

Thursday, December 7, 2023-6:30 PM
West University Neighborhood Association
December 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 6:32 p.m., Betsy Larson called the meeting to order. The following members were present: Lisette DeMars, Jim Glock, Betsy Larson, Erec Toso, Holly Vaden, and Dave Zipps. Absent: Chris Gans, Joel Ireland, Brian Kemp, Rick McDonnell, Andy Pongratz, Shannon Riggs, Judy Sensibar, Mack Sigmon, Willem Van Leeuwen, Henry Werchan, and Lex Wilcox.

Also present: Diana Amado (Ward 6), Perry Baslione, Ion Bazgan, Raul de los Angeles, Eryck Garcia (Mayor's Office), Tom Kennedy, Jan LaBate, Kevin Nelson, and Larrie Warren.

II. Announcements and Call to the Audience

Diana Amado stated that there was a meeting yesterday at Ward 6 about changes to the Randolph Golf Course, including the addition of a nature park and a skate park. Attendance was very good. Diana stated that The Loft will be showing The Nightmare Before Christmas on Sunday, December 17 at 2:00 pm, featuring a costume contest, a sing-along, and props to use during the movie. Proceeds will benefit Friends of Aphasia. Diana also reported that our speed hump on 3rd Avenue near Time Market will be approved, but the Ward is figuring out how to spread the money because more than five neighborhoods applied.

Neighbors who live near Anza stated that there is a lot going on at the park. TPD has been active in trying to address encampments and there have been improvements in the alley north of First Street. But there is a lot of drug activity, including runners on bikes and scooters, and it looks more like a business operation and less like a camp. One neighbor noted that it's not just one person, it's multiple people who are at the playground, the bathroom, and the picnic table near the bus stop. Neighbors noted that mail has been stolen, and people are breaking into cars and testing windows and doors. One neighbor stated that he goes to the park every day and tells people that the playground is for kids; most move on but some are confrontational. Betsy Larson stated that she has been in touch with Lt. Wine about the situation in the park and that past efforts that proved successful are likely to work again. Diana Amado stated that she will reach out to Lt. Wine and ask how the Ward can support TPD's efforts.

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

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

IV. January Picnic Details & Board Nominations.

Betsy Larson asked Board members to let her know if they are or are not running in 2024. Jim Glock noted the Annual Picnic is traditionally the Saturday of MLK weekend (January 13), but we might want to push it to January 20 this year to get a little more time. Betsy proposed that we go with January 20 and said she would throw her hat in the ring for one more year as President because there are things she would still like to accomplish. Betsy noted that she and her family will be moving out of the neighborhood to care for an elderly family member, but they will still own their property, which they will rent out. Betsy stated that she would like to scale back Board meetings to one per quarter in order to get better attendance, but also place greater emphasis on committee work, including Development, Parks, Streets, and Events.

V. Committee Reports

A. Development Committee

Betsy Larson stated that the Mayor and Council will vote on the Capstone project at their meeting on Tuesday at 5:30. This includes changes to the historic zoning, moving the homes in the location of the project, the City's agreement with Capstone, and the zoning changes. Jim Glock stated that Betsy would likely appreciate some company at the meeting; he also applauded Betsy's leadership in getting the project finished, and thanked Judy Sensibar for her work.

B. Historic Fourth Avenue Coalition

Lisette DeMars stated that H4AC had a very successful Made in Tucson market of local and handmade goods. Lisette noted that H4AC will have its general meeting in January, the meeting will highlight the Master Plan with the Drachman Institute, and she will share the date of the meeting with the Board.

C. Streets Committee

Jim Glock said the Ward's decision to subsidize the speed hump on 3rd Avenue near Time Market is great for our budget; he noted that the two speed tables on 6th Avenue cost \$18,000 so the Ward's ability to reduce our cost to \$500 is a screaming deal. Jim stated that he talked to two City officials about the ADA implications of street repaving—the head of Prop 411 projects and the Director of Transportation & Mobility. Both stated that if there is a sidewalk adjacent to a street to be repaved, the City must install ramps when the street is repaved. Erec Toso asked if speed humps can go in before repaving; Jim stated he believes they can as they will be removed and replaced when repaving. Larrie Warren asked about the cost of a traffic circle; Jim stated that 4th Street and 5th Avenue cost us \$27,000. Jim noted that Jesse Soto has been non-responsive about installing a painted traffic circle with vertical elements at 1st Avenue & Seventh Street, and we need to think about whether we want to spend between \$2000 and \$5000 while we wait for the real thing.

D. Parks Committee

Jim Glock gave some history on the improvements at Anza Park and the ongoing efforts to install a shade structure. Kevin Nelson stated that the dog park is getting one-third of the traffic it got 18 months ago and there is a big weed problem. Jan Labate stated that there are overgrown trees and bushes that need to be cut back. Jim suggested that we have a neighborhood gathering at the park to pull weeds. Betsy Larson asked Diana Amado if the tools the City supplies for neighborhood cleanups include goat head pullers; Diana stated that she did not think so, but they could definitely get some. Jim stated that when we passed the 2023 budget, we approved monthly activity funds, and these are available to use for food and beverages when we do a cleanup at the park.

A neighbor who lives near Anza stated that a group of at least 10 people set up a tent next to an empty house across from the park. This and drugs are the problem. He said he had talked to Lt. Wine, who said that if the unhoused are not in the park, they're not breaking the law. Diana Amado noted the City does have an ordinance that addresses sidewalk camping. (Details about this ordinance are contained in a Daily Star article from 2015 that can be found at this link:

https://tucson.com/news/local/new-rules-how-to-sleep-on-tucson-sidewalks/article_e2abc14c-d35d-5fca-a3eb-4c8e534ce639.html. (The article states that the unhoused can sleep on a city sidewalk between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. in downtown and university area commercial zones as long as they have a maximum of 4 cubic feet of personal property on the sidewalk, including backpacks, blankets and other belongings, and keep their property five feet back from the curb, leaving a clear walking space for passersby.)

VI. Adjournment

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:41 p.m.