story office building that is now on the site. The developer hopes to go through the city process in early March, 2016. Vercauteren reports that work in the construction zone on the Square is underway and they appear to be making progress at the Inn on the Park. It could result in striking improvements to the hotel. The trees on the Anchor Bank site are "gone," he also reported. Cooper added that the three trees closest to Nostrano's restaurant were taken down apparently to make room for the construction workers' porta-potties.

**First Settlement.** Stitt reports that the new apartment building on E. Wilson and S. Hancock Sts. is about to be topped off. He was impressed that the building's design follows the curvature of the street. Someone, he commented, was sensitive to its placement and the context of its environment.

Vercauteren asked what will happen with Bellini's restaurant now that it will not be used for the homeless day resource center. Stitt does not know, noting that the most recent district meeting was held there. He added that the owner's ability to do anything with the building is constricted by the historic district.

**James Madison Park.** No one present.

**Mansion Hill.** Ingebritson reported on the recent district meeting to discuss the development proposal for the large building owned by Steve Brown at 126 Langdon St. She said that Ald. Zellers did a good job of explaining how the developers are able to take down the existing building despite the Langdon Historic District. They are allowed to build up to the height of the current building on the current footprint, but they must preserve views of the lake. Vercauteren noted that there is an existing easement that preserves lake views, but they want to take ten feet off of that. The Texas developer also wants to build over the existing parking lot. The current building is 79,500 sq. ft. but they want to build up to 86,000 sq. ft. Residents are concerned that they want to build a building that is bigger than an already huge building. Ingebritson notes that the new building will not have balconies or a pool. Nearby sororities are concerned about what might happen to them during construction. Vercauteren added that the major issues at the meeting were the sororities' concerns and the square footage of the new building. There was some confusion over the allowable replacement scale. Some make the calculation based on square footage versus volume. The issue is whether they include the entire building or the useable space in making that determination.

Ingebritson also reports there is a proposal (in a letter from Atty. Ron Trachtenberg) to demolish the house at 219 W. Gilman St. even though the developer initially said they would save the house.

**Miffland.** Kamps reports there were no major police issues on Halloween weekend that included Freakfest and a Badger football game. Police reported only seven arrests from among the 30,000 who attended Freakfest. One of the arrests was of someone who tried to bring a concealed firearm through security. There were also some "bottle neck" points in the

crowd that need improvement in the future. There are reports of drug dealing near the library and on the cul de sac on Mifflin St. Police will assign an officer to the library. Brabender asked about a recent shooting in the district. According to Kamps, police reported that a gun discharged in a vehicle during a drug deal gone bad. No one was injured and police are still investigating.

There will be a new restaurant tenant in the former AT & T building. It is "Red Sushi II." The sidewalk in front should reopen by the end of the year. It is hoped that work on the building will be done by then as well (except for the mural). The Johnson Bend building is now topping out with its 12th floor. The Uncommon Building at the end of Mifflin St. is now half done. The Madison Development Corp. should soon be submitting their application for the proposed development on W. Mifflin St. and a steering committee will be formed. Kamps believes the committee will likely support the project that will include affordable housing.

There are no new developments concerning the city's proposal to create a park in the district. The original site is now off the table, and the city is looking at another nearby site for the park.

Negrin reports that a flower shop has opened on Mifflin and Broom Sts., but the coffee shop in Metropolitan Place has closed and moved to Verona. Kamps noted that whatever business moves in there won't be able to prepare food because there is no kitchen. He added that the flower shop is a good addition to the neighborhood.

Vercauteren asked whether there has been any reaction to the decision publicly announced today by Fire Chief Davis to longer keep an ambulance at Fire Station No. 1 on Dayton St. Kamps answered that Verveer mentioned this at the district meeting. Kamps added that this will result in less noise and the numbers presented by the chief seem to make sense. Stitt agreed. Negrin is concerned that the public announcement only discussed the volume of calls and not the response time after these changes. Plotkin followed up her comment stating that he sent an e-mail to Verveer asking that very question. He is concerned that the placement of the ambulance is being treated as a management issue and not a patient care issue. Plotkin suggested that Verveer ask the Chief to provide the estimated response times from location to location before and after the change. He suggested using the YWCA as the focal point for making that evaluation. Cooper suggested Capitol Lakes as another response time focal point for analysis.

## VII. ALDERPERSONS' REPORTS

Verveer reports that he spoke with Chief Davis about the move of the ambulance from Fire Station No. 1 and the issue was raised at the Board of Estimates meeting. Verveer said he could not second guess the experts, but believes we should have ambulances located everywhere. He agreed to forward Plotkin's e-mail to the chief and he will then forward the chief's responses to the listserve. Verveer notes that the cost of staffing a 24/7 ambulance is around \$1 million per year. Ambulance fees help support the cost. There are also plans to construct a new fire station that will house an ambulance on the south side in 2017. Verveer pointed out that two pieces of equipment are dispatched to every medical call. An engine or a ladder with trained EMTs will always be dispatched for downtown residents from Station #1. Each engine or ladder has four trained firefighters and the closest ambulance will also

respond, with two more trained first responders. In the past, there was no downtown ambulance, and the closest was stationed at Willy St., just as it will be now. Verveer also noted that the new St. Mary's and UW Hospital emergency rooms recently opened on the far east side may positively impact response times because ambulances may be dispatched from stations closer to them. The chief said he will evaluate this continually and a change could be made in the future. Also, a rescue ambulance will still be kept at Station #1, but only for special events downtown. The department's boat unit will also be kept there. Station #1 is scheduled to reopen on Dayton St. next Monday (11/30). The new Fire Administration office/condo will open in the Ovation Building by mid-December.

Stitt commented that it would be good to have someone from the downtown BID regularly attend our meetings. Verveer responded that he is on the BID Board and they meet monthly. He reports that the BID is looking for a new director because Mary Carbine left the BID recently to work on the new UW Alumni Association Park and pier. Verveer suggested that we invite the new director to our meetings when one is chosen. Stitt commented that the BID is a large organization and an integral part of our neighborhoods, noting that Carbine was paid \$70,000 per year. He said the BID is re-evaluating its relationship with the DMI. It is important that the BID be a part of our discussions. He noted that Milwaukee has 23 BIDs.

In response to a question by Vercauteren, Verveer said he does not know when the city review process will begin for the proposed county day resource center at the Messner Building on E. Wash. For now, \$30,000 has been budgeted for an interim day resource center at Bethel to keep it going until October, 2016, the date that the city was told by the county that the E. Wash center would open. There is another \$100,000 available to fund the day resource center, and to fund outreach workers at the Central Library on a daily basis. Stitt asked what is happening at the Grace Episcopal shelter. Verveer answered that the shelter had to be moved to enable subterranean parking for the Hovde museum project. It could reopen after the parking is completed, but it might become too costly to house a shelter in that building. Verveer added that the city is considering commissioning a study to consider using the city garage on Fairchild St. as a men's drop-in shelter. Verveer believes the study should also consider other uses for the garage including a shelter. In response to a question by Negrin, Verveer said the resolution would be introduced before the city council on December 1, and then go through city committees before coming back to the council for a final vote.

In response to a question by Cooper, Verveer reports that city staff has filed a complaint in municipal court against the developers of the recently constructed building at 425 W. Wash. (the Eric Minton project) alleging daily violations. The case is now on hold, he said, because Minton and John Sutton are working with city staff and the neighborhood to come up with modifications. They must give 30-day notice to file major modifications to the building with the Plan Commission. Verveer asked whether the neighborhood wants to meet with them. Ostlind answered that they should share their ideas with us first. Cooper believes it would be best to have a steering committee meet with them.

Verveer reports that three developers remain in the running after Exact Sciences pulled out of the Judge Doyle Square project. They are: ULI and two Chicago development teams. Bob Dunne is no longer involved. The three remaining development teams are to submit their proposals by January 9, 2016.

Verveer reports that downtown resident and activist Rosemary Lee turned 78 on November 13, 2015. Mayor Soglin declared it "Rosemary Lee Day." Rosemary is battling health issues at this time.

MEETING ADJOURNED; on MOTION by Kamps, SECOND by Ostlund.

**\*\*\*NOTE: There is no EC Meeting in December.**

Instead, we will celebrate at the CNI Holiday Party Thursday, December 10, 2015, 6:00 p.m., at Rigby's on East Main St.

**\*\*\* *Happy Holidays!* \*\*\***

NEXT EC MEETING: Tuesday January 26, 2016, 5:15 p.m., Central Library, Third Floor.