

South Uptown Neighborhood Association (SUNA)

Draft Meeting Minutes

January 16, 2024

Attending: Alex Bissen, Joel Chechik, Brian Dvorak, Phil Qualy, Gretchen Sieger (Absent: Jerome Chateau, Jenna Egan, Alec Shannon & Rachel Starcher)

Meeting was delayed due to technical issues, and it was called to order by Alex Bissen at 7:15 PM.

Introductions and Announcements:

- Board Chair Jerome Chateau is excused, away on business: Alex Bissen will chair meeting.
- Luminary Skating Party has been rescheduled to February 27th, 2024.
- A South Uptown volunteer is needed to serve as the organization's "elector" for the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) Policy Board election on February 17. This elector will attend the Minneapolis Community Connections Conference to hear candidates and vote on behalf of the South Uptown organization.

Agenda & Minutes

- Approve Agenda and November 21 Meeting Minutes. Motion to Approve, Phil, Second, Brian. Vote: Support with appreciation expressed for recognizing neighbor Howard Verson, former and long-time CARAG Board member.

Community Forum

- Request made by three SUNA neighbors for creating a community garden. Several options and locations were discussed including Bryant Square Park (BSP), roof-tops of private buildings, boulevard spaces, and homeowners sharing garden space. BSP Director Green explained Minneapolis Park Board (MPB) is reluctant to share park properties. There is enthusiasm for public gardens in our community.
- Request made for SUNA to sign onto open letter of support for Minneapolis Public Schools written by the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers. This letter was brought forward by a neighbor and shared with Board leadership last fall. Phil asked SUNA to review, take note of other entities and neighborhood groups who have already signed onto the letter, and for expedited action by Board. The neighbor was on Zoom, but could not address the issue due to technical issue. Phil requested that Board members review the letter and respond within 48 hours. If objection, letter assigned to a committee.

Bryant Square Park Report: BSP Director Jason Green:

- The luminary skating party was originally changed from January 20 to February 3, but is now scheduled for January 27. Weather conditions over third week of January may not be favorable; action pending.
- BSP has a good supply of free-use skates with 15 new pairs and all skates sharpened.
- The SUNA neighborhood Chili Fest event at BSP is scheduled for Sunday February 25th.
- Dates for the BSP Summer Concert series, music in the park, are June 11- August 1. There are twelve dates with ample band applications anticipated.
- Date for the BSP Movie in the Park night is August 31.
- BSP has hosted fun activities this winter including the BSFP Bake In, which had 25 bakers.
- BSP is hosting Ti Che yoga on Wednesday nights, basic yoga on Thursday nights, with other activities. All MPB and BSP park schedules can be found on line at Minneapolisparks.org.

SUNA Committees Update:

- Land-Use and Transportation Committee will meet February 7. There is no update from Northpond LLC regarding proposed Seven Points development. Common Bond is seeking financing to complete the project, and they need \$2 million to move forward.
- The Livability and Engagement Committee meets February 14, and they have Luminary and Chili fest events scheduled, as well as monthly 1st Thursday happy ours.
- The Development Committee meets January 27, and they are seeking sponsorships for upcoming events.

SUNA Board Retreat Follow Up (Discussion):

- The Allied-Folk “road map” hand-out was referenced as a guide for next steps regarding renter focus group follow up.
- Proposed NRP Plan Modification: Engel presented a proposal to reallocate \$10,000 from home loan program income to support enhanced renter engagement activities. This concept came forward from Board discussion during the November meeting when \$50,000 was reinvested back into the loan program. In order to move the funds, notification of the proposal needs to be provided to neighbors including social media and during the meeting. The concept can be considered during the next meeting on February 20. There was discussion about the goal and desired outcome for the renter engagement program.
- Phil objected to the entire \$10,000 going into a renter outreach program and questioned the purpose and desired outcome of moving the funds. He suggested that a portion of the money be used for “quiet zone” signage in areas of the neighborhood near bars and restaurants.
- Phil reiterated his idea of Board Members contacting landlords/ rental property owners to appropriately and legally enter or post SUNA QR code decals. This would include Board Members reaching out directly to rental property owners with introductory phone calls.
- Phil committed to develop the pedestrian “Quiet Zone” sign request and include past request, example of sign designs, with an outline of neighborhood support.

SUNA Treasurer's Report:

- SUNA Treasurer report documents from November and December 2023 were provided to Board Members and available at meeting location.
- The following motions were approved via email after the meeting due to the Zoom sound issues.
- Motion to endorse the IRS 990 tax form and support for Joel Checkik, as Treasurer, to sign it. Approved.
- Motion to Endorse the MN Attorney General's Charitable Organization Report Form and for SUNA Jerome Chateau and Alex Bissen to sign it as President and Vice President. Approved.
- Motions were made, seconded, and approved. Because quorum was lost due to technical failure during this meeting, five SUNA Board members have voted subsequently via email to confirm approval as of January 21, 2024.

Tenth Ward City Council Member (CM) Aisha Chughtai Report to SUNA Community:

- CM reported she has completed her first term and second City Budget process.
- CM Chughtai is Vice President of the City Council, and Chairs the Budget Committee, and is on the Audit, Strategic Planning, Government Structure, and Charter Committees.
- CM stated there are two new members on the City Council that reset cultural goals for City.
- CM Chughtai authored or co-authored nineteen City budget amendments which re allocates funding to street safety ambassadors, eight (8) cultural corridors, improved safety for transit corridors, improved compensation for our city's lowest paid employees including housing inspectors, 911 emergency callers, expanded domestic abuse and violence navigators to support victims, crime-laboratory traffic calming initiatives, and supported other budget initiatives to improve our city.
- Regarding Uptown generally, CM Chughtai shared that it has been difficult to prioritize investment for improvements when competing with other interests among the City Council and staff. The newly approves safety ambassadors can improve safety in Uptown area.
- Regarding traffic calming, the city received over 600 requests with only 35 requests improved. The new City budget, along with forthcoming federal funds, will continue to address backlog of traffic calming and safety requests.
- CM Chughtai reported the confirmation of City of Minneapolis COO, (Chief Operating Officer) Margaret Anderson Kelliher. Kelliher is a Minneapolis resident (Bryn Mar) and former Speaker of the House, State of Minnesota.
- CM Chughtai shared that she believes the City is on track regarding the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) Consent Decree and with the Minnesota Human Rights Commission Decree. Oversight of the MPD decree is from, and in conjunction with, U.S. Department of Justice. There are outreach opportunities for community engagement and oversight with the Consent Decree.
- CM Chughtai reported she looks forward to working the Seventh Ward Council Member to address Uptown revitalization; they envision future outreach and ideas to improve area.
- CM Chughtai answered a question regarding homeless encampments in the city. She supports addressing the issue with compassion, as well as focusing on the root-causes of homelessness.

- CM Chughtai addressed a question regarding community gardens suggesting funding opportunities in partnership with City engagement fund with under represented groups. As well, partnering schools, seniors, renters, for skill sharing and to bring people into neighborhood representative process. The program is managed by the Neighborhood & Community Relations Department (NCR).
- CM Chughtai addressed the question, does CM Chughtai consider South Uptown a safe place? She referenced other areas of city in comparison and set forth our Bryant Square Park as a safe-place resource. She also referenced anecdotal inputs and objective evidence with data matrix from other cities.
- Phil thanked CM Chughtai for any intercession her office made regarding the environmental noise emanating from the roof-top HVAC at Moxy Hotel. To date while the Moxy HVAC is not corrected or improved, the noise is only heard one day of the week; neighbors enjoy ambient silence in their homes and yards six days of the week.
- Phil shared an observation that is shared by many residents in Southeast Uptown regarding late-night bar noise and street activity in front of homes. As good news, neighbors have enjoyed a second summer season (April -October) of relative peace and quiet; years 2022 and 2023 have been a reasonable baseline for residential livability next to commercial district.

Meeting Adjournment:

- Motion was made, seconded, and passed to adjourn the meeting. January SUNA meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.