

Seward Neighborhood Group Board Meeting

July 23, 2014

Attendees: Diann Anders, Marnie Zafar, Angie Haeg, Ben Walen, Peter Fleck, Bob Friddle, Hannah Epstein, Peter Truax, Bruce Johansen, Michael Purcell, **Staff** Doug Wise, Kate Sheldon

Excused: Tariku Belay and Sterling Brown **Absent:** Maia Homstad, Kidist Gemta and Dane Mclain

Guests: Ira Jourdine (Candidate for Board of Education), Connie Fournier (Milwaukee Ave Homeowner's), Phyllis Kahn (Candidate for State Rep.), Robin Garwood (City Council member Gordon's office), Marcela (Abdi Warsame's office)

Meeting called to order at 7:08

Diann aks to pull the consent agenda.

Diann moves the approval of the remaining consent agenda (Minutes of the May meeting). Marnie seconds. All in favor. Motion passes.

Introductions. Angie welcomes the group and we go around the room introducing ourselves.

Public Discussion

Phyllis Kahn starts. She states that she is in a competitive primary election. Passes around a general letter and campaign literature. Highest proportion of projects covered by bonding bill which affects Seward. Rehabilitation of Brian Coyle Rec. Center. Pleased to see a press release from the gov. about saving \$27 mil. on State systems, a big accomplishment. Chairs the Legacy Committee which deals with funding. Works with Conservation Core dealing with the Mississippi River. Speaks about Abdi Warsame support in her election. Suggests visits to her website. Stops for questions. Primary's Aug. 12th.

Diann brings up the neighborhood divide. Phyllis discusses Prospect Park. Seward once had three representatives. Angie thanks Phyllis.

Ira Jourdain speaks about himself. Speaks of ties to the neighborhood, and excellent education experiences in Seward--very challenging, very rewarding. Would like to tackle district boundary lines. Has had children in district for quite some time. Is disappointed in a shift away from the community approach, supports growth and expansion of Seward Montessori. We need more Montessori schools. There are different pockets of the city that have different needs. Focus on special education, speaks of IEPs and the diverse Seward community. Wants to diversify curriculum, get away from standardized teaching. Focus on multicultural education components that are of public concern. Emphasize environmental sciences. Focus on hands-on education.

Cam Gordon 2nd Ward Report

Robin Garwood steps up and passes reports around. They really need more election judges. Spread the word.

The report discusses Open Streets (August 17th), National Night Out, Two Public Meetings on Community Engagement on the 31st and Aug 2nd.

Wants to highlight that Brian Miller asked to put a sign on the Cooperage building, the answer was no because it is not a street. Cam has put out an ordinance to allow people to put up signs that highlight the Greenway or trails. Could be an incentive for people to activate non-motorized trails.

Note that the Honey Bee ordinance passed, you no longer need permission from neighbors, but you do need to notify them and get a permit (renewed yearly).

The Minneapolis Youth Congress studied youth access to tobacco. Tobacco flavors are the same as candy. Youth's idea is to limit these flavored packs to tobacco stores (do not sell in gas stations) , and raise the price. Expected to pass, and has strong support.

Abdi Warsame 6th Ward Report

Marcela speaks about Open Streets. They need volunteers for a wide variety of things. Warsame would like to have a Unity Walk, taking the Hiawatha Trail, highlighting that is a safe way to connect to one side of the neighborhood to the other. They are talking about connecting some of the businesses near the light rail to connect both areas. Speaks of supporting this connection, working with the police department to get mounted police to mingle around the area.

Has passed around a map. They are working on creating a business bingo card for Open Streets. In order to get bingo you must cross from Phillips to Seward on Franklin.

Questions?

Peter F. would like the LRT to provide free rides. Marcela says they are providing free rides and potentially providing some Nice Ride biking passes. Maybe even some one month passes. Maybe Nice Ride could set up some temporary bike stations. There will be a pop-up protected bikeway outside of the Sierra Club. Provided by the Bike Coalition.

Guests

Connie Fournier speaks about MAHA Sponsor request. They would like to get some historic signs or banners along walls. They are looking for places to tell the Milwaukee Ave story. They have started a small group, and have come to the realization that signage is expensive, and would like to qualify for legacy funds through the historical society. MAHA is not a non-profit, but started to look for sponsorship and is seeking that through SNG. Connie requests SNG as a sponsor.

Questions?

Diann points out that it fits into our strategic plan. Its about fostering work that supports our mission. **Diann moves that we partner with MAHA.** There is discussion of who would distribute any funds from grants. Connie and MAHA accept all responsibility that comes with the grant, and become partners, with respect to all agreements. **Bob seconds. All in favor. Motion passed.**

Executive Report

New Hire

Introduction to Kate

CDC

Ben speaks about how there is more participation needed. They need firm commitments from people. Should we change the day of the week they meet? Is there a day that would work better? Stay within 2nd week of the month, 7pm, 6:30 during the summer. Ken would like more participation and commitment. Angie would like to attend, Marnie is also interested but worried about how much she travels. The committee would prefer to keep the time as is, unless there is strong commitment from others. Does anyone want to be a part of the committee? Ben's not sure what to report back. Diann thinks we should let the CDC know that the Board knows about the problem and will try to get

more attendance. Ben encourages people to attend. Matthews Park, second Tuesday of the month.

Open Streets on August 17

Does the Board want to have a presence at Open Streets? The History Committee will be participating. Diann thinks we should bring Merwin out of the office! We would need some interested people to contact Kerry. SPOKES will be present at Open Streets, History Committee will be in front of the building. The Board could be present for discussion. Doug will be there with information about housing grants. Bob will bring Open Streets up at the next Environment meeting.

Candidate Forum for Ward 62B on August 7

CANCELLED.

Community Conversations Dinner

The next dinner is August 20. The last one was very successful, hopefully this next one will be as well. Bob has been talking with Sheldon about a SPOKES component to the dinner. We did not have enough translators, and will be working for more. There were about 50 people at the last event.

Addendum

A business requests temporary liquor license for Open Streets. Will revisit when they contact us.

Finance Report

May Financials

Ben has a question about current ratio (2.5%). It was actually just a typo! Diann is tracking down the real information, and will pass it on and also send on the financials for June.

Diann was approached by an anonymous donor who would like to set up a funding source for Seward residents to have access to some extra money for something experiential or educational. It will be a grant of about \$500-\$1,000. There is a total of \$10,000 to create them. We have set some guidelines--after the money was spent the person would not have anything tangible/physical. SNG is still working on names for the grant. The plan is to tie it to attending the Annual Meeting, creating a sort of lottery draw at the meeting. The money will last for maybe a decade, and will draw attention to the meeting.

Peter T. has a question. He does not think that it should be a “luck of the draw” sort of thing. It could be viewed in a spiteful way, as “wasteful”. Whenever there isn’t oversight there is potential for abuse. Angie argues that the donor understands these risks. She would prefer a more community approach.

Diann clarifies that an individual can submit something for the community and thinks that the “draw” approach creates more transparency. Kind of a double-edged sword. Peter T. thinks that if it can be done easily, and would be good for our neighborhood that he is in support. There is a public perception component that we would want to be careful about. SNG needs to make it very clear that this fund is specifically for frivolities. There needs to be CLARITY. Robin says that it could be a potent fundraising tool, if each applicant gives a donation in order to participate. Angie says it must be simple, and suggests tabling the topic for now and discussing it at the next meeting.

Staff Report

National Night Out Aug 5

Open Streets Aug 17

Community Conversations Dinner Aug 20

SPOKES

Housing

Doug wants to mention the interest in housing loans. He thinks that things are turning around in terms of the economy and housing market. We have used 80% of the funds for the project. We will need to think about the future. Part of the agreement is that NRP take take \$45,000 of repayment money as it is included as part of the loan. Doug would like to re-negotiate and discuss this. Diann clarifies the history of the revolving loan. In the past, SNG had taken housing program money and put it into the General Fund (2007-2008 NRP forgave a third of this). There is a remaining \$45,000 debt from the 2007 “meltdown”. Diann and Doug will set up a meeting. Doug says that most of the \$45,000 has come in, but he is unsure.

Strategic Plan Progress Reports

Committees and projects

Ben has distributed a Google Doc with goals and the ability to edit and make comments regarding the Strategic Plan. He will resend it to those who did not receive it.

1. Communications--Peter Fleck

Diann's question about Peter's motion--where is the budget for the flyers? The flyer will list the meeting dates. Peter states that a quarterly is too far apart, and would like to look into a monthly flyer. It could feature new businesses, changes in the community. Diann is concerned because it is a big job, a couple hours a month and how will we distribute these papers? Peter says we will distribute through businesses. An alternative would be to post it around. Kerry and Kate could put this together? Peter suggests that maybe we should re-think the structure of the Profile. Angie suggests putting together a draft. Diann thinks this information must be mailed. Diann suggests we could get rid of the Profile, but does not think there would be a positive response. But if the Profile is not meeting needs we can make a change. Peter T. invites Diann to come to the next Communications meeting to talk money.

Marne speaks of how the Profile has a core group of advertisers, but is looking for more businesses. Peter F. suggests we table the idea, and discuss with the Communications Committee. Marne wonders if people even have the dates maybe they don't come anyway. Ben suggests that that is not true everywhere. Maybe SNG should use events and word of mouth to get the word out to access people without internet. Angie suggests we use ALL of these ideas. **Peter F. moves to table the idea. Ben seconds. All in favor.**

Peter F. has a decision on the new website template. We are on a path to a new website. We'll be on Wordpress.com and will consolidate all sites except the Seward Arts site. Communications has reviewed the strategic plan, and references the minutes.

2. Community Building--Diann Anders

Last meeting was low energy. The big idea from last time was to keep the volunteer hours in a log. It was mentioned that perhaps this could be online.

3. Community Conversations--Bob Friddle

Already covered.

4. CDC--Ken Webb

Already covered. Read the minutes.

5. Crime and Safety--Peter Truax

Seward Walkers meet every Wednesday night. National Night Out. Peter T. is wondering if any Board Members would like to go around as community outreach and

get to know neighbors. Any interest, speak to Peter T. Diann and Marnie are interested. Angie suggests also representing the Board at block parties individually if people can't make it out.

6. Environment--Bob Friddle

No meeting since last time.

7. Fundraising--Diann Anders

SNG made about \$700 from the Garden Tour. It seemed that everybody had a really good time.

8. History/Archive--Dick Westby

There are a handful of people interested in serving as editors.

9. Profile--Marne Zafar

Gearing up for Fall. Marne is going out of town, and trying to gather as much info as she can. It could be out the first week of September. There will an article and pictures from Michele about the 10th Anniversary of SLRJ. Marne is "in the hunting and gathering phase".

10. Restorative Justice--Hannah Epstein

2 referrals since the last meeting. 15 conferences to date. Youth have been deferred for trespassing and possessing a BB gun. Michele is working with police. The 10th Anniversary is Oct 22nd at the Ivy Building

11. Seward Online Report--Peter Fleck

Already discussed.

12. Seward Towers--Diann Anders

Refinancing and restructuring. A \$40 million project, with need for tax-credit funding. BIG NUMBERS. These two buildings are a big asset to the community. We are doing something that they said couldn't be done. Resident Representation will remain.

Other Business

Claire resigned. **There is a Board Opening! If you know anyone interested, let them know.**

Bob F. says he was approached by a non-profit art gallery which is looking for space in the spring. The gallery shows almost entirely local artists. The Board suggests talking to Redesign.

Board Meeting Evaluation

Marne: We need to have food!

Peter T: We should generate some feedback for committees re: Strategic Plan.

Peter F: Give 2-3 minutes limit to each politician.

Diann moves to adjourn.

Marne seconds.

All in favor.

Adjourned at 9:02.