

Heritage Hill Association Board Meeting  
February 19, 2020 Minutes

In Attendance: Wes Beck, Suzanne DeHaan, Amy DeMott, Wendy VerHage Falb, Michele Giordano,  
Sarah Green, Wayne Norlin, Scott Opperman, James Scozzari and John Walendowski

Absent: Kate Diedrich, Jeff Martin

Staff: Amanda Cormier, Barbara Draughon

Public: Johanna Schultz, Chris Truesdale

1. Call to Order: 7:05 pm
2. Public Comment – none
3. Johanna Schultz from the City of Grand Rapids attending meeting to explain the City Development Block Grant funding (CDBG) to board:

The city gets approximately \$6 – \$8 million each year in federal monies to distribute throughout city neighborhoods, community centers, associations, etc. Leadership and public safety programs are used as measurements for many of the amounts allocated. CDBG is also used for housing assistance (and affordable housing development) and city infrastructure (parks, streets, plantings). The city has been receiving block grant monies from feds since 1974 and has been delegating the usage to neighborhoods since the 80s (she was not sure of exact year).

The city is currently working on a new regional 5-year plan as the current plan comes to a close in May of 2021. Federal CDBG funding requires this long-range plan and HUD requires that plans include funding to low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.

(The 2020 census will also dictate parameters used and may – in some cases – reflect a different income set in some neighborhoods, possibly affecting monies allocated.)

The city's community development department measures and tries to understand/state the quality of all neighborhoods' programs in their reporting. The city requires performance outcomes and relies on complete reporting (by neighborhoods) of impact on neighbors/neighborhood and the leadership training of neighbors on neighborhood issues.

(The board members in attendance agreed an offsite planning session would definitely be in order to plan for the eventuality of a decrease in the funding provided by the CDBG due to one or more of many factors including federal funding, census results and the city's new regional plan.)

Action Items:

4. Approval of January 2020 Minutes – Minutes of the January meeting were approved.
5. Motion and approval sought to review association bylaws:  
(Should we) create a policy addendum to include an equity/inclusion statement to bylaws. Motion made and approved to include such an addendum. Examples from other neighborhood associations and/or organizations to be collected and reviewed/discussed at next meeting.
6. Historic Preservation Awards: Query put to board for any suggestions, nominees, etc.

Information Items:

7. Treasurers Report – Board introduced to the move by the association to Quickbooks for the Heritage Hill Association's financial reporting. Reports for January reviewed.
8. Staff Reports:  
No questions were posed regarding Amanda's or Barbara's staff reports.
9. Committee/Liaison Reports:  
Land Use Issues: Wayne Norlin and group met with Craig Nobbelin. Revisited Heritage Hill's master plan and relationships with bordering institutions and with city offices when issues/projects arise.

Group looking to be more (and/or remain) proactive in issues which affect our neighborhood and to educate the board regarding the Hill's master plan.

(Offsite board session brought up again at this point and topics mentioned for discussion – besides future of CDBG – now include bylaw addendum AND Heritage Hill master plan.)

Also talk of 153 Lafayette SE on current code compliance and whether to support rehab or demolition by Mercy Health. Board informed that Mercy Health has extension until spring 2021 on building as is. Parking on Morris SE between Cherry and Logan to be looked at by city for fire/garbage vehicles. Results of that study and the city's intentions to be announced to Morris neighbors during the summer of 2020.

Administration: Looking for prospective board members to fill out 3 mid- and late-term vacancies. Also, new office personnel hours announced to meet current needs.

Fundraising: Home Tour 2020 line-up is still seeking one more home (due to a late drop-out). House captains are all assigned and volunteer needs look like they could be moderately to greatly reduced due to some Tour element redesign. Proposals being sent to some of the Hill's infrastructure providers (i.e., Consumers, Comcast, etc.) for Tour sponsorship.

This year's Tour will be dedicated to Joyce Makinen.

Community Engagement: Partnering with HQ (on State Street) to help in the clean-up of Foster Park.

10. New Business: Joyce Makinen's Celebration of Life will be held February 29.

Also, Barbara Draughon asked board for opinions/suggestions on conducting "meet-up groups" for neighbors to discuss neighborhood issues.

11. No Old Business.

12. Meeting Adjourned at 8:15pm.

Submitted by Tom Truesdale