

# Neighbors of Belknap Lookout Board Meeting

Tuesday, January 9, 2017  
NOBL Office, 700 Clancy Ave NE  
6:30 pm

1. Call to order
2. Additions to agenda
3. Approval of December minutes, year end financials
4. Committee updates
5. New Business:
  - a. Afterschool Program Background, Current Status, and Future Scenarios
6. Old Business:
  - a. Determination on Adoption of Development Committee Recommendation to Not Support Special Land Use for Parking Lot at 1136 Plainfield
  - b. Homeless Encampment Update
  - c. Research Requests for Retreat
7. Public Comment
8. Adjournment

Note: Elianna will be out of town (but available by phone and hopefully email) from Jan 13-23.

## 2018 Schedule:

Jan 25 – board retreat, 6:30 pm 700 Clancy  
Feb 13 - board meeting, 6:30 pm 700 Clancy  
Mar 13 - board meeting, 6:30 pm 700 Clancy  
Mar 15-18 - poker tournament at Russo's 6209 S Division 10:15 am-5:30 pm - NEW START TIME  
Apr 10 - board meeting, 6:30 pm 700 Clancy  
May 8 - semi annual meeting re: goals, 6:30 pm East Leonard Elementary  
May 31-Jun 1 - poker tournament at Russo's 6209 S Division 10:15 am-5:30 pm - NEW START TIME  
Jun 12 - board meeting, 6:30 pm 700 Clancy  
Jul 10 - board meeting, 6:30 pm 700 Clancy  
Aug 1 - national night out, Mary Waters Park?  
Aug 14 - board meeting, 6:30 pm 700 Clancy  
Sep 11 - board meeting, 6:30 pm 700 Clancy  
Sep 27-30 - poker tournament at Russo's 6209 S Division 10 am-5:30 pm - NEW START TIME  
Oct 9 - board meeting, 6:30 pm 700 Clancy  
Nov 8-11 - poker tournament at Russo's 6209 S Division 10 am-5:30 pm - NEW START TIME  
Nov 13 - annual meeting & board election, 6:30 pm Coit Creative Arts Academy  
Dec 11 - board meeting, 6:30 pm 700 Clancy  
TBD - Dumpster Day, Neighborhood Clean Up, Harvest Celebrations

# Neighbors of Belknap Lookout Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Board Members Present:	Steve Faas	Angel Gonzalez	Jill Gonzalez
	Rob Kennedy	Barbara LaBeau	Loren Sturrus
	Jonathan Swets	Gretchen Warnimont	

Board Members Absent:	Todd Leinberger		
Staff Present:	Elianna Bootzin		
Guests Present:	Loretta Klimaszewki	John Skryski	Miriam Teft

1. Call to order - The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.
2. Additions – There were no official additions to the agenda.
3. The October minutes, November minutes, and November financials were approved with explanations that we classify rent as unrestricted funds and our property tax payment has already been reduced but may still be an opportunity for cost reduction.
4. Committee updates: Loren mentioned that we are working with the state to share our expectations for the sale of 719 Prospect. It was noted that the new owner will need to deal with the remainder of the site’s brownfield needs. The Coit condos will still be coming as a design conversation. A Special Land Use has been requested to build a parking lot at 1136 Plainfield. We are inclined to say no; Loren will request an email vote from the development committee and bring a recommendation in January. Finally, GVSU’s parking lot may include affordable housing. There were some digressions about the restaurant at the Gateway opening in 2018, as will Rowsters. Could we combine their opening with a bike rodeo? May 5 is bike to school day.
5. New business:
  - a. Consent agenda – More information is needed on how to use in terms of removing items from a consent agenda. We will handle this item with rulemaking. The retreat was set for Thursday January 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm.
  - b. Accomplishments – There was a general appreciation for a job well done. We can do a staff self-assessment and written board evaluation of staff. We will address goals at retreat but may get going on mobility committee examination of expanding the parking permit zone.
  - c. Budget – Elianna mentioned potentially seeking a second crime prevention training. The budget was approved.
  - d. Homeless Encampment – Our letter has been sent to our City commissioners, and we’ve gotten in touch with Community Rebuilders/The Salvation Army as well. The camp has been growing, with visible blankets and tarps. Elianna will forward the letter to our County commissioner and check in for action before the next meeting.
  - e. Officers – The board selected Loren Sturrus as Chair, Angel Gonzalez as Vice Chair, Jill Gonzalez as Secretary, and Rob Kennedy as Treasurer. The board approved these new officers as signatories on the bank account, replacing Barb, John and Gretchen.
6. Public Comment – No public comment
7. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned.

# Director's Notes

## Preparatory Information for Business items:

**Afterschool Program Background, Current Status, and Future Scenarios** - Several people have noticed that our Afterschool Program is not an optimal fit for our current level of staffing in terms of time, training and disposition. We can consider in more detail at the retreat where it ranks in terms of our priorities. In the meantime, here is why it exists: The program was launched as a condition of the grant which provided the computers for the community portion of our office. The expectation was that we would provide space for 6 hours per week. We justified the grant request on the "education" portion of our exempt status, and the need certainly exists. We originally cited the fact that in 2014, GRPS graduation rates were 50%. As we heard in November, they are now up 25% but at least as of 2016 they were still significantly lower than the statewide average. Again at the time we applied for the grant, our neighborhood elementary school, Coit Creative Arts, had an 85% Free or Reduced Lunch population.

There is no question that this kind of programming, as originally intended, should be provided by some entity. It can also be justified as a crime prevention strategy according to the City's SAFE Report – which in turn supports the ELO Network, a coalition of out of school programming providers who collectively follow rigorous Quality Standards for their operations and engage in additional outcome tracking. The programs at Coit, East Leonard, and Riverside (where our neighborhood's middle schoolers attend class) are run by the YMCA. By the time we meet, I will have met with Campfire/4C, the other major provider in town; the day after, I will be talking with the United Way, which has been funding many of these program with an eye to expanding access to more students. Through these conversations and likely a third with the YMCA, we should be able to get a sense of whether and how these well-established sites can take on our students, and what kind of role we would play in the transition.

Again, we are not likely to determine a course of action until (or after) the retreat, but to lay out some options we could 1) actually decide to ramp up, fundraise and hire specifically to increase the capacity of this program as a supplemental location; 2) carry on at the current level a) for the remainder of the school year (an amount of time that would be reasonable if "expensing" the computers in a single year), b) until June 2022 ("depreciating" the computers over 5 years), or c) indefinitely; 3) drop back to requiring parental supervision (or similar), as in the second option for any of the three periods of time; or 4) drop it altogether. Let's try to get a general sense of everyone's gut instinct and collect any additional questions whose answers would help in reaching a decision.

**Determination on Adoption of Development Committee Recommendation to Not Support Special Land Use for Parking Lot at 1136 Plainfield** – As you can see in the developer's application at the link, [http://grandrapidscitymi.iqm2.com/Citizens/Detail\\_LegiFile.aspx?ID=5254&highlightTerms=1136plainfield](http://grandrapidscitymi.iqm2.com/Citizens/Detail_LegiFile.aspx?ID=5254&highlightTerms=1136plainfield), the Homewood Hotel downtown wants to pave a remote parking lot near the DASH North line for use by its employees and long term guests. The Development Committee does not recommend supporting it because it does not provide the optimal use (although the spot is in a sort of Bermuda triangle between the Belknap residential area, Monroe North, and Creston, the Monroe North plan does have buildings across the street allowing up to 5 stories, Creston has that area broadly identified as a neighborhood entrance and the city considers that area a "village center") and there are a surplus of parking lots in that area, the City's in particular being underutilized.

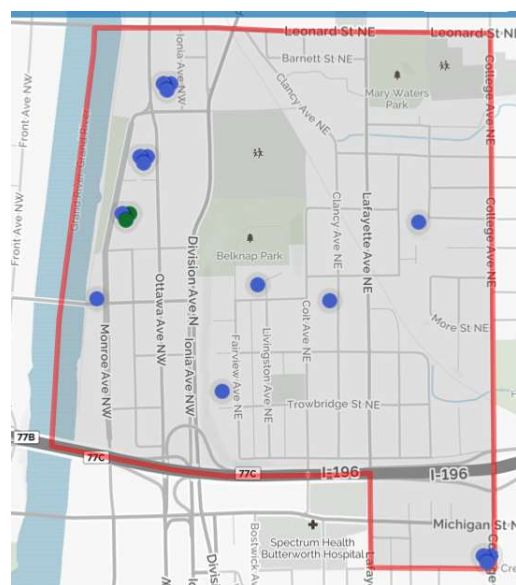
Note the Planning Commission may be influenced by recent press about lack of parking downtown, as in a paragraph of the piece about the library lot: <https://mibiz.com/news/real-estate/item/25359-downtown-parking-ramp-discussion-clears-mobilegr>; similarly, stats were released earlier that City lots' monthly parking permits are 95% full: [http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2017/02/by\\_the\\_numbers\\_downtown\\_grand.html](http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2017/02/by_the_numbers_downtown_grand.html) so we may want to find and cite more detailed information about the lot on the north end of the DASH route. In terms of the Special Land Use Review Standards, we might also cite section 2, Neighborhood under a. it not being compatible harmonious or appropriate with planned character and uses of the neighborhood and adjacent properties and d. it adversely affecting the walkability of the neighborhood, disrupting the continuity of the urban street wall and otherwise hindering the creation of a pedestrian-oriented environment.

**Homeless Encampment Update** – The Salvation Army completed assessments for everyone at the camp and is waiting for housing to open up. Ruth acknowledged receiving our letter. JP swept the camp again, giving warnings and making two arrests upon his return. Cold temps are affecting others nearby: [http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2017/12/police\\_assist\\_frostbit\\_trio\\_of.html](http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2017/12/police_assist_frostbit_trio_of.html).

**Research Requests for Retreat** – Our incorporated purpose refers to crime (aka safety), housing, communications, business, education, social action, community affairs (the ASP), and related areas.

**Regular Report Contents:**

**Public Safety** – [www.grcity.us](http://www.grcity.us) Online services → (Lookup) Crime Data Destination is <http://grcity.us/police-department/Pages/Crime-Mapping.aspx> Selected last 4 weeks with ½ mile circle around 800 Coit unfortunately losing the corners (left, below)



**Development** – [www.grcity.us](http://www.grcity.us) Online Services → (Permits & Applications) Permits & Applications Map Selected 12/12-1/4 in the Belknap Lookout neighborhood (right, above). Again, mostly small things.

Update on other major projects: 719 Prospect posting from the State should be online by the time we meet; parking lot at 1136 Plainfield is going to planning commission Thursday Jan 11 as noted above. We also received the follow up documentation from the planning department for the Fairview condos:

**BLDG B**



**BLDG C**



### **Updates on Old Business**

Vacant lot at 762 North – We can arrange basically a perpetual lease at \$1 per year, with permission to make most improvements (no permanent structures). Document should be available to sign at meeting.

Neighborhood Matching Fund – Report has been submitted and we are ready to assemble the team for our next application.

No further updates on 712 North, Kristi's recognition in the office signage.

### **Admin**

Another fairly routine month, with correspondence, tutoring, and reporting, plus we passed our CDBG audit with the City of Grand Rapids with flying colors. Some information of note: I learned that a handful of the homes in the large and widely publicized ICCF purchase are in the neighborhood – most in the Bradford/North loop on the east side of the neighborhood, one on Hopson and one to two on Leonard. ICCF will maintain them as affordable rentals with the midterm intention of making it possible for half of their renters to become homeowners. The Urban Core Collective has been researching possibilities for standardizing notice for and facilitation of developers' public meetings prior to public hearings. It's a ways off from implementation (and should plug nicely in the middle of our own development process), but stay tuned for more on this initiative this year. The Other Way is getting ready to post their community engagement position, and we will be included in the interview process.

As far as some smaller activities I've got in the hopper, I'm talking with Comprenew about hosting a series of small group computer classes in our space; at the end, participants would be able to obtain a low cost computer. As I'm often out of the office for community meetings, I'm going to try having a volunteer supervise our space Monday and Thursday mornings; if all goes well this month, with me here some days and leaving her alone for others, we will discuss giving her a key in February.