

## **PPA Virtual Board Meeting Notes – March 23, 2020**

### **Approved at April 27, 2020 Board Meeting**

The Prospect Park Association (PPA) held a virtual board meeting on March 23, 2020.

**Meeting participants:** The names that appeared on the virtual meeting platform were Laura Preus, Amy Kaminsky, Ann Sechter, Britt Howell, Cameron Gordon, David Frank, Eric Amel, Ethropic Burnett, Jan Nelson, Jerry Stein, John Wicks, Lydia McAnerney, Lynn Von Korff, Rebecca Cowin, Joe Ring, Samantha Messina, Sarah Friedman, Jeffrey Barnhart, Devan Blanchard, Lupe Castillo, and Sarah Huddleston. There were also five numbers that did not have names associated with them (or simply did not show up on the PPA secretary's computer screen).

**Call to Order and Quorum.** PPA President Eric Amel called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 pm. There was a quorum.

**Format Introduction/Review Regular Agenda.** Eric explained that this virtual meeting allowed PPA to continue its business while social distancing measures were in effect due to the coronavirus pandemic. The virtual meeting was announced over the PPA newsletter and was open to anyone who wanted to join.

PPA Secretary Laura Preus noted that she would take notes in this new format, and use the information on the screen to try to determine participants.

### **Announcements/Updates.**

**Coronavirus – PPA meetings/events: discussion.** Eric A. asked Lydia McAnerney and Mary Britton to lead a discussion about their ideas for how PPA could be most helpful in this this time of the coronavirus pandemic.

Lydia explained that she had noticed that people were offering help to each other on the PPE list, e.g., shopping, supplies, needs, etc. She also knew of examples of community assistance models from places that are ahead of us in the pandemic, like Albany, NY. She approached the PPA management committee with this idea, and also discussed and adapted ideas with Mary Britton. They now have a questionnaire that focuses on two major topics: 1) Here is how I can help; and/or 2) Here are the things that I need. If PPA thinks this is a good idea, then Lydia, Mary and others would enlist neighborhood organizations – SE seniors, churches, food shelves, and other entities that are supporting and helping the neighborhood. This would allow PPA to reach out and help with this situation. Lydia noted the questionnaires are quick; they take about 2 minutes.

Mary Britton added that there is a need to improve our communication lines. She brought up the PPA website and shared her screen. She asked how we can be most helpful and share good information. Lydia noted that the NROC committee page wasn't active, and that this work has largely transitioned to the work of the Community Building effort.

There were expressions of appreciation and support for the idea both verbally and on the chat line. There was also a discussion about how we can be practical about it, so that we do not try to take the

place of other resources, and that we do not over-commit PPA's limited staff time now that we are down a staff person. Lydia and Mary suggested that a group could work on this and help keep it up.

***Lynn moved that we create a COVID task force and ask people to join and go forward. Susan Larson Fleming seconded.***

It was noted that this would be spear headed by Lydia and Mary. Lydia summarized that they are asking for two things:

- To create a neighborhood questionnaire under the auspices of PPA.
- To revise the PPA page for COVID-19 response and this neighborhood activity. They would work with Andy Michael. One idea was to adjust the Environment Committee page and NROC page to share information.

Laura noted that this will help address a question we have all been asking ourselves: What is the best role for a neighborhood association in a pandemic situation? We want to be helpful and we don't want to try to take the place of other social services. This seems like a practical way to connect resources and people.

Lynn noted that a task force status means that a group has been authorized to go forward and make good things happen. Lydia said she would get the questionnaire to board members.

***The motion passed unanimously.***

**Upcoming events postponed.** Jan Nelson summarized what has been cancelled or adjusted due to COVID-19.

- March 28 Climate Action Plan kick off is cancelled. More to come.
- April 18 Earth Day Clean-up is cancelled, at least in its group format. More to come.

There was discussion about Earth Day and if there might be ways for individuals to support this event in new ways that allow for social distancing. The Environment Committee will discuss this virtually.

**Ward 2 Update.** Council Member Cam Gordon gave an update from the city. Due to the coronavirus a state of local emergency has been declared and extended into April. The city council will meet on Fridays on a weekly basis and will address with critical city business. Everything is generally on hold except those things that must be done for a legal requirement, funding/financing. They are taking action to protect people's access to electricity, water and other functions. They are discussing concerns about the city's businesses and the long-term economic impact. They will be holding virtual meetings and have opportunities to see them on their broadcast channel; they will also be recorded. Cam sent an e-mail Ward 2 Update out to everyone.

He also addressed neighborhood business.

- The Vermilion development/Art and Architecture project/Wallis project. This project went through the appeal process brought forward by PPA. The appeal was denied. There were conditions added related to screening, burying power lines to make the area more walkable, conserving more of the A&A building, and adding a point of contact to the neighborhood during the construction phase. He had looked at topics in the MOU. He noted that a main point of the

PPA appeal was that the project shouldn't be getting conservation amenity points when they were taking away the A&A building rather than conserving it. He noted it was one of the more difficult processes he went through. He likes it when it's possible to achieve a win-win situation, but this was too challenging for that. His concern was that if they didn't build this version they could still go and build the building that was previously approved. He noted there were different opinions on this and he was willing to explain more or answer questions.

- Arthur-Williams walkway. The contractor will put in new retaining wall. They did a temporary fix; this will be addressed.
- 10<sup>th</sup> avenue bridge closure. Many people use this bridge for crossing the river. It will be closed starting march 30<sup>th</sup> for many months.
- Glendale historic designation. As previously discussed, CM Gordon nominated Glendale for local historic designation. It went through staff review and state review, and the staff did not recommend historic designation status. On a divided vote it was moved forward for a local designation. It will next be going forward to the Zoning and Planning Commission. The commission meeting had been scheduled for early April, but this may change based on the COVID-19 response situation. He also noted that MPH has been opposed to the designation. Now there is a new director, Abde Warsame. CM Gordon will keep us updated.

#### **Organizational business.**

#### **Committee Updates.**

**Transportation Committee.** It was noted that PPA had made previous comments related to the Transportation Plan. As a result, board members expressed they did not think there was any further action needed at this time.

**Environment Committee** – This committee is considering issues related to resiliency. They had worked on resiliency for the climate action plan and Mary B. noted that while this was different from the pandemic response there are related connections. They planned a virtual meeting for March 24 on PPA's role in building neighborhood resiliency.

**Land Use Committee.** The Land use committee held a meeting on March 12<sup>th</sup>, just prior to when greater social distancing guidance went into effect. Brief topics that were mentioned included the Historic Preservation Commission, lessons learned regarding the Vermilion development project, and the Residence Inn.

**Community Building.** Jerry Stein and Susan Larson-Fleming gave an update. They highlighted the tenants' rights project and how it also overlaps with the student outreach project. They are going to continue doing outreach with students using an online format, and they will add questions about how they are doing in this difficult pandemic situation. They are also doing work with Glendale. Kaaha, part-time staff, is helping to work on a number of these projects.

**Admin Committee.** We have a major grant going in for the We Count census work. There are efforts connecting with Fresh Thyme, Green on 4<sup>th</sup>, Pillars, etc. Ethropic was going to share information, but there were technical difficulties. In place of that Britt H. stepped forward to give a brief update.

Lynn VK gave an update on the lease extension. At the last meeting we approved the concept of an 18-month lease through 2021. This had been based on previous information on funding. However, there

has been a changing situation related to Neighborhoods 2020, and Lynn wanted everyone to be aware of this changing funding situation.

Background: PPA had approved the Neighborhoods 2020 plan and we had signed a letter of support. We have been working on efforts toward underserved audiences, and it seemed to fit with our goals. Other neighborhoods were not as supportive, however, and as a result there were many revisions. The City Council requested that a consultant help develop a way forward. Now, the revised plan includes new recommendations for funding. It has not been approved yet. It is dramatically different from the previous version. Now the proposed base funding is changing. Right now it is about \$64,000 annually. In the future it will go from approximately \$20,000 down to \$10,000 annually, if approved by the City Council. Of note: there are other pools of funds that PPA would likely be able to access, so our situation is not as dire as this first suggests.

Lynn VK noted that these changes would go into effect January, 2021. She wanted to bring forward concerns about committing operating dollars in this new financial situation. Under our previously recommended approach, our rent commitment would be \$12,000. She noted it is hard to commit PPA to that commitment in 2021. Lynn is recommending that we change our approach to commit to a lease that runs through 2020 instead of 2021.

***Lynn VK moved that we approve the lease through December 31, 2020. Susan Larson Fleming seconded. The motion was approved. Jeff B. abstained.***

**Staff update.** We have an announcement out for a Communication Coordinator. We posted this announcement on a non-profit website and at the U of MN. We have 9 applicants. Jan, Lynn and Susan will do interviews in mid-April and plan for the position to begin in May.

Lynn added that Jan is now working extra hours to cover needs since Nellie has taken a new, permanent position. Nellie is kindly doing some additional volunteer work to help with newsletter in the interim. Lynn extended thanks to Jan and Nellie on behalf of the board.

**Neighborhoods 2020 guidelines.** Lynn gave additional information to what was shared on this topic earlier in the meeting. She noted the public comment phase ends in mid-April. If we want to make comments we still can. The board received this information in their packets. The base funding will rely on a formula for equitable funding. We would be getting approximately 3,000 a year. Then it is possible to gain additional funding based on partnership engagement efforts. Our PPA values are consistent with those efforts. In an 18 month period it would be possible to get anywhere from \$5,000 to \$150,000 in possible grants. This means there will now be much more uncertainty for how we plan for our organization. To ensure sufficient funding we want to continue to demonstrate that we are aligned with the goals of Neighborhoods 2020. There is a definite concern about the extensive amount of administrative time we will now have to commit in pursuing the grants and funding.

In the past we submitted comments. Board member suggested we may want to make comments about the degree to which this will become more administratively challenging for our organization.

CM Gordon noted that comments might be valuable. He noted some issues with the guidelines. The recommended funding is different from what City Council had originally approved. The City Council had been discussing a base funding of \$25,000 a year. He heard our message that we are supportive of the

great steps forward of Neighborhoods 2020, while noting that administratively there will be significant challenges with this approach. He thinks it's possible the comment period will be extended.

***Eric A. moved that we empower Lynn to draft comments that could be shared with the board for comment. Amy Kaminsky seconded.***

Britt H. noted that we should ensure that the good work we are doing is both done and able to be seen by others. If we do this work, then the benefits will come through for PPA. We have to reach out to all board members. We can write this up and show that people are doing the work, and that we are working to connect well with black, indigenous, and people of color.

Laura P. added that everyone wants to be supportive of this good work, and so the essence of any comments should just be to highlight that administratively the small base funding combined with grant-writing will be administratively more difficult. Lynn VK affirmed Britt's message.

***The motion was approved.***

**CPP annual report.** This information was in the packet.

***Lynn moved to approve the CPP annual report to submit to the NCR. Samantha Messina seconded. It was approved by unanimous consent.*** Jan will deliver that to NCR.

**Further updates from Jan N.**

**U of MN good neighbor grant.** This grant will be for a fall student event. It is informally being called "Rock the Tower." This event is being anticipated for Saturday, Oct. 3rd, 11-3 pm. Students would go up to the Witch's Hat Water Tower, and there would be work with the League of Women Voters to register voters.

There was a big thank you to Lydia M. for her hard work to complete this. The deadline was scheduled for March 31<sup>st</sup>. This was for \$3,500 for the good neighbor fund.

***Susan LF moved to approve this grant application. Lynn seconded. Jerry S. voiced support. The motion passed unanimously.***

Jan N. described one-time funding made available by the good neighbor fund. Jan noted the deadline was this past Friday March 20, but there was an extension so we could go through an approval process with the board. Jan would submit it if this were approved.

Sammy M. described the purpose of the grant application. The census is still mandated to happen this year; with COVID-19 there are now even more challenges in reaching out to undercounted groups. We will need to get away from previously planned group gatherings, and think creatively about how to reach out to historically undercounted areas, such as renters, college students, racial and economic minorities, Glendale residents and children. It is still critical to achieve the count and be sure to count undercounted group. We will listen to concerns of undercounted residents. The purpose is to train and provide information to targeted groups so they can help completion of the census. They would also be working to dispel myths, and help set up resources to complete the form. This would include a part-time community census organizer to help reach students and renters and groups. There might be creative ideas such as reminders on takeout orders, reminders with rent reminders, and other approaches.

***Amy K moved to support this grant application. Susan LF seconded. There was unanimous approval.***

Jan gave an update on looking ahead. National night out is on the horizon, and Jan will work with Britt and others on preparing information for the next board meeting.

**Ice Cream Social.** The MOU agreement has been approved and signed by Pratt PTO. This year we added a little more clarity on some details and wording to help keep things straightforward for everyone. If we approve, then Eric will sign and Jan will get this back to the committee. The Ice Cream Social was set for Saturday, May 30, noon to 3 pm. However, there is contingency planning for the COVID-19 response. If we cannot have the Ice Cream Social in the typical way, we will have to adapt. Susan LF added that if the Ice Cream Social does not go forward as a public event, they would still hope to have a fund raiser to help with the school, such as an online auction or other ideas.

***Lynn VK moved that we convey to Pratt PTO our general support for them if they need an alternative activity. If they need to adapt in this time of crisis, we would like to be creative to help them be successful in whatever way is most appropriate. We would work with the PTO on what is most appropriate. Susan LF seconded. It was unanimously approved.***

***John moved to approve the MOU as it's written. Susan LF seconded. Unanimously approved.***

We stand with Pratt.

***Susan moved to approve the consent agenda. It was seconded and unanimously approved.***

Finally, the board checked in with each other on how is this meeting going? And do we need to make any adjustments? Jan N. will continue to organize board packets with some numerical ordering, as board members appreciated that organization.

Lynn gave a thanks to everyone for organizing the virtual meeting. The Methodist Church may not be open for meetings in April, so we may need to adjust and continue with our virtual meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17pm. Thanks to all for participating in a virtual meeting.

*Notes respectfully submitted by Laura Preus, PPA secretary.*