

East Isles Residents' Association (EIRA)
Minutes from the Semi-Annual Meeting
October 14, 2014
Grace-Trinity Community Church

25 East Isles residents and invited guests attended the meeting.

EIRA President Dan McLaughlin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

EIRA Board members were introduced.

Park Board Commissioner Anita Tabb, District 4

The Park Board allocated \$300K for park enhancement adjacent to the new Walker Library. The proposed budget grew to \$1.6 million during the planning phase (library design process). The Park Board is working on leveraging the \$300K to bridge the gap with things like the park dedication fee and transit-related opportunities. To put this in perspective, the entire Park Board capital budget for all of the neighborhood parks is \$1.5 million. If the Park Board can't leverage enough funds, they will come back to the community to establish priorities.

\$200K has been dedicated to Smith Triangle Park improvements in 2019. Commissioner Tabb congratulated the neighborhood for working on cleaning up the park.

City Council Member Lisa Goodman, Ward 7

The city is on the brink of a housing crisis for affordable housing. East Isles is at the epicenter of the density debate. The City Council is encouraging density, which should be along transit corridors, such as Hennepin Ave, to keep the density out of the neighborhoods. Growth will put less pressure on property taxes. The city is working on an ordinance to allow Accessory Dwelling Units (so called granny flats).

Hennepin/Lyndale project: improvements are being made for bicycle/pedestrian paths and to add green space to the corridor. The budget did not allow for major changes. The improvements should result in fewer conflicts between cars and bikes.

Representative Frank Hornstein, District 61A

Hornstein is chair of the Transportation Finance Committee.

Accomplishments in the last session: more money for bus shelters, bicycle transit, and affordable housing; park dedication fee (collects fee from developers for parkland); funding for upgrades to Sculpture Garden and Nicollet Mall; major update on recycling and composting laws.

The legislature did not pass a transportation funding bill last session but it is a top priority in the next session.

Senator Scott Dibble, District 61

Dibble is the chair of the Finance-Transportation and Safety Division.

Accomplishments in the last session: supported local government aid (LGA); balanced the budget and paid back borrowing from schools; major funding for education; marriage equality; anti-bullying; medical cannabis; help for homeless youth and protection for pollinators.

Work in the next session will focus on a transportation bill and consumer protection.

PANEL DISCUSSION OF ELECTED OFFICIALS

Q: What is the role of neighborhoods and specifically related to funding?

Goodman: Very supportive of neighborhoods but does not support providing large amounts of funding for projects. Money needs to be pooled to solve bigger issues. Some neighborhoods didn't spend NRP money

well. \$16 million in NRP money remains unspent. Supportive of providing funding for staff, communications and events but not large amounts for projects.

Tabb: The Park Board works with neighborhoods for outreach and community engagement.

Hornstein: Mixed record on NRP but there is a role to support and fund neighborhoods for the capacity to organize. Neighborhoods develop leaders to engage with developers and elected officials. Strong supporter of neighborhoods but neighborhoods should also do fundraising.

Dibble: There is a role for neighborhoods to work together.

Q: Status of vegetation at Lake of the Isles?

Tabb: The Park Board has been working on the vegetation around the lake. Vegetation is needed for shoreline stabilization but they want the lake visible from the paths and trails. They have been having problems with the turf and are aerating and over-seeding this fall so the turf can grow as intended. The Park Board is thinking about the best way to maintain the gardens around the lake.

Q: Are there any plans to make better transit connections between Uptown and downtown?

Goodman: Minneapolis is working on streetcar planning. The first route will be on Nicollet Ave (from Franklin Ave to Mississippi River). They have \$200 million from TIF districts but need matching federal funding. Goodman is also supportive of transit on the Midtown Greenway to connect Hiawatha LRT with Southwest LRT.

Q: Child protection

Dibble: The Governor formed a task force and the legislature needs to do a better job. It is a big issue and now has the attention of key people. Strategies are emerging. Foster care also needs reform.

Hornstein: This is one of many concerns on the child agenda.

Q: What incentives can be put in place for green buildings and renewable energy?

Goodman: A working group is being formed of city, county and state officials for community solar. State has program called PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) to allow property owners to borrow money from municipal financing districts to finance energy retrofits and repay the loan through an annual special tax on their property bill.

Hornstein: Renewable energy is not an option; it is a requirement. Need to promote policy to reduce carbon footprint. Needs strong grassroots efforts statewide.

Dibble: Small-scale renewable energy is the wave of the future. Conservation and efficiency are essential.

Tabb: The Park Board received a \$1 million renewable development grant. Solar will be installed at Parade Ice Arena and demonstration sites throughout the city (including Tin Fish).

Q: What is the proposed Adventure Center of the Loppet Foundation?

Tabb: A 5-year Community Advisory Committee for Wirth Park identified interest in a facility to house programs for skiers, golfer and recreational park users. The Park Board received \$1.5 million in bonding from the state and the Loppet Foundation will raise an additional \$3 million to build an Adventure Center (located near the old Par 3) to support many activities at the park.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Treasurer's Report

President Dan McLaughlin reported that the IRS has officially approved EIRA as a 501(c)(4) nonprofit.

Zoning Committee

Chair Allan Amis reported on Zoning Committee activity in the past six months. The committee met with CPM to discuss their proposal for a 6-story, 70' tall, 45-unit apartment project on the SW corner of Irving Ave S and Lagoon Ave. The property is zoned R6 and is in the Shoreland Overlay District which restricts

buildings to 2.5 stories (35'). CPM is asking for variance for height and setbacks on three sides. One level of underground parking.

The committee met with the Bridge for Youth to discuss their application for a conditional use permit (CUP) required to house all of the youth they serve in one main building. The Bridge will decide the fate of the white house on the corner of 22nd and Emerson Ave S by the end of the year.

Work continues on an application that developers and residents would complete in advance of meeting with the committee to streamline the process.

Lake and Irving met with the committee to discuss their plans to add sidewalk and patio seating to their restaurant.

The 70/30 restaurant group presented information to the committee about an initiative on the November ballot to repeal Minneapolis' 70/30 law that requires 70 neighborhood restaurants to serve a ratio of 70% food to 30% alcohol. If the law is removed from the City Charter, these restaurants will be governed by Minneapolis ordinance.

Giordano's Pizza will be opening a restaurant (with full liquor license) at 2700 Hennepin Ave S (former BP site) in April 2015.

Green Team

Chair Betsy Allis reported that the Green Team is beginning their 4th year. They are proud of all they have accomplished with numerous events to raise awareness of green issues. Major events include the Super Sale, Green Festival and the demonstration rain garden at 27th and Humboldt.

The Green Team is concerned about the seriousness of climate change and invites residents to join them in the work.

NRP Committee

Coordinator Monica Smith reported that the committee works with funding from Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP), a 20-year City of Minneapolis program that provided funding to neighborhoods to make improvements based on the needs of each neighborhood. The NRP program has been phased out; there is no new funding but East Isles continues to spend down our funds.

Program for residents: Home Security Grants of up to \$250 for security upgrades. Details are available at www.eastisles.org.

Outreach and Nominations

Chair Linda Schutz outlined the main focus of this committee – to recruit candidates for the yearly election of EIRA Board of Directors. There are currently three open positions to serve out the remainder of this term (until April 2015). Candidates are being recruited to be appointed at the November 11th EIRA Board meeting. The committee also recruits committee chairs (a chair for the Crime & Safety Committee is needed) and standardized committee operations.

Schutz announced that she will be resigning as committee chair on December 31, 2014.

Social Committee

Chair Amy Sanborn discussed the two major events that the committee organizes each year: the Ice Skating Party (scheduled for January 25, 2015) and the Ice Cream Social in August. The Social Committee also organizes volunteers for fundraisers like the pop booth at the Art Fair.

The committee is working with the Loppet Foundation to recruit volunteers to help make ice luminaries, staff a food station and organize a snow sculpture team.

Transportation Committee

President Dan McLaughlin reported that the newly reformed committee has met three times in the past six month. The next meeting is Thursday, October 30, 7 pm at Grace.

OPEN FORUM

A budget of \$200 was requested for hot chocolate and coffee for the January 25th Ice Skating Party.

A concern was raised about The Bridge for Youth possibly selling the white house at 22nd and Emerson Ave S because \$19K of EIRA's NRP funds paid for new windows in the building in 2011.

In response to comments by elected officials about the NRP program, one resident reported that EIRA partnered with the Park Board to help fund major improvements at Lake of the Isles.

Concerns remain about the vacant and deteriorating house at 2208 Irving Ave S. The EIRA Board will discuss the status of the property at an upcoming meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.
Submitted by: Monica Smith, Recorder

Next EIRA Board of Directors meeting: Tuesday, November 11, 7 p.m. at Grace-Trinity Community Church, 1430 W. 28th St.