

CAPITOL NEIGHBORHOODS, INC.

MINUTES of Executive Council Meeting Held Tuesday August 23, 2016.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vercauteren (President), Stitt, Ostlind, Negrin, Warman, Broughman, Kamps, Brabender, Cooper, Fisher, O'Brien and Ald. Verveer. GUESTS: Mike Herring, John Morgan, and Madison Police Det. Berkovitz, Sgt. Cherne and Officer Trovarthan (sp.)

I. Meeting called to order by Vercauteren. There was no quorum at the outset.

II. DOWNTOWN SAFETY REPORT.

Sgt. Cherne apologized for the lack of attendance by police dept. representatives at recent EC meeting. She reports that burglaries, which decreased early in the year, increased as summer approached. Many involved entry through open doors, windows and cut screens. There has been an increase in thefts from autos. Police also report a "tremendous" increase in stolen autos. Many involve entry into unlocked cars and the thief uses spare keys found inside. There has been a slight increase in thefts of bikes from garages, but video cameras have helped.

Police are again this year working to educate students on preventative measures such as locking doors and windows, and not leaving valuables in plain view from outside an apartment or vehicle. In response to a question by Vercauteren, Cherne said there were some thefts during the recent move-in/move-out days when doors are often left open, but not a large increase over past years. In response to Verveer's question whether this criminal activity is organized, Cherne said it is "a mixture." Some is organized. Often, though, the crimes involve thefts by juveniles or the homeless who then sell what they stole. Cherne encouraged people to write down serial numbers of items they own so they can be traced and recovered. In response to a question by Herring, Cherne said some of the thefts from autos involve "smash and grab," but many involve entries into unlocked vehicles. The thieves will try the doors of cars until they find one that is unlocked. Thieves can get \$800 for a laptop computer; it is worth the risk. Berkovitz added that if the thief gets access to a garage door opener when they break into your car, they will have access to your home. Herring, who lives in the 600 block of W. Main St., says he feels safe walking around at night and asked whether he is correct in feeling safe. Cherne answered that it is a good community and you should feel safe, but a lot happens late at night. Also, some of the burglaries occur during the day. Berkovitz concurred that we should feel safe because Madison rates quite well, but always be aware and "have your wits about you" late at night. Cherne added that if we see anything suspicious, report it.

In response to a question by Ostlind, Berkovitz said there are still problems late at night (1:00 - 3:00 a.m.) in the area of lower State St., Frances St. and University Ave. Police are trying to keep a lid on it, and are working on environmental changes and providing more resources in that area. Fisher asked whether there is a particular problem bar or whether the large bar capacities create problems. Berkovitz answered there is not one problem bar, but there are a lot of bars in the areas, they all close at the same time, people don't want to leave the area after they close, and there can be "flash points." Broughman asked whether there are problems at the parking garage on Frances and Lake Sts. Berkovitz answered that sometimes there are, and sometimes not, but the entire block at times can become a "rolling

disturbance.” He noted that people will sometimes argue on Facebook and then show up on State St. to fight.

Verveer, noting that CNI in the past has supported budget items for the Downtown Safety initiative and for more Community Policing Team officers, asked whether the department needs our help again this year. Berkovitz answered that he will have Capt. Gloede reach out to us if there is a need for our help. He added that the department has ideas for addressing these problems. The task is now to determine how to implement them and what it will cost. Cherne noted that more Safety Initiative officers will be on duty in the upcoming weeks. Berkovitz reports that the area around the Capitol Square and E. and W. Main St. is generally safe.

[There is now a quorum]

II. APPROVAL OF JULY EC MINUTES.

The minutes of the July EC meeting, with minor corrections to the Bassett district report by Ostlind, are APPROVED; on MOTION by Stitt, SECOND by Ostlind.

III. TREASURER’S REPORT.

Warman reports that he is still in the process of taking over from Plotkin. He urged us to review Plotkin’s report on the budget for the first six months of this year. Warman reports a bank balance of \$23,009.44. This includes the \$6,192 collected for treating trees in downtown parks for EAB. We received a \$450 contribution from the Monona Bay neighborhood association to be used on the trees at Brittingham Park. Joe Bonardi also requested \$500 out of the parks fund to be used in Period Garden Park. Warman noted that our budget allows for a distribution of \$100 to each district annually to be used for district projects, but this does not roll over from year-to-year; “use it or lose it.”

Vercauteren praised Ostlind for the great work he has done on the EAB project. He suggested issuing a press release to acknowledge Ostlind’s work and to announce our plans to promote what he is doing. Ostlind hopes to do an article for the newsletter by September 15. He added that the treatment work on the trees may have begun today (8/23). He agrees we should do a press release. Ostlind said some trees along Law Park will also be treated by City Forestry. Fisher commented that the street trees along E. Gorham and Johnson Sts. “look awful” and the city is cutting anything underneath power lines. Ostlind responded that the city will only treat street trees that qualify. Broughman noted that city workers recently planted stakes around the trees on the terrace in front of Metropolitan Place to save them.

Ostlind reports that Marquette Neighborhood Assoc. is looking to form a broader group to discuss city tree policy in hopes of moving City Forestry away from cutting and pruning. Kamps has the contact information for those working on this. One issue being raised, Kamps said, is to replace removed trees with larger trees than the “Q-Tips” being planted now. Herring asked whether the yellow ribbons around trees mean that those trees will be saved. Ostlind answered, yes. In response to Herring’s question, Ostlind believes that the city will treat about 9,000 trees and remove about 9,000 trees on street terraces. Verveer provided Ostlind with the name of a *Capitol Times* reporter who could write an article on this.

Warman asked when Ostlind would need money from the account to pay for the EAB treatment. Ostlind answered that he will send an invoice in the next couple of weeks. The cost averages out to about \$200 per tree, depending on size, every three years. According to Ostlind, we received strong support from individuals and businesses. The Echo Tavern donated \$1,000. There were also generous donations from Phil Hees and from McGrath Properties. Ostlind would like to recognize the contributors in any article written about this project.

IV. NEW BUSINESS.

Appointment of Mike Herring to the EC.

At the last meeting, we decided to appoint Vercauteren to fill the EC vacancy in Bassett district so that he could serve another term as CNI President. That, however, left out Mike Herring, a Bassett resident who wished to fill the vacancy. Rather than appoint Herring to a committee chairmanship, Vercauteren suggested that we appoint Herring to fill the Bassett vacancy and appoint Vercauteren to be Chair of the CNI Policy Committee. To that end, Vercauteren resigned as Bassett representative. Warman pointed out that because Vercauteren already serves as Chair of the Policy committee, there is no need to re-appoint him to that position and he may continue to serve on the EC solely in that capacity.

A MOTION by Warman, with a SECOND by Kamps, that Mike Herring be appointed to fill the neighborhood representative vacancy in Bassett district, is APPROVED.

Herring provided a brief biography. Herring is recently retired, owns a condo at 600 W. Main St., and he and his wife are having a “great time” in Madison. Before retiring, Herring served as a city manager in four cities, the most recent being Chesterfield Missouri - a suburb of St. Louis.

Proposed Contribution to Creative Learning Day Care Center.

At the last meeting, Bert Stitt proposed that CNI donate \$500 to Creative Learning Day Care Center on Butler and Main Sts. in support of their effort to raise funds to enable them to purchase the building they are in currently as renters so the day care center can remain downtown. Stitt explained the reasons for the fundraising effort and believes keeping the day care center here will be a great asset for the downtown. He said they also hope to be able to provide for people of lesser means in the future. This contribution will, he added, show that CNI supports people who are working to create a healthier neighborhood downtown. Vercauteren believes it is a worthy cause and we have the funds to do it. This is especially important in light of the report that Red Caboose on Williamson St. has announced plans to move out of the downtown to Union Corners, what Stitt called a “real loss” to the downtown. In response to Ostlind’s question, Stitt said he has “no doubt” they will be able to meet the fundraising goal. When Vercauteren asked for a motion for approval, Warman explained that a motion was already brought and we tabled it at the last EC meeting.

Accordingly, the motion tabled at the July EC meeting to authorize a \$500 contribution by CNI to support the fundraising effort by the owners of Creative Learning Day Care Center to enable them to purchase their building on E. Main and S. Butler Sts. and remain downtown, is APPROVED. Stitt thanked the EC and he will put Warman in contact with their director.

State/Langdon District.

Vercauteren asked whether anyone is interested in working on re-incorporating State/Langdon district into CNI as it was in the past. He noted that this discussion started when the “Hub” apartment building proposal in State/Langdon went through the approval process. This action would require review and compliance with our bylaws and city process. City staff is supportive if we can identify people in State/Langdon who are interested in making the move. Kamps asked whether we have members who currently live there. If we do, that might be a good place to start. The alder for most of the district is Zach Wood. Ostlind noted that Ald. Zellers also represents part of State/Langdon. According to Verveer, Ald. Wood expressed interest in having State/Langdon once again included in CNI. Verveer added that many business applicants are trying to get hold of State/Langdon representatives to notify the neighborhood about their proposals without success. There is just “a void now,” he remarked. Warman noted that former Ald. Eli Judge had worked to separate out State/Langdon from CNI. Warman suggested inviting Ald. Wood to our next EC meeting. Vercauteren agreed, adding that Wood might be able to identify district residents interested in working on this. He will invite Wood to the next EC meeting.

Outreach to New Residents.

Vercauteren wants us to come up with ways to improve outreach to new residents. He announced that Davy Mayer is working on a brochure for new residents to be included in the “welcome” packets distributed by the BID to new downtown residents. Warman suggested holding one of our meetings at the “Ovation” or “Domain.” We could use the \$100 allotted annually for the district to provide refreshments. Kamps suggested having MG & E distribute our brochure when they start up new service. Vercauteren said he will contact David Benfarrado at MG & E with that suggestion. Warman believes it is more important for us to discuss ways to get more people involved in the organization. Stitt commented that organizations go through cycles of low energy and lethargy. We have been in a lethargic state for awhile. We should think strategically of ways to pump energy into this organization. Vercauteren likes the idea of CNI hosting meetings in larger buildings in our districts, noting that this has worked in Bassett.

V. OLD BUSINESS.

State Street Retail Study Update.

Vercauteren reports that the consultants’ draft report was recently released. There will be a follow-up report in September with specific recommendations. Tiffany Kenney of the BID said the initial draft report was what they expected. Vercauteren said CNI will continue to wait and see how this develops before we take a position. Verveer reports the city will host a large meeting for public input September 22, 5:30 p.m. at the Overture. It will involve discussion of the draft report’s analysis, conclusions and recommendations. The final report will then come out in October. Issues to be discussed include: whether buses should be allowed on the Capitol Square and State St.; whether State St. should be designated a national historic district. Stitt referred to today’s news report that Amazon plans to take over the first floor of the Red Gym to dispense orders to customers. This, he believes, will have an impact on retail downtown. Kamps noted that this may help reduce congestion caused by

deliveries. Vercauteren discussed the impact of e-commerce on brick and mortar in general, noting there is now some evidence that it is starting to flatten out and there may be a resurgence of traditional retail. Stitt commented that he was impressed with the retail mix he recently saw in Ann Arbor, Mich.

Homeless Day Resource Center Update.

Stitt reports that the proposed homeless day resource center at the Chamber of Commerce Building, 615 E. Wash., will happen. He has met with a UW Ph. D candidate and the maitre 'd at Miramoto restaurant who is interested in working on this. They are currently working on finding meeting space and met with people from 100 State. Stitt does not yet see a lot of concern or energy around this issue in the area and believes people are generally supportive so far. Much depends, he said, on how it rolls out and it is important that we have input. If so, we can have a healthy result. Noting that an outdoor play area was proposed to be located behind the building, Stitt believes residents will be concerned about outdoor activities there. Vercauteren noted that the Salvation Army across the street has an outdoor area for families. They also plan to expand their building to six stories. The success of this proposal will depend on how it is handled. This could be a benefit to the community if handled well, Vercauteren added.

VI. DISTRICT REPORTS

First Settlement.

Stitt believes that the proposed high-rise development on the Essen Haus property is over-reaching and impractical. Some residents oppose tearing down the buildings on Wilson St. because they are in a national historic district. Cooper asked for an update on the McGrath high-rise proposal for E. Wilson St. next to the Marina Condos. Stitt said the signage is up. Kamps added that the developer now has a website for the project.

James Madison Park.

No one present. Morgan reports a lot of rabbits in the district. Vercauteren is working on finding a new EC representative for the district.

Mansion Hill.

Vercauteren reports that Ald. Zellers has scheduled a meeting for next week to discuss residents' concerns with the Edgewater Hotel. Verveer reports that the Chabad House demolition is closing in on city approval despite Fed Mohs' efforts to work out an eleventh hour compromise. It will go before the Plan commission for a conditional use permit next Monday (8/29). According to Verveer, city staff recommends approval.

Miffland.

Kamps reports the district has been relatively quiet recently. The "Uncommon" apartment building is now open. There have been complaints about moped parking on the sidewalk and terraces there. Kamps said he spoke to the property manager about it. Demolition is now complete and the hole has been dug for the Madison Development Corp. project on W. Mifflin. Kamps reports that Jeff Wills plans to add a 3-4 story addition to the

rear of his house. This will both preserve the house and add apartments. Work continues on locating a new park downtown. It is an ongoing process according to Kamps.

Kamps hopes to provide momentum for a special neighborhood plan for the district, especially regarding development proposals for W. Wash. Warman had hoped that Bassett representatives would attend the last Miffland meeting to discuss a vision for the W. Wash. corridor. Cooper explained that he could not attend and the notice went out late. Warman suggested that Miffland representatives attend the next Bassett meeting. Cooper agrees this should be taken up at a future Bassett meeting. Kamps believes the districts must work together on a special plan.

Bassett.

Cooper thanked Ostlind for his work on the EAB treatment of park trees downtown. Ostlind reported on the Plan Commission meeting that addressed the non-conforming aspects of the Eric Minton building at 425 W. Wash. Minor deviations from the original approved plan were approved, but major ones were not and the developers were ordered to remove them. The major items include: the ground level fence, the fifth floor trellis, the wood fence. The biggest non-conforming item, the HVAC vents on three sides of the building, is currently in court as a law enforcement issue. According to Cooper, the Plan Commission sided with city staff as well as the neighborhood in ruling as they did. The lesson to be learned, according to Cooper, is that you build what was approved. Ostlind noted that Brandon Cook's building on S. Bassett St. also has non-conforming issues. His changes were, however, taken up and approved by the Plan Commission. Verveer pointed out that Cooks was prosecuted by the city, much like Minton is now, resulting in a substantial fine. Cooper remarked that the issues with 425 W. Wash. have been ongoing for twelve years.

Broughman asked whether the Anchor Bank development will include condos. Cooper answered that it will only include apartments. Vercauteren attended a recent DMI event at the renovated Park Hotel and commented on how nicely the work inside was done. He noted that each floor has its own mural. There is a new bar and restaurant on the ground floor.

Finally, Brabender noted the recent passing of Lori Bond, a Miffland resident and steering committee member.

VII. ALDERPERSONS' REPORTS.

In the same vein, Verveer noted the passing of long-time CNI member, newsletter editor, treasurer and downtown resident Lynn Phelps. There will be a newsletter article similar to what was written for Megan Christiansen when she passed. Kamps asked whether CNI will make a donation in Lynn's memory. The obituary suggested donations to Capitol Lakes or Grace Episcopal Church. We could put this on the agenda for the next meeting. Vercauteren suggested that we approve it now subject to an e-mail vote. We decided to contribute \$100 to Capitol Lakes as a memorial to Lynn Phelps. Vercauteren will circulate an e-mail for EC approval.

Verveer reports that loitering and behavior issues at the top of State St. have decreased and there is a police presence now. Increased LED-style lighting will begin there tonight (8/23). He encourages our input on how it appears. Lighting has also been improved

near Porta Bella on Frances St. According to Verveer, the request by police that there be a change in payment practice at the Frances St. parking garage was opposed by the Parking Utility and rejected. Police wanted payment upon entry into the garage rather than upon exit to alleviate congestion at the end of the night. In response to Warman's question, Verveer said the Transit and Parking Commission was not involved in this discussion. Verveer also noted that the city is working on late night food vending issues in that area.

New signs have been installed on the Square by City Traffic Engineering for the new bike lane. Verveer said that Fed Mohs is opposed and sent around a petition to have them removed. Mayor Soglin wants the signs to remain up to see whether people comply with them. Vercauteren remarked that, as a bicyclist, he would sign a counter-petition on behalf of cyclists. Kamps added that he favors anything that keeps cars out of the diamond lanes. Verveer reports that the proposal to install public art on Library Mall, 700 block of W. State St., is not going to happen. They are "going back to the drawing board" with a new round of public engagement and competition.

Work will begin in the next few months on the replacement for the Government East parking garage as part of the Judge Doyle Square project. According to Verveer, the TIF Board meets tomorrow (8/24) to discuss whether to allow the use of TIF money to partially fund the parking garage replacement. The City Council will vote on the architect and engineering firms at its next meeting. Verveer said we will need to recruit people from First Settlement and Bassett to work with the design team for the parking structure.

The city's biennial Neighborhood Conference will take place Saturday, October 8, 2016, at Monona Terrace. The focus will be on helping neighborhood associations. Vercauteren said he would do something for the conference. Vercauteren also notes that he and Verveer are on the DMI panel preparing DMI's annual State of the Downtown report due out Sept. 28. He will send an e-mail when it comes out.

MEETING ADJOURNED; on MOTION by Warman, SECOND by Brabender.

NEXT EC MEETING: Tuesday September 27, 2016, 5:15 p.m., Central Library third floor.

AGENDA for Sept. 27 EC Meeting

- I. CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM (Vercauteren).
- II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AUGUST MEETING MINUTES.
- III. TREASURER'S REPORT (Warman).
- IV. DOWNTOWN POLICE REPORT.
- V. COUNTY SUPERVISOR'S REPORT (Mary Kolar).
- VI. ACTION ITEMS/NEW BUSINESS:
Action on EC Projects for the Coming Year;
Proposal to re-incorporate State/Langdon into CNI;

Other.

VII. OLD BUSINESS:

CNI Membership Outreach/Growth Strategy Next Steps;

Update on Website/Membership/Communications System Upgrade;

State Street Retail Business Study and Potential Action;

Update on Homeless Day Resource Center;

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.**