

CARAG

Calhoun Area Residents Action Group Monthly Neighborhood Meeting Minutes May 16, 2006

Subject to Approval at the June 2006 CARAG Meeting

Board Members Attending: Jill Bode, Rick Bojko, Cindy Christian, Thatcher Imboden, Ellan Meyer, Kay Nygaard-Graham, Aaron Rubenstein and Howard Verson. (Absent: Bill Morton)

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 April meeting minutes.

Bryant Square Park (Julie Sandin) Registration is now in progress for summer programs, which start June 19. The Ice Cream Social will be Wednesday, July 12, 6-8 pm.

Community Crime Prevention (Tom Thompson) A new city plan, the "Safe Cities Initiative", is available on the city website. The 5th precinct will have four specific focus areas: Lake & Pleasant, Steven's Square, Uptown from 28th to 31st and Dupont to Humboldt, and Nicollet from Lake to 38th. Each area will have extra officers, with specific duties to be assigned. This summer, many city resources will be focused on the north side of the city, including all housing inspectors. The impact of these plans on the Uptown neighborhoods was the subject of some discussion.

Uptown Small Area Plan Representatives (Howard Verson) Each neighborhood needs to elect two representatives and two alternates to serve on the Steering Committee for the Uptown Small Area Planning process. The steering committee will guide the planning process; they do not determine the content or the outcome of the planning process; rather, they determine the process by which the plan is developed. The entire process is expected to take about 18 months. In addition, Council Member Remington will appoint several representatives to serve on the Steering Committee. The CARAG elected representatives are: Keith Sjoquist and Aaron Rubenstein, with alternates: Alex Woehrlin and Jill Bode.

City Council Member's Report: (Ralph Remington) The city is seeking citizen input for the selection of the police chief. Call 311 or go to the city website to take a survey about what you want in a police chief. "Breakfast With Ralph" is held on the 3rd Monday of each month at the Egg & I, and provides an opportunity to meet in a small group with Council Member Remington, discussing a specific topic each month. A developer is beginning the planning process to possibly build a boutique hotel in the ECCO neighborhood, on Holmes Avenue between Lake and 31st. They have made a presentation to an ECCO meeting. There is also a possible hotel as part of the Greco project at 29th and Lyndale, in the LHENA neighborhood.

Capital Long-Range Improvement Projects (Howard Verson) As part of the long-range capital approval process, the city has sent a survey seeking input of proposed capital improvement projects. Most of these are already in discussion or planning, such as the Lake and Lyndale reconstructions, a Picnic Shelter/Pavilion for Bryant Square Park, Walker Library Improvements, and possibly replacing traffic signals on 31st St with overhead signal lights.

NRP Advisory/Finance Committee: (Cindy Christian, Scott Engel) NRP Task Force Committee reports were distributed. The Livability Committee proposed a revised CARAG Elm Tree Treatment Grant

Program, which was approved unanimously. This provides a pool of up to \$5000 of NRP funds to be used a matching grants for treatment of elm trees located in public boulevards. The application deadline is June 30th; contact the CARAG office for details and application information.

Treasurer's Report: (Cindy Christian) As of April 30th, CARAG has \$7266.80 in the operations account, \$6990.88 in asset accounts. The UNN bank account has a balance of \$1422.53; the April issue saw a net profit of \$23.01.

Two important income opportunities for CARAG: The Beer Fest, on Saturday, June 3rd, on Hennepin Ave, at which CARAG staffs a popcorn booth, with proceeds going directly to CARAG. Volunteers are needed to help staff; contact the CARAG office.

Hennepin-Lake Wine Tasting: The 24th annual Wine Tasting event will be held on Wednesday, June 14th. This is one of CARAG's largest annual fund-raisers, as we keep all proceeds from tickets we sell in advance. Contact the CARAG office at 612-823-2520 to purchase tickets. CARAG also needs to provide volunteers to help staff the event, from 4:30-9:30.

Lake Street Reconstruction: (Gay Noble) The west segment committee has finished their business. Lyndale Ave will be 5 lane (4 travel + left-turning lane at the Lyn/Lake Intersection), meaning 13 more feet of pedestrian crossing distance and a loss of 5 ft of sidewalk width. If this is a concern to you, make sure you let both City Council Member Remington or County Commissioner Gail Dorfman know! There will be an open house for the reconstruction project on May 23rd & 24th at the 5th Precinct, 6-8 pm.

CARAG unanimously passed a resolution strongly opposing the 5-lane design for Lyndale Ave at Lake St, objecting specifically to narrowing sidewalks, increasing street-crossing distance, and the loss of existing parking.

Lyndale Street Reconstruction: (Sheila Lynch) The planning process is proceeding; the green vs concrete median remains unresolved, although nearly 70% of property owner's surveyed want a planted median.

Zoning: (Aaron Rubenstein) Brief zoning updates: A summary of the first Uptown Small Area Plan meeting is available at the city's website. The first draft of the Midtown Greenway Land Use & Development plan is estimated to be available in three weeks, again at the city's website. There will be a 45-day comment period, and then a hearing on the plan. In CIDNA, the Lander Group project at 2626 W Lake St, next to the Calhoun Beach Club, has been approved by the city planning commission, after recommended approval by the CIDNA neighborhood. In ECCO, a presentation on early plans for a possible hotel on Holmes Ave between Lake and 31st was presented to the ECCO zoning committee. There is no significant news on the Calhoun Square project. The LHENA Planning & Zoning committee has met about two possible projects in LHENA: the Greco Project at 29th and Lyndale, a comprehensive project to include retail, residential, office, condo, and parking spaces, as well as possibly a hotel and a public plaza. Applications are expected this summer, with construction possibly starting in Spring 2007. Finally, also in LHENA, Bennett Lumber may sell some of its land for a residential development, although the store will remain open.

Adjourn: Motion to adjourn passed unanimously.