

East Isles Neighborhood Association Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, November 14, 2023, 6:00 p.m
Grace-Trinity Community Church, 1430 W. 28th Street and via Zoom

MINUTES

Board members present: Mike Erlandson (President), Dan Sutton, Julia Edelman, Ellen van Iwaarden (Vice President), Paula Chesley, and Cuyler Dinegan (Coordinator)

Board Members Absent: Henry LaBounta, Debra Altschuler, Jonathan Beck, Quinton Courts (Secretary) and Brian Milavitz (Treasurer),

19 neighbors attending.

I. Call to Order (Mike) The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m.

-Mike announced that the Board is honoring Council Member Lisa Goodman as the neighborhood's Neighbor of the Year 2024.

II. Guest, Minneapolis City Council Member Lisa Goodman with an update:

- Lunch with Lisa will happen tomorrow (11/15) at noon at the University of St. Thomas, Room 202. The speaker is Lisa telling all.
- There will not be a Lunch with Lisa in December, but Lisa is throwing a party to celebrate her years on the City Council on December 14, 4:00 p.m. downtown. RSVP to Lisa's office.
- Yard waste collection will go through week of November 27.
- The City's budget process is happening. Today, City Council did not vote for police officer retention and hiring funds.
- Our police staff is down to 525 officers and Minneapolis is 45th in the state on police pay.
- The last opportunity for the public to comment on the budget is on December 5th, 6:00 p.m. at City Hall.
- There will be a Rail Safety meeting, connected with the light rail construction, tomorrow (11/15). Reach out to Lisa's office for the link or for information on what happened.
- Minneapolis's new Climate Action Plan is the most progressive in the country.

III. Guest, Shelley Carthen Watson, YWCA CEO with an update:

- After meeting with East Isles leaders and Council Member Goodman, Ms. Carthen Watson wanted the neighborhood to know why the YWCA made the decision to close its Uptown fitness center.
- Fitness is just a small part of what they do. In addition to three fitness centers, the YWCA runs five childcare centers, after school child care, STEM programs, and the Girls Rap program at four sites (one is at the juvenile detention center) for girls who have been in trouble with law or are at risk of that. They also do Diversity Equity and Inclusion consulting and lobby for issues affecting girls and women.
- Their mission is Eliminating Racism, Empowering Women and Girls, and Promoting Peace, Justice, Freedom and Dignity for All. The YWCA has a strong record of working for racial justice. They opened the first integrated pool in Minneapolis, appointed the YWCA's first African American board member, and their Midtown Center became a community hub after George Floyd's murder.
- As part of their ten-year plan, the YWCA looked at all they were doing and found the greatest need was in early childhood and girls programming. After the pandemic, the girls in their programs were suffering from more mental health issues and lack of achievement.
- Since the pandemic, the fitness centers have produced 20 percent of the income, but are responsible for 35% of the expenses. The YWCA is not unique—all the fitness centers in town are hurting. 85% of YWCA's nationwide have exited the fitness business. The Uptown facility only did fitness, none of the other programs were located there. The pool and its ventilation system need to be updated. The YWCA is closing its Downtown location as well and both properties are on the market for sale.
- Colliers is their broker and they put out a call for offers in early November. Offers are due by the end of November. They've had a lot of interest in the buildings and are waiting to see if there are any offers.
- Ms. Carthen Watson encourages former Uptown members to try out the Midtown site. She also asked neighbors to help them keep an eye on the empty building. Board President Mike Erlandson has the Facilities Manager's contact information in case neighbors notice anything of concern at the building. There will be YWCA personnel in and out of the building as they sell the fitness equipment. There is a security system in the building and cameras inside and out.
- EINA will put together a working group of neighbors and board members to work with the new owner—whoever that is. The idea is to actively work with the new owners to try and make sure the new use is pleasing to the neighborhood.

IV. Guest Barb Davis, board member of Hill and Lake Press, with an update:

As a volunteer, Barb runs the HLP advertising program. HLP is almost 50 years old. Now it is a new 501(c)(3) with a nonprofit board. The mission is to produce this newspaper for the neighborhoods it serves. It now comes in the mail and they are trying to make it better. HLP wants to build better communications with all of the neighbors, homeowners, renters, and businesses in its community. On their website, HLP has an archive of every paper printed since 2010 which can be found at hillandlakepress.org. EINA has a ½ page ad every month, plus more advertising for special events. Cedar Isles Dean, Lowry Hill, and Kenwood residents are represented on board. The HLP is looking for another board member from East Isles. HLP is currently doing a test to see if the East and West Bde Maka Ska neighborhoods can be added to their circulation. HLP is trying to get the voice of the whole community involved, from the youngest to oldest, and they welcome community input and advice on how the paper can better serve the community.

V. Community Forum:

A neighbor raised a concern about the asphalt patches to the sidewalks, particularly on Hennepin Avenue. Neighbors can call 311 to report any patches of concern (uneven, possibly dangerous). Sometimes there are temporary patches because there is more work to be done as the Hennepin Avenue reconstruction project begins.

Paula Chesley shared what will be happening on the Mall. As part of the Mall project adopted in 2023, the Park Board will be taking out the north road on the Mall from Irving Avenue to East Bde Maka Ska Drive. It will be replaced with grass and trees. The Woonert at the east end of the Mall will have more green area. The project is happening while the Metropolitan Council is redoing the storm sewers and will be tearing up the Mall to do that. Nothing beyond the infrastructure is funded, so the rest of the Mall plan will remain on hold.

VI. Consent Agenda

Financial update. Mike presented Brian's monthly report and noted that there was nothing out of the ordinary. Ellen moved to approve the financials and last month's minutes. Second by Dan, approved.

VII. President's Update – Mike Erlandson

- Budget Conversation for 2024. If there are any ideas for next year's budget, please contact Mike and Brian. Draft of the budget will be released in advance of the December meeting. There will be a Zoom call to allow board members and the public to ask questions. We don't know yet what the neighborhood's funding from the City will be for 2024.

- Board Seat Open. With the resignation of board member Mark Greene, there is an opening on the board and an application is available on the website for those interested in joining the board.
- The Board is interested in setting up a working group for Hennepin Avenue and Uptown, to work on revitalizing those key areas of our neighborhood.

VIII. Coordinator Update – Cuyler Dinegan.

There will be a Greenway Cleanup, Sat. at 10:00 a.m. Meet on the Greenway under Hennepin Avenue. The next Safety Walking Club walk will start at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov 21st.

The winter skating party will be held on Sunday, January 28, at 1:00 p.m.

Cuyler is working on an annual event calendar. The December newsletter content is due on Sunday, Nov. 26th. Cuyler has been doing social media posts about giving to the neighborhood and this year so far we've received \$4,934 in donations. There will be a donation letter coming out next month, focusing on green efforts. EINA has received a grant, along with East Bde Maka Ska, to help build fundraising capacity. Cuyler is writing a Business District grant application to see if we can get some support for our advertising for next year. Dan and Jon may also write a grant application for some funds for the Farmers Market.

IX. Committee Updates:

a. Public Safety--Julia Edelman, Chair.

- The Public Safety Committee is working with other neighborhoods, the Park Board, and the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) to host a public meeting this winter regarding public safety.
- They are also working on doing something nice for the police officers in our precinct for Thanksgiving. There is also a MPD Feed (a meal donated by several neighborhoods is served to MPD officers in our precinct) in January that our neighborhood will be involved in.
- Julia and Paula will be co-chairing the Safety Walking Club. Our Club has really impressed neighboring neighborhoods on what good turnout we have.
- There are weekly meetings on Wednesdays for the community about public safety at the transit center and at the Hennepin County Library, Paula has been attending on behalf of EINA. EINA is interested in having other board members or neighbors attend. There will be additional security at the transit center, beginning this month there will be security there from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. every day. There has also been increased security on

the library property. There is a community feeling that the City has forgotten about Uptown.

· EINA hopes to set up a working group to continue to advocate for public safety during the Hennepin Avenue reconstruction.

b. Green Team—Ellen van Iwaarden, Chair

EINA's Green Team and the Lowry Hill East Neighborhood's (The Wedge) Environmental Committee are working together to sponsor a Greenway Cleanup on Saturday, November 18. It will start at 10:00 a.m. on the Greenway under the Hennepin Avenue Bridge. Hennepin County Commissioner Marion Greene will be there.

The Green Team is also working with The Wedge's Environmental Committee on a grant we received from the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization to try and reduce pollution in the Mississippi and Lake of the Isles. We've been promoting the Adopt-a-Drain program in both neighborhoods with great results. The percentage of drains adopted in East Isles has gone from 16% to 33.5%. In the Wedge it has gone from 15% to 19%. Keeping trash and vegetation out of the storm sewers by cleaning the surface grates of the drains helps improve water quality. Everyone in the two neighborhoods who is adopting a drain has been invited to enter a drawing for prizes. The prizes are gift cards donated by local businesses and one anonymous individual. Our local businesses have been incredibly generous—donating over \$900 in gift cards. On November 28 we'll hold the drawing to see who the winners are this fall. In the spring we'll be promoting Adopt-a-Drain again and will hold another drawing.

This winter we'll be encouraging neighbors to reduce their use of salt and other de-icers to protect water quality in the Mississippi and Lake of the Isles. As part of that effort we'll be having a giveaway of traction grit, which gives traction on ice and can be swept up in the spring and reused.

c. Built Environment—Mike Erlandson (Chair Open)

The board discussed the current built environment issues as part of the YWCA discussion and in the community forum, reported on above.

d. Farmers Market Committee—Dan Sutton, co-chair

- The Committee decided not to try and launch a new Uptown Farmers Market this year, given all the upcoming construction on Hennepin Avenue.
- For this summer there will be pop-up Farmers markets in each of the neighborhoods that are interested in starting the Uptown Farmers Market in 2025). So far, the East Isles, East Bde Maka Ska, Lowry Hill, and Lowry Hill East (The Wedge) neighborhood associations are interested in participating. The Uptown Business Association is also interested in participating. The South Uptown neighborhood is considering it but has not made a decision.
- EINA will have one pop-up promotion for the Uptown Farmers Market. The Committee is hoping to identify sponsors and volunteers that might want to be involved.

X. New Biz/Old Biz (All)

The Board decided to have Committee Chairs send out a Google calendar invitation to all board members for their upcoming events to help make sure we have a board member or two at every event.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10