

Thursday, February 4, 2021-6:30 PM
West University Neighborhood Association
February Board Meeting, Via Zoom <https://arizona.zoom.us/j/87152096098>

I. Call to Order, Roll Call and Welcome

At 6:30 p.m., Judy Sensibar called the meeting to order. The following members were present: Betsy Besenik-Larson, Lisette DeMars, Brian Chaneka, Jim Glock, Rick McDonnell, Shannon Riggs, Judy Sensibar, Monique Vallery, Willem Van Leeuwen, Larrie Warren, Henry Werchan, and Dave Zipps. Also present: Diana Amado (Ward 6), Bill Bradway (TPD), Elise Constantine, Preston Hould (TPD), Julie Katsel (U of A), Gene Kunde, Belinda Morales (TPD), Constance Negley, and Sally Rusk. Absent: Cindy Doklan, Richard Fifer, Jane McCollum, Jasmine Pierce, and Rev. Mack Sigmon.

The ice breaker was a request to describe home projects and headaches in our vintage homes.

II. Consent Agenda Approval of Treasurer's Report and Meeting Minutes

Jim Glock reported that we paid our \$500 invoice from Trees for Tucson for the Catalina Water Harvesting Project (to go towards the irrigation), spent \$300 for the gifts to the Environmental Services Department employees, and paid our Historic Fourth Avenue dues. He also reported that we have 40 dues-paying members and his goal was to have the 2021 approved vendors list available by the end of the month. There being no objections or corrections, the Treasurer's Report, the December 2020 minutes, and the January 2021 Annual Meeting meetings were approved consistent with the consent agenda.

III. Announcements and Call to the Audience

Capt. Chris Dennison from TPD introduced Lt. Belinda Morales (520-837-7203) belinda.morales@tucsonaz.gov as the new point of contact for Sector 8, which includes West University. He also complemented Officers Hould and Bradway for their work at Anza. Officer Hould reported on the arrest of a drug dealer who was released and was back at Anza, but who took a plea and will be sentenced in March to 3.75 to 8 years in prison.

A concern was expressed about cars driving near Anza on 1st St and 7th Ave looking for drug buyers or sellers. Captain Dennison stated that there are certain subjects they are looking at for drug activity in the park who are candidates for treatment who will be indicted if they don't complete it. He also said they will be looking at a group of folks in March and April who will be arrested if they return to the park and continue to engage in criminal activity. Captain Dennison also reported that Lupita Morillo from Channel 4 will be doing a story and will interview Judy and another neighbor.

Officer Bradway gave a report on criminal activity in the neighborhood. He noted that TPD had arrested a person who fired a gun at 550 E. 5th Street and that TPD had also recovered the gun. He stated the incident was likely drug induced. He also stated that overall crime numbers in the neighborhood look good and are trending downward.

A concern was expressed about the Sahara Apartments and, in particular, B&Es to cars that seem to trace back to a ring at Sahara with stolen goods. Officer Hould said they are seeing an

uptick in that area, and that addressing it is going to be one of TPD's projects. He said some of what they are seeing is nuisance, but some is serious and that will be the focus.

Judy Sensibar flagged the survey related to the threatened closure of the Post Office's Cherrybell Processing & Distribution Center. She asked everyone to complete it and circulate it in an effort to keep the facility open. She also flagged the Ironhorse Park meeting on 2/11 at 5:30, noting that they had obtained \$600,000 for improvements and that we should send our support.

Jim Glock reported that he had spoken to Chris Leighton at Peach Properties, who had met with Tucson's Director of Transportation on February 3. Chris reported that the Director is frustrated with the road closures in the area and struggling with the loss of personnel and the impact of those departures on the decisions being made.

Betsy Besenik-Larson expressed concern about aggressive driving in the neighborhood and wondered if we could use signage to address it. Diana Amado stated that the Ward had slowdown signs available for pick up.

Diana Amado, Jim Glock and representatives of the Historic Fourth Avenue Coalition and the FAMA then had a discussion regarding road closures. The consensus was that the City needs to do a better job communicating when closures will occur and to stop having multiple closures with cascading impacts. Diana reported that she gets construction and road closure updates; Jim said that he gets them as well but they are not regular. Diana proposed that we suggest to the City Manager that the city schedule weekly public meetings to address road closures, and she also asked that people follow up with her offline to discuss how best to proceed.

IV. Committee Reports

A. Parks Committee

Lisette DeMars identified the following topics she would like to address: sanitation stations, bathroom access, and bathroom construction. She stated that the Committee is taking new members, is shooting for quarterly meetings that will be virtual for now, and will send out an email for a meeting in late February or early March.

B. CCRC: Campus Community Relations Committee

Henry Werchan reported that the Committee had its first meeting in early January, just before classes started. He noted the University is still in Phase 1 with very limited activity on campus, but it will start administering vaccines and is currently working on a sign up program.

Julie Katsel reported that the University is pleased with the testing rate on campus, which she described as exceptionally low: less than 1% positive with 20,300 tests. She stated that she did not know when the school would be going to Phase 2, but the mall would be a point of distribution for the vaccine with a focus on educators. She said the County had dropped the age requirement for vaccination from 75 to 65 and those individuals can also go to the U of A. She stated that the school is funding a campus area response team with UAPD and TPD. She said they have only received a few calls but there has been 100% follow up. Judy Sensibar noted that Richard Fifer gave her the name of a student who stated his fraternity

would be willing to help clean traffic circles; Julie stated she & Henry could also raise a request for assistance with the CCRC.

C. Development Committee

Rick McDonnell reported that he has been talking with Matt Bailey, a lawyer at Rusing, Lopez & Lizardi, about the Capstone project, and he believes we should retain Mr. Bailey for legal advice. Rick believes we need to frame talking points with the Wards, put WUNA's position forward, and lobby (probably with Feldman's) against the project. At present, Rick does not believe legal fees for advice to help frame arguments will exceed \$2500. Rick then moved that WUNA allocate \$2500 to put Mr. Bailey on retainer, which was seconded by Henry Werchan. A brief discussion ensued regarding Capstone's efforts, including its proposal to demolish homes contrary to the overlay district, and the need to stop projects like this from slowly eroding the footprint of the historic neighborhood. Rick's motion was then put to a vote, and all present approved.

V. Goals for the Year

Judy Sensibar began a discussion about goals for the year by noting that many were listed in the minutes for the 2021 Annual Meeting. She said she would like the Streets Committee to identify locations for curb cuts for sidewalks starting at Catalina Park. Jim Glock said he would contact the City to see if funds are available for this project. Judy also identified traffic calming on 4th Street as a 2021 goal, with chicanes, stop sign placement, and traffic circles as potential options. Jim said the Streets Committee would create an action register identifying priorities in March. Judy observed that Mayor Romero was quoted as saying the streets in Tucson can't wait any longer, although Jim noted that the \$14 million being proposed for repairs was just a band aid. Jim said he would contact Ward 6 to see if there was any way to leverage our money for the improvements we are seeking to make.

Judy stated that she liked Willem's idea for historical markers on homes, and observed that we would need to decide who gets one and if we had the money for the project. Jim said we have \$18,000 in restricted historical funds, and would be getting \$2500 per year for three more years. He noted that some homes are historically significant while others are contributing. (Rick McDonnell later observed that in the historic designation application, we listed 114 houses as significant and 539 as contributing.) Betsy Besenik-Larson suggested we start with the oldest homes and work towards the newest. Jim said he would reach out to Kerry Stratford to see if her firm could assist with the design of the markers. Betsy also observed that we should tie in the markers as part of a beautification project for the neighborhood, including right of way spaces, which will help with visitors and how they treat the neighborhood.

VI. Adjournment

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Dave Zipps