

Minutes SPCC Board Meeting May 6, 2008

Tenaya Wright, board president, called the meeting to order at Langston Hughes P.A.C. at 7:00 P.M. Attending were board members Joanna Cullen, Tracey Fugami, Kiku Hayashi, Andre Helmstetter, Marianne Mork, Sunny Knott, Alex Zankich, and Bill Zosel, and neighborhood residents Michael Hintze and Stewart Perry. Also, from Seattle University, Kateri Schlessman and from the Seattle Dept. of Parks and Recreation Donald Harris, from Hewitt Architects Kris Snider, and representing Barrientos LLC, Richard Loo.

Proposed park and woonerf at James Ct. adjacent to mixed-use project on Seattle University property: Kris Snider, landscape architect with Hewitt described three conceptual schemes for the proposed park at James Ct. and 12th Ave. as well as the proposed woonerf for James Ct. Snider has been hired by the Parks Dept. to design the park as his firm (Hewitt) is designing the building that is proposed for the block north of James Ct. on property owned by S.U. The intent is that the building and its landscaping respond to and enhance the proposed park. The designers and the Parks Dept. have been in conversation with the Seattle Department of Transportation which seems willing to see James Ct. (the public street and sidewalks) be developed in a way that includes landscaping and other elements that are more attractive to and allow increased use by those not in motor vehicles.

Donald Harris gave an overview: The Pro Parks Levy Opportunity Fund set aside \$500,000 to purchase land for a park to serve the 12th Avenue neighborhood awarding that amount in response to a neighborhood application for a "12th Avenue Gathering Place." After a search of possible locations, the Parks Dept. recommended that a park be established on one of two City-owned parcels on 12th Avenue --- one at E. Jefferson and one at James Ct. At a public meeting, a strong consensus of those attending the meeting favored the James Ct. site over the E. Jefferson site.

The James Court site is one of the remaining parcels of the so-called Mayor's 12th Avenue Plan. That Plan calls for the properties to be transferred at market value and the proceeds used for capital improvements in the 12th Avenue area. Proceeds received by the City so far have been used mostly for street improvements on 12th Avenue and nearby: specifically traffic circles in a number of intersections between 13th Ave. and 18th Ave., curb bulbs and textured crosswalks on 12th, street trees on 12th, and pedestrian lights on 12th. (Other efforts paid for by the 12th Avenue fund sales include a rezone analysis done more than ten years ago, and administrative costs.)

However, the James Ct. site has been transferred to the Parks Dept. for a purchase price of \$0 which therefore enables the \$500,000 set aside for purchase of park land to be "reprogrammed" to fund the development of the park. Also, the Parks Dept. has approximately \$500,000 from King County conservation futures to purchase property for another park to serve the 12th Avenue area. No property has been identified for that future park, and most likely there will have to be additional funds raised to augment the \$500,000 which is not sufficient to purchase a parcel of adequate size.

Board members and others reviewed the schemes presented by Kris Snider. There were favorable comments regarding all of the schemes and a desire to take more time to consider the details.

The design of the Barrientos/S.U. building as it meets the street at James Ct. was thought to be particularly important. Hewitt has not yet finalized its design and will be able to present that later.

The Parks Dept. will hold a public meeting for all interested persons to review and comment on the design of the park. No date has been set.

Possible grant application to “green” gray parking strips Michael Hintze wants to enlist neighborhood support for a project to turn some asphalt parking strips in the neighborhood into landscaped areas. At the recent SPCC quarterly meeting he expressed an interest in leading a SNAP grant for this purpose. However, he currently believes it would be impossible to put together a successful SNAP grant application before the deadline, which is later this month. Board members encouraged the idea and expressed willingness to support and help work on the project. Michael will get back to us on the next steps. A DON matching grant is a possibility.

Dearborn Street Coalition and the project proposed for the Goodwill site Stewart Perry, the SPCC representative to the Dearborn Street Coalition gave an update on the status of negotiations/conversations with the developer. Stewart noted that the Department of Planning and Development had issued a decision granting the Master Use Permit sought by the developer. The developer’s most recent position appears to be less than conciliatory. Some of the concessions to neighborhood concerns that had been offered earlier have been withdrawn. If SPCC is to continue participating in the process, the next step likely will be appealing the DPD decision granting the MUP. This means sharing in the cost of the appeal. SPCC has no bank account allowing the organization to contribute. Board members expressed a willingness to participate in fundraising activities.

In addition to the DPD Master Use Permit decision, there is another decision point. That is, the developer has asked for street vacations. The City Council must decide that issue. If the City allows the streets to be vacated, the law requires that the developer provide a “public benefit” to compensate for the loss of streets (and the loss of any future use of the streets). The public, including SPCC, can weigh in on the issue of what constitutes an adequate public benefit.

Stewart also indicated that, contrary to earlier representations, the developer is now saying that it is not able to build in such a way that Goodwill will remain without interruption on the site. That is, there will be at least a temporary absence of Goodwill from the site during construction. It’s not clear that the absence will be temporary. (or at least not clear to the note-taker from the conversation at the meeting.)

Other items deferred Since the earlier items on the agenda were lengthy, and it’s necessary to vacate Langston Hughes at 9:00 the meeting adjourned without consideration of other issues on the agenda:

Election of board officers
Juneteenth Celebration, table and outreach
RPZ Zoning letter
July quarterly meeting and newsletter planning

Minutes submitted by Bill Zosel as Susan, secretary, unable to attend.

Blanche Lavizzo Park planned improvements Randy Robinson, landscape architect with the Parks Dept. stated that there is a “little bit of money” to improve Lavizzo Park --- about \$43,000. Most of the work will be done by the Seattle Conservation Corps. The plan is for the work to be done this year. It’s likely that the focus of the work will be on the arcade structure. (The original design included a sitting area under the arcade, but the benches that were there have been destroyed.) Planned improvements will include some ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) features. Locking the fireplaces has been suggested. There will be a directional sign for the Central Park trail.

It has been reported to the Parks Dept. that people avoid the overhead shelter. Randy wants feedback from the community regarding the shelter. Tenaya suggested that the shelter could be improved if it had a clear roof to let light in.

Several people noted that the park is “a bog” --- drainage is a problem. John suggested that Parks “go with the bog” and make a wetland.

Several people emphasized that the park is poorly lit. Tracey suggested that thought be given to activating the space ---- maybe a chess board, for example. Andre urged that there be more programs for the park. The amphitheater is a good thing, but on most days the park is a cold, dark, wet place. Randy Robinson noted that there are more programs planned for the park this summer and he will recommend to the Parks Dept. that there be a comprehensive plan for the park with opportunities for future development. Tracey suggested that the Parks Dept. survey participants at the programmed events to seek opinions about what should happen to the park/at the park.

Randy Robinson stated that he will have more information to provide in about a month. (Randy Robinson, Senior Landscape Architect, 684-7305)

Impact of staff and visitors to Sabey/Swedish campus on street parking in the neighborhood: Andre brought to the board’s attention the increasing problem of scarcity of on-street parking spaces. Staff and visitors to the medical center and Sabey’s tenants are known to be parking on neighborhood streets. The institution raised the parking rates recently, a step it is required to take in order to discourage staff from arriving by single occupancy vehicle (SOV), but it seems that many are not joining carpools or taking transit, but are parking for free on neighborhood streets in order to avoid paying for parking. Donya stated that this is also an increasing problem around her house. (She lives west of the institution and Andre lives east.) There was a discussion about asking the city to extend the boundaries of the Residential Parking Zone (RPZ) which covers some of the streets around the institution. The board stated that it would write a letter to the Department of Transportation (SDOT) if Andre, and others, will suggest what might be the appropriate new boundaries for the extension of the RPZ.

Planning for July SPCC party Kiku was not available to give a report on the status of party planning. Alex stated he will contact Kiku to see what needs to be done in the next month.

Juneteenth Celebration John led the discussion regarding the upcoming Juneteenth celebration and participation by SPCC and SPCC board members. He stated that he would do the “standard outreach” to encourage participation. He asked other board members to take part in the event and in encouraging others to participate.

Newsletter Delivery Joanna and the board discussed the details of newsletter delivery. The newsletter should be ready by Friday. Tenaya will pick up the newsletters from the S.U. Copy Center. Joanna is designing routes. Alex will deliver the batches of newsletters to the delivery persons. It is expected that newsletters will be delivered to homes this weekend.

Quarterly Meeting There has been no planning for a program or guests at the quarterly meeting. Even though it is too late to publicize it in the already-printed newsletter, it was discussed that it would be good if we could plan a program and publicize it by phone calls and e-mails as well as the list service and www.centraaldistrictnews.com Donya noted that the last quarterly meeting, and several previous quarterly meetings had been attended by new people who were wanting a discussion about crime in their neighborhoods. The board decided to try to get representatives of the East Precinct Crime Prevention Coalition and the Police Department to speak at the quarterly meeting. Tenaya will contact Stephanie Tschida to invite them. When this is confirmed all board members will spread the word through phone calls/e-mails, etc. (Regarding relations with the East Precinct: Donya reminded the board of previous discussions about the tone of the photos at the East Precinct station. Community members had expressed a desire for “kinder and gentler” photos in the public areas than those currently displayed. It was unclear whether or not a request for a change had been communicated to the Police Dept. or if anyone had taken on the responsibility to do so.

Black on Black Crime Coalition The coalition continues to meet regularly. Tenaya attends those meetings.

Event at Flo Ware Park On April 19 there will be a community gathering with special emphasis on events and activities for children at Flo Ware Park. Tenaya and her family will be there. All are encouraged to attend.

Language classes at CASA Latina John stated that planning for Spanish and English classes at CASA Latina were progressing. C.L. is in the process of hiring a teacher. It's expected that classes will start some time in May (Note, since this meeting the first Spanish/English class session has been announced for May 8 at 6:00 P.M.)

Swedish/Sabey CAC The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) issued a decision approving the institution's request for an extension of the expiration date of its current Major Institution Master Plan (MIMP). The DPD decision states that any proposals that are beyond the scope of the projects approved in the existing MIMP will trigger a requirement for a major amendment of the MIMP or a new MIMP. This seems to provide some protection to the neighborhood. It was widely expected that Sabey intended to use the process of extending the Master Plan to propose and implement a project on 18th Avenue that would be much larger in scale and scope than buildings and uses for 18th Avenue in the current MIMP. The neighborhood should pay attention to the CAC meetings and upcoming Sabey proposals and be prepared to advocate for full review of any new and different large-scale proposals for 18th Avenue.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 P. M.

Minutes submitted by Bill Zosel, substituting for Susan Minogue board secretary