

East Isles Residents' Association (EIRA)
Minutes from the EIRA Board of Directors (BOD) Meeting
January 14, 2014
Grace-Trinity Community Church

Board members present: Dan McLaughlin (President), Vaughn Emerson (Vice President), Candace Dow, Nicole Engel-Nitz, Donna Jansen, Carla Pardue, Michael Rossini, and Linda Schutz. Alternate Bill Elwood and other East Isles residents were also in attendance.

EIRA President Dan McLaughlin called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Council Member Lisa Goodman, Ward 7

East Isles has been redistricted to Ward 7 and will once again be served by Council Member Lisa Goodman.

- The City has hired a law firm for the lawsuit against 1800 Lake (for pumping groundwater into the Lagoon between Lake Calhoun and Lake of the Isles).
- Lunch with Lisa is Wednesday, January 29, noon at St Thomas, Opus Hall, Room #201. The topic will be the Nicollet Mall renovation. Project planners will attend to hear feedback from the community before the design process begins. Feedback is also encouraged via an online survey at www.nicolletmallproject.com.
- The city offers a number of ways to be alerted about Snow Emergency parking restrictions, including a smart phone app, Facebook, Twitter. For details, go to: www.minneapolismn.gov/snow.
- Public Meeting to discuss the proposed Conservation District Ordinance, Tuesday, January 28, 4:30 pm at City Hall, Room 319.
- A task force continues to work on reopening Nicollet Ave (at Lake St Kmart site).
- Regarding transit on the Greenway: CM Goodman reminded all that the Midtown Greenway was purchase by Hennepin County to be used a transit corridor. If the Greenway is selected as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the Midtown Corridor Alternatives Analysis, there will be many opportunities for public comment during the very long timeframe before the project is completed.
- The MoZaic received public funding (federal stimulus money) for the first phase of the project. MoZaic is applying for a pollution remediation grant for the parking lot of the second phase of the project.
- The City's goal of increasing density will help with property tax rates. CM Goodman supports increasing density where it allowed by current zoning codes.

Announcements

- City of Lakes Loppet is January 31-February 2nd. The Loppet Foundation (event host) will be more stringent about requiring registration for participating in the Luminary Loppet.
- Save the date for the Community Connections Conference on Saturday, March 22, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. at the Minneapolis Convention Center. The event is free and open to all.
- Hennepin County Commissioner Gail Dorfman has resigned. A special election will be held.

REPORTS

Zoning Committee, Donna Jansen

The December 17th meeting included a presentation about a variance request to reduce the east interior side yard and the rear yard setbacks from 6 ft to 1.4 ft to replace an exiting garage. The homeowner

reported that the neighbors have been informed and do not have objections. The EIRA Board approved the Zoning Committee recommendation to support the request.

The next meeting of the Zoning Committee is Tuesday, January 21 and includes a discussion with the Green Team about sustainable building standards and a presentation by Lake & Irving Restaurant (1513 W Lake St) to change their license to include live music of up to five musicians.

Transportation Committee, Candace Dow

Candace Dow is the chair of EIRA's Transportation Committee and EIRA's representative to the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) for the Midtown Greenway Alternatives Analysis. Dow reported that the Alternatives Analysis is studying transit options for Lake Street and/or the Midtown Greenway between the proposed Southwest LRT and Hiawatha LRT.

The transit options have been narrowed to the following: arterial bus rapid transit on Lake Street; double/single track rail in the Midtown Greenway; or a combination of both. The Policy Advisory Committee will select the Locally Preferred Alternative on February 12, 2014.

EIRA's Transportation Committee employed a number of efforts to reach out to the community for feedback on the project: outreach at Ice Cream Social, presentations/surveys at EIRA's semi-annual meetings (April and October 2013), monthly committee meetings, EIRA e-newsletter and email communication, Metro Transit open houses, informal discussions with residents and monthly reports at EIRA Board meetings. The vast majority of the respondents were opposed to rail on the Greenway.

The committee drafted a resolution to the Alternatives Analysis stating that EIRA recommends bus rapid transit on Lake Street and does not support rail on the Midtown Greenway (full resolution is attached). After much discussion by residents and board members, the EIRA Board approved a motion to approve the resolution (vote count: 5-3).

Dan McLaughlin encouraged everyone to submit individual comments about the Alternatives Analysis to the Metro Transit.

Social Committee, Amy Sanborn

The annual Ice Skating Party will be Sunday, January 26, 1-3 pm at Lake of the Isles. Contact Amy at events@eastisles.org to volunteer at the event.

Amy will let board members know if volunteers are needed for the City of Lakes Loppet.

Green Team, Betsy Allis

- The Green Team is discontinuing the film events and instead will be planning quarterly programs for 2014.
- The first event is *Transition Towns-The Future is Now*, a presentation about moving toward self-reliant communities. Monday, February 24, 7 pm at Grace.
- The Green Team has six working groups: solar, recruitment, edible gardens, green standards for development, plant swap and water quality. Volunteers are need!

NRP Committee, Monica Smith

- The committee is seeking a new EIRA Board member to serve on the committee.
- The paperwork is being finalized to shift the balance of the funds from the Residential Loan Program to the Affordable Housing Loan Program.

- The Participation Agreement has been amended to include implementation activities and was extended until 12-31-14.
- Neighborhood and Community Relations (NCR) is developing a new funding program for neighborhoods called Community Innovation Fund. A number of meetings will be held during the month of February to help draft the program.
- The next meeting is a joint meeting with the Parks Committee to prioritize park improvements. Monday, February 3, 7 pm at Grace.

Nominations Committee, Linda Schutz

- The committee will meet on Tuesday, February 11 and Tuesday, March 11, 6:30 pm at Grace to plan for the 2014 board elections.
- The committee is seeking new board members. Interested individuals should contact Monica Smith at nrp@eastisles.org.
- Recruitment ads will run in the January and February issues of the Hill and Lake Press.
- The EIRA Board approved a budget of \$100 for committee expenses.

BOARD REVIEW

Community Participation Program

Expenditures for the CPP program ending 12-31-13 were reviewed. The EIRA Board approved a motion to shift fund to underfunded line items in the budget. \$10K of unspent funds will be carried over to the next cycle.

The annual report for the 2013 CPP program is due March 14th. A draft will be presented to the EIRA Board at the February meeting.

EIRA Annual Meeting

The Spring Annual Meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 8 at the Uptown Diner and will include a chili dinner.

Board approvals

The EIRA Board approved the following motions:

- To fund up to four board/committee members to attend the Uptown Association's Annual Meeting on January 28th.
- To renew Monica Smith's contract for 2014.
- To contribute \$200 to Grace for the furnace repair.
- To elevate EIRA Alternates Bill Elwood and Rosita Acosta to EIRA Board of Directors to replace departing members Mike Rossini and Renee Guest.

Miscellaneous

- The 501(c)(4) application has been sent to the IRS. Special thanks to Ramon Ramirez Quintero and Monica Smith for their work on the application.
- Board members signed thank you notes to Council Member Meg Tuthill and her staff for their service to the neighborhood.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.
Submitted by: Monica Smith, Recorder

The next meeting is Tuesday, February 11, 2014, 7 p.m. at Grace-Trinity Community Church, 1430 W 28th Street.

Transportation Committee Resolution adopted by the EIRA Board on 1-14-14

Midtown Corridor Alternatives Analysis: East Isles Residents Association Recommendation

Background/Big Picture Ideas/Questions

1. East Isles Residents Association (EIRA) supports improved transit options for East Isles residents and visitors.
2. EIRA supports improved transit options for other neighborhoods in the corridor and throughout the metropolitan area.
3. Light rail could benefit East Isles users and non-East Isles users. Some residents have indicated a preference for rail before understanding the number of vehicles per day, noise, impacts on the Midtown Greenway, and other factors.
4. As Minneapolis becomes more densely populated, greenspace will become even more important and more difficult to add to developed areas.
5. Do we sacrifice the quality of life in East Isles for the benefit of the majority of users who do not live in East Isles?
6. The Midtown Greenway, the world-class biking and walking trail, attracts thousands of commuters and recreational users daily.
7. USA Today named the Midtown Greenway the best urban bike trail in the nation in 2013.
8. This recommendation reflects discussions with East Isles residents at EIRA meetings, EIRA Transportation Committee meetings, community events, and other venues.

Of the three options considered for the Midtown Corridor, EIRA recommends arterial bus rapid transit (ABRT) for the following reasons:

1. Cost: ABRT on Lake Street has the lowest cost, thereby allowing more funds to improve other transit options in the metropolitan area.
2. Equity: ABRT would improve transit service to a well-established, consistently proven ridership, many of whom are dependent on public transportation.
3. Lake Street businesses: Many persons along the corridor do not have access to a vehicle for shopping trips and use transit on Lake Street. Improved transit could reduce the need for parking for businesses along the Lake Street corridor.
4. Greenspace: Improved transit on Lake Street preserves the Midtown Greenway greenspace.
5. Safety: Lake Street is a major traffic artery across south Minneapolis. Bikers, drivers, and pedestrians are already accustomed to “stop, look and listen” for traffic. If there is a disruption on Lake Street that results in a break in service, there are easy ways around the “disruption,” as well as easy access for emergency services coming to attend to any rider’s emergency needs.

EIRA does not support rail on the Midtown Greenway for the following reasons:

Primary reasons

1. Cost: Rail costs considerably more to build, maintain, and subsidize, compared to ABRT.
2. Safety: East Isles has three at-grade crossings that already have problems with bicyclists, drivers, and pedestrians not obeying stop signs, resulting in many near misses.

3. Equity: Adding rail to the Greenway would remove area currently used as recreational space east of 5th Avenue, an area that has limited access to parks compared with the west end of the Midtown Greenway.
4. Green space/open space: The Midtown Greenway, a major asset for the city and the region, continues to draw more users and awards. Minneapolis has consistently ranked at or near the top of lists for best cities for bicycling. Adding rail to the Greenway would eliminate the trail user's tranquil experience. As the city adds more housing units, open space and quiet will become increasingly important and more difficult to acquire.
5. Divide neighborhood: 220 trains per day would severely reduce access to and from Uptown for East Isles residents and visitors north of the Midtown Greenway.
6. Noise: Rail vehicles on the Midtown Greenway; safety measures, such as horns and crossing arm warnings; and idling vehicles waiting to cross while the intersection is closed for rail vehicles would increase noise.

Secondary reasons

7. Pinch points: Rail would take trail space at some locations, resulting in a narrowed trail.
8. Property values: Deleterious effects from decreased open space and increased noise, vibration, and air pollution could reduce property values along and near the Midtown Greenway.
9. Reduced access to, from, and across the Midtown Greenway: Bicyclists and pedestrians would have to wait for trains to pass 220 times per day.
10. Historic preservation: Modifications to sides of the trench, such as for retaining walls, may not meet historic preservation requirements.
11. Air pollution: Idling vehicles at crossings would increase air pollution at the three at-grade crossings in the neighborhood.