

**Calhoun Area Residents Action Group**  
**Monthly Neighborhood Meeting Minutes**  
**November 17, 2009 7PM Bryant Square Park**  
*Approved at the December 2009 CARAG Meeting*

**Board Members In Attendance:** Julie Cohen, John Darlington, Zack Farley, Jeff Forester, Anna Matthes, Aaron Rubenstein, Howard Verson **Also Present:** Scott Engel **Absent:** Lisa Ganser, Brendan Jordan

**Agenda:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Agenda presented with a few minor revisions. Motion, Seconded to approve the revised agenda. Motion approved unanimously.

**Calhoun Square Project Update: Gayle Siegler**

Siegler, CS General Manager, said much of the demolition and renovations to date have taken place behind the scenes, including the construction of the new L.A. Fitness and the demolition of three Lake St. buildings not attached to the main square. Construction crews have removed the old flooring surface and it is in the process of being replaced. They have experienced some project delays and have incurred additional costs after excavating some of the older buildings, finding contaminated waste such as the remnants of a previous building that had burned down.

The new Calhoun Square will be more open. The two separate up and down escalators have been removed and the new ones are now paired together, placed near the Kitchen Window cooking center. Several existing tenants have already moved into their new, larger spaces, including Kitchen Window and Bay Street Shoes. Il Gato (the former Figlio) opens on November 23<sup>rd</sup>. Another restaurant will be occupying the new space at Girard and Lake. The new L.A. Fitness on the second floor is 31,000 sq. ft. and will be opening in March of 2010. CS is at about 60% in terms of occupied retail space.

The building on the corner of Hennepin and 31<sup>st</sup> was slated to be replaced by two levels of commercial space and three levels of residential space, but that plan has been put on the hold while involved parties determine next steps. Despite the historical significance of this building, the environmental issues and costs to renovate it are too much and the building will be demolished. In the meantime, the empty space next to it will be enclosed with a cedar privacy fence and erosion control has already been put in place. The building containing part of the old Kitchen Window space is scheduled for demolition in February of 2010.

Neighborhood representatives asked Gayle questions about the light pollution coming from the parking garage. The CARAG Zoning Committee will be discussing additional ways to address this issue at their next meeting. The lighting levels in the parking garage are mandated by the City for safety purposes, but Siegler agreed that additional light shielding may be necessary. There were also questions about extending the sidewalk on the west side of Girard to the curb. This will be addressed in the spring once building management can meet the city's requirements for pouring and curing concrete. A member of the CARAG board asked that Siegler keep in mind the neighborhood character that was lost when the Uptown Bar closed, and to be aware of this as they continue to secure new tenants.

**Uptown Market Report: Megan Gamble**

The Uptown Market reported having about \$5,500 in the bank after their first season. They sold out vendor spaces at a couple of the last markets. Obstacles included getting more produce and farm vendors, learning and understanding City Hall procedures, and getting parked cars towed to allow space for the market. Their next steps are to discuss their budget for 2010, a plan to run the market on a weekly basis, and what they need to do with the City to achieve this. There are a couple of board spaces open and they would like to integrate representatives from other neighborhoods. CARAG board President Aaron Rubenstein inquired about the relationship between the Uptown Market and CARAG; both parties agreed that they needed to meet to reevaluate for next year. The next Uptown Market Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 9. They usually meet at the Dunn Brothers in Loring Park around 6:30pm.

**Lake Calhoun Planning: Aaron Rubenstein**

CARAG was contacted by Commissioners Bob Fine and Tracy Nordstrom last month and asked to provide a one-page document about the neighborhood's usage of and connection to Lake Calhoun. Adequate notice was not provided prior to the meeting that took place on November 5; however, CARAG has been granted an extension until the end of January to provide the Commissioners with this information. Anna Matthes provided a brief recap of the Nov. 5 meeting, stating that about 40+ people from the surrounding neighborhoods attended, as well as members of the Park Board staff. Four groups were moderated by Park Board members while the groups discussed how they use Lake Calhoun and what improvements could be made to allow for a better connection to the lake. The Park Board is compiling this information for now, but does not have an immediate plan to implement anything at this time.

- A suggestion was made that the CARAG board solicit neighborhood input about its usage of and connection to Lake Calhoun at the next monthly meeting in December.

**Community Input/Announcements: Aaron Rubenstein**

There has been no update about the Midtown Greenway Coalition fundraiser. No other announcements were made.

**Approve Consent Agenda & Minutes: Aaron Rubenstein** Motion, Seconded to approve the revised August and draft October minutes. Motion Approved. A discussion of the CARAG Committee Policy will be picked back up in December, at which time feedback will be solicited.

**Financial Reports:** CARAG Treasurer Lisa Ganser was unable to attend the meeting; no report of CARAG's finances was given. President Aaron Rubenstein inquired about appointing new signatories; CARAG Neighborhood Coordinator Scott Engel stated that the existing signatories can continue to sign until the CARAG board appoints new ones.

Jill Bode distributed the 2010 UNN budget, which was approved at the November 11 UNN board meeting. Motion, Seconded to approve the 2010 UNN budget. Motion Approved with one abstention. October net profit was projected to be \$600.95; actual net profit was \$119.88. November net profit was projected to be \$568.47; actual net profit was \$824.56. The UNN currently has three signatories; CARAG board will revisit if needed.

**Neighborhood Livability & Engagement: Diana Boegermann**

The committee met on November 11. The newly-combined committee was renamed "Neighborhood Livability & Engagement" and Diana Boegermann was elected Chair. The committee is responsible for neighborhood events, livability issues such as street tree planting, and promoting neighborhood engagement including block clubs.

**Zoning Committee Report: Aaron Rubenstein:** Committee Chair Aaron Rubenstein is scheduling a meeting for early December to discuss a proposed new retail space at 3005 Emerson, a parking variance at 3541 Lyndale, the new Rainbow Foods, and the Calhoun Square parking garage lighting issue.

Kay Nygaard Graham provided an update on the Midtown Greenway Rezoning Study. This large-scale rezoning proposal was laid over to the December 14 Planning Commission meeting.

**Uptown Association Update: John Darlington**

John provided an update on the three new logo options for the Uptown Association. He'll provide a full report at the next CARAG monthly meeting. Meg Tuthill attended the last Uptown Association meeting and discussed the Walker Library comeback and her platform to lower property taxes. Ralph Remington also attended and discussed the non-motorized transit pilot program, which is seeking to make intersections, sidewalks and streets safer for pedestrians. News rack concerns were also discussed.

**CARAG Meetings:** It was suggested that the December monthly meeting be more light and social, with a discussion about the neighborhood's vision for Calhoun and a review of the NRP survey data. CARAG board members offered to bring refreshments. The CARAG board retreat is tentatively set for Sat, Jan 9, 2010. Board members will confirm this date via email communication.

**NRP Survey Data: Aaron Rubenstein**

CARAG received 411 responses to the NRP survey. The City had someone compile the data into a spreadsheet, but it needs to be analyzed (tabulated) and interpreted in a report. The MN Survey Research Center charges \$60/hour for this service and also has a freelancer who charges \$40/hour. They estimate it will take 10 hours to analyze and interpret the data. Mike Ware, a researcher who helped fine-tune the survey and is very familiar with the data, has offered to analyze and interpret the data for \$25/hour. He estimates needing 10-20 hours to complete the project and could do it this week or the week after Thanksgiving. CARAG has \$100 in the budget for consultant fees and will fund the additional money needed by spending less elsewhere in the budget, or by tapping into NRP reserves. A Motion was made to hire Mike for 10-12 hours (\$250-\$300) to analyze and interpret the data. Motion Approved.

**UNN Proposal: Jill Bode, Anna Matthes**

Jill and Anna, who are CARAG representatives on the Uptown Neighborhood News Managing Board, presented their proposal to address some of the ongoing issues at UNN. The two main issues are that after four years of publication, and despite the hard work of many people, the paper is not fulfilling its mission, and the management structure is not working as it was originally intended. Decisions are either not being made, or are being made too slowly. Jill and Anna put forth two motions.

Motion 1: "Jill and Anna will perform all management functions for UNN by acting as business managers for CARAG for approximately three months, at which time CARAG will transfer ownership of the UNN to their LLC." The current management board would be restructured as an advisory board to advise on the end product. The proposal is intended to strengthen community involvement for the betterment of the paper.

Motion 2: "To remove all UNN references from the CARAG by laws."

It was suggested that a special meeting be called to discuss the details, concerns, and issues of the UNN and this proposal. UNN contractors/ board members, CARAG board members, & other interested parties would be invited to attend this meeting.

A Motion was made to table the discussion until CARAG board members can sort out the best time to schedule this meeting. Motion Seconded and Approved.

**Uptown Neighborhood News Rep: Aaron Rubenstein**

Motion, Seconded to table UNN rep vote for the time being. Motion Approved.

**Adjourn:** Motion, Seconded to adjourn the general meeting at 8:55 p.m. Motion Approved.

*Minutes recorded and submitted by Julie Cohen.*