

CARAG

Calhoun Area Residents Action Group Monthly Neighborhood Meeting Minutes January 17, 2006

Subject to Approval at the February 2006 CARAG Meeting

Board Members Attending: Jill Bode, Rick Bojko, Cindy Christian, Thatcher Imboden, Ellan Meyer, Bill Morton, Kay Nygaard-Graham, Aaron Rubenstein and Howard Verson. (Absent: none)

Welcome: The CARAG Board is made up of volunteers who also volunteer time on other neighborhood committees and organizations. Scott Engel, the CARAG community coordinator, can be reached at 612-823-2520. CARAG is a democratic organization; membership and voting privileges are open to residents, property owners, and business owners in the neighborhood.

Approve Agenda & Minutes: Motions were passed to approve the agenda and the December meeting minutes.

City Council Member Report: (Ralph Remington) Ralph is our new city council member, representing Ward 10 including CARAG. Ralph can be reached at his office: 612-673-2210, and his council aide is Lisa Miller. The city's new 311 service is operational for all questions, puts you in direct contact with any city office you need to talk to. In general, all neighborhood problems or complaints should be logged first with 311, so they are on record. Discussions are underway to explore setting up a SAFE zone in Uptown, which places cameras in public areas, allowing the police force to monitor problem areas remotely and respond rapidly. This is already in place downtown and is working well. Ralph is committed to making city government a more transparent process; as part of this effort, he hopes to bring representatives of various city departments to future CARAG meetings. A new city comprehensive plan for Uptown will begin to be enacted in April. Ralph will be sending a report every two weeks detailing upcoming development projects in Ward 10.

Treasurer's Report: (Cindy Christian) CARAG has \$11,858.94 in the operations account, \$6990.88 in asset accounts. The Calhoun Square appeal, approved last month, was more expensive than predicted, totaling \$440. The UNN account has a balance of \$2495.00 as of Dec 31, 2005.

NRP Report: (Kay Nygaard-Graham, Scott Engel) NRP committee updates were distributed. Housing & Economic Development: A recommendation was made to approve allocating \$66,073.81 in CARAG NRP home improvement program income back to fund additional "1-3 Unit" Matching Deferred Loan Program loans. This income was mostly from loan paybacks, and CARAG would like to re-invest this money in the NRP program by funding additional 1-3 unit loans to people already on the waiting list, which has about 50 people. Approved by all 9 board members.

Crime & Safety Committee Update: CARAG will be starting a Crime Watch walking group. Kickoff will be at the next meeting on Feb 13. This group will be similar to the Lyndale Walkers group, and will create a presence on the streets to help deter crime. A representative from the Lyndale group, and Tom Thompson, Crime Prevention Specialist, will be at the meeting to help the group get started.

SPACE: The new neighborhood signs are on the way within the next few weeks, and will be installed on the CARAG perimeter.

Zoning: (Aaron Rubenstein) CARAG's appeal of the approval of the Calhoun Square project will be heard by the city council's Planning and Zoning Committee on Jan 19, which will then make a recommendation to the full city council meeting on Jan 27. The CARAG appeal is based primarily on height, but also amenities and design issues. Aaron will be meeting with an attorney to get advice on how to best frame

the appeal. Aaron asked CARAG to allow hiring this attorney, with cost to be paid privately. Based on very recent meetings, including a meeting with Councilman Remington, Aaron now feels the chances of the appeal are very limited without legal representation.

Aaron proposed a resolution: Authorizing the hiring of attorney Tom Casey to represent CARAG by preparing a brief to be submitted on CARAG's behalf to the city council for their vote to be held on Jan 27, with the cost to be paid by private parties, not CARAG. The decision to hire the attorney will be made jointly by both Aaron and Howard, following the Jan 19 public hearing. Motion approved, Yea: 9, Nay: 5.

There were several recent emails about the proposed Calhoun Sailing Village project, which would relocate the yacht club along with a "mini-retail mall" to the Southeast corner of Lake Calhoun.

An updated Land Use and Development Plan for the Midtown Greenway is ongoing, with a draft to be presented in February.

Community planner Beth Elliott is planning to get started on the Hennepin Ave Strategic Plan after the Greenway plan is completed. This will include revising the earlier Hennepin and having it formally adopted. There was an initial meeting held to involve the Humphrey Institute on a project to gather data for this Hennepin Ave plan. In addition, the Uptown Small Area Plan will get started in April. Finally, draft results of the parking study will soon be available, and we can perhaps get a report next month.

Lake Street Reconstruction (Gay Noble and Catherine Geisen-Kisch)

Gay and Catherine are the CARAG representatives to a sub-committee currently gathering input for the upcoming reconstruction of the western portion of Lake St, from Blaisdell to Dupont. A visioning session was held this past Saturday. A handout summarizing the brainstorming session in the form of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges is available. A survey form is also available; results can be returned to the CARAG office. The next input session is being planned to include not only community members but also small business owners. Gay is trying to find a time that will optimize attendance, and will publicize the meeting in the UNN, and post to the CARAG forum.

Midtown Greenway Coalition: (Scott Devins) Approval has been reached to build a Bike Center just on the south side of the Greenway at Allina Hospital. Freewheel Bike Shop will have a small presence offering repairs, there will be a bike center for area employees to park their bikes, and the Midtown Greenway Coalition will relocate their offices to that building as well.

Adjourn: Motion to adjourn passed unanimously.