

Whittier Alliance Board Meeting Minutes Draft
July 28, 2022 6:00-8:30 PM
Hybrid Meeting: Whittier Recreation Center (425 W 26th St) & Online Zoom Meeting

Present: Kami Brodie, Nick Hutchinson, George Rishmawi, Sydney Burroughs, Daniel Hansen, Danny Villars, Megan Mathew, Cyndi Hovey, Jesse Oyervides

Absent: Stephanie Brown, Kate Davis, Katie Heimer

Staff: Kaley Brown

Call to Order at 6:03pm by Kami Brodie

-The agenda is reviewed. **Motion to approve the agenda. Seconded. Motion passes.**

-The Standard of Conduct, Conflicts of Interest Policy, and Anti-Discrimination Policies are reviewed.

-The Board community agreements are shared and read aloud.

A round of introductions is done.

Discussion question: 1. How are you physically/mentally/emotionally/spiritually on a scale from 1-10? (1 = struggling/totally depleted, 10 = grounded/fully rested)

2. What is one thing you're excited to learn more about in the next year about Whittier or Whittier Alliance?

Officer election:

Allison Bross-White has unfortunately had to step away from the WA Board at this time due to unexpected family needs, so we need to hold another election to fill the Secretary position on the Executive Committee. A brief overview is made of the Secretary responsibilities, and the floor is opened for questions or nominations.

Kate Davis is nominated but cannot accept due to graduate school commitments this fall. Daniel Hansen is nominated but cannot commit at this time. Megan Mathew is nominated and accepted. A motion is made to elect Megan Mathew to the position as 2022-2023 WA Board Secretary is made, seconded, and passed unanimously.

Secretary's Report:

We have 11 active board members and 6 vacant seats (two 2020 Resident seats, 2021 Resident seat, 2022 Biz/Nonprofit Representative). We will be convening the Nominations Committee again this fall to fill the 6 vacant board seats. If you're interested in helping to get that group together, recruiting community members, and putting forth a group of candidates to recommend for board approval, reach out to Kaley or Kami.

Board Attendance Tracking Summary Below:

As of July Meeting			
Zero (0) Unexcused Absences	11	Zero (0) Excused Absences	7
One (1) Unexcused Absence	0	One (1) Excused Absence	4
Two (2) Unexcused Absences	0	Two (2) Excused Absences	0
Three (3) Unexcused Absences	0	Three (3) Excused Absences	0

We encourage members to regularly review the attendance policy in the Bylaws to be sure you are planning ahead if you have a schedule conflict at any point during the board year; this will allow yourself the opportunity to convert the absence into an excused one with volunteer hours, if possible.

Motion to approve June meeting minutes is made, Seconded. Motion carries.

Treasurer's Report

June Financials:

- We received our Q1 2022 funding from the city for the Neighborhood Network Fund ~\$3,700, Equitable Engagement Fund ~\$43,000, and the Neighborhood Revitalization Program \$131.99 (our reserve funds)
- ~\$22,000 in AR for EEF & NNF this month
- \$225 in other donations
- \$600 for Spring Fling net beverage sales. Still anticipating a reimbursement for beer/cider that was not sold at the event. Prodigal to bill only for the product sold.
- \$700 receivable added for Krystin's hours
- \$3,500 to Lyndale Neighborhood Association for 2021 Great Streets
- There were 3 pay periods in June which is why the salaries & related lines look a little high, but the year-to-date numbers are reasonable
- Seeing the last of the Spring Fling expenses - lines 7512, translation services, food-events, and mailing.
- Paid on the YWCA contract ~\$3,400. This was a catchup payment for backlogged invoices pertaining to IDIs and strategic planning support
- Property maintenance is up for mowing the grass at the lot
- Nothing is budgeted for Database Services, but those charges are for Mailchimp. Mailchimp is free or discounted for a certain amount of email users, but we have finally reached the next threshold and are now paying a monthly subscription cost

A note is made for the board that a portion of some of the May payroll was recoded to be applied retroactively to the newly signed contract with NEOO Partners, so the May financials have since shifted a bit from one receivable line to another since last reviewed and approved.

Motion to accept June 2022 financials. Seconded. Motion carries.

Acting Committees

- **Housing and Land Use**
 - This month we had a conversation about a proposed Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) on 2524 Clinton Ave and gave community members information about what an ADU is and how that type of development occurs. It was more of an informational discussion rather than a proposal presentation as the owner does not need approval for this type of project from the HLU committee.
 - We also had a presentation about the redesign of the 28th street Tot Lot at 175 28th Street E. MPRB gave a presentation about the current lot and discussed how engagement will occur in the future to gather feedback from community members about what the future park could look like and what it could include. We then heard about a potential traffic calming proposal around Whittier International School and held a discussion on some of the ideas. Nick will be back in the future for another presentation and is looking for a vote from the committee in the future to have Whittier Alliance support the proposed traffic calming proposal. In order to be considered for the project, the proposal needs community organization support.

- We also continued to provide an update about the 1st ave reconstruction project and discussed the current ongoing work with the lyndale pilot program of turning lyndale from a 4 lane road to a 3 lane road.
- **Community Engagement**
 - No July meeting, but volunteer work on the traffic calming project is well underway.
 - Whittier Solidarity Network has had a ton of activity recently; 130 active users and more joining all the time
- **2116 Nicollet Ave Steering Committee**
 - Brigid introduces herself; just finished her 3 year term on on the board but is still chairing the 2116 Nicollet Ave Steering Committee as a community member
 - Brigid provides background on the project, overviewing the timeline included in the board packet
 - Since Brigid gave a mid-point video report in April, the dentist office to the south was listed for sale; we worked with the Land Bank to put in an offer to hold the property for us to eventually acquire and pull into the larger development project; the offer was beat out by another buyer, so that is no longer a possibility
 - The Brave New Media site was also passively up for sale, but after conversation with the current owners they are not in a hurry to sell it and like how it is being used

Office move discussion:

- Kaley overviews the pros/cons chart that the staff team created together, highlighting the considerations that she believes are most consequential from the staff perspective
- It is not necessarily a straightforward decision, and it may be one that the Board does not reach consensus on
- Stephanie is out of the country but is on the 2116 Nicollet Steering Committee as well and weighed in on the Pros/Cons chart earlier today.
- George: Doesn't think our current office rent amount will stay the same long term, and it would make sense to him to have an anchor tenant to finance and drive the new development; downside is the less than ideal location, though Nicollet is a prime corridor that could eventually yield more foot traffic over time. It could introduce WA to new people. Current office doesn't have the functional ability that our staff and organization deserves or needs
- Kami: Agrees with George's perspective; lots of pros, but the location is not as good; hadn't fully thought about the fact that the WA office has been here for 30 years with good foot traffic, but thinking about the future and longevity, her mindset is to go forward with change and do things that might be painful now but maybe in 5 years + will be a good decision; its also important to consider where our rent money going now.
- Nick: Thought the same thing about the location; current location is very central, but the stretch of Nicollet Ave is not currently as well-traveled, but our development could create or contribute to that; the push to clear out the rest of the items in the basement is good, but event supplies storage is real.
- Daniel: Which of these factors is most important to the org? Stability over the long term vs. location vs. rent levels?
- Cyndi: That is the question to answer together. Has there been discussion with other tenants about their current leases and rent levels? Maybe we should research what the commercial space next door is renting for.
- Jesse: Idea to have Habitat for Humanity help with the new project; that would give us a lot of recognition widely and also do good in the community.

- Q: What is the timeline for moving the office if we decide to do so? A: Earliest is probably 2025 realistically that we would move.
- Brigid: The amount of space we want/need in a new project would be largely up to us and our partner depending on what we determine is financially feasible and responsible.
- Q: How much of the lease details need to be decided up front? A: We would negotiate with our partner.
- Brigid: Ultimately, we need to decide now today whether we want to design a space for the organization OR if we just build a blank, plan commercial space. If we want to design a space for US, we need to include it in the RFP.
- Financial commitment, lease terms, and move date would be dictated by the partnership agreement with the selected developer.
- We don't find many commercial spaces in the neighborhood that have the street level access, the amount of space needed including storage, that are anywhere near
- Daniel: Seems like the development partner would need to be a part of the conversation and decision.
- Jesse: If things get bad with our current location, we can always rent a trailer and have staff work remote until the new space is done.
- The idea of paying rent long-term to an owner from California in current office isn't great.
- The idea of owning our space and having a say in what the office looks like and the ownership structure feels like an important opportunity; physical space has an impact on staff retention and experience.
- Danny: The benefit of having a shared meeting/event space for the community is HUGE. Over months and years, we will build that familiarity with the community coming into that space for different reasons; the 2116 Nicollet lot space is the space that can continue serving us decades from now.
- Q: What bearing does this decision have on the RFP? A: Cannot overstate the attractiveness of having a commercial tenant already identified for potential development partners. People may not apply otherwise due to the other constraints on the space such as the lot size.
- Brigid: The development as a whole could be even more powerful as a new structure on the lot that WE did given that we are the ones leading on commercial anti-displacement work in our neighborhood now.
- George: Believes that the WA office should move to the new building. That's his position.
- Kami: Other questions or thoughts that folks have on the decision?
- Megan: Likes the idea of the customization of the space for what we need. Wonders what the new office is like for comparison since she has not yet seen it.
- Kami: We need to vote on whether to include in the RFP that WA will be an anchor commercial space tenant.

Motion to include the relocation of the WA office to the new building as a piece of the final version of the RFP to be released to the public. Seconded. Passed unanimously, 9-0.

- A big "thank you" is expressed by all to Brigid for all her hard work and leading the work on this project.

Other announcements or topics to discuss:

- George shares about the 30 Day Foundation, an organization that helps individuals and families with basic needs
- Kaley will include information about them on WA's communication channels

Soo Line Garden ADA Access Point:

- The idea is raised for some WA Board members to get together for conversation with the Soo Line Gardeners to find some common ground.
- It is possible to be in community with others even if folks ultimately disagree on something.
- A few members share they would be happy to find a time to talk with them.

Check Out question: Who could you invite to potentially join the WA board via the upcoming nominations process?

Meeting adjourned at 8:24 PM. | Minutes submitted by Kaley Brown.