

Notes from the Fulton Finance committee meeting of January 4, 2017

Present

Jane Kohnen, John Finlayson, Jim Tincher, Ruth Olson, John Dillery, Vikas Narula, Vivek Narula, and Dave Delvoye

Administrative items

The next issue of Fulton Neighborhood News will be delivered in a couple of weeks. The next neighborhood networking event is set for 2/6 at Pig & Fiddle. At its meeting on 1/11, the FNA Board will deal with the annual Attorney General's report and brainstorm ideas for projects and events to work on.

Community Engagement committee

The 2017 Fall Festival is set for 9/9 at Pershing Park.

Safety committee

Numerous property crimes have been reported in the neighborhood over the past month. Ruth will include information about preventing motor vehicle theft in the upcoming issue of Fulton Neighborhood News.

Environment committee

John Dillery has prepared a proposal to continue the pollinator protection project in 2017 and will submit a 2017 budget for the Environment committee to the Finance committee next month.

Dillery introduced Vikas and Vivek Narula, the leaders of Neighborhood Forest, a nonprofit organization dedicated to giving free trees to kids for Earth Day. Vikas and Vivek made a brief presentation explaining the program, which since 2010 has distributed 18,000 trees through 70 schools in 9 states. The nonprofit works with schools to give small trees to kids, who take them home and plant them on their own property. "Sponsorships from businesses and individuals help pay for the trees. . . Any school can register to receive free trees." Providing trees to one school can cost between \$500 and \$1,000. About 100 trees are given to kids by each participating school. "Parents register and agree to plant and care for the trees with their children." The Environment committee recommends that FNA sponsor the program at neighborhood school(s). There was a discussion about using the money in FNA's tree fund to pay for the program; about \$27,000 is available from plant sale proceeds. Neighborhood Forest has worked with a number of local schools already, including Lake Harriet Lower, Armitage, Burroughs, Carondelet, and Southwest High School. Vikas and Vivek agreed to approach Lake Harriet Upper about the program again; the school initially opted not to participate. The Environment committee will check references regarding the program and then come back to the Finance committee next month with a specific proposal so that a project might be approved by the beginning of March.

Other business

There was a discussion about whether FNA should sponsor a community meeting regarding the status of US Internet's fiber optic cable plan for the area now that the City has given the company a permit to cross Minnehaha Creek. There appears to be widespread interest in the issue. Ruth will check with the Ward 13 office about whether it would be appropriate for the neighborhood association to organize such an event in conjunction with a for-profit company.

Three applications have been received for FNA's 2017 grant program. Information will be presented at the Finance committee's meeting on 2/1. Ruth will also work with Jim develop the annual FNA budget and present the draft at the same meeting.

Jim reported that Park Board staff are talking with City staff about the planned improvements for Minnehaha Creek pathways. He also suggested that FNA conduct an annual online neighborhood survey in order to identify and track resident issues. There was a discussion about how to reach those without easy internet access.