

East Isles Residents' Association (EIRA)
Minutes from the EIRA Board of Directors (BOD) Meeting
August 14, 2012
Bridge for Youth

Board members present: Dan McLaughlin (President), Linda Schutz (Vice President), Richard White (Secretary), Sue Durfee, Vaughn Emerson, Tina Frontera, Renee Gust, Carla Pardue, Michael Rossini, and Jane Schommer. Alternate Donna Jansen and other East Isles residents were also present.

President Dan McLaughlin called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Announcements

- The groundbreaking ceremony for the new Parade Parkway will be September 6.
- Closing event for the Walker Library will be September 22, 10:30 a.m.

Open Forum

Janet Hallaway, Corporate and Community Engagement Manager for the Bridge for Youth.

- Janet welcomed the group to The Bridge and offered space for board and committee meetings.
- Ikea donated \$10,000 worth of goods to transform the group space to feel more like home.
- The Bridge is asking for community support for their annual fundraising dinner on September 14 at St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church.
- The Bridge is also seeking partners to fund new musical instruction initiative for the youth they serve.

Meg Tuthill, Ward 10 Council Member, City of Minneapolis

- The Mayor will present the 2013 budget at noon on August 15.
- Meet with Meg on August 14th featured a Minneapolis Police Department speaker with expertise in forgery, fraud, identity theft, and Internet crime.

Henry Reimer, Assistant Director of Inspections, City of Minneapolis

CM Tuthill invited Henry Reimer to address problem properties in East Isles.

Information conveyed by Mr. Reimer included: (1) The City's Vacant Building Registration (VBR) program aims to monitor and manage nuisance vacant properties; presently 750 properties are on the VBR list (down from 1,000); the problem properties program focuses on the worst cases, engages in periodic inspections, issues work-orders, and sometimes citations and hires contractors to ensure maintenance occurs (cutting grass/weeds, rubbish removal, code violations remedied); (2) Funding of the program isn't through property taxes, but by fees charged against owners who must register vacant properties; Minneapolis charges higher fees compared to many other cities -- its fees are \$7,000/year/vacant structure although \$2,000 is refundable if improvement is completed in six months after the permit process begins; there's a class action lawsuit against Minneapolis regarding the fees, seeking damages and reparations; a future idea is a tiered fee system with higher fees for vacant properties on the list 5-10+ years; (3) Few other options besides entering into a "restoration agreement" or tear down a structure.

One property of concern is 2208 Irving Ave S. Mr. Reimer indicated it's been assessed over \$17,000 in fees/fine this year (and \$29,000 totally since the property's been vacant), and the owner is paying property taxes and fines; this year not many "311" calls received about it. Residents present: (1) indicated nearby residents, and others, have expressed concerns repeatedly over many years about the deteriorating structure and associated lowered market value and tax contribution, its appearance, etc. and have done work to clean up the property. Reimer suggested neighbors not clear rubbish, not mow, but

instead any one concerned should call “311” (complaints made can be anonymous), to help the City build the record; (2) inquired why the owner who is also developing a large residential project near the Greenway in a nearby neighborhood, citing recent article in Star Tribune, is given the go ahead to proceed by the City, without the City insisting the 2208 Irving structure be improved, sold or torn down; (3) offered ideas such as (a) City looking at “best practices” of other cities; (b) offering draft language for a letter that EIRA BOD could send to owner; (4) wondering about nuisances and hazards (pigeons, vermin, wildlife, partying, trespass, fear of fire); (5) speculating that EIRA could be accused of harassment for articulating neighbor and neighborhood concerns, etc. Among EIRA Board of Directors (BOD) members present, consensus was that an EIRA BOD member, who offered to call the property owner to elevate awareness of the condition of 2208 Irving Ave. S., do so, and that the EIRA BOD review the property’s status and situation in six months.

REPORTS

Amy Sanborn, Social Committee

- The Ice Cream Social on Thursday, August 16, at Levin Triangle Park (1600 W 26th St) will be a combined East Isles and Park Board event to celebrate the grand re-opening of the park. The event will be from 6-9 pm (ceremony at 6:30 pm).
- Thank you to the volunteers for the East Isles pop booth at the Uptown Art Fair.

Harvey Ettinger, Zoning Committee

- A meeting has been scheduled with Central Bank to discuss the vacant BP station at 2700 Hennepin Ave S. CM Tuthill will also attend the meeting.
- Smith Triangle surveys: 19 have been returned to date (deadline is Sept 10). The subcommittee will meet to review the surveys and present information at the September EIRA Board meeting.
- Melissa Anderson-Rossini will be the point person to coordinate and share information regarding possible mass transit on the Greenway. She will report through the Zoning Committee.
- Wiring for the new lighting on the Greenway has begun. Letters will go to nearby residents to inform them about the project. Final approval of Hennepin County partner funds is expected on August 21st.

Richard White, Membership Committee

- Thirty membership forms have been returned to-date.

Monica Smith, NRP/Staff Report

- There has been a date change for the September NRP Committee meeting. The new date is Tuesday, September 4, 7 p.m. at Grace Trinity Community Church, 1430 W 28th St.
- Burglary Prevention and 911 Presentation sponsored by Minneapolis Police is August 22, 6 p.m. at Temple Israel, 2324 Emerson Ave S.
- A summary of the Community Participation Program expenditures for the program ending June 30, 2012 was distributed. Unspent funding (\$218) will carry over to the new program for a Neighborhood Priority Plan.
- East Isles’ application for the 2012-13 Community Participation Program was approved. At EIRA’s September BOD meeting, clarification will be provided about by-laws related commentary of a City staff person, so that EIRA BOD recommendations regarding any bylaws changes can be presented within adequate time-frame for consideration at the semi-annual October 2012 meeting of EIRA members

Green Team

- Green Team was awarded a grant from the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization for a demonstration rain garden at 2871 Humboldt Ave.
- Several upcoming events are being planned. Contact Monica Smith at nrp@eastisles.org to sign up or volunteer to help.
 - Super Sale: Saturday, Sept 8, 9am – 3 pm.
 - Brown Bag Lighting Tutorial: Monday, September 17, 7-8:15 pm at Bridge for Youth, 1111 W. 22nd St, featuring a lighting expert offering tips on exterior lights to improve security, beauty and energy efficiency.
 - Rain Garden Basics: Saturday, September 22, 9-10:30 am, 2871 Humboldt Ave S. Learn about rain garden benefits, design, plantings and upkeep.
 - Rain Garden Installation: Saturday, October 6, 9 am – 3 pm, 2871 Humboldt Ave S
- The EIRA Board approved by consensus, \$175 of general funds to be used to purchase food and beverage at upcoming Green Team events.

Board Review

- Take Back the Air sent a revised resolution for the EIRA Board to consider regarding wood-burning recreation fires. Reservations were expressed about some provisions. Dan McLaughlin will write a more general resolution for review at the September meeting.
- Dan McLaughlin and Tina Frontera will draft an outline and advance questions for the Strategic Planning session (September 22nd). The Board unanimously approved reimbursement for expenditures (food, beverage, materials) for the session. Committee chairs will also be invited to attend. In advance of the session, an Internet link to the Uptown Small Area Plan (USAP) will be provided to all BOD members.
- Possible date for the EIRA Semi-Annual Members Meeting is October 23. Linda Schutz will contact a park historian as a potential speaker. The EIRA Board will hold a regular board meeting on October 9.
- Monica Smith's contract is expiring September 6th. The Board authorized Dan McLaughlin to negotiate a new contract and present at the next meeting.
- Candidates for political office will not be offered time on EIRA Board meeting agendas. Elected officials are invited to address the Board. Comments of some present included: a variety of events and forums already exist for candidates to make contact, and several offer more adequate time to deliver presentations along with Q&A, concern with multitude of candidates running for assorted offices at various levels of government year-round, desire of EIRA to remain nonpartisan and nonpolitical, constraints of tight monthly BOD meetings, etc.
- Michael Mechtenberg, Transit Planner from Metro Transit will attend the September 11 EIRA Board meeting to discuss the Midtown Corridor Alternative Analysis.

Next meeting of the EIRA Board: September 11 at the Bridge for Youth, 1111 W 22nd St.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Submitted by: Monica Smith, Recorder