ELNA Meeting November 11, 2024

Welcome call to order by Barry at 7:06 p.m.

Attendees and Introductions: (b = board member; z = attend by zoom) Justine Burton, KT Walsh (Veep b), Barry Shalinsky (Prez b), Pam Blackburn (b), Lane Eisenbart (coordinator), Linda Lipps, Phil Collison (Secretary b), Joe Bickford, Ellen Paulsen (z), Aaron Paden (treasurer b,z), Max Wilcox(b,z), Krista Gentry (b,z), Jan Butin, Walt Clogston (z), Nancy Overmeyer, Peggy Robinson, Suzan Hampton (b,z).

Approve agenda and minutes: KT moves to accept agenda and minutes, Pam 2nd. No discussion, All in favor aye. Approved.

Off agenda, another (non-ELNA) election occurred. We are not a partisan organization. Barry wants to share info precinct 39 had the #1 highest percentage of votes in DG county for Harris. 91%. Precinct 40 had the 2nd highest percentage at 90.7% DG County had highest in the state. A KCK precinct may have been higher. What was voter turnout in DG county? Was in the 50% range. Voter turnout is really not a stat you can get meaningful data on. This precinct (39) in particular has a lot of apartments so people move away but they are still on the rolls. Some folks did show up but had to cast provisional ballots. Slightly lower turnout than 4 years ago.

Board Elections. Lane conducted the election. Membership will be voting to accept the slate. We can do officers later. Thanks to Julia Patterson for serving. Candidates: Barry Shalinsky, Phil Collison, Sacie Lambertson, Darrel Proffitt, Krista Gentry, Pam Blackburn, Max Wilcox, KT Walsh, Suzan Hampton, Aaron Paden and Brenda Nunez.. All in favor say aye. Any Nays? No.

Discussion items:
Proposed Land Development Code. We've been though a 2 year process. There were several opportunities to participate and speak. Most of what we have had to say has not been incorporated into the draft plan. There have been dozens and dozens of letters that have been received on this document. An interesting point is there's a large group of people who will be impacted other than neighborhoods. There's a lot of money on the line. But none of those people with money on the line are commenting. Does that suggest there's another way to have an impact other than public comment? (Phil C passes around his comments). The most current iteration was released after the deadline for written public comment closed for the planning commission. It has been difficult to follow the document, and it seems to move around on the web page when looking for it. Mandy Enfield, president of University Place Neighborhood Association has been a great ally and has tried hard to follow along and shed light on the document. Any comments so far? HRC has asked the City to come to them with no response. HRC has asked for a moratorium of teardowns until the code is corrected. There is a movement to create a dispersed historic district that includes homes of NAACP founders. But this district has not been created as yet, therefore could slip through the cracks. Barry recommends a moratorium on demolitions of buildings older than 50 years. There are sales contracts pending on the outcome of tomorrow's vote and the demolitions could begin immediately. We need an overlay district before this has occurred. Parking is a big impact. The code would do away with any required parking. The whole premise is that housing is scarce and if there is more housing it will cost less. We are very hopeful that this happens. But, in reality, all we can do is hope. There needs to be some assurance that it will happen. There is no requirement to build affordable housing. The cheapest houses in town could be snapped up and made into expensive rentals. There will be no affordable housing left. The Panasonic Plant will have an impact on all of this, too. What is affordable housing? And what is the formula for that? There are formulas and it is defined. We are subsidizing people so the landlords get market rate. There is a change.org petition out there and yard signs. The action item here is to sign the petition, send the letter that was started by Phil and show up. Pam moves we send the letter that outlines our concerns, KT 2nds, All in favor, No one opposed.

Traffic Safety update. We talked about the rise on the Central Fields at 14th and Connecticut. We reported on the safety stickers for Delaware St. Krista reported on the Traffic grants the City is offering (they'll let us know!). Walt asks about our traffic signal along 11th street. In the alley b/t New York and CT street. Walt suggests 9th and Rhode Island may need crossing help. Krista says she uses that 11th and NJ/NY crosswalk with her kids. There is a "Lawrence's safety action plan" on the city website.

Demolitions: No new demo permits since the last meeting? There's been a number of tear downs that have happened along CT & NJ streets. Barry suggests a letter requesting a moratorium pending the adoption of a neighborhood plan. Pam asks what about those houses that are in really bad shape. Barry suggests why did they buy it in the first place? Perhaps that could be included in the moratorium that it has to be owned for a period of time before it could be torn down. There are houses that can be made to be livable again. Don't let your house fall apart. Sometimes there are no resources to fix it up. Krista says it is hard to rehab. She also asks why aren't these houses that are rentals being inspected as a part of the rental licensing project.

Our neighborhood plan timeline began nearly 4 years ago. In the winter of 2021.

KT has happy news. Hobbs Park Stadium & Murphy-Bromelsick House. KT was in a meeting with an historical group that puts plaques out. This group had money how many plaques do you need? We said we need an historic survey done, sure, apply for a grant. There's a process for that, and they usually do grants for multiple years. Hobbs Park needs a lot of improvements. We apply in mid-January and the grants come out in March or so. Justine is on the board of Watkins Museum and they want a grant for Hobbs renovation. Let's collaborate! Her uncle was Wesley Simms.

New York School's list of needs is up to date in the E-news. We donated $150 to the Central Fun Run.

Goals and plans for the coming year? One of Barry's frustrations as prez is putting up signs, folding newsletters, getting ads, doing mechanical stuff that gets us through the day-to-day operations. He would rather spend more time on the visionary stuff. We react a lot. It could be better to be more proactive. What do we really want and how do we get there? We did fulfill a few of the things Barry wanted to do. 501c3 and bolstering the treasury. Newsletter delivery. There's more to do. Get more grants. What would we do at Hobbs Park? To put in the grant application. Josh Davis (Penn St.) could be a good resource for engineering. We have to bring money to the table. Promoting City Policies to operationalize strong welcoming neighborhoods. Get together with other neighborhoods that we drew up the plan with and pushing it forward again. There are no definitions for that strategy nor much money. Take it off the strategic priority list if it doesn't work. But it can't be taken off the list so then let's "figure it out"!

Justine suggests that when she was growing up here, all the neighborhoods kept things neater. Lawns mowed. There was more pride in their homes. She doesn't see that as much in our neighborhoods now. Are there rules for that? Laws for that? Why are our houses going downhill. Where's our pride? If we wish to be welcoming why is that not emphasized? "Natural" lawns are now considered acceptable. The flip side to that was when code enforcement was used as a weapon by the City. Unequal enforcement was the result. This side of the City has been better kept in the past.

Can we sell associate memberships and our own pride stickers? Any other ideas?

Any other business. We need more gunlocks. We had 3 shootings in the neighborhood. At 7th and VT, 9th and Pennsylvania ST, near the movie theater right now! 8th and Rhode Island. Bike got hit at 10th and DE and they had a gun on them!

Coordinators report: Art grant with Suzan has finished. Thanks to Karl Ramberg for a $150 donation to ELNA.Holiday Adopt a family - It's a family of 5 we will adopt. Lane will do that thanksgiving week. We got a note from Matt Riley for the Kansas half marathon. We posted info about it and he said it had an impact and thanks. Probably do some merch pop-ups before Christmas.

Officer Elections:2 board members left. We will defer the officer elections to a later time to have a full board.

Treasurer's report $15,026.73 in the bank. without November expenses.

Krista asks about Christmas Parade for how they will get downtown? Last year was a slightly different route b/c of road construction. We'll see what we can dig up? Nancy O. is going to their committee meeting on Wednesday. She will ask. Nancy also reported the drones at her home first appeared in 2019 or so.

Meeting adjourned. 9:17. Thanks all!!