**West Maka Ska Neighborhood Council Zoom Meeting Minutes**

**February 8, 2022**

**Call to order:** 6:06 PM

**Presided by:** Tim Knight, Chair

**Board members in attendance:** Allan Campbell, Richard Logan, Tim Knight, Joey Meiers, Bob Gordon, Lynette Davis, Melanie Fehlberg, Megan Betterman

**Absent:** John Bordwell, Dave Stougaard, Tim Walker

**Coordinator:** Michelle Sass

**Resident in attendance**: Jill Hagen

**Guest Presenter:** Audua Pugh, Chair, Jordan Area Community Council (JACC)

**Approval of January Minutes:** Motion by Richard, Second by Allan, Approved

**Presentation by Audua Pugh**

Richard introduced Ms. Pugh and spoke of our wish to work in partnership and offer support to stressed neighborhoods such as Jordan as part of our equitable engagement work and for our mutual benefit. Besides chairing the neighborhood association, Audua teaches at North Hennepin Community College and is the founder and executive director of Off the Blue Couch (offthebluecouch.org), which provides healing and support to persons recovering from addictions.

Audua described the North Minneapolis Jordan neighborhood as open, friendly and diverse, with a great array of culture, but lacking in resources and threatened by gentrification, in part due to the proposed Blue Line. Currently, the neighborhood council has only four members and is searching for new members as well as for a new executive director following the departure of Cathy Spann after 10 years of service. The neighborhood is bounded by Emerson and Oliver east to west and Lowry to West Broadway north to south.

JACC uses its NRP funds for grants to first time homeowners and for an emergency fund for residents. JACC also hosts an annual Week of Kindness in June in which Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity does work on a few selected houses. This work is done for free provided the homeowner lives in the home for at least five years. To celebrate the Week of Kindness, streets are set aside for vendors, a kids play land, a beer garden, food, entertainment, and politicos. At the last celebration before COVID there were over 40 vendors (who pay JACC for the right to have tables) and between 350 and 500 people in attendance. Because Jordan is still a community in trauma there probably will not be a celebration this year. The celebration has not gotten news coverage, but the neighborhood has done a video of the event.

Audua said Jordan would like to do partnering. Richard agreed and said neighborhood associations are too siloed. A partnership would set a model for the rest of the city.

Ways of partnering with Jordan were discussed. Audua said that Jordan currently has a working relationship with the neighboring Hawthorne neighborhood and is working together to support the Green New Deal with the Folwell neighborhood. The board decided to try a meet-and-greet with folks from JACC and the Jordan neighborhood to be held at the Axon Green community room on Tuesday, February 22nd. Tim will confirm the availability of the room, with the Bakken as a possible alternative. Michelle will communicate with Audua and invite Sebastian, mural artist, to attend.

**Treasurer’s Report**

Richard moved to accept. Melanie seconded. Accepted.

**Coordinator’s Report**

Michelle presented a proposed layout for business cards. Lynette noted that the hashtag ontheedgeofeverything was difficult to interpret. Bob suggested that it should be placed vertically ontheedge of the card. The only changes that were agreed was that the font of @westmakaska, info@westmakaska.org, and westmakaska.org should be in a larger font than Montserrat 7.

Michelle also presented three alternatives for banners. Lynette proposed approval of the 2nd banner, which has the word neighborhood in slightly larger font than the 3rd banner. Allan seconded the motion. Approved.

**Committee Updates**

**Communications, Outreach and Events (COE)**

Bob reported on the meeting with Mike, the manager at My Burger. Pending corporate approval, the plan is to have a fund raiser on the My Burger patio in May, possibly with entertainment. The event would take place at some time between 4 and 9 PM on a Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday. WMSNC would receive 25% of the profits from persons identifying themselves as participating in the fund raiser. Tim said it sounds like a no brainer. Tuesday was agreed as the best day. We will need to decide how to publicize the event. Bob to follow up with My Burger. Allan to bring the WMSNC sandwich board. A banner of some sort was also suggested. Michelle to investigate with Pixelwerks, the company doing our banners.

Other events were discussed:

* Fund raisers with Chipotle or Ben & Jerry’s
* A larger event at the Bakken or in our greenspace for late spring or summer
* A scavenger hunt to visit businesses and get a reward
* An event with City Paws (Joey to investigate)

**Safety**

Richard reported on the joint safety committee’s most recent meeting. Items discussed were:

* Planning a meeting with We Push for Peace and the 5th Precinct
* Planning a Rail Safety Workshop with the City Office of Emergency Management
* Planning a public safety meeting for West Maka Ska, CIDNA, others
* Excelsior Boulevard sidewalk access/ADA accessibility
* Paying for video camera coverage of key public areas in our neighborhoods.

Richard also suggested letters of commendation to businesses for good jobs with snow removal, etc., and contacting City Council re snow removal.

**Greenspace**

Allan and Lynette reported on finally hearing back from Colleen O’Dell at the Parks Department. Colleen is responsible for overseeing our proposed bird and bee garden and murals. Demonstrating community engagement in the mural will be required. Maintenance is not a serious issue (we can put up 10% of the mural’s cost for maintenance). Lynette suggested applying material to make it easy to remove graffiti. Lynette asked interested persons to contact her about their availability for a Zoom call with Colleen to discuss both projects. Available dates are February 11, 14, 15, or 17.

Lynette said that we are due this year for the third follow-up of buckthorn and garlic mustard removal by the Tree Trust. Lynette believes the last one cost about $6,000. Richard made a motion, seconded by Allan to approve up to $7,000 for this work. Approved.

**Land Use**

No report

**Equitable Engagement**

Allan noted that our approved equitable engagement budget includes about $2,000 to hire someone to do door knocking. Joey indicated that he was willing to put flyers under doors (at no charge, as a board member). Bob noted that we can gain access to apartment buildings by being accompanied by someone running for public office.

Other suggestions for equitable engagement were:

Melanie: dog pictures contest

Joey: Bark in the Park

Megan: Canvassing at businesses to get email addresses

Pop-ups on web site to ask for email addresses

Post cards paid for from EE funds

**Miscellaneous topics: Open for Discussion**

Richard recommended Tabio Yuoh as a Neighborhood Treasure to be awarded a plaque. Richard gave a pitch for Tabio, citing his life history of escape from civil wars in Liberia, personally supporting food programs, and generally being a great human being who is loved by all who have known him in his many years of working at Axon Green.

Lynette asked what the qualifications should be for a Neighborhood Treasure suggesting it should be someone who is known throughout the neighborhood. Tim suggested that we should formalize the process for selecting Neighborhood Treasures, e.g. what are the qualifications, how often we make the award, when and where. Tim also suggested a monthly/bi-monthly profile on the website and said there is value in recognizing citizens in the neighborhood. Melanie said recognition should be part of an event.

Richard moved to nominate Tabio as a Neighborhood Treasure. Tim seconded. Approved

Allan pointed out that Tabio is already in the Humans of West Maka Ska section of our website. It was suggested a record of past neighborhood treasures be added to the website.

Melanie noted that it was approaching 8 PM and suggested that we wrap up the meeting since it was her birthday and she was in Florida. The board, inspired by the balmy 36 degree temperature in Minneapolis (and whatever it was in Maine where Michelle was Zooming in) sung Happy Birthday to Melanie in Florida.

 Melanie asked that a discussion of a potential May event at the Bakken focused on native plants be added to the agenda for March.

Richard volunteered to serve as note taker along with Bob for the March meeting

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM