

CAPITOL NEIGHBORHOODS, INC.

MINUTES of March 22, 2016 EC Meeting

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

GUESTS: Madison Police Officers Casey Charne (downtown liaison) and Chad Cross (Community Policing Team), Steve Morgan, and Tom Waangard (a Capitol West resident in Bassett).

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

The meeting opened with a round of introductions of EC members and guests present.

II. MINUTES of February EC meeting (with minor corrections), are APPROVED; on MOTION by Mohs, SECOND by Brabender.

III. TREASURER'S REPORT. Plotkin (not present) submitted a written report showing a bank balance of \$12,924.70.

IV. DOWNTOWN POLICE REPORT. Officer Charne reports that police are beginning to focus on the upcoming Mifflin Street Block Party on April 30 that they believe will "ramp up" because the UW will be holding a smaller version of "Revelry" this year. The "Crazy Legs" run will also be held that day. Extra officers were on duty last weekend for St. Patrick's Day events and the boys basketball tournament Charne reports that things went well, noting that students were on spring break.

Charne reports that the city will soon be sending out information regarding the closure of Doty St. between S. Hamilton St. and Martin Luther King Blvd. as part of the Anchor Bank construction project. The closure is scheduled for April 6-10 to make room for two tower cranes.

The officers provided a printout of crime statistics for the various sectors covering most of the downtown (401-06). In response to Stitt's question, Charne said the study covers mostly areas west of the Square, but also extends east of the Square to Blair St. There were five strong-arm robberies between January and March 22. Cooper asked whether there are typical times of day when these crimes occur. Charne answered that it varies and there is no trend. In response to a question by Stitt, Charne explained that break-ins are included under the "Thefts" category. Charne believes there will be an increase in thefts as the weather warms up. He reminded everyone to lock homes, windows and vehicles. Don't make it easy for thieves. In response to a question by Kamps, Charne said these statistics are at times recoded and are not 100% accurate. Officers will sometimes correct a report to move an incident into the correct category. Ostlind asked whether the figures represent the average in each category reported per day. Charne answered that they do reflect the daily average. Parking is the most frequent complaint in this area, which he sees as good news.

V. COUNTY SUPERVISOR'S REPORT. County Super. Mary Kolar emphasized that the County Board recently approved a market study and a master plan for the Alliant Energy Center - nothing more at this point. The board is hoping for a good outcome in the future. Stitt asked whether the county was still tied into a specific developer for the project. Kolar answered,

“No.” Devitt asked how often the Coliseum is used. Kolar did not have specific statistics, but said that its use has gone down and events there have declined. The Coliseum did, however, earn a small profit last year. Devitt asked whether any of this will affect the World Dairy Expo. Kolar answered that the county would do everything to make sure the Dairy Expo stays here.

The County Board approved up to \$2 million toward the “housing first” initiative which is designed to get homeless people into housing as early as possible. To that end, the county purchased two buildings with eight units of housing to be leased by “Housing Initiatives.” Mohs asked who will be living next to these buildings. Kolar answered that there are neighborhoods that welcome them, including in CNI. “Housing Initiatives” has a 95% success rate placing homeless people into units they provide. Neighbors will hardly notice they are there. She cited the example of a homeless veteran who is now employed at the MMOCA and lives in a “Housing First” facility. Cooper asked for an update on the homeless day center proposed for the Messner Building on E. Wash. Kolar reports that the United Way is working with the city and county, but there is not much progress so far.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

New First Settlement Chair.

Vercauteren reports that Jim Skrentny (not present) recently announced that he will be stepping down as First Settlement Chair after the Annual Meeting. He is willing to remain as a District Representative. Because he is not here, this will be deferred to the April EC meeting. Stitt reports that no one has yet stepped forward to replace him as chair. The district intends to do a recognition event for Jim.

Nominations for Madison Trust for Historic Preservation Awards (MTHP).

The MTHA is looking for nominations of properties for its annual awards. The deadline is April 1st. Vercauteren would like to see nominations of properties in CNI. Last year, awards were presented in several of our surrounding neighborhoods. Stitt recommended the Steensland House. Ingebritson recommended the ALANON house at 511 N. Carroll, and the house at 28 Langdon St. where she said there was a “spectacular renovation” of the outside. Mohs added that 28 Langdon is a sorority house that originally was a single-family home. Ingebritson also mentioned the house at 504 Wisconsin Ave. where the aluminum siding was removed to reveal the original wood siding. Devitt commented that renovation of the ALANON house on N. Carroll St. has made a huge difference. Mohs added that the ALANON house used a \$10,000 façade grant from the city to build a new porch. This was the second ALANON house in the country, according to Mohs, and in its years at that location, ALANON has saved “countless lives” including some from Madison’s most prominent families. Stitt noted that he helped to keep the house from closing and they agreed to improve the house despite ALANON’s desire not to have a “grandiose” facility. Devitt remarked that he would gladly live next door because they have been such good neighbors. Vercauteren asked the Mansion Hill district to take the lead on this and select a few worthy candidates for nomination. Devitt remarked how pleased he was that the church and neighborhood came together to save the Steensland House. He especially complimented Ingebritson and Mohs for their efforts.

Doors Open Madison.

Vercauteren reports that DMI is coordinating this new event, modeled after similar events in Milwaukee and other cities. It will take place Sunday April 24, 2016 from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The general public will be allowed to explore various designated buildings in and around the downtown area, some of which are not regularly open to the public, free of charge. One example is the American Exchange Building on the Square. Volunteers are needed. Stitt called it a great event. Waangard remarked that the Milwaukee event is “really cool” and usually quite busy.

CNI Annual Meeting.

Vercauteren wants suggestions for speakers at the CNI Annual Meeting in June. We could cover their travel expenses, but not air fare. Devitt recommended David Molenhoff and Jack Holtzhueder. Kamps recommended John Gurda from Milwaukee. Gurda has taught architecture and has written books on the social and architectural history of southeastern Wisconsin. Stitt agreed that Gurda would be a great choice, noting that he just finished a book on Milwaukee neighborhoods. Stitt volunteered to reach out to Gurda. The Annual Meeting is usually scheduled for the last Thursday in June. This year it is June 23, but Vercauteren said there could be some flexibility to accommodate the speaker. We have not yet reserved a room at Monona Terrace.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

Downtown Post Office Relocation Update.

Stitt believes it is “unconscionable” for the mayor to take the position that the post office cannot return to the Municipal Building after the construction work is done there. He wants us to “lobby hard” to get the post office back in there after the work is done and he wants CNI to issue a strong statement to that effect. Vercauteren said he received a request from someone that CNI modify its statement previously issued to now state that the post office should be located “somewhere within the Central Business District” rather than in the Municipal Building. Mohs believes the mayor made this statement probably because city departments are requesting more space. Mohs added that putting the post office on Mifflin St. across from the Capitol on the Square is arguably a better location with a greater density of users. Stitt remarked that the mayor could provide additional city office space elsewhere in the new construction to provide more space for the post office in the Municipal Building. It shows a lack of respect for city history and the La Follette connection to the Municipal Building, Stitt remarked. Mohs pointed out that the old federal courthouse is gone, too. Devitt believes the post office “should stay exactly where it is,” and he lamented what the city did to the interior of the Municipal Building.

VIII. DISTRICT REPORTS

Bassett.

Cooper reports that, after the UDC disapproved of the 5 ft. setback for the ULI apartment building proposal at 222 S. Bedford, ULI modified it to a 7 ft. setback. He said the steering committee wants still more of a setback to spare the mature trees on both Bedford and Doty Sts., adding that the trees along Bedford are at greatest risk. The committee chair will meet tomorrow (3/21) with City Forestry to see whether a 10 ft. setback would save the

trees. According to Copper, ULI is “not terribly enamored” with the neighborhood’s proposal of a 10-11ft. setback.

First Settlement.

Stitt reports that that Jim Skrentny has “abandoned us’ as district chair and no one has yet stepped up to replace him. Stitt said he will not do so. Stitt commended Skrentny on the wonderful job he has done as district chair. Those who run the Creative Learning Day Care Center on Butler St. are raising funds to purchase their building and keep the day care center at that location. They have a short time frame to raise the needed funds. The district intends to host a fundraiser for them. Park Bank has donated \$10,000. Vercauteren commented that the availability of child care downtown is a major issue. Ostlind asked about the neighborhood’s reaction to the new apartment building recently completed on E. Wilson. St. Stitt said that he personally likes the design and appreciates the attention to detail as reflected in the curvature of the building to conform to the curvature of the street.

James Madison Park.

No one present. Waangard reports that the new Festival Foods grocery store in the 800 block of E. Wash. opens April 8.

Mansion Hill.

Devitt reports that the historic district street signs are now up throughout the district. An “open house” sponsored by Bethel Lutheran to view the restored and moved Steensland House will take place Saturday, April 9, 2016, from 2:30-4:30 p.m. David Molenhoff and Randy Alexander are scheduled to speak. Mohs commented that the process was adversarial at first, but the new pastor at Bethel came from a church located in a historic district and the attitude changed. The church council was also very cooperative after his arrival. Mohs added that we all benefit by having a strong church in the neighborhood, and the church benefits by being adjacent to a thriving historic district. Devitt added that the church put a lot of money into the copper roof. Stitt suggested that CNI do something to express our appreciation to Bethel not only for its work on the Steensland House, but also for its work with the homeless. Devitt expressed appreciation for First United Methodist Church’s sign announcing that their church is welcoming to all. Devitt contrasted that with the Catholic Church. Mohs said he thought we would lose all of the downtown churches in the 1970s and, though many are gone, we are lucky to still have these remaining churches.

According to Ingebritson, State Historical Society photos of the Chabad House on W. Gorham show how beautiful the house once was but they now want to demolish it for more space. She said the proposal goes before UDC tomorrow night (3/23). The house is in the Mansion Hill National Historic Registry but is not protected under the local Mansion Hill District. If demolition is approved, this will create what Mohs termed a “worrisome precedent.” Mohs pointed out that the district fought and prevented the church across the street from tearing down two houses for surface parking. Vercauteren asked whether the district has taken a formal position on the Chabad House. Mohs answered that they are trying to figure out a way to save the house and bring it to the city’s attention. Ideas include expanding the Mansion Hill Historic District or creating a Langdon Historic District. Devitt also suggested finding another sight for the house to be moved in the area.

Negrin asked for an update on the proposed move of Madison College out of its downtown campus. According to Mohs, MATC President Jack Daniels will reveal his plans tomorrow (3/23), but they likely will not change. Mohs reported on the tour of the MATC downtown building that he, Jonathan Barry, John Wiley and others took two weeks ago. They were all “stunned” at how modern things are in the building. There is a modern boiler and classrooms that, according to John Wiley, are better than many on the UW campus. Yet, Mohs remarked, Daniels wants to spend \$10 million in taxpayer money to build a new building. Mohs believes the existing building cannot feasibly have any use other than as a school. It might have to be torn down if MATC leaves. He added that things were fine only a few years ago when MATC wanted to build a culinary school downtown. The MATC Board is scheduled to vote on the proposal in May. Cooper asked whether this will go to a referendum if they go ahead with plans for a new building on the south side. Verveer answered that they are doing everything they can to avoid a referendum.

Miffland.

Kamps reports that police updated the neighborhood on planning for the Mifflin St. Block Party ‘non-event’ on April 30. UW is sponsoring a scaled-down “Revelry” event at the Orpheum Theater this year. Verveer added that police will go door-to-door in advance of the event as they had in the past. In response to Stitt’s question, Verveer said the “Crazy Legs” run being held the same day will go down State St. as it has in the past.

According to Kamps, a zoning change is required for the proposed “Downtown Dogs” business on the first floor of Metropolitan Place Phase II where a coffee shop had been located. Kamps supports it, but said there is mixed feedback from neighbors. The applicant is scheduled to appear at the April district meeting.

Kamps reports that the early renderings are out for the apartment proposal on the northwest corner of W. Wash. and Broom St. The steering committee has been meeting and, though they have not yet reached a consensus on a position, they are getting closer. The committee met with the developer last night (3/21). Kamps noted that this is one of the first Miffland core developments under the new downtown plan. The developers are applying for two bonus stories for “exceptional” design. According to Kamps, the process has been productive so far and the developers are open to neighborhood feedback. He is happy with the process so far and believes the developers are working with the steering committee in good faith. They are meeting weekly. There is some deep-seated opposition to the height and massing, he noted. Stitt said he “mourns the loss” of these residential houses and the beautiful streetscape leading up to the Capitol. Instead, we should strive to improve every one of those houses. Cooper agrees, and wishes we could have so convinced the city when they approved of the downtown plan. We tried, he added. Stitt believes we must still speak out. Warman agrees that we should not “throw in the towel.” He noted that this represents our first battle under the new downtown plan. We could challenge whether the design is “exceptional” to allow for two more stories. We should not accept this as a foregone conclusion. Verveer commented that things are not as pessimistic as they might seem, at least at this point. In response to a question by Cooper, Verveer had no news to report on the proposed creation of a city park in the area.

IX. ALDERPERSON'S REPORT.

Verveer reports that no final decision has yet been made about the possible relocation of the post office to Manchester Place. The post office believes there is insufficient space at that location, and Fred Mohs is working with other tenants to free up more space there. Verveer remains optimistic and believes it would become the permanent location for the post office. The post office does not want to move twice and, Verveer believes, they would not be interested in moving back to the Municipal Building even if it was made available to them after construction.

Doty Street will be closed to traffic between Fairchild St. and Martin Luther King Blvd. from the evening of April 5 through Sunday April 10 to make way for cranes used for the Anchor Bank construction. The city council will take up a resolution at its meeting next Tuesday (3/29) to let the crew work until 9:00 p.m.

Reconstruction of the northwest half of the Capitol Square began yesterday (3/21). In response to a question by Kamps, Verveer said the construction will include widening Mifflin St. on the city side of the Square by two feet to accommodate a contra-flow bike lane in the future even though the state has disallowed the contra-flow lane for now. Crews will also install a signal conduit for the lane. According to Verveer, the State Capitol and Executive Residence Board disapproved of the contra-flow lane because they determined it would be "unsafe." That caused Kamps to comment that what is "unsafe" is what's there now. According to Vercauteren, the DMI biking subcommittee continues to work on and lobby for the contra-flow lane. Vercauteren had recommended a return to angled parking on the Square. Angled parking was rejected because, according to Verveer, it would entail the reduction of sidewalk space and the removal of planters and trees.

Plans are underway for the Business Improvement District's (BID) summer programming on and around State Street. The BID will have \$70,000 this year from increased food cart and café license fees to program for the entire BID footprint from the top of State Street, down State Street and around the Square. He said Mayor Soglin wants to hire a full-time staff person to do downtown public programming.

The Orpheum Theater has a new management agreement with "Live Nation." They filed a liquor license application on March 21 and will appear at the April ALRC meeting. They are required to hold a public meeting on their application and Verveer asked if there is any interest in inviting them to a CNI meeting. Cooper asked whether they plan any operational changes. Verveer answered that they have pledged to hire locally and to do more aggressive event scheduling. Morgan asked for an update on the Orpheum marquee. Verveer said it is still in fabrication and the current owner still plans to erect it when done. Verveer said "Live Nation" is out of California and, in response to a question by Stitt, said he is not aware of any negotiations between them and the owners of the Majestic.

The owner of Capitol Center Foods, Mitch Eveland, has asked the city to let him purchase the land on Broom St. next to his store so it can expand. This land has previously not been developed because the city used to require a setback along the Broom St. transportation corridor. That setback requirement changed when the Alexander Co. was allowed to build into

it. The city is in the process of deciding now whether to sell the land. The Capitol Center owner might attend the next Miffland district meeting.

The Board of Estimates took up the two remaining Judge Doyle Square proposals at its meeting last night (3/21). The Board will make a final recommendation at its April 11th meeting to the city council as to which of the two development teams the city should negotiate with. If the deal is approved by the city council, Verveer said, we will have to form a steering committee to become involved in the process thereafter.

MEETING ADJOURNED (on MOTION by Cooper; SECOND by Warman)

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

AGENDA for April 26 EC Meeting

- I. CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM (Vercauteren).
- II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MARCH, 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.

Annual Meeting.

- 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;

New First Settlement Chair;

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.**