

CAPITOL NEIGHBORHOODS, INC.
MINUTES of Executive Council Meeting Held July 25, 2017.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vercauteren (President), Negrin, Warman, Mohs, Ostlind, Broughman, Mayer, Ingebritson, O'Brien.

GUESTS; Madison Police Capt. Jason Freedman, Jim Morgan.

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER by Vercauteren. There is no quorum.

II. DOWNTOWN POLICE REPORT. According to Captain Freedman, police continue work on the State St. corridor and have been generally successful in displacing problems. They have seen a drop in service calls and in "significant events" in the area. There have been "flare-ups" in other areas. Police continue to work with homeless service providers, including "Beacon," the day resource center set to open on E. Wash. in October.

Police continue to face persistent late night problems and chronic fights in the 600 block area of W. University Ave. Police have seen an increase in violent assaults and weapons offenses in the area. There is a volatile mix of people, many of whom are intoxicated, late night. Police are addressing the issues with a multi-layered approach that includes working with bar owners and street vendors, and improving lighting. Police will be on full overtime for the rest of the summer. In response to Mohs's question, Freedman said the crowds consist of bar patrons who are college students and non-college students alike, others hanging around outside, people from outside the central district, and people who are there just looking for trouble. When there are this many drunk people in a close space, trouble is bound to happen. In response to Ostlind's question, Freedman said police have met twice with bar owners so far. The City Attorney and Ald. Verveer also attended. Bar owners are willing to talk but tend to believe they are not responsible for problems that occur outside their bars. He said bar owners are willing to put up signs telling patrons they are under video surveillance and notifying them of a code of conduct. Freedman added, however, that police cannot require bars to close early or to reduce capacity. They have asked for "voluntary compliance" in these areas. The owners understand that they need to be partners because if something bad happens, it will hurt everyone. Freedman believes progress is being made. He added that officers from the Community Policing Team are meeting with all of the bar owners individually. In response to Ingebritson's question, Freedman said police horse patrols are good for crowd control and they have asked for increased use of horse patrols downtown. Currently, there are two full-time and two part-time mounted officers. Due to severe staffing shortages, Freedman doubts they will see an increase in the use of horse patrols. He added that police are currently staffed at 470, below the 485 level they are authorized to be at, and far below what is needed. In response to Morgan's question, Freedman said the new class of police graduates

will not start until September or so, while many officers retire at the beginning of the year, causing a staffing shortage for that period of time.

Broughman referred to a program in California called “VIPs” (Volunteers in Police Services) where citizens would volunteer to help police and fill some of these gaps while saving money. Broughman first proposed this approach ten years ago when he arrived from California. He was told back then that police were opposed because it would result in the loss of overtime. He cited as an example the use of officers to stand at barricades for various events 8-10 hours at a time. Volunteer citizens could perform such functions at less cost, freeing up officers for more important duties. Freedman noted that police have a volunteer program made up of retired officers and others who meet certain minimum requirements. He also noted that there is some union opposition and there are rules that make a program like VIP difficult here. Even so, he said police are expanding the use of unarmed citizen volunteers who are not in uniform. One program being used is “ROAR” (Retired Officer Advisory Program).

III. TREASURER’S REPORT. Warman reports a checking account balance of \$21,037.91 and a General Account balance of \$16,001.76, the difference being money set aside for specific accounts: Period Garden Park, James Madison Park and Emerald Ash Borer treatment. He noted there were contributions of \$1,700 in the last two months to Period Garden Park. Ostlind explained that the pending \$252 check for emerald ash borer treatment resulted from the fact that two additional trees became available for treatment; one was in an area that is now part of a park, and the other is in an area that the city now identifies as a “quasi-park.”

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Election of Executive Council Officers. Vercauteren announced that he will not seek another term as President. Due to the lack of a quorum, the election of officers could not be voted on. It will have to be taken up at the August meeting (assuming a quorum). At Ostlind’s suggestion we had a round to determine who would be interested in serving as officers. O’Brien said he was willing to serve another term as Secretary if no one else is interested. Warman is willing to serve another term as Treasurer. Vice-President Negrin said she is willing to stay on in that capacity, but is not willing to take over as President. When asked, Ostlind said he is not interested in serving as President. He suggested sending a message out to the general membership. This will be deferred to the August meeting when (presumably) there will be a quorum. All current officers will serve on an interim basis until then.

“Off the Square Club” Event Sponsorship Request.

According to Vercauteren, Ilse Hecht of the “Off the Square Club” asked that CNI sponsor their annual fundraiser to be held September 28. (Hecht gave a

presentation about the club, which provides services to the homeless in James Madison Park district near St. John's Lutheran Church, at the February EC meeting and we approved a one-time \$250 donation at the March meeting). Donor levels are: \$1,000 \$500 and \$250. There is also the option of sponsoring a table of eight for \$300. Ostlind noted that we do not budget for sponsorships and we don't have a history of doing it. We do not have a formal grant process. Ingebritson offered to pay \$350 on her own and say that it is from CNI; or she offered to put in half and CNI would put in half. Vercauteren and Ostlind agreed our account is sufficient to cover it. Warman believes it is something James Madison Park District should support, and suggested that members of that district purchase a table for the event. He believes that it is better for CNI members to attend the event and participate, rather than just giving money. In response to Mohs's question about the organization, Vercauteren said he believes this will serve as a compliment to the new day resource center on E. Wash. Ingebritson added that the club connects the homeless to services. Warman believes the people being served there are not the same ones who are causing problems around the Square. Vercauteren suggested that CNI purchase a table for \$300, and that someone take on the role of table captain and encourage others to attend. Ingebritson volunteered to be the table captain. We will follow up on this at the next EC meeting. Vercauteren noted that the deadline for sponsoring the event is September 10.

Report on CNI Annual Meeting. Vercauteren reports the meeting went well, was well-attended, and the food was good. He thanked Ostlind for obtaining the speakers and putting together the program on the urban forest. Ostlind noted that we received good publicity ahead of the event, it was broadcast on City Cable, and five alders and the top three from city Parks and Forestry were in attendance. Ostlind added that both speakers thought it went well. Their power-points are available on the Madison Street Canopy organization's website. As a follow-up to the event, the city is creating an urban forest task force and is in the process of nominating people to serve on it. One who will likely serve is John Harrington who presented at our meeting. Vercauteren will send out on the listserv the link for the City Channel TV re-broadcast. Warman believes we should do more at these meetings to sign up new members. Vercauteren noted that we provided our new membership brochures at the meeting. O'Brien commented that the presentations were excellent and the food was good.

V. OLD BUSINESS

Madison College Relocation. According to Mohs, the Hovde hotel group wants to add two stories to the existing building but they lack parking and the city won't give it to them. He commented that the proposed eight-story "glass box" with little parking and a supermarket with loading docks is poorly thought out. Mohs believes the hotel people have a good track record and seem to be "on the ball," but the big issue is the "woefully inadequate" parking. Ostlind announced that there

will be a neighborhood meeting on August 15 to discuss the proposal. Ostlind spoke with a representative of the Drury Hotel group to explain what the meeting would be like and he believed the representative was receptive to it. Ostlind was pleased that they reached out to him in order to be ready for the meeting. Mohs reports that he met twice with them but they still do not have parking in order. Ostlind noted that city zoning does not require parking.

West Washington Corridor Plan. Ostlind reports that a small group recently took part in a walking tour of the area, but there has been no meeting since. He explained that the Downtown Plan calls for a special area plan for this corridor consisting of these two blocks on W. Wash. and the two blocks to the north. Vercauteren reports that two new city planning staff members will start in August to fill vacancies. Mohs commented that W. Wash. is very important to the downtown.

VI. DISTRICT REPORTS

Bassett. Ostlind reports that the new owners of the Heartland Credit Union building on W. Wash. and Bedford want to re-develop it but he has heard nothing about it to this point. The new Urban Land Interest building on Bedford St. opened recently. Vercauteren commented that the city may need to install four-way “stop” signs at Bedford and Wilson Sts., and Bedford and Doty Sts. Negrin noted that the new ULI building on the Square, part of the Anchor Bank redevelopment project, is scheduled to open for occupancy in August but appears to be behind schedule. Vercauteren added that none of the commercial spaces have been leased out.

First Settlement. O’Brien reports that the Essen Haus development proposal is on hold due to several issues including ingress/egress, and the fact that part of the property is in a national historic district and part in the First Settlement Historic District. Reports are that a new architect may be getting involved. The “Beacon” homeless day resource center at 615 E. Wash. is scheduled to open in October. Construction of the Lance McGrath high-rise apartment building on E. Wilson is underway. The “Hail Mary” sports bar has opened in the site of the old Monastery and Bellini’s restaurants, after finally obtaining a liquor license from the ALRC when the owners agreed to sell the Tikki bar they owned on State St. Vercauteren also noted that the city plans to install a stop light at the intersection of Blair and Main Sts. to help pedestrians crossing there.

James Madison Park. According to Ostlind, a proposal to add a third story to 26 N. Hancock is going before the zoning board of appeals. Cliff Fisher’s micro-apartment proposal appears to be moribund for now.

Mansion Hill. Vercauteren noted there was a nice article posted today on Channel 3000 about the Edgewater in which Ingebritson was quoted. Ingebritson

explained that music at the Edgewater has been shut down at least temporarily because the hotel got an “entertainment” license in 2014 but never paid for it. They now have to reapply for the license. Residents now know that it was Bob Dunne’s vision to make the hotel a live music venue, with 3-4 amplified concerts per week plus movies. Ingebritson exclaimed, “I’ve had it.” She believes the license issue will now give residents an opportunity to modify what’s going on. Mohs commented that it is “wrecking the neighborhood,” adding that if you can do this in a residential historic neighborhood, than you can “kiss it goodbye.” Ingebritson added that the idea of making this a music venue with concerts several nights a week was not mentioned in their 2010-11 application. They are allowed to have amplified music from 8:00 a.m. until 11:00 p.m. According to Mohs, their own hotel guests have complained about the noise, or asked to be moved into quieter rooms. Mayer agrees with the concerns, but urged residents not to vilify the performers or the people who attend the shows; the Edgewater is the problem, not them, he added. Negrin commented that Breese Steven Field on E. Wash. has become a concert venue, and those living in nearby apartments do not seem to have problems with it; renters seem to enjoy having access to the venue. Ostlind also noted that there are plenty of residents living near Breese Stevens and Central Park. Ingebritson responded that the frequency of amplified concerts is the greatest problem. Negrin commented that it would be mutually beneficial to neighbors as well as hotel guests to try to reach a solution.

According to Mohs, residents are working with the Evans Scholar program to come up with a better design for their proposal to tear down the current house on Langdon St. and build a four-story building in its place. Ingebritson announced that the owners of the Mendota Lake House, David Wagh and Bob Klebba, have proposed restoring the Knapp House (and former Governor’s Mansion), and turning it into an eight-room hotel with some affordable units. The target date for opening is in May 2018. Mohs commented that he is impressed with their proposal and described it as “professional.”

Miffland. Warman reports that the July meeting was cancelled. Discussions continue about locating a city park in the area.

MEETING ADJOURNED

NEXT EC MEETING: Tuesday August 22, 2017, 5:15 p.m., Central Library, third floor.

AGENDA for August 22 EC Meeting

I. CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM (Vercauteren).

- II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MAY AND JULY EC MEETING MINUTES.
- III. TREASURER'S REPORT (Warman).
- IV. DOWNTOWN POLICE REPORT.
- V. ACTION ITEMS/NEW BUSINESS:
Annual Election of EC Officers (deferred from July due to lack of quorum);
Securing CNI's Facebook Account from Hackers (Brabender);
Other.
- VI. OLD BUSINESS:
Madison College RFP Update;
W. Washington Corridor Plan Update;
State Historical Museum Project Update;
John Nolen Dr./Blair/Willy/Wilson St. Improvement Proposal Report;
Off the Square Club Event Sponsorship;
State Street Retail Business Study and Potential Action;
Judge Doyle Square Update;
Proposal to re-incorporate State/Langdon District into CNI;
Update on Homeless Day Resource Center;
CNI Membership Outreach/Growth Strategy Next Steps;
Update on Website/Membership/Communications System Upgrade;
Other.
- VII. DISTRICT REPORTS:
Mansion Hill, Bassett, Mifflin West, First Settlement, James Madison Park.
- VIII. ALDERPERSONS' REPORTS.
- IX. PRESIDENT'S REPORT (Vercauteren).
- X. COMMITTEE REPORTS:
Program (open), Membership/Media/Development (open), Policy (Vercauteren), DROC (Ostlind), Finance (Warman), Physical Linkages (Mayer), Garden (open), Education and City Issues Monitoring (open).
- XI. ADJOURNMENT.
***Agenda subject to change by Vercauteren.**

