



**Calhoun Area Residents Action Group  
Monthly Neighborhood Meeting Minutes  
December 15, 2009 7PM Bryant Square Park**

*Approved at the January 2010 CARAG Meeting*

**Board Members In Attendance:** Julie Cohen, Zack Farley, Jeff Forester, Brendan Jordan, Anna Matthes, Aaron Rubenstein, Howard Verson

**Also Present:** Scott Engel

**Absent:** John Darlington, Lisa Ganser

**Agenda:**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Agenda presented with one revision. Motion approved unanimously.

**Uptown Neighborhood News: Aaron Rubenstein**

Rubenstein provided a brief recap of the restructuring proposal put forth by Jill Bode and Anna Matthes at the November neighborhood meeting, as well as a brief history of the activity with regard to the proposal since its introduction. The UNN board voted 4-2 to oppose/reject the Bode/Matthes proposal at their December meeting. Six of nine CARAG board members expressed their support via email and phone call conversations for the UNN board to address the issues internally before further involving CARAG and ECCO. A motion was made and seconded to reject the proposal. Motion failed 6-8. A motion was made and seconded to further discuss the proposal at the January neighborhood meeting. Motion approved 10-7. A motion was made to devote significant time to discuss the proposal at the January meeting. Motion seconded and approved.

Rubenstein noted that Bode's term as a CARAG rep on the UNN board expired in November and he opened nominations for the position. He said he had spoken to two people—Jeremy Iggers, Executive Director of the Twin Cities Media Alliance and former Strib writer, who's interested in the position but not certain, and Virgil McDill, Senior Communications Manager for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Motion, seconded to elect Virgil McDill as the new CARAG representative to the UNN Managing Board. Motion approved.

**CARAG NRP Neighborhood Survey Results: Scott Engel**

Surveys were mailed to 4,100 CARAG households in August to solicit feedback as to how CARAG should spend its almost \$600,000 in NRP Phase 2 funds. 409 surveys were returned. CARAG hired Mike Ware to analyze and interpret the data. Engel presented the findings in Ware's report, which will also be posted to the CARAG website. The age distribution of survey respondents matched those of CARAG residents: 25-54 (52%). Of those who responded to the survey, 45% were homeowners, 43% were renters, 7% were absentee property owners, and 4% were business owners. Of those who indicating they were homeowners, 15% have owned their home for one year or less, 40% 2-5 years, 10% 6-10 years, and 35% 10+ years. For business owners, 3% have been in business one year or less, 30% 2-5 years, 13% 6-10 years, and 55% 10+ years. Only 11% of survey respondents reporting having children in their household. 98.5% of residents were very or somewhat satisfied with living in the CARAG neighborhood – up 6% since the last NRP survey.

Respondents also indicated that the issues most important to them are crime (95% extremely important/somewhat important), parks (86%), housing (84%), and transportation (76%). With regard to crime, residents were most concerned about nighttime safety, lighting, alleys, apartment buildings, bars & restaurants, and senior/family safety. With regard to housing, residents were most concerned with the condition of homes and home improvement grants. Residents also expressed concern about crime in parks and an interest in greening the parks. Traffic congestion, parking, the lack of light rail and improved transit options were also mentioned with regard to transportation.

Next steps: The NRP Steering Committee is scheduled to complete a draft of the NRP Phase II Action Plan by April 2010. They plan to use the survey data as a tool to guide the plan. A brainstorming session has been scheduled for Thursday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, from 7-8:30PM at Bryant Square Park to discuss ideas for improving crime/safety, parks, housing, and transportation. The public is encouraged to attend and participate.

**Lake Calhoun Letter of Connection: Aaron Rubenstein**

Jeff Forester has agreed to draft a letter for discussion at the January meeting. If you would like to share your thoughts about Lake Calhoun (i.e., how you use it, why it's important, issues of concern, etc.), please email Jeff before the January meeting at [forester@bitstream.net](mailto:forester@bitstream.net). Jeff will compile all the comments and incorporate them into the draft letter of connection.

**Community Input/Announcements: Aaron Rubenstein**

The First Universalist Church of Minneapolis (34<sup>th</sup> & Dupont) is having their Solstice celebration on Sunday (12/20) at 7PM.

CARAG now has a Twitter account (@CARAGmpls)! Follow us for updates on neighborhood meetings, events and updates.

City Council member elect Meg Tuthill sends her regrets for not being able to attend tonight's meeting.

**Approve Consent Agenda & Minutes: Aaron Rubenstein**

Motion, seconded to approve the November meeting minutes, committee policy, and 2010 events calendar. Motion approved.

**Financial Reports:**

CARAG's current Treasurer has been unable to attend the last three meetings or report on CARAG finances. It was decided that a new Treasurer needs to be appointed. According to the CARAG by-laws, if a sitting board member misses more than two consecutive meetings without a valid reason, the board can declare the seat open and appoint a new board member. Motion, seconded to declare an open seat on the CARAG board. Motion approved. A vacancy was declared. Jen Nelson nominated herself and said she's willing to serve as treasurer. Rubenstein asked if there were other nominations; none were made. He noted that, in accordance with CARAG bylaws, nominations will remain open until the election to fill the vacancy at the January meeting.

Scott Engel presented CARAG operations account balances for October and November. A report for September needs to be done, as well as NRP account reports. Scott Engel will handle in the temporary absence of a CARAG Treasurer.

Jill Bode presented the UNN financial report. As of November, the UNN reported assets of \$7,191.49, liabilities of \$1,312.66, and equity of \$5,878.83. The UNN earned a \$427 profit for the December issue, bringing the overall projected profit for the fiscal year to \$1,734. Rubenstein thanked Bode for her more than five years of dedicated service to the UNN; everyone endorsed the sentiment with a big round of applause.

**Zoning Committee Report: Aaron Rubenstein**

The Zoning Committee met on 12/3 to discuss a new restaurant building proposed at 3005 Emerson, a parking variance for 3125 Girard, Calhoun Square parking ramp lighting, and update on Rainbow Foods and the new Walker Library. Rubenstein reviewed portions of the committee's written report. The property owner and architect (BKV Group) for 3005 Emerson plan to submit applications to the city for land use approvals in December and start construction in March or April of 2010. They anticipate needing two variances—one for parking and one to permit a front setback of zero feet. Neighbors expressed concerns about noise from a planned rooftop terrace.. Two community members said they have started a petition in opposition. The Zoning Committee will take up the issue in more detail once the plans are finalized and land use applications to the city have been made.

Howard Verson provided an update on the Planning Commission's December 14 approval of the Midtown Greenway Rezoning Study. CARAG had requested that two lots on the 3000 block of Fremont remain R3 rather than be rezoned to R4, which was accepted by amendment. CARAG's request to downzone four parcels at the northeast corner of Bryant and 31st was not accepted, nor was the request to extend the Hennepin pedestrian overlay district from midblock to 28<sup>th</sup> St.

**CARAG Board Retreat:**

Scheduled for Saturday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, from 9AM – 12PM at the 5<sup>th</sup> Precinct.

**Adjourn:**

Motion, seconded to adjourn the general meeting at 8:15 p.m. Motion approved.

*Minutes recorded and submitted by Julie Cohen.*