

Neighbors of Belknap Lookout Board Meeting

Tuesday, April 9, 2019
NOBL office, 700 Clancy
6:30 pm

Mission: To advocate for and enhance the quality of life in the Belknap community.

Vision: To be a vibrant, diverse and desirable place to live in Grand Rapids.

Public Space Goals: Improving access down Belknap hill (design DDA budget FY2020); Hastings Connector & Linear Park (implementation City of Grand Rapids summer 2019 & 2020); Better Pedestrian Connections (MobileGR planning durable crosswalk and “stop for pedestrian” signs).

Add'l Priorities: Social Connections; Active in the Neighborhood; Voices Heard in Local Gov't.

1. Call to order and additions to agenda
2. Presentation – CDBG – Johanna Schulte, City of Grand Rapids
 - a. Any comment on CDBG allocation?
3. Approval of January minutes and financials (Motion)
4. 990
5. Small Group Work
 - a. Long discussion topic: Committees, HR Manual; Report Out for Documentation
 - b. Short discussion topic: Scheduling, Breakaway; Report Out for Decision
6. NLA and/or Community Relations & Racial Equity Committee report out
7. Authorization for Follow Up Letter to Commission on Coit Square
8. Miscellaneous & Public Comment
9. Adjournment

2019 Board Meeting Schedule, 6:30 pm at 700 Clancy Ave NE:

May 14

June 11

~~July 9~~ (off)

August 13

September 10

October 8

November 12 (Annual Meeting at Coit Creative Arts Academy)

December 10 (Old board/new board potluck)

Please watch the mass emails to the neighborhood for additional social event announcements.

We're adding an optional “Eat – and Drink – Local” series on board meeting nights after we adjourn.

Tonight we'll be headed to Linear (1001 Monroe NW) after the meeting.

Neighbors of Belknap Lookout Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 12, 2019, Newberry Common House, 800 Livingston, NE

Board Members Present:

Robin Benton	Brian Bremer	Rob Kennedy	Loretta Klimaszewski
Dan Miller	Dean Rosendall	Loren Sturuss	Jonathan Swets

Board Members Absent:

Todd Leinberger

Staff Present:

Elianna Bootzin

Guests Present:

17

Meeting Minutes:

1. Loren called the meeting to order.
2. Dan welcomed the Board and Guests to Newberry Place.
3. Dean presented CopperRock Construction's proposed development at 826 and 835 Fairview. It involves 17 condos on both sides of the street which represents a density of 1,665 square feet. There will be 29 parking spaces for an average of 1.71 per unit which will be accessed by two curb cut drive ways on the west side of the street and surface parking accessed by Hester Alley at the back of the units on the east side of the street. Artists rendering indicate that the exteriors will complement the existing housing in the neighborhood and that the units on the west side of the street will be spaced far enough apart to allow views of downtown from the street. Prices will range from the 180s for a one-bedroom unit to several hundred thousand for larger units and those with a view of the downtown.

In the discussion that followed, the following points were made:

- a) CopperRock will do extensive engineering work to stabilize the bank on the west side of the development.
- b) The units on the east side of the street will probably have a common dumpster. Those on the west side will probably have individual trash bins.
- c) A new sewer line will be installed to connect the units to the city sewer system and the owner of 827 Fairview will be able to tap into it if he so chooses.
- d) Because the units will be owner occupied condos with a condo association, it is hoped that nuisance activities at the parking lot on the north end of Fairview will be discouraged. (This idea was expressed by the owner of 827 Fairview whose home will be adjacent to the new development and who currently feels isolated by the absence of close neighbors.)

- e) Regarding traffic on Fairview, Dean would like to put in speed bumps or some other feature to slow traffic. Some present noted that the snow plows don't work well with speed bumps. Dean also raised the possibility of installing a photo cell powered timer on the gate at the parking lot since it is sometimes locked during the day which makes it difficult to turn around at the end of Fairview.
 - f) Dean was asked how often he has met with neighbors to discuss the project. He noted that he gave flyers to the neighbors on Hester Alley and that he had met individually with six neighbors and with the NOBL Development committee once.
 - g) Jonathon regretted the loss of the house at 835. Dean and Brian noted that the house has a terrible mold problem and a leaking septic system and so is probably unsalvageable anyway.
 - h) Summary: There appeared to be broad support for the project among those present.
 - i) The Board passed a motion to support Dean's development with the suggestions that the curb cuts use stamped concrete or some other decorative surface material and the brick windows be framed. It was noted specifically that 4 units per building are acceptable on the east side solely because of the buildable land lost for sewer lines. Loretta clarified that she had abstained.
4. The Board approved the Minutes of the January 8, 2019, NOBL Board meeting and the February 19, 2019, NOBL Development Committee meeting and the NOBL Financial Report for January/February 2019.
 5. The Board discussed the format of future meetings:
 - a) Board heard that a consent agenda could include the minutes but best practices suggest excluding the financial statement.
 - b) Loretta recommended that invited speakers should be limited in the amount of time they are given to present.
 - c) Dan suggested spending a few minutes at each meeting to discuss topics of practical concern such as a "succession plan" in the event that someone in the organization who had specific responsibilities left or was unable to perform their duties. Loretta suggested such topics could be discussed in small groups which could offer solutions to the issues raised.
 - d) Board agreed to change the date of Board meetings to avoid conflict with City Commission meeting times. Eliana will send out a "Doodle" survey to determine which day would work best.
 - e) Robin suggested that we share meals and spend a little time at each meeting in social interaction to increase trust and encourage cooperation among Board members.
 - f) Board agreed that we should continue meeting in the office for smaller meetings with Newberry (and possibly 940 Clancy) for larger monthly meetings.
 6. Board approved the CDBG funding application for the coming year.
 7. Robin proposed the establishment of a Community Relations and Racial Equity Committee. (See the notes Elianna distributed prior to the meeting for details.) Robin

suggested that it would complement the work of GARE which is a top down approach to dealing with issues of racial inequity whereas this would be a bottom up approach. He noted that it could serve as a model for other Neighborhood Associations. The Board approved the formation of the new committee and Dan and Loren volunteered to serve on it with Robin.

8. Board asked for monthly updates on the “Work Plan.” (See the notes that Elianna distributed prior to the meeting.)
9. Robin suggested that NOBL should look for a way to raise funds from the Breakaway event that occurs in the neighborhood each summer. Board decided to discuss the issue at the April meeting.
10. Board discussed the PILOT funds allocation. (See the notes that Elianna distributed prior to the meeting.) Board passed a motion to accept the proposal with the changes: transfer \$500 from “Transfer to Parks: Lookout Park, ...” to “Events” and another \$500 from “Lookout Park” to “Beautification” to include lighting on the stairs at Fairbanks.
11. Board discussed other beautification needs such as trash barrels and noted that the L&L Store is willing to help with funds for trash barrels near their location.
12. Elianna reminded the Board that we need to follow up on the staff evaluation and that the Neighborhood Match Fund is open again this month. Robin will apply for the committee and Elianna will apply for block party funding. Loren and Robin expressed interest in the mixer that Midtown is hosting at 7 Monks; Elianna will send details.
13. Annie Stormzand from the Gateway development announced that 25 covered, secure parking spots available at a cost \$125 per month. Elianna will share on social media. She noted that Roasters Coffee should be opening there soon and expressed the hope that once one business locates there, others will be more likely to open there.
14. Terry Morris noted that homeless people are leaving clothing in the Highland Park area which clogs the storm drains and causes erosion of the sidewalks. He also recommended that the signs and dog poop dispensers be located at a more appropriate spot where dog walkers actually enter the park rather than their current location.
15. Board voted to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Daniel Miller, recorder

Meeting Information

1. CDBG – NOBL actually incorporated in 1980 in order to be able to affiliate with the City of Grand Rapids and receive Community Development Block Grant dollars originating from the Federal Housing and Urban Development department to address the crime and blight in the neighborhood through public safety and neighborhood leadership development dollars respectively. Johanna will provide an overview of the program, potentially discussing obligations and restrictions of participation. This program regularly ends up on the Congressional chopping block, so attention is typically needed

each funding cycle. In addition, eligibility is based on having a majority low income population. We may lose the program after a decennial census; discussion for Dec.

Our recommended allocation for July 1, 2019-June 30 (up for public hearing tonight and public comment collected through April 22), is \$20,982 for Neighborhood Leadership and \$18,924 for Public Safety. These figures include a proposed increase in the first in order to build capacity and increased engagement for the Master Planning process, which is probably 2-3 years out. Realizing the increase is dependent on the Federal allocation; if the City receives lower funding then there will not be an increase.

Our current performance: Outcome/Indicator	YTD (3/4)	Goal
# received training - personal safety for home	76	92
# reported feeling safer	71	69
# receiving safety improvements	2	10
# educated on public safety design features	46	50
# places where public safety implemented	3	4
# significant public safety issues IDed	3	4
# significant issues resolved >6 months	3	4
# receiving leadership training.	37	41
# report > knowledge about leadership	29	31
# became involved in board or committee.	11	15
# who improved a neighborhood condition	102	195
# owners contacted about nuisance and/or exterior code	13	30
# issues resolved thru self-compliance.	6	20

2. 990 – See attachment. We will discuss primarily the first two pages as well as any questions you may have. Our Treasurer, Rob Kennedy, reviewed the full document on April 2nd. Thank you to Scott Huebl for filling the form out for us pro bono this year!
3. Longer discussion items: Break up into 2 discussion/work groups
 - a. Group 1: Committees – Committees play a critical role in organizations. Organizations often form unique committees to address specific concerns in their communities. Standing committees continue from year to year to handle on-going issues. Ad-hoc committees have specific assignments to help manage special short-term projects. The ideal number of members on a committee can vary, but 12 or fewer is a manageable size. We should be able to define each committee’s purpose and responsibilities. We currently have a Development (zoning) Committee, form an ad hoc Nominating Committee each year (defined in bylaws), and just established a well-defined Community Relations and Racial Equity Committee. Typical standing committees for neighborhood organizations are **public safety, neighborhood beautification, and economic development.**

Many organizations seek local professionals with expertise in these topics to sit on them. Other committees used by nonprofits generally include:

- i. *Executive Committee*: Officers manage issues requiring attention between regularly scheduled board meetings, set the agenda a week before the meeting, and serve as sounding board and support for staff. Currently just the Chair.
- ii. *Finance Committee*: Treasurer with board and community representatives oversee budget process, annual financial statements and review financial records. Similarly currently just the Treasurer.
- iii. *Fund Development Committee*: Board and community representatives develop and implement fund development strategies and programs and work with the staff to help insure that the organization has adequate resources to maintain the mission of the organization. Business aspect is clearly listed in new CRRE committee responsibilities; other prospects may be addressed there or not. Ideally there is a role for each board member to introduce NOBL to new people.
- iv. *Program Committee*: Board and community representatives work with staff to evaluate programs and services as well as helping to identify new ways that the organization can respond to needs.

Which of these committees do you see it being useful for NOBL to establish?

More urgently, how can we better define the role, responsibility and rules for the Development Committee? (What is the board actually intending to delegate to them?) Note, their process is at <https://www.belknaplookout.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Development-Process.pdf>, which is intended to bring the look and feel of projects they support to the board for further endorsement. (Anything that does not include exterior changes comes directly to the board; anything they oppose does not move forward to the board at all.) At this time, needs for more definition are:

- Defining quorum (may refer to/repeat bylaws for much of this question)
- Determining membership rules (joining, resignation, removal to update list)
- Requiring a standing meeting time
- Reviewing level of authority (above description should match board desire)
- Adjusting the process – one member proposed adding a statement to the outline that “the development committee must approve site plan and elevation drawings before a project is brought to the board for a vote” (I think at the end of step 3, the public meeting, in our current outline).

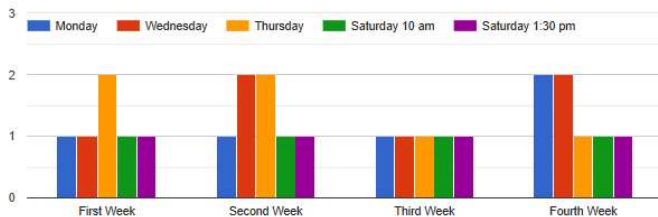
Of the other desired committees you identified in the first step, above, what would be their purpose and responsibilities? (What can they do without board approval?) Any requirements for composition? Quorum? Rules to join, resign or be removed? Meeting frequency? Options for public safety could include tasks distributing crime alerts and telling businesses about GRFD self inspections; members of CRRE or fundraising could take on tasks related to event preparation and outreach/communication.

- b. Group 2: Human Resources - It's important for the board to be involved in the creation of the organization's human resources manual both because the Executive Director is employed by the board (and therefore should be subject to its wishes as outlined in that document) and also because it is the board's responsibility to ensure that the manual is up to date with current employment law. We should be able to crib much of our language from another nonprofit that recently updated theirs, but should establish what the board wants to control / define in the document. This is probably a good opportunity to identify as well what benefits we would like to add in the future as we can afford them. Standard areas the manual should include are:
 - i. An outline of compensation and benefits (currently offer holiday, vacation and sick time, but amount is not defined; often scales up with more years of service; now would be a good time to talk about maternity leave too)
 - ii. Disciplinary procedures
 - iii. Grievance procedures
 - iv. Travel and expense guidelines and procedures (currently covering primarily travel to CDBG-funded training when it also falls within the grant amount)
 - v. Dress code
 - vi. Work schedule guidelines (tricky due to flexibility needed for evenings and weekends with only 30 hours available) (this may actually be the section that talks about the time off structures mentioned above as well as unpaid leave)
 - vii. Technology guidelines including personal phone and email use
 - viii. Severe weather guidelines

Report back main outcomes from worksheets for documentation and approval in May.

4. Shorter discussion items: Break up into 2 discussion/work groups

- a. Group 1: Scheduling – 4 responded, with a max of 2 available for the same dates:



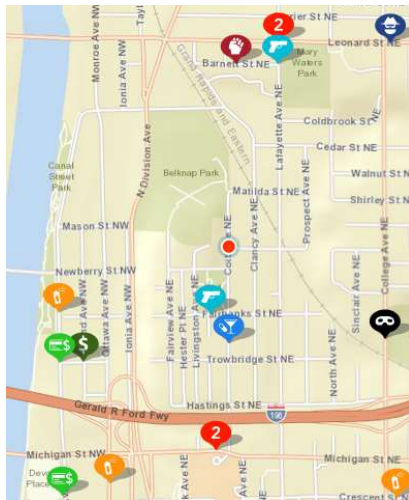
We added two questions after the first three responses; the fourth respondent advocated for an alternating Tuesday schedule starting in May. Other comments:

"I like the current day. Wednesday & Thursdays don't work at all for me. Maybe Monday."
"I'm retired so my schedule is pretty flexible. I won't be here in May and early June."

- b. Group 2: Breakaway – The event is scheduled for Friday August 23 and Saturday August 24 on the www.experiencegr.org calendar. We definitely need to be sure that specific individuals are committed to following through. That said, what can we do as a group to make sure NOBL raises funds as a result of this event?
5. NLA and/or Community Relations and Racial Equity Committee Report Out – It was very exciting to see so many of the things we are planning to address this year (like succession planning and nominating committee/board recruitment) covered in the NLA, and to have enthusiastic support from attendees Dan and Robin for making sure we do them well. Other attendees are welcome to add their thoughts. The first CRRE committee meeting on April 3rd introduced a variety of concepts, including changing systems that hold power to create equitable outcomes, service providers acting as gatekeepers, disaggregating data to show disproportionate impact (examples of low business ownership and high suspensions and expulsions among communities of color), and organizations' propensity focus on optics as opposed to change. We outlined 8 areas of impact to discuss in our power analysis: health, education, criminal justice, environment, health/social services, economics, culture/religion, and communication. Raven from GRAAHI noted they have a health equity index and will be doing in person and online surveys before forming a health workgroup. We listed categories of organization that impact communities generally and named some specific to Belknap. We noted data sources, strategies to pursue to seek influence, local geographic divides, and the importance of making our findings accessible and replicable with a dashboard.
6. Authorization for Follow Up Letter to Commission on Coit Square – City Commission voted no on the Coit Square rezoning on March 26. 2nd Ward Commissioner Jones cited a need for variety of price points (Master Plan), the driveways creating voids that are not customary for the neighborhood and disruptive to the street wall, as opposed to all using the alley (ASP). His colleague Commissioner Kelly said it takes away parking and eliminates lower priced housing like the other 649 new market rate units that have been built in the neighborhood (including Monroe North) since 2011. She claimed using the ground floor as parking was novel and detrimental. Would the board authorize a follow up letter offering the follow up corrections: The streetscape is the same as the originally approved PRD; there is an overall reduction in number of driveways with which the neighborhood is satisfied; parking is largely but not exclusively dependent on the alley due to the grade on the site; this design offers more parking than those previously approved; and low income housing has also been built in the neighborhood since 2011 at Creston Plaza, upgrading what was there previously.

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 – Elianna contacted additional businesses about fire self-inspections and delivered crime alert flyers.

Updates on Old Business

- No further updates on 712 North, office signage, or lighting on stairs.
- Clean up of the homeless encampment has taken place.
- HousingNOW updates were included in the last mass email (including passage of duplexes by right on sufficiently large corner lots; several other neighborhoods opposed but it is in line with our ASP).
- CDBG does not prevent us from using 940 Clancy for larger meetings.
- Elianna also just got in touch with Vik about a trash can at the L&L.
- Loren conducted an evaluation with Elianna; overall it was generally positive with constructive criticism on handling conflict and communication.
- The March work plan was executed as expected; we will be swapping planting from April to May while adding the unspecified preparation steps of National Night Out sponsor outreach and poker application to April.
- Group discussion topics for the May meeting will focus on fundraising and succession planning – we'll spend some time, probably in pairs, on individualized elevator pitches based on language conventions. If ready, Robin may share a pitch for serving as fiduciary for Capacity Builders. Loretta will share some information about Form-Storm-Norm-Perform and Elianna or a guest will talk about collaboration across neighborhood associations (NAC).

Other NOBL updates/use of staff time:

- Continued work on intern recruitment.
- Continued supporting NEWC / urban trail development.
- Participated in Neighborhood Leadership Academy.
- Requested tax exemption at March Board of Review again (unsuccessful).
- Joined garden committee in preparing for growing season at 762 North.
- Got more details on Hastings construction (see next mass email).
- Attended ALPACT (committee on police-community trust).
- Prepared for purchase of 762 North.
- Prepared for and attended first Community Relations and Racial Equity Committee meeting.

Other area news:

- Crosswalk will be installed on Michigan between the river and the post office.
- Highway construction has started! Check the news for more info.
- Road diet for Michigan between College and Eastern is coming soon.
- There will also be construction in Monroe North on Mason Street, fall – spring 2020.

Communication: We received a letter of objection to the 826 and 835 Fairview project from Alan Otis (forwarded via email).