

## **Waite Park Community Council Annual Membership Meeting February 5, 2014**

The annual membership meeting of the Waite Park Community Council was held on Wednesday, February 5, 2014, at 7:02 p.m., the president being in the chair.

In attendance were Lorraine Dodd, Mary Farnham, Jacob Wilkinson, Mike Refsland, Ann Kastensen, Danielle Mixer, Joe Guerin, Alita Bergan, Sandi McDonald, Emily Koski, Gary Arntsen, Phil Zittel, Rosie Heille, Connie Stauffer, Andrew Pimental, Chad Collins, Ross Haddow, Kelly Barto, Greg Secaur, Marty Schirber, Anthony Beard, Katie Topinka, Greg Flanagan, Marie Flanagan, Kevin Reich, Jenny Arneson, Donald Risk, and Thomas Dahlstrom.

The agenda for the annual membership meeting was approved as amended. The minutes of the January 7, 2014 board meeting were distributed and approved.

### ***Guest Speakers and Q&A***

The president introduced the first guest speaker, **Jenny Arneson**, Minneapolis School Board Member representing District 1, whose topics included the increasing number of children attending Northeast schools; the reopening of Webster Elementary in fall 2015; the plan to have children who live downtown attend Northeast Middle School and Edison High School; and the addition of a Spanish immersion program at Sheridan Elementary.

Questions asked about the use of the Tuttle school building (special program) and about STEM curriculum (focus on science and technology, though not always under the name of STEM).

The president introduced the second guest speaker, **Andrew Pimental**, Area Manager for the Minneapolis Parks & Recreation Board, who spoke about the playground improvements at Waite Park that were started in the fall of 2013; work will be completed as the weather warrants in 2014. No project money is available for the installation of a shade structure, as contingency money was used for drainage problems. Wading pool improvements are set to be made in 2014. The Park board has divided the city into six service areas, and further reorganizations starting next week will mean a new director for Waite Park. Brian Hall will replace Chad Collins, who will be taking a position with a different program.

Questions asked about the pool's cost of \$500,000 (line-item budgets can be provided by the Parks department), a fieldhouse renovation (the fieldhouse will not soon be renovated), Rec Quest (an initiative to see if people are being served by recreation centers, through surveys and focus groups), and the Waite Park building

being a candidate for a green roof. In addition, an observation from the audience that park vehicles have been driving on and damaging walkways.

The president introduced the third guest speaker, **Kevin Reich**, Ward 1 City Council member, who spoke on four subjects:

- *Central Avenue Railroad Bridge.* MNDOT is replacing this bridge and the city is involved to attempt to get more out of the project as an amenity and mitigate the impact to Central Avenue. The community wants an attractive, contextual project. The design calls for brick and metal materials, a widened underpass (that will accommodate bicycles and streetcars, and improve drainage), and mounting areas in which art may be placed. Mitigation efforts include frontage access to every business on the avenue, the project's duration being compressed, and trucks being routed to University Avenue, Fillmore Street, or Johnson Street.
- *34th Avenue & Johnson Street bumpout.* The bumpout pilot was well-received by the Waite Park school patrol, and city staff reported a successful project. Funding for a permanent bumpout will come out of the city budget.

Questions asked about snow removal at the intersection (this will be increased), city staff reaching out to neighbors (staff should be considering their views), and the bus stop being moved (council member will report back though the board).

- *Central Avenue median.* Remnant native prairie has been installed in the new median, and should be established enough in the next year for a controlled burn, after which flowers can be planted. Sightline and water capture problems should be solved after the prairie is established.
- *Nicollet–Central Streetcars.* A streetcar study should soon be completed and submitted to the Metropolitan Council. Pending that approval, the project would be eligible for federal money. The starter segment of the line to be applied for would start at Lake Street, go through downtown, head over the Hennepin Avenue Bridge, and end somewhere between 5th Street NE and 14th Street NE.

Question about passenger rail access in Minneapolis (not now).

### ***Waite Park Community Council 2013 Annual Review, and 2014 Outlook***

The president reported on the purpose of the neighborhood council and presented an annual review, which included survey data. The council's focus is on making Waite Park a neighborhood that people want to remain in for the long term. Tasks for the neighborhood in 2014 will include evaluating potential projects that fit with the neighborhood priority plan. Most of the community council's funding comes from the city, and this is not a large amount of money; Waite Park has one of the larger boards among neighborhood groups to compensate for this, by trying to

create a group of engaged volunteers. The WPCC offers home improvement loans, block club grants, and security rebates; and participates in community events such as NECDC's NE Ride and the Waite Park Fall Festival and Pushcart Derby. The council's charge from the city is to engage people; board governance work – revising bylaws, examining insurance, reapplying for money from the city – has been done over the past few years, so that the focus can now be on projects.

Comment thanking the president for his report and leadership.

The vice-president reported on proposed meeting topics for the coming year, ideas which came from neighborhood input.

### ***New Business***

#### **Board Director Nominations and Election**

Four board directors' terms have expired. Gary Arntsen, Lorraine Dodd, Mary Farnham, and Connie Stauffer were re-nominated, for terms expiring in 2016.

Four board director seats are open. Ross Haddow, Katie Topinka, and Emily Koski were nominated for terms expiring in 2016; Marty Schirber was nominated to a term expiring in 2015.

A motion that "all nominations be accepted to membership to the board" was approved.

#### **Board Officer Nominations and Election**

Anthony Beard nominated for second term as president, expiring in 2016.

Danielle Mixer nominated for term as vice-president, expiring in 2016.

A motion for "a white ballot" was approved by acclamation.

#### **Other New Business**

Suggestion for combining adjacent block clubs in order to create a tipping point for those who want to organize a club, and reaching out to businesses to host block club events.

A drawing for door prizes was held. The prizes included a birdhouse, a Weisman Art Museum membership, a Holy Land gift certificate, a Twin City Grill gift certificate, an Eastside Co-op t-shirt and mug, a Hideout gift certificate, a Waite Park shopping bag and t-shirt, Waite Park t-shirts and water bottles, and a Vikings autograph.

The meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Jacob Wilkinson acting as secretary