

WUNA Board Meeting Minutes (corrected)

Thursday, March 3, 2011

I. Call to order: Meeting called to order at Trinity Presbyterian Church, Room 205, at 6.30 p.m., by Chris Gans, President. Other officers attending: Richard Mayers, Vice President; Ford Burkhart, Secretary; Cheri Wiens, Treasurer. Area Reps: Janet Pitts Labate (1); Gal Witmer (2); Carolyn Niethammer (4); Brian McCarthy (5); Noah Sensibar (6); Dave Boston (7); Richard Mayers (8); Patricia E. Pinzon Pitts (9). At large members: Dave Croteau; Cathy Morrison and Bob Morrison; Michael Morse; John Patterson, Kurt Tallis (FAMA), Matt Williams.

Others present: Jill Bielawski; Donovan Durband, City Ward 6; Jack Shomenta and Jadel Roe (128 E. University); Keith Bagwell, Pima County Sup. Elias office; Susan Wink, artist, Roswell, N.M.; Jeff Anderson, resident (1025 N. 4th Ave.), Matthew Ahmandi and Brandon Wells from Tau Kappa Epsilon

II. Minutes: Dave Croteau moved approval of February minutes and treasurer's report; Jan Labate seconded. Approved unanimously.

III. Announcements. None.

IV. Call to the Audience.

Cleanup: Two members of TKE fraternity said they plan an area cleanup after Spring Fling. Chris suggested they contact Mike Birrer, who is also planning cleanup efforts.

Crime: Jeff Anderson said he was selling his house in the neighborhood because crime is on the increase. A general discussion of crime and reporting of crimes followed.

Streetcar: Susan Wink, artist of Roswell, N.M., invited ideas for her project to create art for the modern streetcar stop at Time Market. She will return in April to discuss plans for her design in more detail. Matt noted that the historic overlay provisions might apply to this project, and she might want to go through the historic review process. Chris said we should check with city on if this project will fall under that review process.

V. Beer Booth proceeds.

Chris said WUNA needs to buy a new 10 x 20 structure for the booth, or buy spare parts. With shipping, it will be \$190 for a new one; parts are about \$170. Cathy moved purchase of a new one, Carolyn seconded. Motion passed, with one "no" vote, by Kurt.

Chris recalled we assigned beer booth money for the Food Bank Snack Pack program; they sent a note of thanks.

Gans suggested we use some funds to support Jefferson Park efforts to raise money to pay for their Neighborhood Plan. Motion by Cheri, seconded by Matt, was approved with Pat and Chris abstaining, to

give 50% of beer booth funds to Food Bank, 10% to Jefferson Park association, and 40% to the Friends of Tucson's Birthplace. Carolyn said the historic preservation and restoration goals of the Friends expand the knowledge of community roots, matching WUNA's goals. Richard noted that group was planning a historic garden.

VI. Proactive vision for WUN development

Gans said we are too often reacting and behind development events affecting our neighborhood; the old Y property came up a few years ago and we were not prepared. A sale of a street near the Y property followed, and then the developers turned their backs on the neighborhood. We held design charettes but they were sparsely attended. No effort by the board was made to develop a neighborhood vision plan.

When the 714 N. Euclid Memorial Complex came up, we were again unprepared. We mobilized, but when the project backer backed out we went silent again; we are still in a reactive mode. We face The District project, and we don't have a vision statement to guide us, and to form something we can take to developers that offers a vision going forward for decades, stating the kind of neighborhood we wish to have. Chris asked if we need to change the neighborhood plan, and take a fresh stand, or look at an historic overlay zone. If we don't act, the IID (Infill Incentive District) which overrides our plan, is going to prevail everywhere. Chris said we are going to see changes we are not going to like if we are not prepared.

Corky Poster will hold a workshop March 9 at 6:30 p.m. to show us how to work on these issues; he has offered to help WUNA move ahead in whatever way we wish to promote our vision of development of the neighborhood.

Matt said the old 714 committee can evolve into a development committee. Chris said we need a more engaged board with deeper continuing knowledge of the issues and of a vision of what we want our neighborhood to be like in 20 to 40 years.

Cheri asked if the old 714 committee would continue that work. That committee included Matt, John, Jenn, Chris, Richard, Jill, Dave Boston, and Robert Pitts. Matt said we need a larger input to have the committee represent the entire neighborhood.

Jill said we need more neighbors at design workshops so the input represents the area. Matt said the committee could then go to the city and others with the emergent plan.

Chris suggested area reps set up meetings in their areas to talk, Chris and Richard will attend to find out people's issues, and bring information to them on the long term issues in the neighborhood. Jefferson Park had the mini-dorms issue to spur its movement. We don't have that.

Cheri supported meetings led by area reps. Carolyn recalled that Corky Poster said at our meeting that developers would look hard at any plan — and that developers appreciate having a structure to guide things. Brian said they would only get waivers for the elements in the plan.

John said we might end up weakening the plan if we revise it; changes may be developer driven, and now they at least have to go through rezoning to get around it. Chris said IID is overriding our neighborhood plan right now. There needs to be stronger protection for our existing plan. Chris reiterated support for an overlay plan as a way to strengthen the plan.

Gal said we need a zoning attorney to advise us how to fight these fights. Mayers said the areas most vulnerable are those outside the historic area, parts of Fourth Ave. and Sixth Ave. and so on. He said an historic overlay would help, as was done for Downtown Links projects. That would help create the development that is what we really want.

Gans said we need a plan to support long-term development of the neighborhood, not just a short-term solution, such as to parking. Our neighborhood's economic impact should be seen as essential to success of the UA Main Gate and downtown area businesses, while we have an in-fill tool, the IID, that works against the neighborhoods.

Mayers pointed out the neighborhood plan is a city instrument, a good tool, but the neighborhood needs its own statement, to show to developers how they can meet our guidelines. It's not a law, but just a clear vision statement. Our plan hasn't changed since 1978.

How would an overlay work? Mayers said it is just a set of options for a builder to opt into, with restrictions and incentives that we design; it overlays regular zoning.

Matt says an urban overlay like IID is one thing, but our own statement is quite different. Mayers said process is product, and we need an involving process to form our vision.

Jack Shomonta asked about the original WUNA plan from 1978, and asked if we want to update that. He said we may need to draft a concise summary of what's in the plan for today's new citizens. Mayers said most of the old plan still works. Gans said it is, after 30 years, still what we need to do today.

Gans asked how we want to move forward. We need to talk to people organizing in other neighborhoods, like Jefferson Park, to get enough people connected to get a sense of direction of this neighborhood. Noah asks if we are talking about new design guidelines.

Gans in conclusion said the board needed to commit to this effort. Jill said the WUN has the skills in the neighborhood to do this; we just need the education in how to do it. Mayers says we could take the 714 committee, and ask them to look at the issues of creating a development vision; take the 1978 document as something to start with, and compile it in a smaller format. Scan it and reproduce it, and perhaps hire people to do this work with us. The committee will figure how to reproduce it. Carolyn seconded Richard's motion. It passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

VII. Updates

Splashpad: Gans said there is a meeting set for Tuesday, March 8, at 5.30 pm, on the splashpad update. At Room 205, Trinity Church. We will learn what all has been deleted for budget concerns. Keith

Bagwell said he was here to discuss the budget outlook of this as a Pima County project; it is way over budget now, and must be trimmed to \$500,000. County needs to trim it down by \$23,000. He adds there may be extra money available if other projects come in under budget. Pima County may move neighborhood reinvestment money from other projects. WUNA needs to make sure the trims are done the way we want them to be.

National Night Out: Will be changed to Oct. 4. The board gave general agreement to that.

Gans said Mayers has attended some Dunbar Springs neighborhood meetings. Gans said he will attend some of the other area meetings to share what we are doing and to offer support for their issues.

The District project: Mayers recalled that Feb. 28 was the deadline for comments for "The District at UA" project (housing for more than 700 students, at 550 N. 5th Ave., the site of the giant hole where the demolished YMCA used to be). WUNA is now waiting for Ernie Duarte, COT Director of Development Services, to issue his decision on the protests. The letters are a public record, which we can review. If we need to appeal to mayor and council, Noah notes there is a cost for filing an appeal to the decision, and moved that we should approve paying that cost. Second by John Patterson. Mayers said in discussion that if someone else also wants to appeal, we should split the fee and file one appeal. Mayers says the time window is small; COT has 20 days to make its decision; that starts the clock for the appeal. Noah's motion passed, with Mayers and Gans abstaining.

Mayers said he had been approached by the District developers (Valeo Cos.) to learn what they can do to meet the WUNA interests. He said he replied that he had no WUNA board mandate to negotiate with anyone on this. He has had no further contact from the developers. Matt noted that the developers put forth their plan at the Roskrige school meeting a year ago, and he suggested they should come before the board. Cheri agreed we should have them come before the board.

Noah moved, with second from Carolyn, that we take a position that these developers should be told that if they have something to say to the board they should get themselves on the board agenda for the next meeting.

Tyndall Project: John Patterson said the University will begin the Tyndall Ave. enhancement project in April. A three-story laundry facility is under way. The UA has not responded to requests for its policy on creating new off-campus dorms.

VIII. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

The next meeting is Thursday, April 7.

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