

**Calhoun Area Residents Action Group
Monthly Neighborhood Meeting Minutes
October 20, 2009 7PM Bryant Square Park**

DRAFT: Subject to approval at the November 2009 CARAG Meeting

Board Members In Attendance: Julie Cohen, John Darlington, Zack Farley, Anna Matthes, Aaron Rubenstein, Howard Verson **Also Present:** Scott Engel

Absent: Jeff Forester, Lisa Ganser, Brendan Jordan

Agenda:

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

Midtown Greenway Power Line Issue: Josh Tolkan

Josh Tolkan gave an update on the Xcel Energy power line issue that is currently being contested in a court case. The proposed high-voltage power lines would run above the rim of the Greenway, with two transformer stations positioned along the corridor. The Midtown Greenway Coalition (MGC) opposes the above-ground lines and transformer locations. MGC is concerned about public health and development implications. MGC would prefer that Xcel Energy invest in power conservation and reduction of need instead. Xcel Energy may also need to apply for other lines in the future, which would call for a larger infrastructure and require a statement of need. There is concern that Xcel Energy is pursuing the Greenway power lines as a workaround.

MGC is looking to raise \$20,000 to pay for the legal fees for the court case. They would like to host a fundraiser at the MGC offices on November 12th from 5:30pm – 7:30pm in partnership with CARAG, LHENA and East Isles. MGC is asking that CARAG participate in the event and support its outreach efforts. They have also asked that CARAG support MGC's efforts in the court case.

The Board requested that Josh Tolkan and/or MGC provide the Board with more information regarding the power lines and the court case before deciding if CARAG will participate in and/or support MGC's efforts.

Council Member Ralph Remington's Report: Ralph Remington

Council Member Remington reviewed his efforts to secure a LRT line through Uptown and why it was unsuccessful. There will be a Southwest LRT stop at West Lake Street (behind Whole Foods), but there was lukewarm support for a Midtown Greenway streetcar. Remington encouraged everyone to pressure city, state, and federal representatives to support an east/west link in Uptown to the LRT, and to make changes to the Federal Formula, which he has deemed faulty and flawed. Remington also provided an update on the newspaper rack ordinance, which seems to be working well. If newspaper racks are abandoned, covered in graffiti, or contain litter, citizens are encouraged to report them to 311; ordinances are in place for mandatory compliance and assessed fees.

Uptown Neighborhood News Viability Plan: Ted Ringsred

Ted Ringsred provided an update on Uptown Neighborhood News' (UNN) financial strategy, which includes increasing revenue, cutting costs, and monitoring benchmarks. Efforts are being taken to increase circulation and ad revenue. UNN has contracted with a new printer to save money and is also cutting the newspaper down to eight pages from 12 when ad sales are down. They plan to monitor ad sales going into January 2010 and may combine the January and February issues to save additional dollars. Benchmarks are in place to monitor cash and equity and trigger any necessary decisions regarding the sustainability of the UNN. Should UNN find itself in a hypothetical situation of zero accounts receivable, they would be able to pay all their bills and close up shop without placing any burden on CARAG. Aaron Rubenstein requested that since CARAG is the official owner of UNN that UNN share these financial benchmarks with CARAG by UNN's December board meeting.

Ted also requested that ads placed by CARAG and ECCO be equal and consistent moving forward for planning and budgetary purposes. The Board suggested that there be an open line of communication between CARAG and ECCO to ensure that this happens. Rubenstein noted that CARAG's budget, including ad commitments to UNN, has been set for the coming year.

Ranked Choice Voting: Ona Keller

Ona Keller from the City of Minneapolis provided an update on ranked choice voting (RCV). RCV was passed in 2006 and will be implemented during the November 3rd elections. Since there are no certified machines, all the ballots must be hand-counted. Final election results should be available in mid-December. The city hopes to have certified machines by the next city-wide elections in 2013.

Community Input/Announcements: Scott Engel

NRP Policy Board elections are being held on 11/19. Motion made and seconded to have Mark Hillyer be CARAG's elector and Julie Cohen as alternate. Motion Approved.

Approve Consent Agenda & Minutes: Aaron Rubenstein

Approval of August meeting minutes was tabled to next month. Aaron Rubenstein requested the following edits to the September meeting minutes: change second to last sentence under "Welcome and Introductions" to "CARAG is seeking neighborhood input...as to how all these funds should be spent." Motion, Seconded to approve revised minutes. Minutes Approved. Motion, Seconded to approve the Conflict of Interest document. Motion Approved. Motion, Seconded to approve the CARAG Accounting Procedures with updated dates. Motion Approved. Motion, Seconded to approve the 10/14/09 Special Board Meeting minutes. Motion Approved. Motion, Seconded to approve the UNN Accounting Procedures with the CARAG approval date changed to 10/20/09. Motion Approved. UNN signatory selections will be postponed until the November meeting.

Financial Reports: Anna Matthes, Scott Engel, Jill Bode

Scott Engel presented the NRP budget, noting that several loans for the 4+ Unit Program have recently been paid out. A monthly UNN budget was not presented; Jill Bode will present the last two months' budgets at the November meeting. The UNN reported a \$1,200 profit in September and a profit of \$120 in October. Jill also presented a revised draft of the UNN 2010 budget that has not yet been approved by the UNN Board. The CARAG Board requested that the budget be revisited at the November meeting after the UNN Board approves the revised budget. Comments about the 2010 UNN budget should be directed to Jill Bode.

Zoning Committee Report: Aaron Rubenstein

Aaron Rubenstein provided an update on last week's Zoning Committee meeting. The Midtown Greenway Rezoning Study was reviewed during the 10/16 Zoning Committee meeting; the following motion was proposed by the committee:

CARAG finds that city planning staff generally interpreted well the small area plans' policies and maps and we support the rezonings proposed within CARAG with the following exceptions. The R4 zoning proposed for two parcels on the west side of the 3000 block of Fremont seems inconsistent; we recommend R3 for these parcels to create a continuous, consistent R3 district. We also recommend that the four parcels at the northeast corner of Bryant and 31st Street be downzoned to R3, rather than remain at R4, in order to provide an appropriate transition to the park and neighborhood to the south. CARAG further recommends that the proposed extension of the Pedestrian Overlay District along Hennepin toward 28th Street continue to 28th Street rather than stopping short of it; it makes sense to have a continuous, pedestrian-oriented character all the way to 28th Street; the character and nature of the street should not change mid-block.

Motion passed 4-2-1.

The proposed addition of two apartments to the building at 3501 Hennepin Avenue was also discussed briefly.

A Planning Commission public hearing regarding the Midtown Greenway rezoning proposals west of 35W will be held on 10/26 at 4:30 PM in room 317 of City Hall.

Uptown Association Update: John Darlington

Nothing to report.

CARAG Meetings

Howard Verson thanked the organizers of the CARAG Annual Board Meeting for a wonderful event. Motion, Seconded to hold the December monthly meeting on the third Tuesday of the month, with the Board retreat taking place after the new year. Motion Approved.

Adjourn:

Motion, Seconded to adjourn the general meeting at 8:50 p.m. Motion Approved.

Minutes recorded and submitted by Julie Cohen.