

Minutes of September 9, 2020
FNA Meeting held on Zoom

Board Members Present: Chris Black, Craig Brown, Katharine Brown, John Finlayson, Ray Klahr, Jane Kohnen, Michael Wagner and Steve Young

Guests: Ruth Olson, CM Linea Palmisano, Leslie Vinson (MPRB) and 14 neighbors

Meeting called to order at 7:02 p.m. There were no revisions or additions to the agenda.

Minutes: Minutes from August 12 FNA meeting were reviewed. Ray moved to approve the Minutes; Michael seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Treasurer's Report: Chris reviewed the Treasurer's report. It was another quiet month; several security rebates were paid out.

Ward 13 Report: Council Member Linea Palmisano (CMP) reported:

- CM Palmisano has engaged in a lot of conversations around public safety.
- The parkway at the SW corner of Lake Harriet is flooding and there will be some street closures to fix the issue.
- France Ave (44th-49th) will also have some closures (although at least one lane will be open at all times) for a telecom boring project.
- The general election will take place on Nov. 3.
 - Absentee ballots will begin mailing on Sept. 18.
 - There will be several ballot drop off locations throughout the city.
 - No more DFL election judges are needed; there is still a need for other party judges.
 - There will be a charter amendment with some technical language revisions.
- A postcard was sent out about engaging in the 2040 zoning code amendments.
- Inclusionary zoning, which requires affordable housing to be added to larger housing developments, is a standalone requirement; it is not part of the 2040 plan.

Pershing Park Concerns:

Several neighbors were present to express their frustration with increasing behavioral issues primarily at the basketball courts at Pershing Park, but also at the church across the street, the high school sports stadium next door and on the nearby sidewalks and streets. Over the course of the summer there has been an increase in illegal activity on park property- fireworks, drug using and dealing, offensive music and inappropriate language. There is a core group of about 5-10 middle/high school aged boys who are at the park every day from at least 11 a.m.-9 p.m.; the group can get as large as 30-40 kids at a time. The behavior is serious and aggressive and is way beyond "kids being kids". The behavior has escalated to damaging park, church, school and private property. Pedestrians have nearly been hit by kids driving cars or "buzzing" them off the sidewalks when they try to walk by. The kids are very defensive if approached and swear at anyone who tries to talk to them. Lake Harriet United Methodist Church, across the street, started out trying to de-escalate and engage with the kids, but that was not successful and they now call 911 every time the group of kids is on their property (primarily in the playground or climbing on the roof.) The police have frequently been called, but are undermanned and are not always able to respond. When they do respond, they drive by, but don't get out of their cars.

- CM Palmisano has talked with Park Police Chief Jason Ohotto. There are only 33 members on the park force and most of their time is taken up responding to calls at the encampments. Chief Ohotto has designated Lt. Noble to be the primary contact for neighbors to call with concerns and complaints. He will try to direct patrols to the area more often, as able.
- Recreation Supervisor Leslie Vinson notes that Pershing is one of five parks in southwest that will be closed completely for the foreseeable future. Even though the building is closed, the outside areas are not. The outside park closes at 10 p.m. (This has since been clarified that it closes at midnight.)
 - Leslie also recommends contacting Sgt. Berdahl of the Park Police, who is the liaison for the area. He is out of the office until 9/16, but would then like to set up a meeting.
 - She would like to set up some structured programming to engage the kids in a more positive way.
 - She is unsure how the start of school will affect the hours that are most impacted, but notes that the busiest time according to neighbors is 11 a.m.-9 p.m.
 - Leslie will redirect some resources to get some staffing at Pershing even though the building is closed. This staff will focus on the basketball court.
 - In the meantime, she will engage Street Reach to have a presence until staff is hired.
- Additional discussion focused on the directives to call the police every time illegal activity is observed; neighbors should document (safely) the behavior that is observed.
- Amana Niskode-Dossett will set up a group e-mail list for interested parties for further communication.
- Clair Daley will be the main contact for nearby neighbors.
- Ruth will circulate e-mail addresses and loop in Comm. Brad Bourn.

Plan Modification:

Previous notice was given to affected parties that FNA intended to modify its Phase II Action Plan up to \$25,000 to support the popular grants program. Jane moved to reallocate \$24,600 of Phase II funds to the FNA Small Grants Program; Ray seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote. The funds will come from an unused environmental strategy (\$13,680.17) and from Phase II housing program income (\$10,919.83).

Further Investment with Propel Nonprofits: FNA has previously partnered with Propel Nonprofits for the development of affordable housing in Minneapolis. Propel has a project in the Jordan neighborhood that needs additional investment. John moved to contract an additional \$85,000 with Propel as a three-year, low interest loan; Jane seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote. The funds will come from Phase II housing program income.

Fulton Development: Concern was expressed about the duplex which was built mid-block on 50th & Ewing. The original plan called for the homeowner to live in one modest unit and to rent out the other. The project changed and ended up being two \$1.1 M condos. The scale of the structure, as well as the pitch of the driveway, are unacceptable to the neighborhood residents. FNA needs to advocate for the safety and value of the community.

Fulton “Alt” Festival: In lieu of our normal Fall Festival, we are trying two things:

- This Saturday, Sept. 12, FNA will be at the Fulton Farmers Market with some giveaways for adults and kids (t-shirts, mugs, racial equity themed books, etc.).

- We are also trying a “reverse” silent auction where we ask neighbors to purchase gift cards to local businesses and donate them to FNA for a silent auction. This supports both local business and FNA. Chris is looking at online software that is free or very low cost.

Coordinator’s Update:

- FNA is considering sponsoring anti-racism training and/or discussions for the neighborhood. Ray and Michael both attended two discussions facilitated by Danger Boat (from the Theatre of Public Policy). Neither Ray nor Michael was overly impressed with the sessions and would prefer to see FNA sponsor something that is led by a trained facilitator and more focused by voices of people of color. Further research will be done to find something more acceptable to bring to the neighborhood.
- The Annual Meeting will be on Zoom on Oct. 14th. Ruth has invited our elected officials and will request a written update from Inspt. Huffman from the 5th Precinct. We will also have Board elections and present the Friends of Fulton awards; current Board members were asked to recruit for both.
- Several neighborhoods have gotten together and written a letter regarding the proposed Neighborhoods 2020 Guidelines and are asking other neighborhoods to sign on. The general idea of the letter is that neighborhoods are uniquely situated to do racial equity work, but that it is difficult to do that work with limited organizational funds. The letter asks for an increase of \$3M (for a total of \$7.1M) to make the program more sustainable for neighborhoods. Concern was expressed that a group letter could be changed after we agree to sign on. Ray moved for FNA to sign the letter “as written”; Michael seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Ruth Olson, Neighborhood Coordinator

Approved by FNA Board: _____

Signed: _____

Ray Klahr, Secretary