

Benton Park West Neighborhood Association Board Meeting Agenda

Monday, June 8, 2020

6:32 pm meeting started

- President – Scott McIntosh **Present**
- Vice President – Tim Thomas **Present**
- Secretary – Erin Godwin **Present**
- Treasurer – Linda Hennigh **Present**
- Member At-Large – Pam Welsh **Present**
- Member At-Large – Gwynn Jackson **Present**
- Membership – Rosie Jackson/Bill Byrd **Absent/ Present**
- Beautification – Stephanie McKinney **Absent**
- Block Link – Chris Schmidt **Present**
- Communications – Scott McIntosh
- Community Garden – Linda Hennigh
- Our Neighborhood Garden – Scott McIntosh
- Dog Park – Jeni Poole **Absent**
- Facilities – Bill Byrd
- Fundraising – Vacant
- Housing + Development
- SLACO Committee – Linda Hennigh
- Quality of Life and Safety – Vacant
- Youth Outreach – Darren Young **Absent**

Flood Plain Gallery

Their current location is for sale, and they would like to move into 3210 Cherokee which it is believed will require a zoning variance as it is residential.

Elizabeth Wolfson, Co-director - 1/3 of the leadership team of the nonprofit art gallery and performance space open since fall 2017. Organized 5-6 exhibitions annually since then and also hosted occasional poetry readings, music events, and a puppet slam. They support experimental musical forms and genres. This isn't a rock venue; they do lots of ambient music and have hosted national touring acts. They aim to connect the community and throughout the midwest and upper south, basically along the flood plain hence the name. They like to support artists taking a risk whether mid-career shifts or new artists. Also focused on supporting marginalized artists including queer, female, trans, and artists of color. Goal with the move is to continue their mission. Moving into the house means they will have much more space for storage, build outs, and tools. One bedroom could be used to host out of town artists such as those from Acre and so avoid paying for other lodging and could help support increased partnerships. The backyard could support outdoor exhibitions. They've had residential neighbors upstairs on both sides at their current location and are already very mindful. They end

live music at 10 on weeknights and give acts the option to go to midnight on weekends, but have never had complaints and focus on being good neighbors. They don't use big amplifiers for music, so it isn't that loud; they could potentially collaborate with San Loo for louder musical acts. Maximum occupancy is 49 for current space; new space may be fewer, but if the backyard is included that would help. It is up to the city, but during Covid galleries are shifting more towards appointments and less crowded events. Downstairs is about 750SF, so they would use the entire downstairs except the kitchen which is pretty small.

Eric Wyszkwewicz, building owner- Rented to other tenants for a couple years. He thinks this adds a lot to the neighborhood. Trusts the owners and has known two of them for several years.

Trina Van Ryn, Co-director - Flood Plain has partnered with artists from Chicago and with Truman University, acting as their home base in STL. They also took art to Kirksville this past year. 2-3 music events would be held per month. 12-5 on Saturdays for art shows. Music shows once a week.

Amelia Jones, Co-director - experimental music is a hard sell at times so having the space to support musicians has been really meaningful.

It was later noted that the location is zoned "G- Local Commercial and Office" and will not require a variance.

Affordable Housing Proposal for 3156-58 Nebraska

Adam Roberts, real estate developer- Proposed to build two new houses a year and a half ago through NOVA program. They are required by HUD to partner with a community development organization in order to get Community Block Grant funds. They previously partnered with the Cherokee Development League which no longer exists. They would be the developer and take on all the debt to build and sell the home. This will be similar to the home at 3152 Nebraska due to CRO approval of existing plans and expectations for design from City; having built them once they think they can make a bit better use of the attic space. 3152 Nebraska is 1450SF and has 2 beds with 2 baths and is accessible. It is required to be 80% or less of median income; if not income restricted, it would be a \$200k+ house. There is a certification and paperwork process for the partner organization (BPWNA) to get certified as an eligible community development organization; he helped the Cherokee Development League to complete that a couple years ago, and it was fairly painless. It depends how involved the NA would want to be. City would grant gap financing for the difference in cost and sale price and debt would be forgiven upon sale to a low income homeowner; the developer uses private loan for the rest of the cost. The community organization signs the deed of note with the city and is therefore a party to the loan. There is some risk but it is nominal; he's worked with St. Louis County Office of Community Development and 99% of the time they are built and sold, except in

a case like 2008. Even then the risk falls primarily on the developer and the city; the houses would be finished by another developer. Any home not sold within 9 months of completion is automatically turned into a rental and the forgivable portion of the loan is still forgivable at the end of the affordability period. The City and developer would refinance and maintain as a rental, likely for 20 years. The first home on Nebraska sold in about 30 days; the hard part was that people had to meet the income restrictions otherwise it would have sold immediately. It was bought by a family of four. Each yard would have its own fence and parking pad. The lots are 25' wide. They are not opposed to installing street trees especially if they're free. They budget sidewalk repair/replacement into the project; he will check the 50/50 program. Houses would be built concurrently; it typically takes 6-7 months, ideally ready for next spring. City of STL CDA can also provide info; Adam would be happy to coordinate a call. They built a number of houses with the Carondelet organization; Fred can provide information on the process.

Will Lieberman of WGL- Feels it is a good product; It looks like a wood shingled house but ages well. Would like to partner with BPW. This will be the third project partnering with Adam Roberts in south city; they did another one in university city. This isn't simple, but it is simpler than renovating, and Adam does everything right and has a great team. Would make \$1,000 contribution to the BPWNA per house. Doesn't intend to make the homes a rental and wants to maintain his good reputation. Nebraska is a great street.

Board Deliberations/Actions:

The Board supports the move to 3210 Cherokee by Flood Plain Gallery and will provide appropriate letters of support as needed for their new location.

The Board was supportive of the affordable housing development proposal. Scott will follow up by reaching out to Michael Sullivan and Graham Brown- the new Housing and Development Chairs- to see if they want to take that responsibility on; then we will do an online vote of the board. Board will present the proposal for approval at the neighborhood general meeting in July at the earliest.

Bill Byrd moves to approve May Board Minutes as presented, Linda Hennigh seconds. The motion passes.

The Treasurer's Report for May was reviewed.

Per the Treasurer's Year-to-Date Report, the total of checking account and money market accounts is \$24,802.36. No mistakes were noted.

Linda Hennigh requested approval to have \$1,641.20 transferred from the money market account to balance the budget for the end of year due to lack of any income from events this

year. Tim Thomas moves to transfer \$1,641.20 from money market to checking, and Bill Byrd seconds. The motion was approved.

Tim asked about soliciting donations during online meetings to help offset lost income from being unable to do the 50/50 raffle at physical meetings; he will share links in the chat during our upcoming virtual BPWNA general meeting.

\$300 were raised for the BPWNA through Bill Byrd's birthday fundraiser; Scott will check on that and how to transfer that to the NA.

There is still money coming in from the garden. The fire hydrant wrench was accidentally lost; a replacement will be sought from the Fire Department.

Scott trimmed the bushes and weeded at the dog park.

There are multiple new dog park memberships totalling \$135 and Pam has taken over the administration of the dog park. The box at the park for applications etc is gone and needs to be replaced; one could possibly be donated by a realtor. Scott will post to BPW Talks and Bill will ask around.

Agenda for next meeting- meeting minutes and treasurer's reports need to be shared so they can be approved at the meeting; we are getting a build-up of unapproved minutes. Scott will try to email them out and/or upload them to the BPWNA .

We may not be able to return to the 5 Star Senior Center in July; Bill will check.

There will hopefully be a St. Louis Public Library representative at the general meeting to talk about available SLPL resources.

There will also hopefully be someone from Cherokee BID to talk about Love Park and what we can do to help improve it.

Edward Dickson aka Andre Cavalier was shot and killed at the intersection of Utah and Minnesota on Saturday morning.

Bill is still trying to figure out who owns the BPW Talk list-serv as Scott is no longer able to access the same tools to manage it, and is it unclear who is the current owner.

Chris Schmidt motioned to adjourn and Linda Hennigh seconded at 8:29. Meeting adjourned.