**Neighbors of Belknap Lookout Board Meeting**

**Monday September 13, 2021, 6:30 pm on Zoom:**

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84768261679?pwd=dURQczVTcFIzMCt5Z3FScFh6MkhpZz09](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84768261679?pwd%3DdURQczVTcFIzMCt5Z3FScFh6MkhpZz09&sa=D&source=calendar&usd=2&usg=AOvVaw00fLWxzNF-azl9__-T74k1)

**Need to connect by phone? Dial by your location**

**+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)**

Meeting ID: 847 6826 1679 Passcode: 192712

**2021-2024 Statements**

**Mission**: To empower residents of the Belknap neighborhood to identify their interests, support their own well-being, and to facilitate community health and prosperity.

**Vision:** A neighbor driven organization, committed to making a deep impact on the major institutions around us and collectively improving our built environment and our neighbors’ quality of life.

**Values: Justice Community Quality of Life Accountable**

**COMMUNITY STANDARDS:**

• When there is a disagreement acknowledge the other’s viewpoint by restating what you believe they are saying.

• Be considerate.

• No attacks.

• Be constructive.

• Assume good intent.

• Check your privilege.

• Step away if you need to

• Bring to the table the point of view of those who are not represented.

• Allow for leaning/be aware of your own triggers.

• Lean in if you tend to speak less, lean back if you tend to speak more.

**Agenda**

* Roll Call
* Last Month’s Minutes
* Talk about each area of the Strategic Plan
* Subcommittees
* Guests
* Miscellaneous

**Meeting Details**

* Roll Call   
    
  Ellie Walborn-Henry (acting chair)  
  Dan Miller (secretary)  
  Amy Gautraud (treasurer)  
  Kara Harrison Gates  
  Loren Sturrus  
    
  Need new chair or vice in position this month.  
  Role is to lead meetings, and serve as Elianna’s supervisor between meetings. The term will only be through December.  
  Nomination round.  
  Explain nominations.  
  Bring forward a clear candidate or discuss further.

Confirm with 5 Finger Poll.

Elect additional members? (Sheri Munsell)  
  
Using 5 Finger Poll until Sociocracy is in place

* Last Month’s Minutes  
    
  **Neighbors of Belknap Lookout Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, August 9, 2021, Zoom Meeting**

**Members Present:** Ellie Walborn-Henry (Acting Chair)Kara Harrison Gates

Loren Sturrus Dan Miller (Secretary)

**Staff Present:** Elianna Bootzin (Executive Director)

**Guests Present:** Bill Hebert (Dev Chair) Chris Meyer (MI Entertainment)

Evette Pittman (City Events Staff) Greg Retzlaff (MSW intern)

1. Ellie called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

2. The Board discussed the recent Upheaval Concert

Elianna summarized comments received both positive and negative.

Loren: Belknap Lookout should receive greater compensation from the concert organizers owing to the disruption caused to the community.

Ellie: There should be fuller and more timely communication about upcoming events of this type.

Dan: My neighbors complained that the concert was too loud and it went on until 11 o’clock on Friday and Saturday.

Chris: Promised more and better and more timely communication. Part of the reason for not wanting to promise “perks” such as free tickets and pizza in advance of the concert is that these are designed for the neighbors and if notice is given too early, the word gets out far beyond the neighborhood and it becomes unmanageable.

Ellie: If you want NOBL to help getting the word out, four days is not enough.

Bill: Why is this concert held at Belknap Lookout?  
Chris: It’s a natural amphitheater and its an urban venue which appeals to people who don’t want to go way out of town to a camper event such as Rothbury.

Evette: Notice should be given two to four weeks in advance. Further out than that and the announcement tends to be forgotten which defeats the purpose of advance warning. The Grand Rapids-Kent County Convention Arena/Authority (CAA) hopes to build a new amphitheater along the Grand River (on the site of the City’s 201 Market complex) which could become an alternative venue for such events.

Ellie: The notice given was pretty inconspicuous—at the bottom of a communication from the City.

Evette: The Breakaway concert on August 27and 28 will be better publicized.

Gregory: I will be studying the neighborhood as part of my MSW. Parking during the concert seems to be an issue; some residents of Coit Plaza had trouble getting in and out. Also, quite a bit of trash was left behind. Greg mentioned some residents seemed to feel that they had no right to speak about it. He’s not sure why but will try to find out.

Kara: Thanked Chris for listening and noted that he is based in Grand Rapids so has an interest in making the community a good place for people.

3. The Board discussed the Strategic Plan.

Elianna: The new Board decision-making procedures are based on the principles of “circle forward” discussions and Sociocracy. The consent concept means not moving forward on a proposal until all objections have been overcome.

Loren: Asked if compensation for subcommittee members ($599 per year/per person = ~$1800 per subcommittee) is sustainable since NOBL’s funds come primarily from a GVSU grant that is scheduled to phase out and from CDBG funds that are at risk as Belknap Lookout’s demographic composition changes. (They are currently built into the budget.)

Kara: The Scorecard for development projects won’t fly given the current composition of the Development Committee.

Elianna: Committees report to and will be selected by the Board.

Loren: We don’t currently have a full Board. There might be big changes on the Board after November (elections). Developers want predictability and the Scorecard can provide that.

Dan: Agreed that the Scorecard is a good idea for providing stability. Sociocracy may not work with the Board because it is not a “community.” It works at Newberry Place because they all live in the same community and have learned to work together. But Board changes every year.

Ellie: Agrees that frequent changes in composition of Board may make Sociocracy impractical.

Loren: Sociocracy can become coercive—objectors can be worn down until the “comply” with the majority.

4. Elianna reported on project completion indicators.

Kara: Bringing internet to Belknap Lookout could be a huge benefit to residents but there could be liability issues.

Elianna: We could ask the City to operate our neighborhood network.

Kara: We should find out about costs and insurance issues before we make a decision.

Elianna: Wednesday is Alley cleanup day. Dan volunteered to help.

Kara: Reported on crime in 600 block of Livingston. Alan followed up with mother whose two sons have been responsible for 18 visits by the GRPD.

Loren: A young man was beaten and robbed behind 700 Livingston. The victim said he recognized the attackers as two men who live in the neighborhood. The property owner can get a police report.

Dan: Can we ask the GRPD to assign a community police officer to Belknap Lookout?

Elianna: There’s a tension between having four officers assigned to the neighborhood across all shifts contrasted with their needing to respond primarily to violent crimes.

Kara: The new apartment development at the 600 block should help to change the character of the street which is now quite dangerous and has witnessed several sexual assaults. The Principal of Coit School is very supportive of the new project for that reason. The Coit project would like NOBL to express support for its application for Brownfield funds to clean up the site. The low-income housing that GVSU is building north of the Finklestein Center should also improve the neighborhood. And Spectrum and other stakeholders are discussing building a connector from North Monroe to Belknap Lookout.

The other board members present agreed to send a communication to Brownfield about its appreciation for the low income apartments and environmental remediation. Amy concurred by text.

Elianna: Discussing GVSU and the impact of their investment policy on vacant houses is still on the docket for next meeting.

5. Miscellaneous Discussion

Elianna: Sheri wants to join the Board on Robin Benton’s recommendation.   
Ellie: The Executive Committee could meet to vet her application.

6. The Board voted to adjourn at 8 pm. The next meeting will be on Monday, September 13, at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted, Daniel Miller, Board Secretary

* **Talk about each area of the Strategic Plan**

Sociocracy Training:

We actually just tested out the election process earlier! Now I’d like to share some key points from a story related in We the People: Consenting to a Deeper Democracy (p 169).

It follows a consultant at a residential school. With lots of schedules lined up for important decision making, but lots of varied concerns about the proposed changes, she introduced the concept of consent.

It sounds like consensus but actually asks if a decision is in your range of tolerance. So she gave a benign example of shopping for clothes, preferring blue or green or occasional warm colors. But she would not pick something yellow.

So then she asks if they can tolerate the actual proposal of closing a specific unit. If not, she collects their objections. Two people specifically objected, and gave their reasons. But that was not the time to address the content of the objections, interruptions were not accepted.

After knowing what all the objections were, she started seeking more information about what might resolve the first one – this is when the additional perspectives are helpful. With the first objection resolved, the second can be addressed.

Sometimes the answers come from reframing other information we already know to take a new view of the expected downsides. Sometimes we have to assign people to figure out an additional piece of logistics in addition to the rest of what we have planned.

Once all objections are resolved, and the proposal restated if needed to address the change, then another consent round ensures there are no further objections and the proposal has passed. In our case, we can continue using the 5 finger poll.

What’s next for us and Sociocracy? **Training the new board on “Appendix D: Sociocracy for One” in January** to embed many of the principles within their operations, and bringing the same practices into our committees. **Adding an Implementation Circle to our 2023 roster and bumping bylaws revision to 2024**.

Additional Committee Supports / Finalize Recruitment

Meals – We have been providing meals from the PILOT Events line,   
typically around $55 per month when the board is in session. Meals are not eligible for CDBG. Assuming we meet in person, we will continue to use the PILOT Events line for multiple committees meeting in person.

Interpretation – Hispanic Center of West Michigan offers interpretation for $50 per hour during M-F 8-5, and $55 outside of that. If an applicant speaks primarily Spanish we can cover this need from CDBG Leadership eligible for reimbursement.

Childcare – Unless we very carefully work this cost into the contracts for the committee members, it should more likely come from PILOT Events as well. We are due to create forms for handling petty cash, and can easily make a second version for committee members to report childcare expenses for reimbursement.

The Public Safety Committee and Racial Equity Committee in particular   
have large projects assigned to them that will consume a significant amount of resources – for Public Safety, the Temporary Bulb Out Installation ($10,000) and Restorative Practice Training ($6,000) and for Racial Equity, the Inclusion Filters ($5,000). The first two have a first bid from local consultants and the third is a wild guess. We’ll talk more about the Bulb Out in the PILOT section. The Restorative Practices we’re expecting to try for a Neighborhood Match Fund grant. For now I’m curious how broadly we want to seek additional bids for something not likely to be provided by many other vendors.

**I believe we are ready to go ahead and post our committee and board positions! Loren has identified that we will need to make changes to our conflict of interest policy to complete the contract process with our committee members.**

Feedback on Scorecard / Development Process

The Development Committee finalized the scorecard criteria and process at their meeting this month. It is ready for your review before distribution to neighbors for comment. Note: We have omitted both the Community Benefits Agreement and Racial Impact Study as we are not able to provide clear guidance on how to meet these items at this time. A future CBA draft may be created using <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e907d1c6f62ac522c31bff5/t/5f79deb2f54a4032051b0941/1601822409403/CBA+Toolkit+for+Website.pdf>

Item by Item review of Accountable: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1elIC6rTN1ylrlrCfhs6GLvykmwUM98tfG74S_X2i8XY/edit#gid=0>

Does GVSU create blight? (One tenant does feel we should ask the GVSU Board of Trustees or appropriate decision maker to increase the amount they are willing to invest in their properties.)  
Reference 3 way Memoranda of Understanding between NOBL, GVSU and the City: <http://grandrapidscitymi.iqm2.com/Citizens/FileOpen.aspx?Type=4&ID=2819>

* Subcommittees  
    
  Development: Completed scorecard preparation as noted.

Racial Equity: Booked Kymie Spring from Creston Neighborhood Association to speak about Climate Change resolution at October meeting, invited City Commissioners to November meeting.

* Guests
* Miscellaneous

ANNUAL MEETING PLANNING / Inclusion of Voting on PILOT

Once again, it seems prudent not to host an in person annual meeting. We had low turn out when requiring neighbors to request a ballot. It seems prudent to try making this year’s postcard the actual ballot. If it takes extra time to receive nominations, we can delay as far as Oct 14, have postcards printed and sent, and make the return deadline the end of November. That way winning candidates will still know two weeks in advance that they should attend the December meeting.

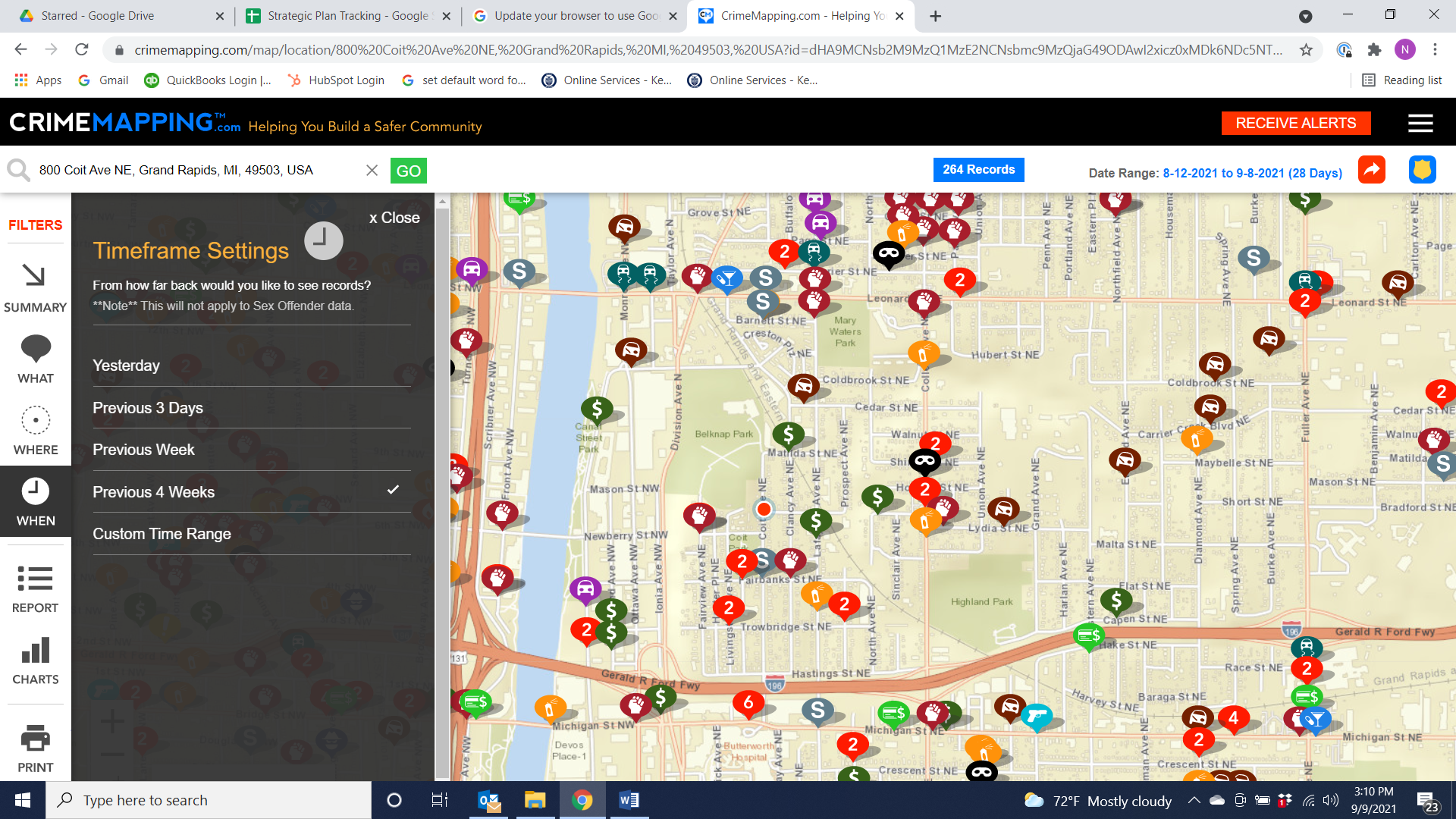
**Who will serve on the Nominating Committee to vet board candidates and choose committee members?**

**Should we put some key items in front of neighbors for potential selection under the next round of PILOT funding?** As mentioned above, the Public Safety Temporary Bulb Out Installation ($10,000) is something we might want to consider for these dollars. I think we could also make the argument that a new roof (~$12,000) is an improvement in the neighborhood. Is there a third large dollar alternative we’d like to run by neighbors? (Combining the other $5,000 for Lights on Stairs with the $6,000 for Restorative Practices?) We can take small dollar recommendations in the meantime, and/or bring the final allocations to the new board for submission at their January (budget adoption) meeting.

**We have been asked to sign on to a petition to keep Sixth Street and Canal Parks pesticide free at**[**bit.ly/GRpetition21**](https://www.change.org/p/city-of-grand-rapids-ask-city-of-gr-to-follow-through-making-6th-street-and-canal-parks-organic?recruiter=307201037&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=share_email_responsive&recruited_by_id=af79e540-06a5-11e5-81f6-61876d8ba86b)**.**

**Regular Report Contents**

**Public Safety -** [**www.crimemapping.com**](http://www.crimemapping.com) **last 4 weeks (image).**

**The City installed three new crosswalks on Fairview and is checking on Coit, Lafayette and College. David Marquardt, the Parks Director, will visitLookout/Reservoir 9/29 at 6pm.**

The Smartzone LDFA approved an agreement with Spartan Innovations & Start Garden to collaborate and manage its SmartZone Incubator and related hi-tech business support services. The SmartZone LDFA selected both operators, contingent upon the successful collaboration with each other to implement the SmartZone LDFA project’s goals and objectives.

**The DDA selected The Smith Group to work on the Hill and River Network.**

We have reached out to 150 households and received 20+ postcards back with additional comments on the Breakaway Festival. Intern Greg is coding them to prepare testimony for the City at their 9/28 commission meeting. Some comments Elianna received via other channels include inappropriate parking on Matilda and only receiving one ticket per household for the Festival. Finally, one neighbor elaborates:

“I have a video of a drunk woman last night that got her car stuck in my front yard.

“She worked on it for a bit finally got unstuck then in drunk logic pulled back over the curb and drove over the yard.  With the motor skills she had going on, she easily could have hit the house.

“I don't want any concerts back here, I don't want a park here, I want some accountability.  Just because the projects are down the hill, this is an inappropriate reason as to where the city locates concerts.”

**507 Sinclair demolition was delayed to 9/7. Tentative plan of action for the apartments behind Finkelstein Hall is as follows:**

* **Mobilization: week of 9/7/21**
* **Excavation: 9/20/21 - 9/28/21**
* **Underground Utilities: 9/29/21 - 10/17/21**
* **Footings and foundations: 10/1/21 – 10/12/21**
* **Structural Steel: 10/13/21 – 10/22/21**

A public hearing on housing and community development program performance and needs (including NOBL’s CDBG results) will be held on Tuesday, September 14, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers, City Hall, 300 Monroe Avenue, NW. Comments will be accepted in writing via email at [communitydev@grcity.us](mailto:communitydev@grcity.us) or by mail to the Community Development Department, City Hall, 300 Monroe Avenue, NW, Suite 460, Grand Rapids, MI 49503, through September 17, 2021.