

# Benton Park West Neighborhood Association

## Neighborhood Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 17, 2020

Submitted by Erin Godwin

Call to order, Scott McIntosh - 7:04 pm

### Attendance - **21 adults- 16 members, 5 guests**

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

Make sure to fill out your Census and get your friends to. Many services and agencies are very dependent on census data for funding. It is nine questions and takes under 90 seconds. Also be sure to register to vote and then go vote.

BPWNA board and neighbourhood meeting minutes will be uploaded to the website prior to the October meeting for review and approval at the meeting.

### **August Treasurer's Report**

We paid the Secretary of State our \$30 annual fee. A \$7 donation came in, and \$35 came in from Bill's birthday fundraiser on Facebook.

Gwynn motioned to accept the August Treasurer's report. Cory seconded the motion. The motion passed.

## **Budget**

The budget kept changing due to the pandemic. Most income is from dog park, garden and neighborhood association memberships. Bill also did a fundraiser for his birthday, and we got a few dollars from Amazon Smile and other small donations. We haven't spent money on events but still had to maintain our web domains, websites, and Dropbox to share files. Funds were allocated for community outreach, insurance and maintenance for the gardens.

## **Board Nominations and Committees**

In October we vote for next year's board. Positions are one calendar year term. Let any board member know you are interested in running in order to get added to the ballot. Every candidate will be able to speak about why to vote for them. We want competition and fresh energy and ideas. Talk to friends and neighbors about running for the board.

Danelle Clemens volunteered to run for Member At-Large. Merit Lau nominated Jennie Alberts for Member At-Large. Danelle nominated her mother Francesco Fenner for Secretary.

Hopefully, next year we'll be able to do more. There are a lot of committees that run a variety of annual events. So there's lots of ways to get involved if you don't want to be a board member.

## **Chris Schmidt, Block Link Captain**

There will be no Trunk or Treat; we are planning a Halloween house decorating contest. Prizes are Visa gift cards for first, second and third place. The decorating deadline is October 30. A list of blocks where you can see something will be published. There will be no candy distribution. Info will be on the website and social media. It is a drive or walk by event.

Chris Schmidt has a list of surveillance cameras facing the street or alley, so if a crime happens, video footage can be shared with the police to help solve that crime. If you're willing to share your footage in the event of a crime, message Chris Schmidt or any board member to get your address added to that list.

## **Dan Guenther, 9th Ward Alderman**

The Board of Aldermen is in session this week. The Close the Workhouse campaign continues and is looking at how to reallocate the \$8 million from the workhouse back into social services.

COVID cases in the city are going down. Please continue to wear a mask and social distance. Cases are rising in Jefferson, St. Charles, and St. Francis County. The 11pm curfew for businesses and closure of playgrounds will probably end in a week to two. Parks will reopen with sanitizer and signs letting parents know to wipe down equipment. You can still sign up for the rental and mortgage assistance program for the city.

DeSales Community Development Corporation has made adjustments to the planned project at Jefferson and Arsenal. It would be a great addition to our neighborhood. Some applications have come through about small houses and different architectural styles; that'll come through the executive board for review.

A local package thief was caught on camera stealing around Pestalozzi and Texas, and Arsenal and Texas, on an orange scooter. If you have video or had a package stolen, let the police know so they can build as many cases against them as possible.

Some problem properties on Texas, California and Utah have been emptied. Please continue to send information about problem properties.

### **Officer Jazmin Garrett, 3rd District Police Liaison**

Crime stats from August 13 -September 9. total crime is down 55%. there was one robbery, the victim did delay reporting and wasn't able to provide a description of the suspect. the detectives are handling it but don't have any leads. we had three first degree assaults. We had one residence burglary; it was unoccupied at the time. There was a total of six larcenies and four vehicle thefts. Two vehicles have been recovered. Year to date crime is 13%.

### **Emily Thenhaus, Cherokee Street CID**

Over Labor Day weekend kids tipped over most of the corner planters, and some were damaged. The beautification committee will talk about fixing or replacing them and plans for street greenery, holiday decorations, etc. Reach out to Emily, and she'll send the meeting zoom link.

Pacia Anderson is leading the effort to come up with a plan for Halloween as the Love Bank gathering won't be held this year; safety is top of mind. Cherokee Street Thanksgiving is an important source of community so they are working to figure out a way to celebrate and support neighbors, whether through a food drive, crawl type scenario, or something else.

Murals are coming to the street, specifically the western wall of El Lenador at Michigan. The CID is trying to form some sort of partnership with St. Patrick's Center for outreach to the homeless individuals on Cherokee whose population is rising somewhat. The CID dedicated more money for additional public art; they need more places for murals.

Interested property owners can email Emily and pick from the proposals the mural they'd like on their property.

Gentrification in the community is a concern. The CID does outreach and supports businesses that have been on the street for a long time in case rents increase. It is especially important to care for existing businesses that created this community and helped it thrive. The CID hopes to schedule more community engagement in the near future.

Scott noted the neighborhood association has worked several years to increase representation in meetings, the board and committees. Board members participated in the program Witnessing Whiteness to be more educated and aware. BPWNA has been working with developers to create more affordable housing. Please encourage others in the neighborhood, your friends and neighbors, to be involved.

The old Frankly on Cherokee location is becoming a furniture consignment or resale shop. There's a new street art shop next to the Open Concept. A new Mexican treat establishment on California, Botanas La Michoacana, is coming soon. Another storefront there will be a pupuseria.

Bill Byrd moved to adjourn the meeting. Cory seconded.  
Meeting adjourned at 7:55pm