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Topic: WMSNC July Meeting
Time: July 12, 2022 06:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Notetakers: Bob Gordon and Allan Campbell

Board members Attendees: Tim Knight, Bob Gordon, Richard Logan, John Bordwell, Leyden Iraheta, Lynette Davis, Melanie Fehlberg, David Stougaard, Allan Campbell, Lynette Davis

Absent: Megan Betterman

Guest Speakers: Park Board Representative Cathy Abene, Councilmember Linea Palmisano

Resident in Attendance: Louise Campbell

The meeting was called to order by Chair Tim Knight at 6:05 PM

Approval of Minutes from June meeting: Moved by Allan, seconded by John, **Approved**

Treasurer’s Report: Dave reported that the affordable housing loan to Propel has been repaid in the amount of $182,408.61 and that we raised $175.21 from the MyBurger fund raiser (including a $25 donation from Meg Forney).

Committee Updates:
Communications, Outreach and Events (COE)

Several events were discussed, including yoga, nature walks and a block party on Neighborhoods Night Out (first Tuesday in August). Michelle will contact the Kenwood Neighborhood Organization to see how they obtained permission to sponsor yoga classes at Lake of the Isles.

The Bakken’s request for us to spend $2,000 to sponsor its “Brilliant” event in August was discussed. It was noted that the $2,000 would buy us only eight tickets to the event and that we could instead sponsor other events that would be more effective means of outreach to residents. It was also noted that this money would have to come from our discretionary account and Dave pointed out that this would use about one quarter of the account. No action was taken on the Bakken request.

Resident Dylan Ohm is interested in organizing nature walks. Melanie has some contacts who do such walks. Melanie will reach out to them.

Presentation by Cathy Abene:

Cathy said that the new Park Board was focused on three priorities: (1) Maintenance of existing infrastructure, (2) natural resource management, and (3) parks for all, especially including youth programs.

Cathy discussed improvements to the bike trails and pedestrian paths. The board thanked her for the rebuilding of the portion of the path that had collapsed into the lake.

Staffing is to be expanded for asset management to deal with deferred maintenance.

Richard raised the issue of the need for improved lighting on West Bde Maka Ska Boulevard. Cathy said she would look into it.

Allan raised questions about monitoring of lake water quality and controlling runoff through storm sewers.

Lynette added concerns about runoff from the greenspace and Melanie added concerns about the broken pipe running through the greenspace. Cathy responded that the Park Board has established a Water Quality Advisory Committee which is now having its first meeting and that the Park Board, City, and Minnehaha Creek Watershed Commission would be working together on a holistic approach to water quality. Meanwhile, Cathy noted that Lake Hiawatha is again closed to swimming and Linea added that a beach on Cedar Lake is also closed due to poor water quality. Cathy concluded the discussion by noting that the City does a good job of requiring storm water management of new development and that street runoff is the biggest source of pollutants in the lake.

Dave said he appreciated that the Park Board is not taking on new projects before maintaining existing ones.

Presentation by Linea Palmisano

Linea spoke about the County’s plan to repave France Avenue between Excelsior Blvd and 49th Street and add a painted bicycle lane on each side. She noted that one advantage of having a bike lane would be that it might help to make an argument for lowering the speed limit.

Resident Louise Campbell pointed out that France is not a safe street for bicyclists and that the intersection with Excelsior is particularly dangerous. Linea answered that the bike lanes would likely be used primarily by commuters to save time versus using the bike paths around the lakes. Questions were raised about the possibility of a bridge across the tracks on France Avenue.

Linea said that traffic would be reduced to one lane on Excelsior on France Avenue from July 24th to 27th to allow for utilities to be connected to the apartment building under construction on the site.

Linea announced the proposed hiring of Dr. Cedric Alexander to head the City’s newly created Public Safety Commission. Dr. Alexander has 40 years of experience in police and public safety work, including serving as police chief in Rochester, NY. Alexander has a doctorate in clinical psychology. Hearings on his appointment are likely to be held in early August.

Interim police chief Amelia Huffman has created a new discipline matrix separate from the police union contract.

Committee Updates (continued)

Greenspace

Bob has two sample RFPs and will prepare an RFP for the mural.

Lynette said we have two proposals for plans for the bird and bee garden: $16,380 from Metro Blooms and $3,850 from Tangletown Gardens. Lynette suggested that before accepting a proposal we might instead seek proposals for an artwork to form the focus of the garden and then develop plans around it. Lynette noted that the Park Board has already planted two trees on site. Melanie questioned why we would change plans when we so close to realizing our plan for the garden. Board members who had been working on the garden for years pointed out that with the Park Board, as with the light rail, realization is always years ahead. It was decided to table the two proposals and send the project back to the Greenspace team for further consideration.

Buckthorn removal was discussed. Allan noted that we have used almost all the money previously allocated and that when we know how much the next stage will cost, we should seek a motion to spend that amount and then seek a contract amendment from the City.

Safety

Richard said that he would reach out to CIDNA to try to reconstitute a joint safety committee.

John stated the need for coordination between apartment and condo managers. Richard said he would continue to work on this.

Miscellaneous Topics

Idea to have event for National Night Out (August 2).

John referred to an article from the New England Journal of Medicine that showed that gun violence had recently surpassed automobile accidents as the leading cause of death for children aged 0-19.

Lynette noted the growing amount of garbage in the Whole Foods parking lot. Richard said that this was the fault of Cedar Commons management, not Whole Foods. Lynette suggested that Tim send a message to Cedar Commons management asking them to address this issue.

Tim again suggested the use of Slack instead of email for communications on projects that do not involve the entire board. Several board members offered to help anyone who needs help using Slack.

Michelle reported that she had submitted the application for a banner permit and was waiting to hear. Also, Pixelwerks had mistakenly made a few extra banners, which we can either keep for future use or sell.

Michelle said that Ariah at Neighborhood and Community Relations (NCR) said that we could use our Equitable Engagement money to hire an agency to knock on doors as part of our outreach to young renters. It was also suggested that any board member or interested individual could be paid to do this.

Community Building: Shakespeare July 16: <http://classicalactorsensemble.org>

Operations: Tim would send out a weekly email with activities. Use Slack.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:39 PM