

***CAPITOL NEIGHBORHOODS, INC.***  
**MINUTES of Executive Council Meeting Held Tuesday June 23, 2009.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Berger (President), Yarborough, Patterson, Stitt, Cooper, Hees, Megan Christiansen, Plotkin, Ostlind, Mohs, Fisher, Dory Christensen, Skrentny, Devitt, O'Brien and Verveer.

GUESTS PRESENT: John Sheean; Brendan McGrath, Bonnie Weidert, Peter Harriet, Eric Paulsen.

I Meeting called to order. There is a quorum.

The meeting opened with a round of introductions.

II. MINUTES of May EC Meeting, are APPROVED, (without correction) on MOTION by Ostlind; SECOND by M. Christiansen.

III. TREASURER'S REPORT.

M. Christiansen reports a bank balance of \$14,193.06; of which \$6,085.70 is in checking, and \$8,107.36 is in CDs. We have no liabilities.

IV. NEW BUSINESS.

**Welcome to New EC Members.**

Berger welcomed newly-elected EC members John Sheean from Mansion Hill and Brendan McGrath from Bassett.

**Letter of Support for Historic Preservation Planner Position.**

Zellers (not present) sought the EC's support for a letter she drafted to the Mayor expressing support for immediately filling the city's historic preservation planner position that has been unfilled since Kitty Rankin retired. The Mayor has proposed that this position be frozen during the current budget crisis. Ostlind voiced support for the letter. Fisher opposes due to the city's budget problems. Skrentny strongly supports, noting that others in the planning department are trying to fill the void but they lack Rankin's expertise and it is causing uncertainty at the Landmarks Commission. This is also delaying the downtown plan and the zoning code re-write. He also notes that many candidates have already been interviewed for the position. Stitt supports the letter. What happened at St. Raphael's show us, he said, that the position is worth a lot more than what's being spent. He believes, however, the letter should be re-drafted to better explain how we came to understand what the mayor's position is and why this should be exempted from the freeze. M. Christiansen agrees we need to make the case why this should be exempted from the freeze. Yarborough agrees with Fisher that we should not send the letter due to the city's budget problems. Mohs supports the letter, noting the threat to the Mansion Hill Historic District brought about by the Edgewater Hotel expansion plans. He also pointed to Donovan Rypkema's recent address emphasizing the economic importance of historic preservation. We need this, Mohs argued, because confidence in historic preservation is slipping.

Verveer said this issue is "close to my heart" because he authored last fall's budget amendment opposing the Mayor's original proposal to cut the salary for this

position. He authored another budget amendment to authorize hiring Rankin's replacement by early 2009. In response, the Planning Commission did a national search and it was close to filling the position. Verveer noted that the Mayor recently said on his blog that we can do without filling the position for now and use fill-ins from the Planning Dept. instead. Brad Murphy had appealed to save the position. Verveer supports the letter, but with the changes suggested by Stitt. He also suggested making this a topic of discussion at the next EC meeting with the Mayor in late July. Eric Paulsen then read directly from the Mayor's blog. In response, Stitt suggested using the Mayor's own words in the letter when making our case.

A MOTION by Mohs, with a SECOND by Ostlind, that the EC support the letter drafted by Zellers with a FRIENDLY AMENDMENT that the letter include the changes suggested by Stitt, as well as minor editorial changes suggested by O'Brien, is APPROVED. Yarborough and Fisher OPPOSE.

### **Status of Alcohol Issues Committee.**

Cooper believes we must have a committee to review liquor license applications in a timely fashion. He asked whether we should do it at the district level or at the EC level. Stitt asked whether we should consider a model similar to how the Development Review Oversight Committee reviews development proposals: they are reviewed at the district level unless there is no one from the district to do it, in which case the DROC would oversee the process. Cooper emphasized review needs to be "timely." Stitt responded that review can only be timely if it is done at the EC level, or there is someone at the district level willing to do the work. M. Christiansen said we need to decide what to do in the face of last month's "ultimatum" from the AIC; do we reconstitute the committee, she asked? Stitt suggested drafting a letter to the AIC members telling them we do not support their position and advising them the committee is disbanded. Ostlind noted the committee has already been, and still is, suspended. Until we reinstate the AIC, or organize something different, we will have only limited review of license applications on a district level. This will lead to inconsistency until we find people who are willing to take this on. Ostlind, however, said this is not a "pressing issue" now; we can do what we've always done on the district level until we have people in place to do this. In response, Mohs asked what would happen if another "Lucille's" bar is proposed; is our response *ad hoc*? Ostlind said it would be until people are willing to do the work.

A MOTION by Stitt, with a SECOND by Fisher to disband the AIC, led to the following discussion:

Stitt noted the "construct" is there, but nothing will happen until people are willing to do the work. Stitt described the AIC in its current form as a "junked car" and we should have another car on the blocks to replace it. Fisher suggested asking who on the EC would be willing to interview license applicants each month. Verveer said the ALRC meets the third Wednesday of each month and noted that applicants are already instructed to notify the alder, the neighborhood association and the police (this is what occurred with the "Bayou," he said). Verveer also pointed to the ordinance requiring applicants to post an orange sign on the premises announcing the application, listing the hearing date and the dates of informational sessions. Verveer has contacted Berger directly and has also told applicants to contact the district chairs. Several residents of 100 W. Wisconsin have asked for an informational session regarding the proposed for

“Cooper’s” on the Square based upon information they obtained from the CNI website. Verveer pointed out that the work of the committee, whatever form it takes, doesn’t have to be as “laborious” as the AIC made it. Stitt objects to having the EC do license review. Patterson asks that, instead of disbanding the committee, we announce that its work is on hold until we re-populate it with new members. Stitt answered that it’s “an Edsel.”

The MOTION to disband the AIC completely is APPROVED. Patterson OPPOSES.

Berger volunteered, although the AIC is now disbanded, to do organizational work to get the ball rolling on this after she steps down as President. She asked for help from others. Stitt suggested soliciting help from the CNI listserv.

### **Nominations and Election of 2009-10 CNI President and EC Officers.**

Mohs nominates Adam Plotkin for CNI President. Mohs presented remarks strongly in support of Plotkin. Stitt agreed, noting that Plotkin’s knowledge of governance and government affairs should make him a great president. Berger praised Plotkin for helping her so much with the elections at the Annual Meeting. Plotkin said he is willing to serve, but will have a “steep learning curve.” He noted that Zellers and Berger did a lot for this organization and brought a lot of energy to the job. Plotkin hopes to grow into the job. Ostlind thanked Plotkin for agreeing to take the position and offered everyone’s help, urging him to remember when to delegate responsibility. Cooper agreed, noting that Holloway pushed for more delegation and said we are all here to help.

A MOTION by Mohs with a SECOND by Skrentny, to name Adam Plotkin as CNI President, is APPROVED unanimously.

Nominations were then opened for the remaining position of Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary.

A MOTION by Berger, with a SECOND by Cooper to nominate Dan O’Brien as Secretary for another term, is APPROVED.

A MOTION by Stitt, with a SECOND by Cooper that Megan Christiansen be nominated for another term as Treasurer, is APPROVED.

There were no nominees for Vice-President. Berger asked what to do with this position. Stitt said we have struggled with this for a long time and we need one. He urged Plotkin to try to find someone to fill this position. The V-P would then be in line for the presidency.

### **CNI Garden Tour.**

The Garden Tour is this Saturday (6/27). Dory Christensen said the planning is done and urged everyone to attend. She noted there was an article in Sunday’s “Home” section of the *State Journal*. She commended Yarborough on her efforts in getting 62 volunteers, and described the work of the committee as “amazing.” Christensen thanked Stitt for facilitating the meetings, to which Stitt responded that Dory is an “amazing organizer,” and both she and Yarborough are incredible. Stitt is also trying to get a TV spot for the event before Saturday. Christensen asked those EC members with unsold tickets to return them. Sheean is willing to forward e-mails about the event.

## **V. OLD BUSINESS.**

### **Housing Inventory.**

Nothing to report.

**Parking Committee.**

Devitt has nothing new to report.

**VI. DISTRICT REPORTS.**

**James Madison Park.**

Hees introduced Eric Paulsen as a new member of the district committee. He will join Hees and Fisher, who is staying on. Hees announced that Ilse Hecht and Donna Asif are stepping down. A district meeting with the new Alder will be scheduled soon.

Hees noted that the gardens at James Madison Park, Butler Plaza and Ilse Hecht's home will be on the garden tour.

The new building at 303 S. Hamilton St. will open July 6th.

**Mansion Hill.**

The Edgewater Hotel saga continues, said Mohs. He is concerned that Zellers, Devitt and himself are being characterized as not representative of the neighborhood. He asks for CNI to approve a resolution in support of the Mansion Hill Historic District.

There followed a MOTION by Stitt, with a SECOND by Skrentny, to adopt the following resolution of support:

"WHEREAS, the Mansion Hill Historic District [is] located in the Mansion Hill Neighborhood of Capitol Neighborhoods Inc. (hereafter "CNI") and the adjacent Langdon Street Neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, the Hammes Group and National Guardian Life Insurance Company have established an alternative neighborhood association made up primarily of non-resident property owners and real estate interest[s] whose purpose is to weaken the historic district in order to allow for developments that they would like to undertake.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that CNI:

1. Confirms its support for the Mansion Hill Historic District with all of the provisions and protections afforded under existing city ordinances and plans.
2. That in order for the Historic District to survive and prosper it is necessary for those areas of the Historic District that are zoned residential to be preserved for that use to the maximum extent possible.
3. That CNI supports the Mansion Hill Steering Committee formed for the purpose of dealing with the Edgewater Hotel Development.

The Motion is APPROVED. unanimously and the resolution is adopted.

Ostlind commented that his experience with the development review oversight committee tells him that characterizing neighborhood leaders as "non-representative" of the district usually is not effective. Mohs agrees that is normally so, but this situation is different because the development team is very persuasive, has access to the Mayor and is making headway. They are meticulous in keeping track of what CNI does and of all their contacts with neighborhood representatives. Mohs added they speak of many "meetings" with the neighborhood but most are nothing more than meaningless contacts where nothing happens. Stitt suggested keeping track of all of this and include a reference to the meaningless contacts with the neighborhood in the

district advisory statement; this should all be made part of the record. Plotkin said this is being done. Patterson suggested they put into the record what these neighborhood representatives have done for Mansion Hill in the past.

Devitt believes the Edgewater plans will be submitted for formal approval around July 15th. Verveer added the developers want to submit the plan this week but he got them to delay one month. Verveer is working with Ald. Bridget Maniacci to set up meetings. The next Steering Committee meeting is Monday (6/29). This should be followed by a full neighborhood meeting some time in early or mid-July.

Stitt asked whether the alternative neighborhood association has asked to be recognized by the city. Verveer does not believe so. He added the alternative association thinks the process for the Mansion Hill master plan was flawed because all voices were not heard. The master plan is on hold for now until the hotel situation is dealt with. Mohs called the situation "bizarre" and added the developers view Mansion Hill as a "mixed-use residential district."

### **Bassett.**

Ostlind reports he was re-nominated for district chair at the last meeting *in absentia*.

The new Lake Park Apartments will be opening soon, with 38 out of 40 units having been rented. Brendan McGrath is organizing the annual neighborhood cleanup.

Verveer reports the vacant former State Bar building on Wilson and Broom is being sold to the National Trade Association for Cosmetic Dentistry, which will relocate its offices there. They want to demolish an apartment building in the rear and expand the surface parking lot. Mohs commented that this is another example of what happens when you allow a commercial use in a residential neighborhood.

### **Mifflin West.**

Plotkin reports that Larry Warman from Metropolitan Place has been selected the new district chair.

Stitt commented that he is impressed with how Metropolitan Place has evolved into such a strong community. Cliff Fisher is to be complimented for having the courage to pursue that project in the face of great difficulties, he added.

### **First Settlement.**

Skrentny reports there was a recent meeting called by Ald. Rummel to discuss the development proposal for the former O'Cayz Corral site. The proposal so far is for a six-story apartment building with commercial space on the first floor.

Skrentny reports roofs are being replaced, repairs are being done and AT & T is burying utility lines in the district. Stitt added that the Hart properties have all been sold to Otto Gebhardt, who is also part of the development group for the O'Cayz site. Stitt noted that, years ago, Gebhardt purchased the troubled building at 135 S. Hancock and cleaned it up.

## **VII. REPORTS OF THE ALDERPERSONS.**

Verveer reports the APEX Group has proposed a mixed-use building at W. Wilson and S. Henry Sts. He has been contacted by former Mayor Soglin about this.

Verveer expressed his displeasure with the fact that the relatively new fountains on the east Washington side of the Square are not working. Apparently the underground pumps have rusted out and have to be replaced. City Parks staff is working to get them repaired. Verveer also expressed disappointment that the Square and the State St. Mall do not look as nice as they should this year because the maintenance crew is short-staffed.

Planning is proceeding "fast and furious" with respect to Peace Park, Verveer said, with meetings having been held every week for several months. Plans include a police substation, a stage, a fountain, public restrooms and green space. He promised a community-wide meeting will be held before the city approval process begins.

In ALRC news, Verveer reports one applicant is seeking to open a bowling alley at the former "Cu-nique" site downtown, and another is seeking to open a combination restaurant and movie theater. Both have asked for exemptions from the Alcohol Density Ordinance. Verveer said

he will sponsor an amendment to the original ordinance that will at least allow them to apply for an exemption.

Verveer will also introduce an ordinance July 7th granting an exemption for historic landmarks from city encroachment fees. This arose out of the controversy, now in litigation, where the city charged the Majestic Theater a fee for encroachment of its historic marquee onto public space. This is also of concern to the Loraine Building which has been charged encroachment fees every year as well. He noted that this would be yet another benefit for having property landmarked.

#### VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS.

##### **ASM Liaison.**

No one present.

##### **Education and City Issues Monitoring.**

Patterson has nothing to report.

##### **Garden.**

Yarborough has nothing to add to what has already been reported.

##### **Program.**

Berger complimented the committee on a wonderful Annual Meeting Program.

Stitt announced that the CNI Annual Potluck Picnic will be held Thursday August 20th at Capitol Point, 125 N. Hamilton St. A full schedule of programs is on tap for next year, Stitt added.

##### **Downtown Living Tour.**

This committee was formed at the May EC meeting to address concerns regarding the division of labor and proceeds between CNI and DMI. Stitt reports the committee, comprised of himself, Ruth Yarborough, Susan Schmitz and John Ceniglia has met and will meet again next Monday (6/29), 11:30 a.m. at Sunprint. Sara Reiter has also joined the committee. One idea is to have an historic home on the tour as a designer "showcase." Berger commended Stitt for taking this on.

##### **Membership/Media.**

Dory Christensen urged Plotkin to take advantage of Griffin Klema's many "great ideas" involving the website, marketing and the like after he leaves for law school.

##### **Development Review Oversight.**

Ostlind notes the committee has asked developers and architects for feedback after a project is completed regarding how the process went. It has produced good thoughts and ideas. He encouraged anyone with feedback from a project in their particular district to pass that along to the committee.

##### **Development.**

Lynn Phelps has resigned as committee chair. It has not yet been determined who will replace him.

M. Christiansen reports she and Zellers met with the attorney regarding CNI's 501(c)3 application. It is now being reviewed by the IRS and the committee has responded to questions from the IRS. This will continue to move along.

##### **Finance.**

M. Christiansen reports the committee:

- Approved a \$150 contribution to Period Garden Park;
- Approved memorial donation in memory of Bob Holloway's mother;
- Reimbursed \$163 to Donna Asif for costs arising from the homeless dialogues she put together as the CNI Homeless Committee chair.

M. Christiansen notes that Asif has resigned as both the Homeless Committee chair and as a James Madison Park District representative. Asif asked Christiansen about the possibility of

CNI's future involvement in homeless dialogues. Christiansen answered it is premature to commit CNI to future support for the dialogues if it is not done by CNI or under our own auspices. Stitt suggested including this as an "Action Item" on the July EC meeting agenda.

**Physical Linkages.**

Mayer not present.

**Alcohol Issues.**

Suspended at this time.

**Downtown Plan.**

Berger reports the plan is still in the works. She will forward information as it develops.

Stitt commented that First Settlement district has serious concerns with the downtown plan in that it allows for buildings up to ten stories on E. Washington between Hancock and Blair Sts. which is within the historic district. The district will request that this provision be removed at the planning department stage, he added.

**Zoning Re-Write.**

Skrentny attended last night's (6/22) meeting. He reports the downtown portion of the re-write is "on hold" while other aspects remain on line. He distributed copies of the committee's June, 2009 bulletin.

The meeting closed with Melissa Berger thanking everyone for their support in her brief term as CNI president.

MEETING ADJOURNED

**NEXT EC MEETING: Tuesday July 28, 2009, 5:15 p.m., State Capitol Rm. 415 NW**

AGENDA (subject to change by the President)

I. CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM.

II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF JUNE EC MINUTES.

III. TREASURER'S REPORT.

IV. ACTION ITEMS

**Status of Alcohol Issues Committee.**

**CNI's Future Role in Homeless Dialogues.**

V. NEW BUSINESS.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

**Safety/Crime Downtown.**

**Housing Inventory/Candidates for Owner-Occupancy.**

**Parking Subcommittee.**

VII DISTRICT REPORTS

**Bassett, Mifflin West, Mansion Hill, James Madison Park, First Settlement.**

VIII. REPORTS OF THE ALDERPERSONS.

IX. COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Downtown Plan, Downtown Living Tour, Membership/Media, Program, Garden, Development, Finance, Development Review Oversight, Physical Linkages, Education and City Issues Monitoring, ASM Student Liaison, Alcohol Issues, President's Report.**

X. ADJOURNMENT.

**MINUTES OF CNI ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING THURSDAY JUNE 18, 2009**

I. The meeting, held at Monona Terrace, was called to order by Berger. It opened with brief remarks by Melissa Berger. Executive Council members were then introduced.

## II. ELECTION OF DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES.

Plotkin announced these would be the first elections under the new bylaws. He distributed ballots and noted there were no nominees for openings in Mifflin West and First Settlement. There was one contested race in Bassett where four candidates were vying for three spots: Jonathan Cooper, Davy Mayer, Brendan McGrath and Rosemary Lee. Ballots were collected and the following were elected as district representatives:

**Mansion Hill** – Fred Mohs, Adam Plotkin and John Sheean.

**Bassett** – Jonathan Cooper, Davy Mayer, Brendan McGrath.:

## III. KEYNOTE ADDRESS.

Former Madison alder Dr. Noel Radomski gave the keynote address on “Madison’s Cultural Plan.” Radomski, the director and associate researcher for the Wisconsin Center for the Advancement of Postsecondary Education, discussed the city’s upcoming cultural plan, He focused on how it might relate to the downtown plan, the zoning code re-write, and UW arts groups. He cited the challenges and opportunities this presents in bringing people together, involving youth in our community, and protecting and enhancing what we have such as the Overture, UW and MATC. Radomski emphasized the need to “connect the dots.” We have an obligation and the responsibility to ask the tough questions and to “step on toes” at times, but with respect. According to Radomski, a website will be up soon with information, followed by “many, many” listening sessions. He concluded by stating that, if we do not participate and work together, we will get what we deserve in a cultural plan.

## IV. AWARDS.

Ledell Zellers presented the following awards on behalf of CNI to the following individuals:

- Tom and Bobby Hegg, for their work in community theater and for helping to convert the Esquire to the Bartell Theater.
- Joe Bonardi, for his work in improving public spaces and gardens, especially his efforts to improve and raise funds for Period Garden Park.
- Ilse Hecht, for her lifetime achievements as chair of James Madison Park District (and Old Market district before then), and her great gardening work in James Madison Park.
- Jeff Kuesel, for his many years of work with Blair St. Gardens.
- Megan Christiansen, for her many years of service to CNI as its Treasurer and as Finance Committee chair, her continued efforts to convert CNI to a 501(c)3 corporation, and her work as the CNI representative on the Downtown Coordinating Committee.
- Michael Bridgeman, for his leadership as chair of the CNI Program Committee in putting together an outstanding array of programs and social gatherings over the years, his work as a member of the City Arts Commission and as a board member of the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation, including leading that organization’s efforts to institute the first Mansion Hill walking tours which has spawned many other walking tours downtown.

The meeting closed with brief remarks by Berger as she concluded her term as interim President of CNI.

MEETING ADJOURNED