

Thursday, March 3, 2022-6:30 PM

West University Neighborhood Association

March Board Meeting, Trinity Presbyterian Church, 400 E. University Blvd.

and Via Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84584666599>

I. Call to Order, Roll Call and Welcome

At 6:31 p.m., Judy Sensibar called the meeting to order. The following members were present: Betsy Besenik-Larson, Lisette DeMars, Jim Glock, Kat Henderson, Rick McDonnell, Andy Pongratz, Judy Sensibar, Erec Toso, Henry Werchan, and Dave Zipps. Absent: Colby Henly, Jane McCollum, Shannon Riggs, Holly Vaden, Willem Van Leeuwen, and Lex Wilcox.

Also present: Diana Amado (Ward 6), Alexander Bardorff, David Burbank, Cullen Chadwick, Chris Gans, and Samantha Neville (District 5).

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

There being no objections or corrections, both the Treasurer's Report and the February 2022 Minutes were approved in accordance with the provisions of the consent agenda.

III. Announcements and Call to the Audience

Judy Sensibar stated that Jim Glock did a clean up with Zeta Psi at 635 E. 5th Street. She also stated that Lex Wilcox will be leading a neighborhood clean up on behalf of the Vineyard on April 10; if people have suggested locations, please let her know.

Alexander Bardorff stated that he owns property across 6th Street from Tucson High School and there are issues with vehicular and pedestrian safety in this location. There are lots of kids around the school and cars are jumping curbs, including one that knocked down a section of the recently-installed fence in the median. With Boadway widened and Aviation Parkway extended, Alexander thinks there is no reason to have 6th Street as a typical road and he wondered if the neighborhood would support traffic calming, including dedicated bike lanes, one vehicle travel lane in each direction, and severe speed limits. Judy Sensibar stated that we are doing a "road diet" on 6th Avenue, but 6th Street is not ours to say. She did suggest that Alexander attend the next streets committee meeting and raise the issue there. Betsy Besenik also noted that the board of H4AC is bothered by some of the chaos on 6th Street and wants to act on it.

Chris Gans gave an update on the protected bike lane on University between Stone and 6th Avenue; he stated that there have been car accidents, including a hit and run on March 2. He stated he had turned in a petition to the City with 40 signatures on it to remove the protected bike lane in favor of the buffered bike lane between 6th and 4th Avenues. Chris is concerned for people's safety; when you see how the protected lane works 24/7, you see all the flaws.

David Burbank, a project manager from the City of Tucson's Department of Transportation and Mobility, gave an update on the Downtown Links project. David stated that

the new 6th Street and Stone intersection should be ready on March 27, and Stone will be closed at the existing intersection with 6th Street during the second or third week of April for excavation 30 feet below the existing grade. This will be a 3-month closure; new drainage will be installed and it should prevent flooding under the railroad bridge. David stated that Church is now open for eastbound traffic and will open in both directions in April. 6th Avenue will reopen through the railroad bridge during the third week of April; the day after it opens, 6th Street will be closed at the railroad crossing west of Stone. Existing eastbound traffic on 6th will then be directed to Stone, Franklin, and Toole, while westbound traffic will be directed to Speedway. This should also be a 3-month closure. After David's presentation, Jim Glock observed that the project's website is out of date and with all the closures that are about to happen, it's important to get word out quickly; businesses are particularly concerned. David stated that he would be in touch with the communications staff and get the ball rolling. [The new 6th Street and Stone intersection did not open on March 27, and hence it may be that the above closures will be delayed as well. We will provide new information as it becomes available.]

Judy Sensibar stated that there was not enough of a groundswell for the plant swap so we will be rescheduling it for the fall. She also observed that the intersection at University and 6th needs a power wash, cleanup, and plantings, and we need to schedule an event for that; perhaps we could do a cleanup followed by a walk. Judy also suggested that area reps host a progressive porch party in May.

Jim Glock gave an update about changes to the rules of the road for the beer booth for the 4th Avenue street fair. We now have the option to sell anything that doesn't compete with beer or energy drinks, and while the price of beer is going up to \$7, our share of the proceeds is being reduced to 45%. We will still be on the northeast corner of 5th Street and 4th Avenue, a busy location.

IV. Committee Reports

A. CCRC: Campus Community Relations Committee

Betsy Besenik gave an update on behalf of Henry with details from the most recent CCRC meeting; she stated that the cleanup by Mortar Board, the scholarship and service association at U of A, would be working differently this year. Unlike previous years, they did not offer to clean a wide swath of the community (e.g., parks around the University), but were supposed to focus their efforts on a single area, which was not specified at the meeting. Spring Fling was canceled this year; it had been delayed to March, but was canceled in late February with little publicity. The new UAPD police chief is supposed to start very soon; her name is Paula Balafas and she was previously at the University of Colorado Police Department. The next CCRC meeting is next Tuesday, March 8.

B. Development Committee

Rick McDonnell reported that he is monitoring several projects but not much is happening at the moment. There has been a lot of talk by Capstone about its student

housing project but a public meeting is not yet scheduled and the public process has not begun; it appears Capstone is trying to work the neighborhoods. TEP shared language it is proposing for special exceptions to the gateway ordinance as part of its negotiations with the City to underground transmission lines for the Kino to DeMoss-Petrie project; the Planning Commission will have a study session on March 16 at 6:00 p.m. to discuss the proposed exceptions with staff, but at this point, the City has not agreed to anything. [The Planning Commission has now scheduled a public hearing on the proposed exceptions for Wednesday, April 6, at 6:00 p.m.]

Betsy Besenik stated that Steve Kozachik told the mayor he will not support the Capstone project. She also stated that her husband was among the first responders to the shooting at the Hub at 1st & Tyndall and the scene was chaotic. She expressed concern to Steve that our public safety infrastructure has reached a critical point because of calls associated with student housing and the entire community is being impacted. Judy Sensibar stated that she spoke to the chief of staff of Ward 3 about Capstone, who pointed out the possibility of steering Capstone to Euclid south of University as a possible construction site, but Judy does not think it's big enough.

Rick McDonnell stated that the developers have broken ground on Opus, the mixed-use apartment building on the former site of Maloney's on 4th Avenue between 8th and 9th Streets. Iron Horse has some agreements with the developers; he is hoping they will be honored.

Chris Gans stated that any additional student housing should be done as a public-private partnership. Chris feels that developers are taking over increasing portions of the neighborhood, and that is bad for us. Rick McDonnell stated that we need to be generally cautious as a neighborhood about additional student housing; more student housing is not what we need. Andy Pongratz asked if the developers will be able to convert student housing to affordable housing in the future; no one present knew the answer.

C. Streets Committee

Jim Glock stated that he is working to schedule a meeting for committee members. Jim said that he hasn't heard back from the City about its plans for the bike lane on University. [Subsequent to the meeting, the City confirmed that it will abandon the parking-protected lane between 6th and Stone and restripe that stretch sometime between April and June to match the buffered lane between 4th and 6th.] Jim also stated that Betsy Besenik asked the City about the status of the protected bike lane on 6th Avenue; the City reported that they are checking on costs for the original plan and did not acknowledge any countervailing proposal.

VI. Adjournment

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.