

Thursday, September 7, 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 6:30 p.m., Betsy Larson called the meeting to order. The following members were present: Lisette DeMars, Chris Gans, Jim Glock, Joel Ireland, Betsy Larson, Rick McDonnell, Andy Pongratz, Shannon Riggs, Judy Sensibar, and Dave Zipps. Absent: Brian Kemp, Adam Milnor, Mack Sigmon, Erec Toso, Holly Vaden, Willem Van Leeuwen, Henry Werchan, and Lex Wilcox.

Also present: Diana Amado (Ward 6), Jill Bielewski, Ford Burkhart, Naomi de la Rosa (Pima County District 5), Raul de los Angeles, Jeanne Downen, Julie Jones, Jan LaBate, Carolyn Niethammer, Molly Quinn, Tiffany Russell, Greg Stoner, and Carmen Villegas.

II. Announcements and Call to the Audience

Various neighbors in the vicinity of Echols Avenue between 1st and 2nd Streets reported that a few camps have been moving back and forth behind the University Inn. The individuals generate a lot of trash and also throw the neighbors' trash around. A house to the south, 935 N. 7th Avenue, which has been vacant for 15 years, was breached this past weekend; TPD responded and boarded it up. The occupants then put up tents on the property, but when the owner closed off access to the property, the tents moved to the alley behind the Bank of America. Judy Sensibar stated that there was a crisis in this location about 5 years ago and WUNA got security at the bank involved; she stated that we need to get the house secured and businesses involved again. Carmen Villegas stated that the bank is offering to get involved. Betsy Larson stated that we should have Lt. Wine come down and see the location and the issues. Chris Gans stated that we had a similar problem with a nearby vacant 12-plex and got TPD and Ward 6 involved; eventually the property was fenced off. Julie Jones stated that she recently went into that property with the owner who stated he is looking to reopen it; Chris stated that he has been saying that for three years. Julie Jones stated that TPD left her a message stating that they went to Echols Avenue but no one was there and that they would make arrangements to clean in that location; Carmen Villegas stated if no one is at Echols, they are at Anza Park. Jan LaBate stated that the park is much better now with the dog walkers and the volleyball players.

Diana Amado stated that companies contracted to install speed humps in the City's reduced-price speed hump installation program are behind schedule. She also stated that Ward 6 will be meeting with TEP about the Kino to DeMoss-Petrie project on Monday, September 11, and she will provide an update.

Naomi de la Rosa, a new intern in the Pima County District 5 office, stated that Pima County had an open house for its new transition center, which seeks to connect defendants

released pending trial with services they might need, including housing, food, drug rehabilitation, medical care, and transportation. Naomi stated that District 5 updates can be found in the newsletter on their website.

Shannon Riggs stated that the Loft Solar Cinema and H4AC will be showing Hairspray in the parking lot at 311 7th Street on Friday, September 8 at 7:30 p.m. H4AC began a year lease on this space in May and has been hosting events there almost every weekend. Shannon said the H4AC website has been revamped with an up-to-date calendar of events.

Betsy Larson stated that Ward 6 has funded additional mailings for neighborhood newsletters. Diana Amado stated that there is now funding to send quarterly newsletters.

Jim Glock stated that the annual fundraiser for the Warehouse Arts Management Organization is Friday, October 6 from 5:00 to 10:00 p.m. The theme is 'Glitz & Glam in Construction Mayhem'.

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

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

### IV. Cyclovia

Betsy Larson stated that Cyclovia will come through West University on October 29. Patricia Schwartz was scheduled to discuss Cyclovia at tonight's meeting but was unable to attend due to an illness. We will try to have her speak next month.

### V. Committee Reports

#### A. Development Committee

Rick McDonnell stated that, other than Capstone, the only news to report is that TEP is reengaging with the Kino to DeMoss-Petrie project. Rick stated that TEP will be redoing the whole plan, but he expects TEP to return to its "We're not an undergrounding company" refrain. Betsy Larson stated a neighbor got a questionnaire from TEP asking if the respondent wanted fewer taller poles or more shorter ones; there was no mention of undergrounding. Dave Zipps stated that a recent mailer from TEP about the project shows that TEP has expanded the eastern boundary of the study area for the proposed power lines from Tucson Boulevard to Country Club.

#### B. Historic Fourth Avenue Coalition

Shannon Riggs stated H4AC will be following up with the Union about keeping their streetscape clean and asking why the restaurant on the first floor has not opened. Shannon stated that the City has gotten a shower trailer and H4AC will host it in its parking lot at 311 7th

Street on two dates this fall. H4AC will also have toiletries and clothing. H4AC is also letting Community on Wheels stage their Sunday Gator-aid 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. Donations in support of this program are welcome.

#### C. CCRC: Campus Community Relations Committee

Betsy Larson stated that Arizona Arts Live is presenting the French acrobatic collective Cirque Inextremiste on the U of A mall on Saturday, September 9 at 7:00 p.m.

#### D. Streets Committee

Jim Glock stated that we are in line in the City's program in which each ward will finance installation of a limited number of speed humps at a substantially reduced cost. Jim stated that we have one hump approved by DTM for installation, but even if we tried to get a contractor on our own, we'd have the same wait the City is experiencing. Jim stated that he is still working with the City to get a painted traffic circle at 7th Avenue and 1st Street while we await installation of the real thing.

#### E. Parks Committee

Betsy Larson stated that we are in a holding pattern for installation of a shade structure at Anza. Andy Pongratz stated that there is a group text for neighbors who live around Catalina and it has been effective for an organized response to problems in the park. He suggested that the neighbors near Anza Park might want to do something similar.

#### VI. Capstone

Betsy Larson stated that the final neighborhood meeting with Capstone will be September 27 at 6:00 p.m. at Trinity Presbyterian Church. At the meeting, the final proposed design will be presented. Betsy then made the following statement:

As we look ahead and try to anticipate the challenges we face, I think it's important to mention the shoulders on which we stand. WUNA was a young organization and still managed to secure historic standing with city, state, and national agencies in the late 70's and 80's. This was no easy feat. These protections are a privilege that many neighborhoods will never experience. The space in which we all call home is a truly unique place because of our commitment to preservation and community. Our space is special and we know Capstone will benefit greatly by becoming a part of it.

When someone becomes your neighbor what is it that makes them a great neighbor? For me; it's the effort, it's sharing of resources, whatever that might be. For instance; my neighbor Sarah has both a handyman and the funds to install fancy security lights in our shared alleyway. She repairs fences and trims

our shared trees. She happily invests her money and I happily volunteer on this board. We both contribute to our shared space with the resources we have available to us. This has made for a good neighbor and friend.

When WUNA discusses large developments, I believe what I hear from you is that we want all developers to be good neighbors. To add value and positivity. To simply be invested in the places they wish to build.

In this spirit I would like to thank Capstone for their commitment to saving and restoring the 5 homes that have been neglected on the SE corner of Euclid & Speedway. These homes had their fate sealed years ago when the Main Gate Overlay added unreasonable pressures to that plot of land. The intention of this corner was to be a buffer to our historic zone, but it came at the expense of those historic homes. The effort exerted on saving the homes is appreciated; however, it does not address the loss of a buffer we will experience if the desired zoning changes are adopted. Preserving these 5 homes does nothing to protect other homes, churches, schools and commercial buildings in our district from the same fate.

What our neighborhood requires to withstand these forces is equitable investment. Accessibility is a key feature in incentivizing seniors to age in place and encouraging families with young children into home ownership in our neighborhood. Sidewalks and access ramps matter. They connect neighbors to much needed resources in an area that can be difficult to park or drive. Health care, parks, & food are all difficult to access for our neighbors with mobility challenges.

It was this idea of neighborhood resiliency that drove WUNA's development committee when they discussed ways in which Capstone could be a good neighbor and offset the challenges they helped create. How can Capstone offset the loss of a buffer while also providing their own tenants with equitable access? The answer is sidewalks and ramps! They're expensive and difficult to build. So Jim started gathering data and we made an offer to Capstone to have them build out these needed improvements in Capstone's immediate area. The idea was they would build it with their crews and already-present contractors. It would be far cheaper with economies of scale and be a home run. Easy Peasy!?! Wrong!! The logistics proved too complicated for Capstone. So last month we reluctantly started to explore other options to get these much needed sidewalks and ramps. You will see in Jim's map document that there are patchy installations of sidewalks and ramps. This is because of the patchy conditions this quadrant of our neighborhood experiences. Sidewalks randomly begin and end, often with difficult bumps and holes. Corner curbs are high and often made with a metal protective band. These corners are nearly impossible for baby strollers and downright dangerous for wheelchairs & walking aides. This original map submitted to Capstone included completing sidewalks and installation of 37

ramps in and around Capstone's development area. A Capstone consultant came down to Tucson and walked this area with us. We all quickly realized that this was a project worth fighting for, and we were optimistic.

A week or so ago Capstone shared contractor bids that they'd finally collected. Those bids for complete sidewalks AND 37 ramps are \$400,000+. We were told this figure was simply not realistic. So we graciously weeded out ramps and came down from 37 to 17! A generous and quick response by WUNA to get this deal done!

So what does this all cost and how will we get the job done? Concrete for sidewalks currently runs about \$65 per linear foot, and each ramp is anywhere between \$6,500 to \$11,000 – depending on which bid you look at. WUNA had a recent bid from the City to do some ramp work and they came in anywhere from \$8-11,000, while Capstone received a bid of roughly \$6500. These are differences of \$1500 to \$4500. Factor in inflation and rising construction costs and we have some negotiations to iron out. WUNA must take these issues of bid differences, inflation, and permitting costs into consideration, and Capstone needs to remember, since they are no longer doing the work, that it will be that much harder and more costly for us to act as the general contractor. We must also figure out HOW WUNA accesses these funds. Simply cutting a check is problematic. So we believe an escrow option might be possible. Our lawyer is actively researching this matter now.

I think that given these numbers, it is reasonable that we should expect a minimum of \$275,000 (equivalent to completing sidewalks & 17 ramps at a bid that straddles both ends of the bidding spectrum.) These funds would be placed into escrow and be held with no cost to us for the purpose of infrastructure improvements. We have come down substantially on ramps from 37 to 17. We also must now cover permitting and other unforeseen contingencies if WUNA is to complete this work ourselves. Time is getting crunched and we need to settle this now. No one wants a contentious neighborhood meeting nor stressful zoning hearing. I believe Capstone has a real opportunity to revolutionize how developers and neighborhoods can work together to create equitable spaces for all. Let's make it happen!

Judy Sensibar made the following motion: "I move to appoint a special committee consisting of the West University Neighborhood Association's ("WUNA") President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Development Committee Chairperson, the purpose of such special committee is to negotiate an agreement (the "Agreement") with Capstone Collegiate Communities ("Capstone") for the payment of \$275,000 by Capstone that WUNA will use to construct sidewalks and wheelchair ramps within the West University Neighborhood, in exchange for WUNA not raising objections to Capstone's current rezoning request for the rezoning of land located within the West University Neighborhood. The Agreement negotiated by this special committee must be

approved by the WUNA Board of Directors before WUNA may sign the Agreement.” The motion was seconded by Shannon Riggs.

Jim Glock asked everyone to applaud Betsy for her leadership. Jim observed that Betsy has navigated the discussion with Capstone by talking principles about why infrastructure improvements are appropriate given the effects of the project. But Capstone lives in a dollar world and hence the motion is an appropriate one; it allows us to go into the public meeting and say we support the project subject to a condition. Chris Gans stated that the building will be built for millions and flipped for millions and not one cent has come to us. Chris stated that Capstone is wealthy and this is a very reasonable request. Chris stated that we should also ask for an annual payment of \$10,000 for 10-15 years to fund neighborhood improvements. But this is a good start.

Shannon Riggs stated that H4AC talked impact fees on a prior project and asked how they are allocated and distributed. Diana Amado stated that the dog park at Anza was built using impact fees that were shared from Ward 1 and Ward 3.

A roll call vote was then taken on the motion, with all members present voting to approve the motion, with two abstentions (Ireland and Zipps).

Andy Pongratz asked if we are giving Capstone carte blanche on the design or if historic is still in play. Rick McDonnell stated that we are not objecting to the zoning change and moving on, so stories, setbacks and the like are no longer in play but appearance is. Judy Sensibar noted that the retail space at the Union is an issue and asked if we can have conversations with Capstone about revising the plans. Rick stated that the retail space is a product of the City's requirements. We have the right to go to PDS and ask them to take it away, but Capstone is not looking to pick another fight. Chris Gans stated he has three concerns: the two bungalows still in the HPZ, the top floor of the proposed building needs to be set back so it is even with the building next to it, and the payment of an annual fee by Capstone going forward. Judy stated that the two houses remaining on the site should have to be rehabilitated as part of the project.

#### VIII. Adjournment

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.