

CAPITOL NEIGHBORHOODS, INC.

Minutes of Executive Council Meeting held February 23, 2016

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vercauteren (President), Plotkin, Mayer, Cooper, Ostlind, Negrin, Mohs, Warman, Kamps, Fisher, Montes, O'Brien, Ald. Verveer, County. Super. Mary Kolar.

GUESTS PRESENT: Asst. Madison Fire Chief Laura Laurenzi, Madison Police Officer Andre Louis, John Morgan (First Settlement), and Alex Morganroth, who lives on N. Hancock St. and was formerly a Beloit City Planner. Now that he lives downtown, Morganroth said he is interested in getting involved with CNI.

I. **MEETING CALLED TO ORDER** by Vercauteren. There was no quorum at the outset.

II. **DOWNTOWN POLICE REPORT.** Madison Police Officer Andre Louis is a member of the Community Policing Team (CPT). Louis is also the liaison to Willy St. and the Marquette Neighborhood Association. He came in place of Officer Casey Charne who could not make the meeting. He reports there were 200 police calls downtown between January 1 and 31, 2016. These included two weapons offenses, two residential burglaries and two drug investigations. The rest were the more typical calls such as disturbances, bar fights and the like. Officer Louis asked what we want from police when they attend our meetings. Vercauteren said we want the officers to inform us of any uptick in criminal activity downtown and of upcoming events that will be of concern to police and the public. We also want the attending officer to listen to our concerns and share those concerns with the department. Mohs added that it is good for us to learn what police are up against and how crimes can be prevented (e.g., students not locking doors and windows). Louis asked what CNI's boundaries are. Vercauteren described them to him. Verveer also described the Central Business District for him. Mayer also directed Louis to the CNI website. Verveer said it is "invaluable" having the police department represented at our EC meetings. Louis asked us to add the police department to our e-mail list.

[There is now a quorum]

III. **MINUTES** of the January EC meeting, with minor changes to reflect (a) that Plotkin (not Vercauteren) met with the Assistant Fire Chief, and (b) the correct spelling of "Chabad" House (in the Mansion Hill report), are **APPROVED**; on **MOTION** by Mohs, **SECOND** by Ostlind.

IV. **TREASURER'S REPORT.** Plotkin reports a bank balance of \$12,937.96.

V. **COUNTY SUPERVISOR'S REPORT.** Mary Kolar is a member of the Dane County Housing Authority, an independent entity created to increase affordable housing in the county. Kolar reports that today (2/23), the authority approved a resolution to enable the Madison Development Corp. to get bonding to provide affordable housing units on W. Mifflin St. She is happy that the Miffland district endorsed the project. Mohs asked whether people are becoming more accepting of behavior problems in such projects. Kolar answered that if people think there will be problems, they'll oppose the project. She added that the project is consistent with the city plan and it went through Urban Design Commission. She believes that neighbors will be happy with their new neighbors.

Kolar reports that the County Board voted last night (2/22) to do a study and to develop a Master Plan for future options for the Alliant Energy Center and the Coliseum properties.

VI. PRESENTATION by Madison Assistant Fire Chief Laura Laurenzi. (Vercauteren thanked Plotkin for arranging this presentation).

Asst. Chief Laurenzi addressed the department's decision to remove the ambulance from the downtown fire station on W. Dayton St. (Station 1) and move it to the fire station on Williamson St. (Station 3). She distributed copies of the report prepared for the Fire Chief that chronicles the number of calls and response times while Station 1 was closed for renovation for most of 2015 during which the ambulance was housed at Station 3 on Willy St. This, along with other changes, has resulted in more even response times citywide without any decrease in ambulance response times. She noted that the fire response time was adversely affected somewhat while Station 1 was closed, but ambulance response times actually improved after the Station 1 ambulance was moved to Station 3 because it provides better coverage to the far east side without adversely impacting response times for calls downtown.

Laurenzi explained that the caller will always get the closest available vehicle. New technology, called "Automatic Vehicle Locators," will help find the closest vehicle. In some cases it might locate an ambulance from another part of town that happens to be leaving a nearby hospital when the call comes in. Also, each ambulance is staffed with two paramedics. If there are more paramedics on duty than needed, the department will put one at a fire station without an ambulance. Further, every fire engine also has a trained first responder medic to treat the person until the ambulance arrives. Kamps asked why it took the relocation from Station 1 for the fire department to realize the value of these changes. Laurenzi explained that the department had met the required standards for response times, but was aware of a "volume gap" in some parts of the city, adding that every change has an effect. She said the department was also looking into preventative measures to reduce demand in areas of high service demand (e.g., blood pressure checkups and better health management). Fisher asked whether the Willy St. station is too small and outdated. Laurenzi believes that, though old, it still is capable of serving the community and the neighbors love it. It is similar to Stations 9 and 5 that were remodeled. She also noted that the city has an agreement with the Town of Madison to send the closest vehicle regardless of jurisdiction. It remains to be seen what will be done when the Town is annexed. Verveer noted that the city has budgeted for the construction in 2017 of a fire station to fill a gap on the southeast side. It is in the Capital Improvement Budget. Planning for the new station is underway now. When the new station opens, the department will apply for a grant to cover the cost of staffing it. Negrin asked about the doubling in the number of responses in some downtown areas from 2014 to 2015 as reflected in the report. Laurenzi did not know why the totals doubled and she will check on it.

VII. ALDERPERSONS' REPORTS. Verveer reported on the February 10, 2016 meeting to discuss the Post Office's proposal to move out of the central business district when the Municipal Building is closed for renovations later this year. He thanked Fred Mohs for his assistance in providing the option for the Post Office to lease space on the ground floor of the Manchester Place Building on the Square. Verveer believes this will provide a perfect fit for their needs.

He also thanked CNI for issuing a written statement, prepared by Jim Skrentny, opposing relocation of the Post Office out of the downtown. Verveer delivered a hard copy of the statement before the public hearing. Verveer is optimistic that the Post Office will now have a new, more visible, permanent home on the Square. He added that Mohs and his partners agreed to hold the space open until the fall. Verveer noted that a big issue in the proposed move was finding adequate space for the 2,000 post office boxes that are in the Municipal Building. Many of those citizens who attended the meeting were post office box holders. There was such a large turnout at the meeting, it had to be moved upstairs in the Municipal Building. Verveer also noted that Madison Metro and City Traffic Engineering are working to improve signage in front of the Manchester Place Building. He does not foresee any problems with people parking briefly in front to drop off their mail.

Negrin asked for an update on the Judge Doyle Square project. Verveer reports that the two Chicago development teams who are still in the running will be interviewed by the Board of Estimates finance team from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. March 9, 2016 at the Monona Terrace Hall of Ideas room. Each interview will last two hours. The Board of Estimates will then discuss the proposals at its regular meeting on March 21, 2016. It may be followed by a recommendation as to which team the city should negotiate with. According to Verveer, the biggest difference between the two proposals is above-ground versus below-ground parking; what he called land use versus cost.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS.

Review and Approval of Grant Application for Ash Tree Treatment.

Pete Ostlind had asked the Finance Committee to approve a grant application on behalf of CNI requesting \$27,000 from a foundation recommended by a Bassett resident for treatment of mature trees for Emerald Ash Bore disease in James Madison, Brittingham and Law Parks. It would extend for three treatment cycles over a ten-year period. Ostlind is not yet at liberty to reveal the name of the foundation. According to Ostlind, the foundation's mission is to preserve the urban forest **mature trees and forests**. The Finance Committee met last night (2/22) and recommended that we proceed with the grant application. Ostlind put the proposal together. He explained that there are no funds in the city budget for treating ash trees in the city parks. Instead, the city created the "adopt-a-tree" program whereby private citizens provide funds for treating specific trees in the parks. He reports that 12 trees were treated once in James Madison Park in 2015. A total of 43 trees in the three parks would be treated if the grant application is approved. Each tree must be treated once every three years at a cost of \$250 per treatment. The grant proposal would cover nine years' worth of treatments for 40 trees. CNI would be the fiduciary agent for the grant. CNI would hold and disburse the funds when we hire a contractor over the next decade. Mohs asked whether the grant would be tax deductible. Ostlind answered that the foundation is already tax exempt, but any donations we make to CNI are tax exempt. Ostlind said the application would be submitted by March 1st.

A MOTION by Montes, with a SECOND by Cooper, that the CNI Executive Council authorize the grant application by CNI for \$27,000 to treat trees in James Madison, Brittingham and Law Parks over the next decade, as recommended by the Finance Committee, with CNI becoming

the fiduciary agent for holding and disbursing the grant money to the contractor hired to treat the trees, is APPROVED.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

Proposed Relocation of Post Office. See discussion, above.

County Board Candidates Forum. Vercauteren reports that the candidates forum held February 10, 2016 at Capitol Lakes for the county board primary election for the seat currently held by Mary Kolar went well and was attended by about thirty people. Kolar and her two challengers, CNI EC member Adam Brabender and Rob Dz Franklin, spoke and answered questions. Vercauteren noted that the forum was videotaped by Brenda Konkel. He commented that it was good exposure for CNI and provided a good service for Capitol Lakes residents. We will likely not be able to do a forum for the general election, however. Warman suggested that individual districts should decide where to hold a candidate forum and it should be held at a location better than Capitol Lakes because it tends to restrict who will attend. He suggested locations such as the “Ovation” or “Domain” apartment buildings.

Membership Growth Strategy. According to Vercauteren, Davy Mayer continues to work on the new membership brochure and is adding new photographs.

X. DISTRICT REPORTS.

Bassett. Cooper reports that construction continues at the Anchor Bank and Inn on the Park sites on the Square. Urban Land Interests has proposed a 4-story, 83-unit apartment building at Bedford and Doty Sts. A steering committee was formed and has met once with the development team. The project went before UDC February 10. The UDC noted the same issues that the steering committee had with the project: it is too close to the sidewalk, there should be space for landscaping and the raised entrances for the first floor units leave a 6 foot concrete wall at the sidewalk. There is limited parking, with some underground spaces, and additional parking available at other ULI buildings nearby. The UDC wants more firm figures as to parking availability. There is a neighborhood meeting to discuss this proposal tomorrow (2/24), 7:00 p.m., at Findorff offices in the new training room.

First Settlement. O’Brien reports that construction is nearing completion on the new apartment building in the 300 block of E. Wilson and it looks good for its size. Construction work on the Progressive Building at 409 E. Main St. is expected to begin some time this spring. They had problems earlier this winter when a pipe burst in the basement after the furnace apparently went out.

James Madison Park. Montes reports that Cliff Fisher’s development proposal has been submitted to UDC but, despite unanimous approval by the steering committee, it came back with issues identified by UDC. They are concerned about the small size of the apartments even though, Montes pointed out, they were designed small to be affordable and the project complies with the downtown plan and zoning code. Montes said she intends to send a letter to the UDC addressing the pros and cons of the proposal. She also noted that Tenney-Lapham residents support the project and she is surprised that UDC is taking the position it has. She believes that the city is “doing a disservice” to the neighborhood by taking this position. Mohs asked whether the neighbors would welcome more buildings like that proposed in this

project. Montes answered that if neighbors do not want them, they will turn out to say so. Vercauteren asked whether there is any update on the proposal by Housing Initiatives to provide housing for homeless veterans in the district. Montes had no news other than that funding was approved for the project.

Montes reports that someone stole her dancing shoes off of her front porch at 10:45 a.m. on February 11. Her video camera captured the theft and it showed that the thief put the shoes inside a car that was filled with boxes of other apparently stolen goods. She sent the video to police.

Mansion Hill. Mohs reports that the district is “blissfully void of news” for now. Work continues on the development proposal for the Chabad House adjacent to the Buckeye Lot. The issue with regard to that project is precedent. The house, though outside the Mansion Hill Historic District, is inside the National Historic District. The house is run by good people and it provides a wholesome environment for students. But, according to Mohs, “precedent is the nagging issue” if they are allowed to tear down the house.

Vercauteren reports that the Texas developer who considered developing a large apartment building on Langdon St. has stepped back from the project.

Mohs discussed the recent proposed state legislation to restrict the creation of historic districts statewide. He called the landlord-tenant bill, of which this was a part, a “kitchen sink” approach. Mohs testified at the hearing against the requirement that all property owners in the district must vote to approve the creation of a new historic district. This would make it unlikely that a historic district could ever be created in absentee/landlord dominated districts. Mohs said this proposal was supported financially by developer Steve Brown. It was a “dogfight” getting this provision out of the bill. Mohs also noted that the legislature removed local controls over “Air bnb” rentals. This is of concern to Mohs because one of his tenants was renting out his apartment to overnight guests. Mohs believes that, without any controls, this could significantly change neighborhoods, especially near Camp Randall, where people could purchase properties just to rent them out to overnight guests. Montes noted that the Collins House is now renting out rooms on “Air bnb.”

Miffland. Kamps reports that the January meeting was attended only by himself and one other person. There is a proposal to demolish or move five houses that provide traditional student housing on the northwest corner of W. Wash and Broom St. and replace them with a large apartment building. The steering committee has met once so far, the project is in its early stages and they are awaiting more details. This proposal for a four or five-story building is within the parameters of the downtown plan. Warman agreed that the downtown plan allows for four stories on W. Wash. with a provision for two more stories if the project has exceptional design. Kamps believes this will result in a big change for this gateway corridor and high-profile corner. Mohs asked what is W. Wash. going to become? Will it become a street of ordinary apartment buildings and row houses?

Warman spoke with a lawyer at the Freedom From Religion Foundation about the bright sign on their building and expressed his disappointment that they did not come to the neighborhood before changing their project to include the sign. Warman also told the lawyer

that Miffland district would consider inviting a representative to an upcoming meeting to discuss how they could become better neighbors.

In response to a question by Vercauteren, Kamps reports that there is a proposal to open an indoor dog park and dog day care on the first floor of Metropolitan Place, Phase II, where a coffee shop/wine bar had been located. This is being proposed by a current resident at Metropolitan Place. Kamps called it a novel concept for which there appears to be a demand.

MEETING ADJOURNED (on MOTION by Mohs, SECOND by Cooper).

NEXT EC MEETING: Tuesday March 22, 2016, 5:15 p.m., Central Library, third floor.

AGENDA* for March 22 EC Meeting

- I. CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM (Vercauteren).
- II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY, 2016 EC MINUTES.
- III. DOWNTOWN POLICE REPORT.
- IV. COUNTY SUPERVISOR'S REPORT (Super. Mary Kolar).
- V. TREASURER'S REPORT (Plotkin).
- VI. ACTION ITEMS/NEW BUSINESS.
- VII. OLD BUSINESS:
 - CNI Membership Outreach/Growth Strategy Next Steps;**
 - Update on Website/Membership/Communications System Upgrade;**
 - Proposed Post Office Relocation Update;**
 - 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.**