

Heritage Hill Association Board Meeting
March 17, 2021 Minutes

In Attendance via Zoom: Richard App, Wes Beck, Suzanne DeHaan, Amy DeMott, Kate Diedrich, Wendy VerHage Falb, Jeffrey Fawcett, Carolyn Ferrari, Sarah Green, Laura Joyce, Wayne Norlin, Scott Opperman, and John Walendowski

Absent: Jeff Martin, James Scozzari

Staff: Amanda Cormier, Barbara Draughon, Maria Zache

Other/Minutes Recorder: Tom Truesdale

Public: None

1. Call to Order: 7:01 pm
2. Public Comment – none
3. Motion to accept January/February 2021 Minutes: minutes approved.
4. Other votes/action: none.
5. Guest Presentation: Ryan Kilpatrick, executive director, Housing Next.
Housing Next working on Master Plan updates addressing housing related needs:
Most specifically, inadequate housing supply for growing GR and Kent County needs, disparities in housing access and dramatic price increases at neighborhood levels.
Also addressing home ownership opportunities by making sure all neighborhoods are creating housing stock and that there is housing available for all income levels.
Working with K-Connect on economic means/capabilities.
Says city of Grand Rapids needs 5,300+ rental units and 3,500+ owner occupied homes in next 5 years to meet population growth needs.
There is currently a 40% gap in home ownership rates between black and white population.
Housing Next is involved in all aspects of the housing crisis, including:
Preserving existing affordable housing, increased funding for homeowner assistance programs, creating gap-funding programs (subsidies) for new development to assure more units are affordable, prioritizing investments along transit corridors, creating affordable housing options in high opportunity neighborhoods, focusing on ownership among those of color and supporting infrastructure projects, small businesses and parks in these neighborhoods.
They are also working with area employers to think creatively in solving the wage/housing cost gap.
This, Ryan said, was the 17th presentation he has made to local organizations regarding the city's concern for its housing needs.
6. Staff Reports:
Barbara says, in addition to her written report, she is attending an Undoing Racism program presented by the Neighbors of Belknap Lookout (NOBL).
Amanda says, in addition to her written report, things are moving along on the public art project to beautify (and prevent graffiti on) neighborhood utility boxes. She has been working with board member Richard App on artists, colors and themes for the one dozen boxes.
7. Committee Reports:
Finance – The first PPP loan was forgiven by the federal SBA. A second PPP loan for 2021 was awarded in the amount of \$18,650 under the American Cares Act.

Administrative – Nothing to report.

Land Use – Wayne Norlin and Craig Nobbelin will remain a team at the helm of this committee, but Wayne will now provide the leadership. The committee (consisting of board and non-board members) will operate under the Land Use header which will encompass all the neighborhood concerns/entities including zoning, housing, preservation, parks, traffic, parking and institutional interfacing (among others).

Neighbor Jay Fowler will be providing articles for the Heritage Herald summarizing things the Land Use committee has done and the importance of the group's vigilance, both proactive and reactive, over the years.

The new GRCC signage for its campus on Fulton was approved by the city's Preservation/Zoning departments after taking into account Heritage Hill Association input.

The city seeks to provide E-Scooter docking at Pleasant Park. This issue is still being addressed by the Land Use committee as to the particular location of parking area and operation of the scooters within park boundaries.

Lastly, Wayne said the group was in the process of collecting all known sources of public announcement of meetings, hearings, presentations of projects and policy in an attempt to stay on top of those issues that would/could affect our neighborhood.

Fundraising - Suggestion of perhaps a meeting/gathering of neighborhood stakeholders (businesses and neighbors) to listen to ideas/concerns as part of the long-range planning process. Garden Tour plans still on track. Now looking for sponsorship for the tour.

Community Engagement – More walks with Caroline Cook scheduled (architectural tour, graveyard tour) through June and also planned as a part of the Garden Tour on June 19.

8. Other: Nothing.

Meeting adjourned 8:07 pm.

Submitted by Tom Truesdale