

**Whittier Alliance Board Meeting
January 22, 2015
Whittier Park**

Attendees: Andy Cohen, Daphna Stromberg, Erica Christ, Erin Sjoquist, Grayson Carr, Laura Jean, Natascha Shawver, Mike O'Dell, Ted Irgens; **Absent:** Diane Moe, Tom Bissen, Christina Le **Staff:** Marian Biehn

Call to Order The Board meeting was called to order by Board Chair **Erica Christ at 6:10** with the establishment of a quorum. Standard of Conduct/Conflict of Interest policy was noted. The January agenda was reviewed and a **Motion** to approve **Carried** with the addition of Financial Review, Website, Open Streets, Somali Mosque and By-Laws clarification.

Secretary's Report, Natasha Shawver

Board minutes from December 2014 were reviewed. **Motion** to approve **Carried** with the addition of an "s" to Ted's last name. Attendance was read.

Board Appointment Requests: There are two requests to be appointed to the Board. David Bagley's request is on the Motion Sheet. Joan Vorderbruggen's request was passed around. David was on the board and needed to resign due to work/travel demands. Joan has been a longtime volunteer, launched Artists in Storefronts. Both gave a summary of their involvement and interest in being on the board. They left the room while the board discussed their appointments. David submitted his interest in the 2-17 seat and Joan in the 2-16 seat.

Bd Motion 1: The Whittier Alliance appoints David Bagley to the Whittier Alliance Board of Directors 2017 open seat. **Motion Carried 8-0-1**

Bd Motion 2: The Whittier Alliance appoints Joan Vorderbruggen to the Whittier Alliance Board of Directors 2016 open seat. **Motion Carried 9-0-0**

Executive Committee: Erica Christ

Special meeting Jan 12- Whittier Alliance By-Laws: The By-Laws amendments were passed but the task force is not done working on the by-laws. The portion that had to be approved by the members was presented and passed by a 2/3 majority, but with discussion and disagreement. Grayson had a question regarding Section 4 where there is a discrepancy to what was presented at the December 2014 board meeting, and corroborated by Dec minutes. Grayson was concerned about confusion. Erica noted that NCR had said that there is a technical amendment which could be used to rectify a typo or inadvertent inconsistency. This might be able to be remedied by the board. NCR will be consulted about aligning what was intended vs presented. It should align with what was noted by the task force and board and by what the inquiries at the meeting. It could be remedied by the board or at the annual meeting. Daphne speculated that it probably happened while working from several drafts between what the board approved and what got posted and how NCR wanted it to be posted. NCR and the attorney will be contacted for advice on how to and who can make the wording change to be consistent with what was discussed and intended by the task force and board. There were comments about the process and the ability to make changes. By-laws cannot be randomly changed from the floor—there are parliamentary guidelines. The amended By-Laws should help put some clarity around the business membership and voting and give precedence to the residents. Over all though there seems to be some higher expectations from the City for how the WA is operating that what is expected of other organizations. Erica commented that she feels it is also a factor of us receiving more money from the city and since we are a very high functioning org, so we have to put in more checks and balances. We are held to a higher standard by the city, that's why we have more complex governance structure. Andy feels there is some misinterpretation what aims and purposes means, it's not arbitrary but clearly

defined. He doesn't see the subjective nature. Marian said it feels like people are focused on the wrong thing. By laws are not the day-to-day work, but that's what the WA is being judged on. No one ever reads or pays attention to the by-laws but they are called upon when needed. Of bigger importance is the day-to-day work and what is getting accomplished.

The idea of bringing Open Streets to Nicollet, would be a good central focus. Have to get grant written.

Annual Meeting

March 26 Thursday. Following week school is closed. The March board meeting will move to March 19. NCR has been reviewing the board application (which has been the same for 4-5 years). They have been very slow and it is another example of oversight excess. Some of the criteria that was on the application has moved into the by-laws as asked by the NCR. City still wants to look at it, but time is running out.

Hoping to get the go ahead this week, because once we get the approval we will post the applications. If everything works out, applications will be accepted through Feb 20, to present at the board meeting in February. We can't wait until the March board meeting which is the week before the Annual Meeting.

In preparation for the annual meeting we have a planning committee for which we need volunteers and help. Would be meeting in early Feb. and haven't decided yet on meeting date yet. Have some responses from the general public already, would like some more board members. One more board meet and great was suggested and supported Marian suggested Dog Days might be an opportunity and Laura recommended the February CI meeting. We need recommendations for board good candidates and suggestions for good business and good neighbor awards. Applications will be on the website.

Decisions are being made by annual meeting task force. Format with Resource Fair is still under discussion. May not have a CO, so this may limit what we can do.

Office Burglary Dec 22

Marian arrived at work to find the back door open. The burglar walked out with flat screen TV, laptops, projector, bank check card which he used and several gift cards--did not take desktop, but did get away with alcohol. Police did fingerprinting. Police seemed to have some leads and showed Marian a mug shot of a suspect. Got reimbursement from insurance. The equipment will have to be replaced.

EC Motion 1: The Executive Committee approves the replacement of the camera, laptop and projector lost in the Dec. 22, 2104 burglary of the Whittier Alliance office. **Motion Carried 11-0-0**

Finance Committee: Tom Bissen (absent)

Erica covered the Dec Financial report. The Dec. report also is the end of year financial report.

The cash balance report shows a new entry for the check card use/fraud by the burglar. It will be credited once the fraud investigation is over. The money from the Stevens house sales went to high yield checking account. Once we have reviewed the all the account entries, a reimbursement will be submitted for CPP and NPR funds. The Profit and Loss statement was reviewed. The funds that we used from our unrestricted account for the Stevens Ave houses has been replaced. Essentially these are our year end numbers. This report will go to the annual meeting as the annual budget, income and expenses. We are in the black. If the closing costs, etc. are correct for closing of the second house, we will make about \$4,000 in profit. The goal was to sell and close on both houses before the end of 2014 but that didn't happen. It means that the proceeds from 2728 will carry through 2015 and somewhat mis-represent the WA income for the year. All the expenses are in 2014.

FC Motion 1: The Board of Directors accepts the Whittier Alliance December 2014 financial report
Motion Carried

NRP Reallocation: The WA chose to move \$700k+ in the housing improvement loan programs, out of the Center for Energy and Environment and move \$500k into GHMC for the single family & rental rehab improvement loans. The contract with CEE is being closed and the funds are in transition. The remainder of the housing funds, plus some program income can be reallocated to the NRP Phase II

strategies. To move money we need to decide where the program income will be placed within the Phase II strategies and will need n-hood approval, at special meeting. Task force on where to move it is being assembled. NCR & MPs Finance will give us the amount of program income from Phase I & II that is available to reallocate + the additional housing funds from the loan contracts. The goal will be to get the recommendation for reallocation completed, to the board for review and approval and have it on the agenda at the Annual Meeting. This will avoid having an additional special meeting.

It was recommended that the loan programs be encouraged next year since when money comes back it's a little less restricted as program income.

Stevens Ave Houses Update

Closing on second house next week. The appraisal came in over the purchase price. We spent a lot more on the other house that sold previously. This house will recoup some of the cost for this in the sale of the house and does net out very well for WA. If MCAD hadn't paid for the moving there would not have been a way to make the rehab and sale feasible. Additionally, out contractor Jim Dowds invested a lot of extra time and materials on his own. If we do another project, he would be a very good partner. Very supportive of our work. A discussion about doing a similar project if one came along was deferred due to time.

FC Motion 2: The Finance Committee moves to pay Jim Dowds of Primaland a bonus of \$2,500 for his work on the Stevens Ave houses. **Motion Carried 10-0-1**

Fall Fundraiser

The fall fundraiser report was reviewed. We did get more contributions from businesses this year but overall the number of contributions is down. With the large donation from Diane Gourney, the total is up but not from the general population.

Community Issues & Business Association:

CI-There were no motions from the Jan. CI meeting. It was a short meeting after the special meeting. The minutes are in the board packet. **BA-**Artists in Storefronts gearing up for another iteration. Long term resident Sarah Jordet gave presentation, looking for funding. The budget was reviewed. Joan commented on her experience in doing AiS, costs, time line, and process for working with artists and businesses and the possible earned income that can help defer the costs. All agreed it was a valuable program. Laura Jean stated that she feels it is important that the program have some outside funding that the WA can't cover the entire cost. If an opportunity for a grant was missed, another has to be found.

BA Motion 1: *The Whittier Business Assn. recommends that Artists' in Storefronts 6 move forward as a planned project for a May opening.* **Motion Carried**

Substitute BD Motion 3: Whittier Alliance approves a matching grant of up to \$5,000 for Artists in Storefronts 6 for a planned opening in May. **Motion Carried. 9-0-2**

Nu Way Appeal-2118 Blaisdell

Ted has been working on an appeal to the City's recommendation to grant Reasonable Accommodation for NuWay to use the building to house people recovering drug and alcohol. He gave an overview of reasonable accommodation and quarter mile spacing and CPED ruling from November. City seems to be worried they could be sued under the FHA if they don't grant the RA. Ted filed the appeal but the WA paid for the appeal. The WA is on record as opposing NuWay's proposed use of 2118 Blaisdell and has send extensive letter on record. Ted had a long conversation with City Council Member Lisa Bender on the issue and the issue of zoning change for homeless shelters was discussed.

Ted submitted a motion to hire a PR person to help with shaping public opinion. Joan: can we ask for some deliverables and see what he has done before? LJ: What do we get for that money? Daphne; WE

are hiring to do them to deal with a specific project? Have to make sure that this does not conflict with our complaint against the city. Board members discussed pros and cons

BD Motion 4: The Whittier Alliance moves to retain the PR services of Noah Rouen for up to \$3000 to assist with the PR surrounding the NuWay appeal with the stipulation that the message be consistent with the WA messaging and be approved by either the ED or Board Chair. **Motion Carried 9-0-2**

Ted commented that a lot of time is being spent on this and while it is okay this time, he can't devote all his time to fighting these issues. We should be devoting our time to attract buyers, and to do attractive things in the n-hood and be proactive about investment vs reacting to what happens.

Staff reports

The Community Organizer job description is being rewritten. The Whittier –Lyndale Somali Com Org position is being posted by Lyndale

Old and New Business:

Dog Days is this Saturday, Jan. 24. Erin & Mike will be helping. Steven's Square will also be joining Whittier at Washburn Fair Oaks Park as a joint effort. There will be a doggie photo booth and treats.

Stop by. Could be a board meet and greet. **Youth RFP:** The micro grant submissions have been reviewed and awards have been given. Letters will go out to the youth organizations. Nine grant applications were received for 2015 funding. It is a 1 year grant that gets reimbursed to the recipient after their grant report is received at the end of the year. Not all got funded—have to demonstrate how Whittier youth are served. The 2014 grants are being paid out now. There is still some NRP money to do micro grants but this is an area that some of the NRP program income will have to be placed.

May Day Soirée: The day is May 7 but can't be in the Blaisdell Manor due to a planned remodel. Other venues are booked or not big enough. May have to re-schedule for June. **Website** Erin is starting a website called Exchange for Good. Like Craigslist, but the sale profits get donated to the lister's choice of non-profits or charity. Feb 20 pilot. WA may partake. Recycling and raising funds on a local level. Has already some great institutions on board. Exchangeforgood.com **Open Streets:** The possibility of having an Open Streets on Nicollet was discussed. The Open Streets organization has criteria that need to be met in order to have one. At this time Nicollet might not be eligible due to the intensity and difficulty of rerouting the busses. It will be explored. **Mosque:** The Mosque at Karmel is opening, accommodating three times more people, Friday 23, 2015. Marian plans on attending the open house part of opening day despite the Karmel trespass.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:40

Meeting Minutes Respectfully Submitted by Natascha Shawver

Approved:

Erica Christ, Board Chair

Natascha Shawver, Board Secretary