

Seward Neighborhood Group Board Meeting

August 27th, 2014

Attendees: Ben Walen, Bob Friddle, Peter Fleck, Peter Truax, Tariku Belay, Hannah Epstein **Staff** Doug Wise, Kate Sheldon

Excused: Diann Anders, Marnie Zafar, Angie Haeg, Michael Pursell, Maia Homstad, Kidist Gemta

Absent: Sterling Brown, Dane McLain, Bruce Johansen

7:07pm Ben calls meeting to order.

No quorum this evening.

Executive Report—The following motions were approved since the last board meeting.

- SNG act as the applicant for an event liquor license for Du Nord Craft Spirits for the August 17, 2014 Open Streets event.
- SNG approve the First Amendment to the Subgrant Funding Agreement with the City of Minneapolis that provides an additional \$12,400 to Spokes.
- SNG extend its contract with The Hub for services related to SPOKES for three months.
- As per the recommendations of Kerry's Performance Review (June 18, 2014), SNG approve a \$1 increase in Kerry's hourly rate effective the first pay in April 2014.
- The Seward Neighborhood Group recommends approval of the following actions by the city of Minneapolis for the Seward Montessori School to allow three building additions for a net floor area increase of approximately 38,000 square feet:
 1. Conditional Use Permit to allow an expansion of a grade school
 2. Conditional Use Permit to increase the maximum height of a building from 2.5 stories/35 feet to 3 stories/40 feet.
 3. Variance to increase the maximum floor area ratio from 0.5 to approximately 0.67 (existing FAR is approximately 0.48).

4. Variance to reduce the minimum front yard requirement adjacent to 29th Ave S from 20 feet to 12.5 feet to allow the building additions.

5. Variance to reduce the minimum front yard requirement adjacent to 28th Ave S from 20 feet to 0 feet and to allow parking to be located between the building and the street.

6. Variance to reduce the north interior side yard requirement from 5 feet to 0 feet to allow a transformer and refuse containers.

7. Variance to reduce the west interior side yard requirement from 9 feet to 7 feet to allow the third floor building addition.

8. Site plan review.

- The Seward Neighborhood Group recommends approval of an expansion of a nonconforming use for Big River Yoga at 3330 East 25th Street to allow new signage on the south facing wall of the building.

Public Discussion

Cam Gordon's 2nd Ward Report
Abdi Warsame 6th Ward Report

Cam, Robin, and Abdi are excused.

Discussion Issues

Changes to the contract between SNG and the Center for Energy and Environment (CEE) for the housing improvement loan programs.

7:10pm

The CCE has changed their administrative fee starting Sept. 1st. We can cancel that contract and start with somebody else. Questionable whether we should switch, but we have been satisfied in the service. Doug has done a lot of publicity, and a lot of people have CCE information. We should perhaps stay with them for one more year, while doing more research to transition more smoothly. Re-evaluations to take place, and it is likely we will transition. Ben will bring the issue to the Executive Committee and suggest moving on with the higher fee, and work on transitioning for next year.

SPOKES-Finances

The goal is to keep SPOKES open indefinitely, but at this point it cannot exist on its own. How much can SNG help support SPOKES? How will we effectively wrap SPOKES up if it comes to that? Diann would be comfortable contributing \$10,000 from SNG if needed. How will giving up surplus now affect us in later years? Any commentary?

Sheldon is looking into getting funding from the city. Tariku comments on how much SPOKES has helped the East African community here. Bob suggests applying for a Community Innovation Grant. Ben says we need to make SPOKES leaner. We still have a McKnight Grant and other funding coming, but we need to be realistic and work to create more funding.

Seward Spread Joy Fund

Bob suggests we have more examples, and is concerned about the short application and review time. It seems to be a short window. He is very excited about the idea, and will write up and submit his ideas. We could use more input to develop the idea. Peter F. supports the fund, but would like to develop the rules. He is not sure he supports people getting rejected, and being able to revise the application. He is also worried that people will only come to the Annual Meeting for the chance to make \$. The group has trouble with the given timeline, but likes the idea that it generates excitement. Ben suggests we weed out the unacceptable applications, and draw from the eligible apps at the Meeting. Peter F: What are the legal implications of this drawing? What are the conflicts of interest? Let's get it in front of a lawyer.

Concerns about liability, conflict of interest, and timeline. More discussion is needed next month.

Sponsorship of Respectful Conversations about Guns event with Faith Mennonite Church.

We would need to commit volunteers, they have offered up dates, and SLRJP has already joined on as a sponsor. Thoughts? If we were joining on, we would need to commit a certain number of people. We are unsure about how many volunteers are needed, are there any other sponsors other than SLRJP. Ben will bring it to the Executive Committee to get any opinions. He'd like to talk to Kerry about finding volunteers.

Minutes from July Board Meeting

7:24pm Discussion of Motions

CDC Motions

1. Motion: The Seward Neighborhood Group recommends approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness by the Heritage Preservation Commission and a side-yard setback variance to replace an existing porch with a new porch at 2300 Milwaukee Avenue. Kathy Sikora moved and Ken Webb seconded. **Motion passed.**

2. Motion: The Seward Neighborhood Group recommends approval of a bean-to-bar chocolate shop at 2211 East Franklin Avenue, including a production area of up to 2,000 square feet. Brian Miller moved and Peter Fleck seconded. **Motion passed.**

3. Motion: The Seward Neighborhood Group recommends approval of a sign variance to permit signage on The Cooperage building facing the Hiawatha Pedestrian/Bicycle Path and LRT. Ken Webb moved and Peter Fleck seconded. **Motion passed.**

4. Motion: The Seward Neighborhood Group (SNG) agrees with Redesign's interpretation of the Seward Commons project as a whole should be considered for the tax increment financing and the SNG supports Redesign's tax increment financing application for 100% market-rate housing. Kathy Sikora moved and Ken Webb seconded. **Motion passed.**

5. Motion: The Seward Neighborhood Group supports the renovation and refinancing of Seward Towers East and West including the application to the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency and any other applications necessary to secure needed financing. Ken Webb moved and Kathy Sikora seconded. **Motion passed.**

No concerns about CDC Motions, the group is in agreement. The Executive Committee will vote.

Community Coordinator Motion

6. SNG supports the application of a Headwaters Community Innovation Grant for the Community Conversations project. The grant request will be between \$5,000 and \$8,000. This will support new and ongoing work to create real relationships between different cultural groups in the neighborhood.

No concerns about Kerry's motion, the group is in agreement. The Executive Committee will vote.

Environment Committee Motions

7. The EC moves that the SNG Board recommends that its representatives on the Seward Towers board work with the budget and design process for the Seward Towers renovation, to make sure the Towers waste management system can successfully conform with the 2016 statewide recycling mandate.

Diann has sent her reactions to the motion and feels that it pushes too far while there is so much work going on at the Towers. Bob states that it needs to be addressed, and perhaps whoever is planning has not gotten this far into the planning. The Environment Committee is just feeling that it just needs to be planned for, and needs to

meet the mandate. It makes sense to be proactive about it. These requirements may affect the budgeting for the project. Diann's concerns about educating tenants are understandable, but the city and the state are behind it so it not necessarily a bad idea to request that the Towers give a consideration.

Doug states that the county has grants available to help plan for the recoiling system. The feeling is that the recycling plan has not been discussed in detail and is very preliminary. Completed plans and construction may start next year sometime. This winter may be the time for plan development. We don't want to complete a building and avoid this mandate. Ben would like to bring this issue to the Executive Committee but also wants to have more discussion. We will table the issue until next meeting, but Ben will mention the issue at the Executive Committee meeting.

Finance Report

July Financials

Staff report

- SNG Community Coordinator
 - o Fundraiser with SPOKES on October 7th at Town Hall Brewery
- Spokes
- Housing

The Winter Frolic is coming up. Doug says no reports from Housing beyond what was discussed

Strategic Plan Progress Report

Committees and projects – reports as available or necessary

1. Communications-Peter Fleck
2. Community Building-Diann Anders
3. **Community Conversations- Bob Friddle**

Last week, 20-25 people. A little better participation on behalf of North African community as far as interpreting. Participants worked on communicating in English. We had some nice conversations, though not many Board members there. The committee is planning for more regular meetings.

No conversations planned yet, the committee wanted to see how this summer went, collect information, and work on getting people of different ages.

4. Community Development Committee-Ken Webb

5. Crime and Safety –Peter Truax

Walks have been well-attended. The committee won't meet for another two months.

6. Environment—Bob Friddle

7. Fundraising—Diann Anders

8. History/Archive-Dick Westby

9. Profile—Marne Zafar

10. Restorative Justice—Hannah Epstein

Reminder that the 10th Anniversary is October 22nd 6-8pm at the Vine Arts Center.

11. Seward Online report—Peter Fleck

12. Seward Towers—Diann

Tariku mentions that they had a Board meeting yesterday at which they discussed recent break-ins. Can SNG do anything to help? Not sure. People have been drinking, hanging around in the parking lot, breaking into cars and bothering tenants. Crime and Safety may discuss.

Other Business

Dane has resigned. Put the word out to people you know who might be interested in running for the board.

Board meeting evaluation

Adjourned at 8:14pm