

MINUTES OF MEETING OF NEIGHBORHOODS UNITED & CONA, AUGUST 21, 2013

Present: Jan Sorby, Jon Lawrence, Cynthia Bretheim, Patrick Murray, Gene Di Felice, Carrie Winkel, Paul Ash, Bill Milroy, David Walter, Ann Kreilkamp, Georgia Schaich, Gary Wiggins, Sandi Clothier

Called the meeting of Neighborhoods United to order at 7:04, and those present introduced themselves.

The first order of business was the presentation of a plaque to David Walters, for his dedication and commitment to the Council of Neighborhood Associations(CONA). David, Jon explained, has been critical in keeping the CONA organization legal, by virtue of keeping all State and Federal filings current and up to date, as well as having served for 13 years on the Board of CONA. Jon Lawrence presented the plaque to David with a round of applause from all present.

Jon explained that, in order to move the meeting along in a timely fashion, there would be an attempt to have a soft "time" limit, with Cynthia Bretheim being our "timekeeper", allowing two (2) minutes per person to speak and ten (10) minutes for general discussion of a topic.

Next order of business: approval of the minutes of the July 17th meeting. Elizabeth Cox Ash motioned, Paul Ash seconded the approval of the minutes. The vote was unanimous in favor of approving the minutes for the July 17th meeting.

Jon then explained that during our last meeting, during which we created Neighborhoods United, we created and voted on a Slate of Officers. Now, it appears there is no problem with becoming CONA, so Jon suggested we can simply put forward the slate for next month's vote (since the officers previously elected were to the organization Neighborhoods United).

Discussion followed:

Elizabeth voiced that since CONA already has a 501C3, she was in favor of becoming CONA again, and keeping the CONA name. Otherwise we would have to re-file with the state and would have to pay at least 450 dollars; she explained that we can amend the bylaws, but to change our name or become a 501C3 as NU would be expensive.

Jan agreed that it would be a waste of money because we already have the joint agenda (CONA and NU), so to throw the money away when the NU can be a byline seems unnecessary.

Ann asked if are there any legal problems (to becoming CONA)?

Jon responded that, as Patrick has mentioned, there are no 501C3 police, we simply will need to send our new bylaws to the state, there will not be a problem. There is no objection to our becoming a 501C3, so we can become CONA, and then work on bylaw changes.

Cynthia made the motion that we accept becoming CONA.

Elizabeth seconded.
The Vote was unanimous in favor.

We are now officially the Council of Neighborhood Associations, or CONA.

Jon then brought up that we put forward a slate of officers (and voted) at the last meeting, so we need to have new nominations for officers.

Patrick said he would make the motion for the slate, and “we can open it up for anyone to throw their hat in the ring if they are interested”.

David responded that he had just one question, “shouldn’t we be following the bylaws as listed now by CONA?” He also mentioned that the minutes must be made public, under the bylaws currently in place for CONA.

Several copies of the bylaws were presented and reviewed.

Jon said, in reading the bylaws, the secretary and treasurer are not part of the Executive Committee. The EC consists of five members.

Cynthia suggested that those who were on the Steering Committee to reinvigorate CONA be considered for the other officers for this vote.

In response, Elizabeth Cox Ash nominated Patrick Murray, and Sandi nominated Carrie Winkel to be on the Slate.

Patrick and Carrie agreed, and it was noted that we needed to have someone move the slate forward; Elizabeth Cox-Ash made the motion, Jan Sorby seconded.

Some discussion continued:

Jon noted that this Slate could change as we make any changes to the bylaws.

There was a brief discussion of what we are doing and how this was necessary to be in keeping with current CONA bylaws, even though the committee to review bylaws may ask for changes later on. The Slate would be on the agenda, and voted on in the coming month, also in keeping with the CONA bylaws, and then, having a report from the bylaws committee, changes to the bylaws could take place at the same meeting.

The vote taken and was unanimous.

The next item on the agenda was the proposal by IU to remove 6 houses in the University Courts area.

Sandi gave a brief summation of the Historic Preservation Commission’s concern, and passed around the letter that had been sent by the commission to the President and Trustees of IU, and explaining that the HP Commission would appreciate support from the neighborhoods.

Bill Milroy added that the Old NorthEast NA has issued a letter to Tom Morrison (IU Trustee) and Jason Banach (IU Real Estate), and to Jim Morris, who will become a new board member on the Sept 9 meeting. The story we (the Old NE) got was that the law school has a donor and they want to expand. He added that he didn’t know how much pressure can be put on the board of trustees, but they will be meeting with Steve Volan in the coming weeks.

Elizabeth noted that there is ample room for the Fraternity north of this location, and the university could build without tearing down these houses.

Jon- wanted everyone to know about this issue, there may be some way that CONA can be involved with this. It was asked if the HPC letter could go out to the CONA members, and Sandi agreed to have the letter distributed. CONA will look for ways to support keeping the homes in place.

The next issue to be discussed was the Growth Policies Plan, or GPP.

Jan has been sitting on the committee meeting to discuss the GPP; she gave an overview of the situation, stating that the GPP must be updated every 20 years. Patrick Murray, also on the committee, said that the UDO- the zoning ordinance that the city uses for how to zone or regulate anything within Bloomington is generally updated every 10 years. The GPP is the policy document that defines the mission statement and what the planning staff will take to revise the city code. So they can enforce the vision of the Growth Policies Plan.

Jan showed the group a list of committee members, which highlighted the people who have primary interest as developers. She noted that neighborhoods are not as well represented as are developers. Jan suggested that we are really only half way through, and passed around graphs, as well as useful sites for notes for the working meetings, how CONA can get involved as an advocate for neighborhoods.

Patrick mentioned that the website for the work that is being done by this group with input from any resident, is Imagine Bloomington. It can be found on the City's website; go to website to find a lot of detail about the process, and you can find a lot of information, as well as the vision statement that is part of the GPP, which was used to create work session goals. There you will also find a series of questions the plan staff posed to the steering committee to generate discussion. It was noted that the people they (Planning) work with on a regular basis are the developers, so it is incumbent on us to bring more balance to this process, in representing the neighborhoods where people live, rather than allow the development community to be the primary voice.

Jon agreed, and said he sees this as a goal of our organization (CONA), to be able to be at the table; also, at some point the GPP will be voted on, so there will be meetings and the opportunity to make our voice heard as to what we feel is important.

Patrick said once this plan (the Growth Policies Plan) is finalized, it will first go to the Plan commission, this body will be able to put changes in, and from there it will move to the Common Council, where public meetings will also take place. Jan reiterated that it is crucial that CONA, and individuals, get involved now. Paul, Ann and Georgia, commented that they went to workshops, but they were closed to

public comment, so they didn't feel heard. Jan said that the workshops are inclusive, and they (Planning) want to hear from us. This is so critical because this plan sets in place how all sorts of issues, from intersections, rental issues, and how Bloomington will look in 20 years, will be determined. One of the group asked what a typical meeting looked like. Jan explained that it is essentially questions; how we look at commercial nodes, strips of commercial, nodes of commercial, for instance south Walnut will/may revert back to residential. She continued that strips have failed, buildings will be higher; how far will this go into our neighborhood is a question to be answered. Issues of density, growth, increasing the number of adults, granny flats, are some issues being discussed. Jan said she would create a cheat sheet for the neighborhood associations, to help in understanding some of the issues, and their importance. Paul mentioned that even when plans are drawn up and approved, they often do not turn out as expected.

Georgia asked if we wanted to get more involved with this, could we have Patrick and Jan come to other neighborhood meetings? It was mentioned that interest in granny flats, and increasing density, are back on the table. Georgia mentioned that during the last update of the GPP, Dave and she when went through the document page by page, which took at least 12 meetings, and months of work. CONA could form a subcommittee and go through the documents, and make recommendations. Jan expressed that she has done quite a bit of work of looking at issues involving historic neighborhoods, such as, how is infill going to look, and what are the good things about higher density.

Jon said that between now and next month, we will be doing business as CONA, and trying to identify contacts for various neighborhoods, as well as expanding the email list to those who would like to receive mailings. Also, Jon will set up a Google Groups, so that we can communicate easily online. He also asked that we each think about what CONA should be, what are the important goals CONA should work towards, and what do others in the neighborhoods feel are important goals for CONA.

Jon asked for those around the table to mention what they felt was important: development issues, education, were mentioned as important to the city and the neighborhoods; if CONA is going to thrive, we need to ask what is it that brings us here, what do we (our neighborhoods) want to get out of CONA?

Paul- we need to have a louder voice so that we are involved in the process
Ann- in the city as a whole, recognition that neighborhoods are an incredibly important group

Elizabeth mentioned the importance of preservation- the renovation of the Legg house, HPC

Jan- CONA can be a voice to help them (developers, etc.) do the right thing

Jon- the importance of showing up; we've experienced going in front of City Council, and what happens is that when you show up you can sometimes change minds.

Sandi- the importance of showing people why they should be interested in CONA- highlight the things that neighborhoods and CONA have accomplished.

Elizabeth- I would be willing to work on a subcommittee for promoting Conservation Districts for CONA, it is a strong tool for neighborhoods to protect their neighborhoods.

Jan remarked that she feels the HPC has taken the place of zoning for preservation of neighborhoods, an unfair burden for the HPC, she feels, and a failure of zoning to properly address the issue of preserving neighborhoods. She mentioned that Chris Smith, who is on the Working Group for the GPP, is in favor of form based zoning, where the rules are known ahead of time.

Jon asked if we should we have another standing item on our agenda for the GPP, and Patrick and others agreed that we should have the GPP as a standing agenda on the CONA agenda for the foreseeable future.

Jon mentioned that he would post the bylaws on Google Groups for our review, there was a bylaws committee that volunteered last meeting, but since we weren't ready yet, they haven't met.

The next meeting will take place on the third Wednesday of September, the 18th, in the Hooker Room, at 7pm. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25

Submitted by Sandi Clothier, co-Secretary

CONA Action Items:

- 1) bylaws committee
- 2) Jan/Patrick talk to neighborhoods about GPP
- 3) Jan create GPP worksheet
- 4) CONA GPP subcommittee to peruse GPP documents & make suggestions
- 5) List of neighborhood accomplishments
- 6) subcommittee for promoting Conservation Districts