

Neighbors of Belknap Lookout Board Meeting

Tuesday, May 14, 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. Guest – 2nd Ward Commission Candidate Wendy Falb
3. Presentation – Form, Storm, Norm, Perform – Loretta Klimaszewski
4. Approval of April minutes and financials (Motion)
5. Long Discussion Topic – Succession Plan
6. Short Discussion Topic – Adoption of Employee Agreement (Motion)
7. Medium Discussion Topic – Committee Documentation
8. Determination on Future Discussions & Use of ~\$1,300 in Public Safety funds
9. Committee and NLA report outs
10. Authorize Signatories for CDBG (Motion)
11. Miscellaneous & Public Comment
12. Adjournment

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

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 Gray Skies Distillery (700 Ottawa NW) after the meeting.

PLUS! Our next poker fundraiser is July 22-25 – please sign up for at least one shift at Poker shift(s)! <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904044da5ac2fa31-sell4>

Neighbors of Belknap Lookout Meeting Minutes

Tuesday April 9, 2019, NOBL office, 700 Clancy Ave NE

Board Members Present:

Loren Sturrus (Chair)
Todd Leinberger
Robin Benton
Dean Rosendall
Brian Bremer
Dan Miller (Secretary)

Board Members Absent:

Loretta Klimaszewski (excused)
Jonathon Swets
Rob Kennedy (excused)

Staff Present:

Elianna Bootzin (Executive Director)

Guests Present:

Johanna Schulte (City of Grand Rapids)
Chris Swank (GVSU)

1. Loren called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.
2. March minutes and financials were approved as per the consent agenda.
3. Johanna described the background of Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs) which are issued “to benefit low/moderate income residents.” Awarding of grants depends on Census data which identifies “target areas” as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) where more than half of the residents have low to moderate incomes. CDBGs must be applied for annually and are distributed annually. Currently Grand Rapids (GR) is waiting for Congressional appropriation/authorization which should come by the end of April to issue grant funding. CDBG funds are to be used for:
 - a. Leadership Training: civic engagement, code compliance.
 - b. Public Safety: resident engagement, home safety, crime prevention, lighting.Funds are distributed after post-payment requests so Neighborhood Organizations (NOs) should secure other, preferably unrestricted, sources of funding so that they can “front” their expenses for a minimum of six weeks prior to receiving CDBG funds. The allocation of CDBG funds will be reassessed after the 2020 Census, probably in 2021.

Brian: Do CDBGs incentivize economic development? Johanna: The aim of CDBGs is to get low/mod income residents involved in improving their neighborhoods. She noted that the Census counts renters and homeless people as well as owners.

Loren: What are the limits of what we can do with CDBG funds? Johanna: They must meet the goals of the program. They may not be used for fundraising or income generating projects. Or other categories like food and alcohol.

Robin: Does funding decline with gentrification? Johanna: If the Census determines that the proportion of low/mod income residents has fallen, the NO could lose funding.

Dan: Do HUD designated target areas correspond to the boundaries of the NOs?

Johanna: Not exactly. They typically fall within them, but make use of smaller census “block groups” to ensure the area covered is eligible for funding.

Loren: Would CDBGs fund “marketing” of NOs so neighbors are more aware of them?

Johanna: CDBGs won’t fund projects that don’t directly aid low/mod income residents. NOs should look for other, more flexible sources of funding.

Dean: Can you point us to NOs that are doing a good job of developing their neighborhoods in a sustainable way without running into the problem of gentrification?

Johanna: It’s good to promote mixed income housing. It’s hard to find a balance between investing in depressed areas that need economic development and creating conditions in the community where low-income people can no longer afford to live. Michigan state law inhibits rent controls and similar devices so it’s hard to find a good example of neighborhood economic development that does not produce gentrification.

Elianna: Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative might be a good example elsewhere in the country; I believe they are a CDFI (community development finance institution).

Johanna: Community Development Trusts have been tried but can be difficult to deal with because of their restrictions.

Written comments about the allocation of CDBG funds will be accepted until April 22.

4. Board approved the annual financial report to the IRS (990). Elianna will send a thank you card to Scott Huebl who did the report pro bono.
5. Board discussed how to derive revenue from the Breakaway concert. The first year we were asked to recruit volunteers to help with simple tasks (low success, probably no longer an option). Last year they offered a neighborhood pizza party with tickets – not direct revenue, but benefit to neighbors. We mentioned bounce attractions as an option but settled on asking area businesses that are closed on the weekends to donate their parking lots which could be used as paid parking during the concert. Example: the new Mini Storage Depot. Per Brian’s suggestion Loren will draw up a liability statement. The Community Relations and Racial Equity Committee will address logistics. Other issues noted with the concert were attendees ending up in the neighborhood following GPS

(Brian), disruptions (road blocks/poorly coordinated with the school, excessive parking – Robin & Elianna). The City should provide some compensation for the inconvenience. Todd said that the Parks and Recreation Department railroaded the neighborhood into accepting the concert. Elianna said Ruth had previously expressed interest in the City adjusting the sliding scale for event fees include neighborhood compensation.

6. Elianna reported that there was no consensus about a better meeting schedule to avoid conflict with the meeting schedule of the City Commission. Robin suggested and the Board agreed to send an envoy (likely from the Community Relations and Racial Equity Committee) to co-scheduled City Commission meetings where issues affecting the neighborhood will be discussed.
7. Robin reported that the Community Relations and Racial Equity Committee will consider plans to develop a neighborhood “dashboard” to measure progress toward its goals. He said it’s not a matter of blaming anyone but of knowing what is actually happening in the neighborhood so that we can measure progress. It will be replicable throughout the city.
8. Board discussed Human Resources issues including an employee manual. Elianna will send out West Grand and New Development Corporation’s manuals to use as references. Loren suggested that our current needs might be better dealt with in an individual contract than in an employee manual. Elianna noted that offering a paid maternity leave will depend on the proposed increase in CDBG funding. We will need to plug in the number of weeks of general paid time off at the next meeting. Elianna suggested reporting chains for disciplinary issues; there was some confusion about the difference between discipline and grievance which Elianna will research. Maintaining travel coverage when it fits into the CDBG training budget is acceptable. Dress code will be fairly relaxed; Elianna likes requiring no rips or bad words. We understand scheduling will continue to be flexible since the current job is only 30 hours per week. Personal use of NOBL technology is generally okay; no gambling or other unsavory activities. Weather policy will follow GRPS closures. We would like to review the job description at this time as well.

Robin suggested the usefulness of interns to do some of the work and offered to assist with some of the office work after Elianna’s baby is born since he lives close to the office. He also noted that the Johnson Center owes the Board 3 hours of consulting work due to our participation in the Neighborhood Leadership Academy.

9. Robin and Dan agreed to bring a report about what they learned at the NLA to the next Board meeting.

10. Board discussed the committee structure. Loren proposed and the Board agreed to fold the Mobility Committee into the Development Committee since it hasn't met for several months and the areas of responsibility of the two committees seem very similar. Loren will propose answers to the questions at the bottom of page 6 of Elianna's meeting notes for the May 14 Board meeting. We will also aim to articulate when the public meeting and the board vote will be combined. We determined future committees should have at least one board member.
11. The Community Relations/Racial Equity meeting notes are on page 8 of the board packet. Robin noted that we need to compile data from several different sources of activity to come up with a dashboard to monitor the health of the community. The Apple Corporation may have grants to fund the IT work needed to prepare the data base. Dan will consult with colleagues at Calvin College who work in the Social Research Center and in the Community Nursing Program. Robin noted that the "Living Cities" initiative commits the City to collect information about racial disparities. It was recommended that Elianna check in with Stacy Stout, Assistant to the City Manager, about acceptance/rejection of the current application for neighborhood matching funds.
12. Board discussed the City Commission's rejection of the Coit Square project. Elianna reported that Angel Gonzalez is requesting a one year extension to make progress on his second design (which has smaller buildings facing Coit interspersing traditional and modern architecture) since RJM's design was rejected. Dan will prepare a draft letter from the Board to the City Commission expressing the Board's frustration with the approval process which did not appear to take the Board's views seriously.
13. Loren adjourned the meeting at 8:30.

Respectfully submitted by Dan Miller (recorder)

Meeting Information

1. Succession Plan – It is prudent for organizations to prepare a succession plan for contingencies due to the disability, death or departure of the Executive Director. This plan will facilitate the transition to interim and longer-term leadership. Understanding the ED's job description and duties (in our case, including monthly grant paperwork and financial recording) is an important pre-requisite to handling a transition well. The current Executive Director job description is as follows:

The primary responsibility of the Executive Director will be to function in the role of Community Development and Safety of the Neighbors of Belknap Lookout (NOBL). The person in this position will work under the direction of the NOBL board of directors in order to improve the quality of life for residents, business owners, and visitors of the NOBL neighborhood. You will form close working relations with volunteers, city staff, GRPD, GRFD, business owners, and other neighborhood organizations and groups to engage residents of the neighborhood.

Executive Director

The responsibilities of the Executive Director will be Community Development and Safety.

The position will act as the face of NOBL to the diverse residents of the neighborhood, landlords, the city, developers, businesses, neighborhood boards of the city. You will be responsible to smooth the progress of conversations, mediating conflict, and gathering community input to share with public and private entities. As you constantly seek opportunities to move NOBL and its residents forward, you will:

- Respond to the needs of residents who call, email, or visit
- Coordinate neighborhood improvement projects, such as cleanups, workdays, and shoveling for elderly residents, etc.
- Address crime by tracking trends, connecting victims to services, providing security surveys to residents
- Work with homeowners, landlords, tenants and business owners to successfully resolve issues, including noise disturbances, and housing and yard violations
- Host community forums between residents and potential developers
- Recruit, motivate, and retain volunteers for events, committees, workdays, etc.
- Work with newly formed business district to address any rising concerns
- organize and advertise events to the NOBL neighborhood and other nearby neighborhoods
- recruit and manage volunteers
- Serve as staff support for various NOBL committees including maintaining detailed records, minutes, agendas, donations and event task timelines

Marketing, Fundraising and Financial Management

- You will report to the Board of Directors on the financial status of the association that may include managing fundraising campaigns, grant writing, special events
- You will communicate and support scheduled activities of NOBL to interested parties
- Expand and utilize NOBL donor base through annual campaign
- Market the news of the neighborhood
- Grant reporting, including quarterly reports to the City of Grand Rapids and yearly RFP
- Manage social media and email campaigns, plus update the website regularly
- Compile and publish a NOBL annual report

Additional tasks

- Manage the NOBL upper unit apartment by resolving any maintenance issues and processing rent checks
- Manage the NOBL office building including: snow shoveling, lawn services and ordering office supplies

Qualifications

An Associate's Degree and two years of relevant professional experience in community development is preferred. A candidate for the position should be able to manage multiple responsibilities with various deadlines. You will need to be able to be self-motivating and work alone, yet be aware of connecting to the various capabilities and needs of the residents of the neighborhood. NOBL is a non-profit organization and you will be need to stick closely to budget, and be aware of funding possibilities that would support the work you are doing. You will also be able to facilitate various Boards and work group functions, keep them on task, and be aware of conflicts of interest. It would be helpful to have community development, nonprofit management, fund development, or other relevant experience.

Hours

Schedule is flexible, with many evening and some weekends required, accumulating to 30 hours a week. Annual pay is \$30,000 with paid holidays, vacation, and sick leave.

Current scenario: Temporary Planned Absence (Maternity Leave starting June 24). My current anticipation is that I will want to have minimal responsibilities through the month of July, and tentatively commit to working 10 hours per week starting August 5, 20 hours per week starting September 2, and return to the full 30 hours per week starting September 30. Depending on how things go I could accelerate at a faster pace. If I need to go more slowly, hours missed (between actual and the planned cap) will not be paid. Since the City is NOT receiving the

expected increase in CDBG funds, we will need to handle this situation within our existing budget. I believe this means the board can either offer me those hours as paid OR have me take the time off unpaid in order to hire someone to fill in on a temporary basis. I have noted the key scheduled duties below, and believe we would do alright without supplementation. If there are specific tasks from the job description that you particularly want to have handled, I think that would be the driving factor in selecting an unpaid leave with temporary assistance.

Expected preparation (key tasks around communication, reporting and events):

- Ideally include National Night Out flyers with Dumpster Day announcement.
- Dumpster Day June 15, 8 am to 12 pm at 700-704 Prospect Ave NE.
- Secure National Night Out Vendors and other key arrangements.
- Complete end of June monthly and end of grant cycle annual reporting before leave begins. If not done, these items are due July 15.
- Preprogram July and August email and some social media.
- Secure extension for Neighborhood Match Fund reporting due July 31.
- Set out of office messages on phone and email, schedule mail hold 6/24-7/8.
- Bring blank checks home.

Expected activity during leave (basic business continuity, ensure fundraiser success):

- Order cat food online for Loretta (GVSU PILOT-funded cat project)
- Prep checks July 8-9 for signature, enter in QuickBooks online.
- Sign up for 2nd hold mail, for delivery August 5.
- Attend poker event July 22-25.

Critical board tasks during leave (basic business continuity, ensure fundraiser success):

- Loren (or Brian?) as repair contact for tenant.
- Robin come to Elianna's house July 8 to drop off mail.
- Loren or Rob (or Dan or Todd) come to Elianna's house July 9 to sign checks.
- Poker shift(s)! <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904044da5ac2fa31-sell4>

Optional board tasks during leave (maintain presence at regular meetings):

- Date TBD, prob a Friday 11 am late in June, local partners mtg @ 940 Clancy
- Thursday June 27, neighborhood meeting at City Hall, 9th floor, 9-11 am
- Tuesday July 9, Clancy St Tactical team (bldg. @ 940 Clancy), 3 pm
- Friday July 12, Monroe North Biz Assn @ Monroe Comm Church, 8 am
- Thursday July 18, North End Wellness Coalition, 9:30-10:45 am @ 205 Carrier
- Date TBD, prob a Friday 11 am late in July, local partners mtg @ 940 Clancy
- Thursday July 25, neighborhood meeting at City Hall, 9th floor, 9-11 am
- Saturday July 27, Eat Local at North Boundary Subway (Leonard), 12 pm

Additional scenario 1: Temporary Unplanned Absence (short or long term)

- The Executive Director or the ED's next of kin should inform the Board Chair of the absence as soon as possible. The Chair should convene a meeting of the officers to affirm the plan or make modifications as appropriate.
- The officers should appoint an acting Executive Director. Options include Megan Kruis at Creston Neighborhood Association and Annette Vandenberg at West Grand Neighborhood Organization. If total compensation for the interim is to remain under \$3,000 making a direct approach and request rather than an open search should be acceptable for this step. Duties may be split among multiple individuals.
- The person appointed as Acting Executive Director shall have the full authority for decision-making and independent action as the regular Executive Director.
- The Chair shall monitor the work of the Acting Executive Director.
- The Chair will notify staff, board, and neighbors of the delegation of authority.
- The Acting Executive Director will notify key contacts such as NOBL's CDBG contract administrator at the City, NOBL's tenant, and NOBL's mortgagor (LMCU), as well as GRPD contacts (community officer and crime prevention trainer) of the change.
- The decision for when the absent ED returns should be determined by ED & Chair.

Additional scenario 2: Permanent Change in Executive Director

- Follow above procedures, plus the full board should appoint a Transition and Search Committee at its next regularly scheduled board meeting to plan and carry out a transition to a new permanent Executive Director. Consider the need for outside consulting, an Interim Executive Director, and planning for either if applicable.

Review plans annually. This will help us stay up to date with whether we have additional talent in-house to promote and consider their compensation changes. At that point we would add org charts and have the expected internal interim sign the approved process.

Elianna has compiled a detailed password document (including website login) for Loren along with some operational details, key contacts, financial information, etc. It mentions as we determined in January that Elianna and all officers can sign checks. MPCU has the minutes on file and officers can go log their own signatures. Elianna will collect signatures to go with the personal information previously compiled for LMCU.

What is the current decision on paid vs unpaid leave? Are any other changes needed?

2. Adoption of HR Documentation – The following section of the packet includes a draft “employment agreement”. There are a few generic blanks to fill in (particularly regarding paid time off [vacation, sick], and generalizing or adapting the paid/unpaid leave arrangements [or going case by case]). After filling in those blanks and making any broadly applicable changes, the board will be asked to make a motion to endorse the agreement and authorizing the Chair to execute it with the Executive Director.

Neighbors of Belknap Lookout Employment Agreement Proposed May 2019

Employee Name
Employee Address
Employee Address Line 2

Welcome! Neighbors of Belknap Lookout (NOBL) looks forward to a productive relationship with you advancing our mission to advocate for and enhance the quality of life in the Belknap community. Signed copies of this agreement are required of staff and kept in personnel files.

Employment Practices

- You have been hired for __ hours/week at \$__./hr. You will be covered for statutory fringe benefits such as social security and unemployment compensation.
- NOBL is an Equal Opportunity Employer.
- NOBL is an at-will employer. This means that NOBL has the right to terminate the employment relationship with or without notice, and with or without cause. The employee has the same right to terminate the employment relationship.
- Although our employees are employed at-will, we request that any employee who resigns provide advance written notification.
- NOBL does not discriminate on the basis of disability and offers reasonable accommodations so long as they do not present an undue hardship. Please submit requests for accommodation in writing.
- NOBL will not tolerate unlawful and/or improper harassment or intimidation, including sexual harassment, which will result in discipline up to and including discharge.
- The date of termination of employment will be considered as the last actual day worked unless alternative severance arrangements have been made. Any organizational property must be returned at that time.

Workplace Conduct

- Your regularly scheduled work hours are: _____. If you will be absent from work because of illness or accident, notify ____ as soon as possible. If the absence should continue beyond initial expectations, the supervisor must be notified so that plans are made accordingly. NOBL may request a doctor's note to ensure it is safe to return.
- Confidential information may come in the form of phone calls, emails, visits, meetings, or conversations. It is imperative that information understood to be confidential in nature, remains confidential.
- Relatives of employees are not eligible for hire. Exceptions may be made where individuals possess specialized education, training or certification when such a decision is in the best interest of NOBL and alternate supervision is available.

- Technology provided by NOBL is intended to facilitate the performance of organizational duties by organization staff. NOBL reserves the right to monitor and review computer documents and files, email and Internet communications transmitted from or received on its computers or computer system when it is determined to be appropriate. Passwords will be stored for organizational continuity.
- You may use technology provided by NOBL for personal purposes provided the content is not unsavory or illegal (ex. gambling, porn) and that such use does not impair your completion of assigned tasks.
- You are expected to complete and adhere to the same conflict of interest disclosure and policy used by NOBL's boards and committees annually.
- Dress needs may vary. You are encouraged to wear clothes good for physical labor during activities like outdoor cleanups; business casual or above for City board and commission meetings. No rips or coarse language should be portrayed at any time.

Performance Expectations

- You will report to _____, who will prepare and discuss your annual review.
- The same individual will provide you with timely opportunities to address any other problems that arise to attitude, attendance, work performance, or conduct which are serious but do not warrant immediate termination. NOBL reserves the right to proceed with immediate termination if appropriate. None of the action steps will modify an employee's at-will status.

Employee behaviors that will result in corrective action include, but are not limited to: Conduct that is disruptive to NOBL's operation including unsatisfactory job performance, excessive absenteeism/tardiness, and failure to notify supervisors when tardiness or absenteeism must occur; Behaviors that violate government law, or behaviors that are immoral, abusive, indecent, or include obscene or abusive language; Behaviors that fail to observe fire and safety rules; or safe work practices; and Willful damage of property.

Conduct which may warrant immediate involuntary termination includes, but is not limited to misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions in your employment application, theft, illegal harassment, discrimination, fraud, willful falsification of records, coming to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the possession or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace, the possession or use of pornography, commission of an unlawful act, insubordination, and violation of NOBL's conflict of interest policy.

- If you disagree with corrective action that has been taken or have another serious grievance, you may begin by communicating with your supervisor. Should that remain unsatisfactory, you can bring the complaint to the full Board of Directors.

Pay Practices

- You will need to track your hours by Administration/Fundraising, Public Safety, and Neighborhood Leadership to facilitate organizational reimbursement by CDBG.

- Paychecks will be provided once a month after each board meeting. FICA, Federal, and Michigan State Withholding Taxes are deducted from your salary in accordance with the Federal and State laws.
- You may use flex time within a pay period provided it does not interfere with regularly scheduled duties.

Time Off

- NOBL’s 8 paid holidays are: New Year’s Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day following, Christmas Eve or New Year’s Eve, or 1/2 day for each, and Christmas Day.

- Paid Time Off: Upon the conclusion of 3 months service, employees will receive vacation and sick day credit at the following annual rates, retroactive to the beginning of employment:

| | |
|------------|-----------|
| Year 1: | ___ weeks |
| Year 2: | ___ weeks |
| Years 3-5: | ___ weeks |
| Years 5+: | ___ weeks |

In each instance above, a “week” of vacation is equal to the number of hours you work a week. You should avoid taking vacations during and immediately before major NOBL events (National Night Out on the first Tuesday in August) and critical tasks; notify your supervisor at least two weeks in advance.

- Jury Duty: Employees called to jury duty are given a leave of absence with pay at their regular rate for working time lost up to the number of hours per work they would normally work.
- Bereavement: In the event of death in your immediate family, you may have up to three nonconsecutive days off, with pay, to handle the family affairs and attend the funeral. For this policy, “immediate family” is defined as: father, mother, step-father, step-mother, sibling, step-sibling, spouse(partner), child, step-child, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sibling-in-law, grandparents, and grandchildren. Additional unpaid days of leave may be requested of and granted by your supervisor.
- Paid/Unpaid Leave: _____
- Weather Policy: If GRPS is closed, NOBL is closed. Hours can typically be made up during the pay period, so will be unpaid unless specifically determined otherwise.

Conferences and Travel Expenses

- See travel policy prepared for CDBG (training and transportation currently covered only so long as it fits within the budgeted CDBG grant allocation).

Health & Safety

- NOBL covers each employee with Workers Compensation Insurance. No deduction from the employee’s salary is made for this coverage. In order to comply with our Workers

Compensation Insurance, all on-the-job injuries are reported immediately to the employee's supervisor. NOBL requires an Injury Report Form be completed and submitted.

Receipt and Signature

I, _____ (Employee's Name) have received NOBL's Employment Agreement. I will comply with this document.

Employee's Signature

Date

Attachments

- Job Description
 - Conflict of Interest Policy and Disclosure Form
 - Orientation Packet
3. Adoption of Committee Documentation – Loren should have some updates towards a proposal for us.
 4. Determination on Future Discussions: Should we continue with whole group discussion topics (one long, one short) or try breaking up into two groups again (two long, two short)? Just next month or whole year? How do we want to make sure we use up our CDBG public safety funds (about \$1,300 unplanned for before cycle ends June 30)? Prepay part of maternity leave? Buy supplies for racial equity portion of CRRE? Other?
 5. Committee and NLA report outs

The Development Committee met with CopperRock on 5/8 regarding 614 Fairview and aside from aesthetics was ok with two buildings with a total of 5 units and 7 parking spaces; it will meet again shortly after the board meeting. The Public Hearings for 826 and 835 Fairview will be held on Thursday May 23 at 1:40 pm or shortly thereafter at 1120 Monroe NW (2nd floor). There may also a neighborhood meeting on medical marijuana at 49 Coldbrook NE in the future (no exterior changes currently anticipated). L&L reconstruction is two years out. Angel received a 1 year extension for Coit Square.

The Community Relations and Racial Equity Committee met 4/25. We discussed the City's proposed Human Rights Ordinance and noted we needed to add housing to our list of power analysis areas. As we recapped that concept, disparate impact and disproportionality surfaced as the actual impact while the result can become a human rights report. Pittsburgh recently published 80 equity indicators which were grouped into 4 of the categories we intend to consider. We talked a bit about what's been going on in the south side of town, food deserts, etc. Elianna will email the committee to identify the top 3 categories to tackle first (also brainstorming by email) as well as to address community relations tasks. Our next in-person meeting will be May 22.

Neighborhood Leadership Academy report out submitted by Daniel Miller, April 23, 2019

Topic One: “Racial Equity”

1) Types of Racism:

Individual—Privilege + Power

Institutional—current policies and practices

Structural/Systemic—the ongoing effects of historical racism

2) Equality versus Equity (as both a condition and an approach):

Treating everyone the same way regardless of their individual needs and abilities versus treating people with consideration for their individual needs and abilities (e.g., income, education, race, gender, physical ability, age, etc.) “When you are accustomed to privilege, equity feels like oppression.”

3) Racial Equity:

Focus on challenging/changing systems, policies, and outcomes that perpetuate racial disparities. Proactive, not just reactive; on-going attention to issues, not just when there’s a problem. Addresses power centers to make changes even though that can be controversial.

4) Racial Equity Tool Kit:

Proposal>Data>Community Engagement>Analysis>Strategies>Implementation>back to Data gathering to determine success/need to alter the approach.

Suggested Readings:

Randall Jelks, African Americans in the Furniture City: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Grand Rapids (2006)

Richard Rothstein, The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America (2018)

Todd E. Robinson, A City Within a City: The Black Freedom Struggle in Grand Rapids (2012)

Jeffrey Kleiman, Strike!: How the Furniture Strike of 1911 Changed Grand Rapids (2006)

Topic Two: “Transformational Leadership” (versus transactional leadership)

1) Transformational Leaders are “hosts” not “heroes”:

They grow new leaders to succeed them rather than making themselves indispensable.

They work to make the organization flatter, less hierarchical.

They don’t try to “drive the conversation” or let one or two opinionated people drive it, to the exclusion of other voices

2) Intersectionality:

Everyone is a unique combination of many different and overlapping identities (race, gender, occupation, education, physical abilities, age, etc). Many of these qualities are invisible to others. We must take time to get to know each person by asking them about their “personal stories” so that we can appreciate their uniqueness. “What makes you who you are?”

3) Not “cultural competence” but “cultural curiosity”:

Don’t assume you know what certain groups are like, ask questions and be open to learning about others. If you make a mistake and offend someone, don’t get defensive, open yourself up to learning new ways of addressing people. “Teach me a more appropriate way to address you.”

- 4) Inclusion = participation, not just representation (“tokenism”)

How do decisions get made in your organization? Who sets the agenda???

How does information get disseminated in your organization? Who is “in the know” and who is not? Need to use multiple media of communication (flyers, facebook, twitter, etc.) to catch different audiences.

Further Information:

See CONA for templates for audits, time sheets, employee manuals, etc.

Topic Three: “Community Engagement and Empowerment”

- 1) It takes up to eight contacts to get people to make a commitment to your organization.
- 2) Success and failure are connected. Don’t let fear of failure stop you trying new things.
- 3) When people make suggestions but don’t receive feedback or see any changes, they go silent.
- 4) Use real photos (not stock photos) in your promotional literature. When people see someone they know in your flyers or minutes, they take more interest.
- 5) Fundraising:

Success is not only measured in money raised but in relationships formed. Fundraising is about encouraging friends to invest in something that they want to see succeed. There is a strong correlation between what people care about, their core values, and what they give to. Why does NOBL exist? Why should neighbors care about it? They need a “WHY”. Always follow up after a fundraising event with thank-you letters and invitations to volunteer. Ask them: “What did you learn about our organization?” When you make a mistake, build trust by admitting it openly and taking corrective action asap.

Topic Four: “Board Governance and Leadership”

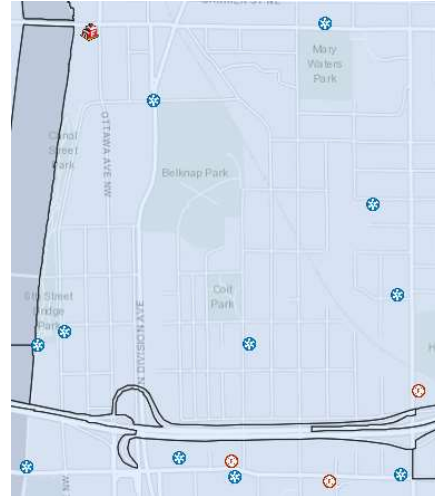
- 1) Boards decide how to raise and deploy resources to achieve the goals that the Board has set in accordance with the mission of the organization and the by-laws.
- 2) Boards have the duties of care, loyalty, and obedience. To avoid charges of “conflict of interest” keep full minutes (evidence of conformity to the by-laws).
- 3) Set goals for the Executive Director and the Board members. Review everyone annually to see how well they have achieved their goals.
- 4) Review Board membership annually and develop a recruitment strategy to diversify skills/expertise, gender/ethnic representation, economic status (renters vs. owners), etc.
- 5) Include an educational component (10 to 15 minutes) in each Board meeting to expand the Board’s awareness of best practices.
- 6) Prepare a new board member packet of info with history of organization, member obligations (e.g., attendance, confidentiality, fund raising, monetary contributions, etc.), contact info, meeting times and places, committee structure, officers and their responsibilities, job descriptions,
- 7) Create a “succession plan” in the event someone leaves or is unable to carry out their functions: Who can sign checks? Who has the website password? Who has the financial info? Etc.

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 created educational materials on exterior stairs and railings, and noted the first set of addresses that need to receive them. The mailing should go out before we meet.

Updates on Old Business

- No further updates on 712 North, office signage, homeless encampment, HousingNOW, trash can at L&L or lighting on stairs.
- 762 North: The City is stepping in to help with Land Bank property sales. They want to form a comprehensive plan. Our transaction will likely take place in September.
- April work plan results: Stair/railing outreach slightly delayed but on track.
- May work plan changes: Without PILOT funds in hand, we will not move forward on planting at this time; Dumpster Day is scheduled for June 15.
- Community Relations: The CRRE Committee has not adequately taken up either an envoy to City Commission for double-scheduled evenings or handling parking lot outreach etc to raise funds during Breakaway.
- Interns: We have secured a spring/summer PR intern and a fall Social Work intern (with 1 hr/wk professional oversight for the latter graciously provided by West Grand). Additional fields are being considered/sought as well.
- NMF: We received \$500 in funding for at least 3 block parties in May-July, with emphasis on reaching new areas (vs repeating previous locations).

Other NOBL updates/use of staff time:

- Providing nonprofit operations training to Calvin geography student, who is in turn producing a digital map of fruit trees in the neighborhood.
- Park clean ups!

- Supporting NEWC generally and with the North Quarter Pathways.
- Acquired a new hot water heater for the building.
- Further explored property tax exemption; most likely to get office space only. Will wait to see how Eastown and Roosevelt Park do; perhaps try next year.
- Submitted lots of event sponsorship and grant applications, mostly for 40th anniversary (most declined) and general operations with focus on CRRE. Also have Census support grant (collaboration with NECAA and Highland Park) ready for submission on May 15.

Other area news:

- Our neighborhood was highlighted in a MiBiz article about the City's proposed Displacement Policy: <https://mibiz.com/sections/real-estate-development/developers-would-pay-for-displaced-gr-residents-under-proposed-policy>.
- The City is also considering a CPTED (crime prevention through environmental design) ordinance for places that sell controlled substances (especially liquor stores) and possibly also massage parlors. They would take an education and low/no-cost improvement approach with most, seek façade improvement grants to provide additional carrots, and target those spots with lots of calls for police service for more aggressive enforcement. It adds exterior trash cans and keeping interior fixtures 5 feet from windows!
- GRPD staffing study emphasized operational changes around who does what, creating efficiencies with modern technology and adjusted work flow.
- The City and Urban Core Collective will be running a Develop with Us pilot between now and the end of the year – providing 3 facilitated development meetings in neighborhoods with varying capacities before Planning Commission hearings to test out a meeting toolkit and make the case for providing this service across all projects for more equitable involvement.
- GR Pickleball is hosting tournaments at Belknap Park June 14-16, July 11-14.
- Bids to work on Belknap, Lookout and Reservoir Parks are open; completion of construction is expected to be reached in November.
- NLA Fall 2019 Dates - Saturdays, Oct 5, Oct 19 and Nov 2, 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- GR FY2020 budget includes decommissioning of the water building on Monroe for future daylighting of Coldbrook creek, etc.
- GR FY2020 budget also includes civilian staff for GRPD to focus on realigning job duties (admin to nonsworn personnel) so officers can be out on the streets more, plus night/weekend community officers. Eastown recommends sharing our opinions with Commission on this topic.
- Don Lee from Eastown is also continuing conversations around a GR charter amendment to form 8 wards (~25,000 residents each) to create a system of better (more local, reflective) representation. Commission has until June 11 to recommend it themselves, if not it will be a ballot proposal. Don recommends having conversations on this topic and sharing opinions as well.