

Neighbors of Belknap Lookout Board Meeting

Tuesday, March 13, 2017
NOBL Office, 700 Clancy Ave NE
6:30 pm

1. Call to order and additions to agenda
2. Approval of February minutes and financials
3. Committee updates (primarily info only):
 - a. Development: 601 Ottawa, 719 Prospect, Coldbrook
 - b. Mobility: RPP Expansion (Motion) and Mile Markers
 - c. Fundraising: Highland Park disc golf, carnival, walk/run
 - d. Communications: Message boards
 - e. Health/Nutrition/Education: NEWC
4. New Business:
 - a. Overview of Working Board: governance (vision, strategy, policy, budget), committee roles, volunteer
 - b. Overview of Major Concepts for By-Law Revision: un/paid membership (**end** poll tax), **open**/closed meetings, board members **elected**/appointed (via vacancies)
 - c. Semi-annual meeting: curb appeal winners, physical plan for n'hood, info tables
5. Old Business:
 - a. Vision Statement & Activity Screen
 - b. HousingNOW
 - c. Neighborhood Matching Fund
6. Miscellaneous & Public Comment (Homeless Encampment & Breakaway Festival)
7. Adjournment

2018 Schedule: Knitting continues first and third Saturdays in April – feel free to join us at 700 Clancy at 10 am. TBD - Dumpster Day, Neighborhood Clean Up, Harvest Celebrations

Mar 15-18 - poker tournament at Russo's 6209 S Division 10:15 am-5:30 pm (no knitting today)
Mar 27 – public hearing on HousingNOW zoning proposals at City Commission, 7:30 pm 300 Monroe NW
Apr 10 - board meeting, 6:30 pm 700 Clancy
Apr 19 – tour of 221 Trowbridge Flats, 12:30-2 pm with light refreshments
May 8 - semi annual meeting re: goals, 6:30 pm East Leonard Elementary
May 31-Jun 3 - poker tournament at Russo's 6209 S Division 10:15 am-5:30 pm (no knitting today)
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
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
Nov 13 - annual meeting & board election, 6:30 pm Coit Creative Arts Academy
Dec 11 - board meeting, 6:30 pm 700 Clancy

Neighbors of Belknap Lookout Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 13 2017

Board Members Present:	Brian Bremer	Rob Kennedy	Loretta Klimaszewski
	Barbara LaBeau	Todd Leinberger	Loren Sturuss
	Jonathan Swets		
Board Members Absent:	Steve Faas	Jill Gonzalez	
Staff Present:	Elianna Bootzin		
Guests Present:	Dan Gurke	Pat Waring (GVSU)	

1. Call to order - The meeting was called to order.
2. Additions – Approval of our CDBG application was added to the agenda. It was noted that knitting will take place at Newberry this week.
3. GVSU – Pat announced that the parking ramp on Michigan is official. Construction will start this year on both it and 333 Michigan and we will receive notification of traffic adjustments. Ultimately the new BRT line will turn off of Michigan into a “loon” and then go back the other way. The walk through of Finkelstein is being rescheduled to Thursday July 19 from 5-8 pm. The work group will be meeting later this month and will presumably discuss the Hastings Connector. Pat noted that it will preserve as many homes as possible, demolishing only 5-6 homes as opposed to a potential 18.
4. The Minutes and Financials were approved.
5. Committees – Loren will continue as chair of the Development Committee. We still have mobility as well. Several fundraising groups were identified: Loretta, Jon and Loren for a Highland park disc golf event; Loren to make initial contact regarding a carnival and Barb the same for a run; Brian to sell parking on the top of the hill during the fireworks; Loretta suggested food at the Pagan Pride festival as well; and there was interest in a medallion or window sticker for businesses. Communications will likely be Elianna and Loren, possibly Sondra and Jerry, and maybe Todd with some interest in selling ads. Health, Nutrition and Education will be Jon, Steve, Rob, Barb and Todd. By-laws will be Loren, Todd, Elianna and Brian. Jon, Barb, Loretta and Elianna should meet up regarding PILOT implementation as well. Elianna will check on the return of the Breakaway Festival and we will discuss in March. Development noted that there has been no movement on L&L, maybe next year; Bazzani doesn't currently have funds to develop and is looking for a buyer/investor. We noted the property currently available on College.
6. New business:
 - a. Board – Brian was appointed to a 3 year term and Loretta to a 1 year term. Todd was elected Vice Chair and will replace Angel on the bank account.
 - b. 990 – Elianna reviewed the first page; the submission was approved. Elianna will seek review from the Michigan Tax Law Clinic if possible for a potential presentation in May.
7. Old Business:

- a. Vision – It was suggested we cut “especially land use”. Then it was noted the statement was too operational and did not capture the focus on diversity/low income neighbors. Todd, Elianna and possible Jon will revise.
 - b. Annual Goals – 250 Email subscribers, 230 Facebook followers, 330 neighbors on NextDoor and retain membership at 70 at the next Annual Meeting.
 - c. HousingNOW – The process on the four zoning recommendations is getting very political. We expect but are not guaranteed that the commission will set a public hearing on Feb 20. We discussed individual commissioners’ likely stances. Elianna will rewrite and resend a letter to the board based on upholding the ASP after editing with Jon. The board will approve it by email over the weekend. Elianna will provide commissioner contact information as well. Loren noted as a digression that there is need for economic incentives on Lafayette; Todd will help.
 - d. Homeless Encampment Update – Jon noted it was still empty.
8. CDBG – The board approved applying for a 65/30 split between neighborhood leadership and public safety.
 9. Public Comment – Loretta noted that the feral cat project is in motion – she and her friend Michelle are feeding and about to trap the cats.
 10. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 pm.

Director’s Notes

Financials – We will need to get new checks in April, and Quickbooks will stop supporting our Payroll software at the end of May. Are there any recommendations related to our banking and payroll choices?

Development Committee

601 Ottawa –Thursday March 15’s Planning Commission meeting has another parking lot proposal coming up in Monroe North. It’s related to a three way land trade going on between the City, the County and MSU in order to create a future park along the river just north of 196. The lot will be owned by the County and operated by the City, with parking available in the evening for patrons of Monroe North businesses, which have supported the application. Three of six development committee members have suggested they would be alright just letting the application go through. Additional info:

- MiBiz article: <https://mibiz.com/item/25593-land-deal-would-clear-way-for-city-owned-riverfront-park-in-downtown-grand-rapids>
- Land swap info in yesterday’s committee of the whole packet: <http://grandrapidscitymi.iqm2.com/Citizens/FileOpen.aspx?Type=1&ID=3221>
- Packet info for planning meeting (probably still going to add staff summary): https://grandrapidscitymi.iqm2.com/Citizens/Detail_LegiFile.aspx?Frame=&MeetingID=4649&MediaPosition=&ID=5668&CssClass=

719 Prospect – The RFQ from the Michigan Land Bank received one response. We requested and received additional information on the outreach conducted. The State Land Bank is inclined to continue with the submission, provided they will engage with the neighborhood. We have therefore been asked to establish a process that institutes NOBL involvement up to and possibly through the development process.

- Be detailed with action items, potential meeting dates, and deadlines.
- The MLB will ultimately use these action items and deadlines to prepare the development agreement.

They would also like to work to schedule a meeting between the respondent, the NOBL Development Committee, the MLB, and the MEDC RRC, preferably March 14 – 16.

Coldbrook – The owner of the apartments off of College, which were built with a variance, would like to build 3 single family homes south of the apartments on Coldbrook, and consider closing off the service drive. These changes would require another variance. The owner has a survey of the site, and the houses would replicate his 421 Quimby design, adjusting details of external materials for variation. Each would be 1000 sq ft main floor and basement, 3 bed 2 bath. It would likely to go the Board of Zoning Appeals for a variance in Mar/Apr. Elianna will likely meet the owner at the March 12 zoning event, and will be working with him on engaging local neighbors. A development committee meeting can be arranged as well.

Mobility Committee

RPP Expansion – Elianna will finish outreach Friday March 9 and bring updated tallies block-by-block to the meeting. So far “pro” neighbors on the 700 block of Coit outnumber those opposed, while others who have received notes mostly haven’t responded. The area of concern we will outline on the map is likely to be Fairview on the west, Hastings on the south, and Clancy on the east. Bradford will be the non-included northeast boundary, while northwest will probably include Newberry. Draft answers:

- Describe the current parking challenges in the neighborhood. Be as specific as you can, this will help staff during the Parking Use Study.

One neighbor reports improvements in the current zone reducing obstructions for snow plows, beeping remotes, and lack of parking. A second echoes: “permit system alleviates all the negatives from that [parking] pressure. They include less congestion, allowing residents reasonable access to parking at or near their homes. There is also the reduction of non-resident parkers intruding on our driveways, (it is hard enough getting in and out of driveways without those violating the 3’ rule). Furthermore, there has been noticeable trash reduction. Non-residents simply don’t respect the neighborhood as do residents. I can attest to this fact since I pick up the trash in my yard daily during Spring, Summer and Fall, and have done so for many years.”

Another neighbor notes there is still competition for parking in the current zone, which may need recalibration, while a neighbor outside the zone reports current issues with cars trying to park between two very close driveways; this particular spot is not large enough legally for a motorcycle, let alone a car, so she is often blocked in.

- What time(s) of day and days of the week the parking issues appear to be the worst?

Business hours, Monday-Friday.

- What do you believe is creating the parking issues in the neighborhood? e.g. commuters from a nearby business or institution parking in the neighborhood, students from a nearby school, business customers.

Our parking spaces are crowded by commuters from Spectrum and GVSU, as well as potentially GRCC, Kendall, and MSU.

- Considering the area of concern you have drawn on your neighborhood map, are there any specific streets or locations that have a need more than others?

In addition to retaining the existing zone, we are hearing the most about the need for additional permit parking around Coit Park (700 blocks of Livingston and Coit, as well as cross-streets Fairbanks and Newberry). We are mindful that these blocks must be available to the general public for evening and weekend park access. Given the congestion around Coit Creative Arts Academy, it may be worth including some additional spaces for the school zone's 2 hour limit.

- Provide any additional information about your neighborhood that would be beneficial to the evaluation process.

Residential Permit Parking signs still need to go back up on the 500 and/or 600 blocks of Clancy, which were under construction recently. We wonder if it would be possible to add 2 sided parking more places. We will also share a resident's data on parking counts for potential reference with our submission. Many neighbors including our leadership think there is a need for a 4 way stop at Coit and Hastings. Earlier comments included asking why it's not possible to park right in front of one's house, wondering how to provide longer exemptions for home health service workers including hospice, better accommodating the needs of the school parents and if it is possible to allow temporary loading for residents who don't have permits. We do need info on current permit renewal.

Motion for to submit app, plus letter recommending caregiver passes for neighbors.

Mile markers – the mobility committee is open to using the funds set aside for mobility improvements for mile markers for an urban walking trail. The next step is a quote.

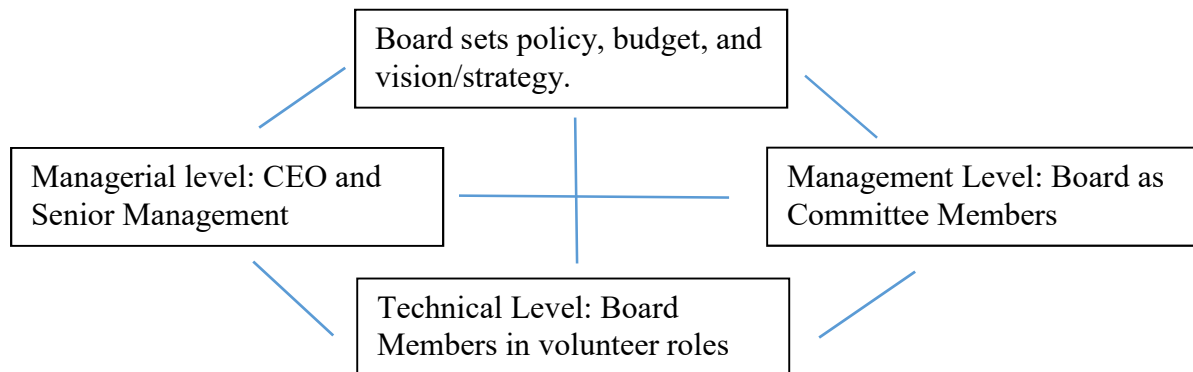
Fundraising – The Highland Park disc golf course has only 9 of 18 holes installed; the rest should go in March 31. Loren got reference materials for hosting disc golf tournaments and run/walks.

There are also 3 carnival companies interested in working with us for 4th of July weekend 2019 if not earlier. Elianna will have a report on grants next time, and Loren will have a timeline.

Communications – Loren would like to see us place physical message boards at key locations in the neighborhood to keep residents updated on what is happening, such as outside the office, by the Bradford stairs, at Bradford/College, the gateway (by Charles), Creston Plaza, Fairbanks stairs, and/or parks. We can also connect with apartment managers.

Health/Nutrition/Education Committee – Elianna has started attending the North End Wellness Coalition. She can share their newsletter with event information and is helping refine their strategic plan, which focuses on mental health, physical activity, and communication.

Working Board – Barb and Elianna attended the working board certification sessions at the Johnson Center. Working boards are characterized by multiple relationships where the board as a whole is responsible for the governance of the organization (vision, strategy, policy, budget) and individual board members can fulfill additional roles equal to or subordinate to staff.



Bylaws – The working board certification sessions also discussed some specific topics for neighborhood associations. There are both benefits and challenges to having paid membership, holding open (vs closed) meetings, and electing board members (vs appointing). As a nonprofit, we can do whichever of those we want, as long as they are within our by-laws. Over the last several months, it’s become pretty clear that we as NOBL would like to eliminate our poll tax. We seem to be committed to a majority of our meetings being open and allowing neighbors to elect all of our board members, while the board retains power to appoint people to fill vacancies. Are there any areas where we want to see multiple options presented by the by-laws committee for further consideration, or other topics we would particularly like them to adjust? We should review their work by October for November adoption.

Semi-Annual Meeting – We are scheduled for May at East Leonard, so we will need to get our next mailing out in 3-5 weeks to announce the curb appeal contest whose winners will be selected at the May meeting. We should package our physical goals for the neighborhood (connector, stairs, rail trail, etc.) for presentation at that occasion, and invite programs like Get the Lead Out, GRFD’s free fire alarms, etc. to provide information for residents at tables at the event. We could ask residents to prioritize projects for the next PILOT allocation. Any other requests or suggestions?

Vision Statement and Activity Screen – As reworked with Todd, our proposed vision statement is: “to be a vibrant, diverse and desirable place to live in Grand Rapids.” We can retain the categories of

physical and social connection, being active in the neighborhood, having voices heard in government decisions, and serving our residents as activity screening criteria. This will help us judge what new opportunities to act on.

HousingNOW – We are coming up on the final push. We need to get back in contact with residents, encourage attendance at the public hearing March 27th, and collect statements on topics like “How have you helped make past development projects better fit the neighborhood?” “What changes would you like to see made to the proposals?” and “What else would you recommend to improve the availability of affordable housing in the neighborhood?”

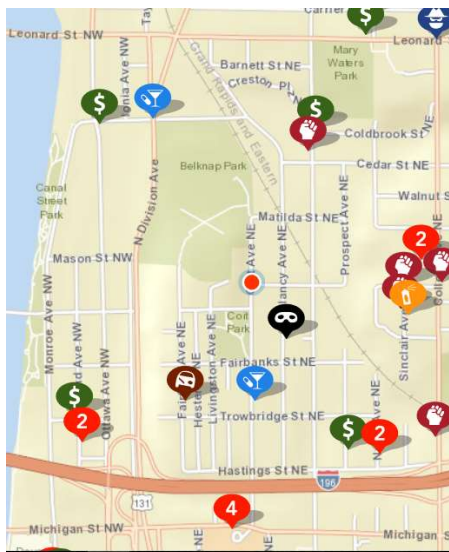
Neighborhood Matching Fund – Applications for next round are due March 31st. NOBL can be fiduciary for multiple groups of 3 people. Each needs a distinct leader. Let’s create groups and submit our ideas.

Homeless Encampment – Code compliance also plays a role in this area; our area’s team lead has been alerted. Elianna has also sent the railroad a message that without denial by March 31 we will plan to paint the graffiti this spring.

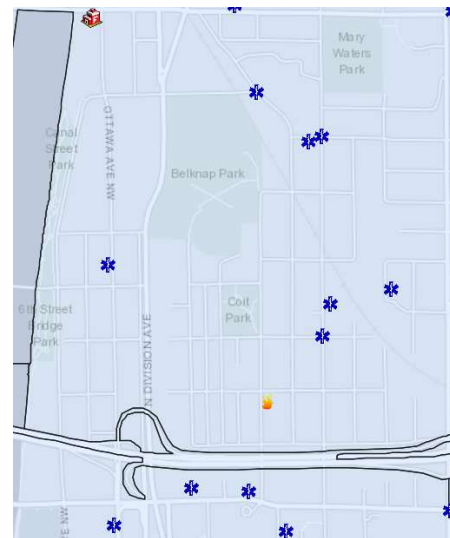
Breakaway Festival – They should decide by the end of the month where to place the Festival, and will set up a meeting if the location is Belknap Park again.

Regular Report Contents:

Crime (last four weeks) from www.crimemapping.com



Fire from <https://grandrapids.maps.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=50bbc7410e5447b99edde0e32d62f4c4> (one week)



Public Safety: I gave a presentation at the Michigan Street CID about the GRPD’s surveillance camera program (will help streamline requests for footage investigating criminal activity). I learned about animal control at KCHD – any animal related call except for noise complaints will go to them; start with the shelter who will forward to sheriff’s office for dispatch. I also learned about the Dispute Resolution

Center which can provide mediation, helped inform CALEA evaluators about GRPD’s crime prevention, and attended the police procedure task force session on policing strategies.

Updates on Old Business

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

Annual Goal Tracking

Fundraisers held: o First o Second

Increased network:

	Start	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Goal
Email	146	156									250
FB	126	137									230
ND	224	233									330
Pd M	70	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		70

Complete current projects:

- Cats – trapped first four cats, more this weekend
- Clear Vegetation – planned for summer
- Communications – first postcard sent, next this spring
- Curb Appeal – designing contest for this spring, judge at May meeting
- Litter Reduction – planning 5 park clean ups with Friends of GR Parks for April-June
- Mobility – getting quote for mile markers for urban walking trail
- Trail Cams – need to research specific device choices
- Trash Cans – need to check in with the Rapid again

Progress on Belknap Hill, Linear Park/Hastings Connector for completion 2020/2021:

Hastings Connector design is making progress, working on securing funding to build

Admin – In addition to standard activities, some information of note: I heard again about the bike share program which MobilityGR will pitch as part of the City budget (not via tax dollars), including electric bikes to help with hilly terrain. DGRI will be working on Michigan Street trail crossings next to the river, as well as streetscape guidelines and a bike lane on Division. Collaboratively, The Other Way is nearly ready to hire their community organizer, who I helped interview. Internally, I’ve also got a lead on an intern. With a volunteer and equipment from Comprenew, we’ve started our computer class for the parents of the afterschool students, with dinner provided by Meijer. I submitted our 990 and application for exemption from property tax.