

Thursday, August 3, 2023-6:30 PM
West University Neighborhood Association
August 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 6:33 p.m., Betsy Larson called the meeting to order. The following members were present: Lisette DeMars, Jim Glock, Joel Ireland, Betsy Larson, Rick McDonnell, Andy Pongratz, Judy Sensibar, Holly Vaden, Henry Werchan, and Dave Zipps. Absent: Chris Gans, Brian Kemp, Adam Milnor, Shannon Riggs, Mack Sigmon, Erec Toso, Willem Van Leeuwen, and Lex Wilcox.

Also present: Diana Amado (Ward 6), Collin Chesston (DTM), Ryan Fagan (DTM), Adelita Grijalva (Pima County District 5), Benjamin McDonald, and Kevin Nelson.

II. Announcements and Call to the Audience

Adelita Grijalva stated that the Board of Supervisors voted to reorganize county employees into new salary grades and job classifications after a study showed that many county employees earn less than those in similar positions throughout the state. The measure will also address “compression,” where salary adjustments for new employees produce pay levels that are closer to those for employees with much more experience. Ms. Grijalva stated the Board has funded a jail transition program focused on defendants charged with non-violent, non-dangerous offenses; the program seeks to connect defendants released pending trial with services they might need, including housing, food, drug rehabilitation, medical care, and transportation. Ms. Grijalva also stated the Board passed a budget that funds roadway improvements and seeks to balance the needs of the neighborhoods. She said that the Board is meeting twice per month with the County supervisor, and will be rolling out a strategic plan 2.0 shortly.

Diana Amado stated that the Ward 6 office has closed because their building was condemned pending restoration after hail and water damage from the recent storm. She thinks they will be out for two to three months, but will be in temporary space at the Benedictines.

Andy Pongratz stated that there are a large number of homeless people in Catalina Park. Judy Sensibar stated the same is true at Anza. Kevin Nelson stated that a tent went up on Ferro Avenue on Monday morning and that the encampment expanded until it blocked the road. A discussion ensued that addressed the City’s homeless encampment protocol and reporting tool, which helps the City identify encampment locations and assess the level of response needed, including outreach, clean-up, and enforcement. Judy stated she would contact Kevin to discuss possible follow up with the City about issues that might need to be addressed.

III. Consent Agenda: Treasurer's Report; May Meeting Minutes.

Jim Glock stated that the only activities of note were debits associated with the two checks for \$697 to Roskruge and Trinity for their share of the beer booth tips.

There being no objections, the minutes for the May 2023 board meeting, and the Treasurer's Report for May to July 2023 were approved pursuant to the terms of the consent agenda.

IV. Bike Boulevard Updates

Collin Cheston gave an update on the 5th Street Bike Boulevard, which is designed to reduce the differential between cars and bikes on 5th Street by lowering the speed limit and adding signs and shared lane markings. Collin stated that 5th Street was milled by 3/4" and a contractor then added a 1/2" chip seal and a 1/4" microseal. Unfortunately, the City didn't get the surface it was expecting so the contractor is coming back in the fall. Collin stated he is anticipating 90% design plans in August; he noted that the proposed traffic circle at 5th Street and 3rd Avenue has been removed from the plan based on a stormwater runoff analysis by two consultants that showed adverse consequences for the property at the southwest corner of the intersection. Collin stated that the City considered a painted traffic circle as an option but did not think it was viable because of the lack of a vertical element. It did not consider a recessed median in the middle of the intersection with sunk-in planters for water harvesting. Jim Glock requested copies of the stormwater analysis; Collin said he would provide them.

Ryan Fagan gave an update on the Sixth Avenue bike boulevard, which was funded when prop 407 was approved in 2018. (The Sixth Avenue bike boulevard is a proposed protected bike lane from 7th Street to Speedway where the City will eliminate the center turn lane on 6th Avenue, move the vehicle travel lanes in, and place the bike lane adjacent to the curb, with cars parked between the vehicle travel lane and the bike lane.) Ryan stated that the new bike lane is part of the City's plan to create a low-stress bike network in the City. Toole Design Group will design it; their experience includes writing the guidelines for protected bike lanes for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation. Ryan stated that the City did a pilot project with a protected bike lane on University Boulevard that had issues, but the design contemplated for Sixth Avenue is different and if the City can't make it safe it won't build it.

Betsy Larson stated that she has been trying to find a spot in the City where a protected lane like the one proposed has been installed in a similar environment, but has been unable to find one. She expressed concern about the elderly and disabled trying to navigate the curbs to get to parked cars and the proximity of the travel lane to those cars once they make their way across the curbs. Betsy stated that she thinks there's a way to create a protected lane, but slabs of concrete are dangerous. Judy Sensibar questioned the wisdom of a raised divider and believes that the number of intersecting streets is a huge problem for a protected lane against the curb, as demonstrated by the issues on University, where a protected lane failed. Andy Pongratz stated he is neither for nor against the protected lane, but the nature and degree of the changes proposed will cause serious havoc. Benjamin McDonald stated that the City needs

more protected bike lanes and that he rides his bike a lot. Benjamin doesn't want what happens to be skewed by people who don't ride bikes and don't know what it's like. Betsy Larson stated that she rides a lot and rides a lot with her family; she agrees there's value to a protected lane, but it has to deal with the reality of the location where it's installed. Lisette DeMars stated that she thinks a protected lane would be an important improvement; the protected lane on University slowed cars down and that was a good thing. Rick McDonnell stated that he has been riding in Tucson and other locations for 25 years and he's very concerned about what is proposed in this location. Given the design, he thinks bicyclists will be trapped in a channel between two curbs, they won't be able to move, and they will end up hitting pedestrians because no one will be looking for each other given that this bike lane is so different from others in the City.

Collin Cheston stated the City is obligated to deliver what the voters approved, which is a protected lane. If anything is to be changed, it must be approved by the bond oversight committee. Collin also stated that, in considering the impact of the design, the issue isn't just the impact on existing cyclists, it is also the impact on those who don't ride but will if there's more protection. Ryan Fagan stated that the design will be intuitively understandable and he showed some graphics depicting Toole designs with bike lanes passing through narrowed intersections that he believes will address concerns along 6th Avenue. Benjamin McDonald stated that we live in a car-dominated culture and the protected lane is an important step to remedy this. He also thought there was more support in the community for a protected lane than the comments at tonight's meeting suggested.

Jim Glock stated that we need to understand how Toole will communicate with us and address our concerns. He also stated the Director of Transportation and Mobility should inform us when and how we will participate and how any issues will be brought to a resolution. Ryan Fagan stated that Toole did initial concepts and that they will take all comments into account in doing a proposed design. Ryan stated that he will come back to WUNA regularly and that he is expecting a final design by next summer.

V. Committee Reports

A. Development Committee

Rick McDonnell stated he, Betsy Larson, and Henry Werchan recently spent time with Capstone reps regarding updates to the plan for Capstone's proposed student housing project at Speedway & Euclid. Rick stated that Capstone took the comments from the public meetings and changed the facade and the floor plan for the building using their best efforts to balance the comments with the economics of the project. Changes included burying the swimming pool, lowering the facade at Speedway & Euclid, and staggering elevations. Rick stated the new design is not perfect, but it is a significant good faith effort. Rick noted that Capstone gave us new text for the main gate overlay that permits revisions to the zoning required to build the project, and it is a decent first pass; it allows them to build the project while also providing security nuances. Rick observed that we asked for improvements to pedestrian access in the neighborhood, including sidewalks and ADA ramps, and Capstone is analyzing what it can and

cannot do; they have expressed a willingness to replace or upgrade sidewalks on 1st Street and nearby on adjacent avenues. Rick stated we have every indication Capstone will make a good faith effort to get this work done. He also stated that the intent is to have a meeting with them in the next 60 days to move from concepts to hard designs.

B. Historic Fourth Avenue Coalition

Lisette DeMars provided information on a number of H4AC events at the new space at 311 E. 7th Street: Las Mujeres Verdes Mercados artisan market, Saturday, 8/5 and Saturday, 8/26 from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.; Fall into Gardening with Stephanie Pederson, Sunday, 8/13 from 11:00 to 2:00; "Sew What" clothing and fabric flea, Friday 8/18 from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m.; a free art supply swap, Sunday, 8/27; and Loft Solar Cinema, Thursday, 9/7. H4AC is also letting Community on Wheels stage their Sunday Gator-aide out of the 311 E. 7th Street space; they are in the area handing out water, sports drinks and first aid to our unhoused neighbors, and are using H4AC's refrigerator to keep things cold and storing their coolers and wagons at the space. (Community on Wheels takes all types of donations including cash.) Finally, work will be starting on the new mural by Wooden Tooth on 7th Street on August 11. Graffiti on the existing mural will also be removed.

C. CCRC: Campus Community Relations Committee

Henry Werchan stated the next CCRC meeting is the week of August 7; he asked anyone who wants to raise an issue at the meeting to contact him and let him know.

D. Streets Committee

Jim Glock stated that the City has a program in which it will finance installation of a limited number of speed humps for \$500, a substantial reduction from the cost to have a contractor install one. Each ward office has authority to award up to five speed hump installations; Jim will check Ward 6 to see if we're a candidate for the speed hump that has been approved on 3rd Avenue just south of University.

E. Parks Committee

Jim Glock stated that Tom Fisher is helping us with the Anza shade structure but he is retiring. Jim stated that Planning and Development Services is insisting on foundation drawings for the cantilevered umbrella. The vendor does not have them but will prepare a set for \$1200. Jim stated that with this new expense, we will have to eliminate a bench to stay within the budget, but Tom has told him the City might be able to do a concrete bench. Jim stated the Mayor and Council have to approve the project so we need to keep the City on their toes.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.