

## Victory Heights Community Council Minutes

June 17, 2014

Meeting called to order by President Ardith Lupton at her house at 7:07 PM. Seventeen people in attendance.

A progress report on the traffic circle project on 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue is that nothing is happening. Eileen Canola successfully collected 80% of the signatures needed by nearby residents (the city only requires 60%), the project is funded, but other than some marks on the pavement, no action so far. She wrote the project manager to request an update on when it will be built.

The Neighborhood Night Out on August 5<sup>th</sup> is being planned by Heidi Smeller. The July meeting at her house will be the official launch and details and jobs will be delegated. The deadline to apply to the city for a grant is June 23<sup>rd</sup>. Heidi said she'd do it tonight. We'll be coordinating with the Pinehurst folks to promote each other's events on our flyers and of course everyone is invited to attend.

There was a meeting of emergency preparedness captains on June 9<sup>th</sup>, although only 4 people showed up. We passed around the template you created for doing a handout. Some changes were suggested and someone was going to modify it. We're going to have a table at the Neighborhood Night Out, we'll need at least two people to man. One goal will be to recruit more block captains. We need to make some signs to draw people to the table (Sharon made a note of this tonight). We want to apply for a grant to buy First Aid kits but some research was required to determine the best place to apply and where to store them. It was suggested talking to Eileen Canola for advice. Keith summarized the Light Search & Rescue course he took. The next meeting for captains will be July 7th at Ardith's.

Update on the Cleanscapes Award. Ardith had talked to All The Best about donating bags for dog poop in the park, although Ryan had told Cleanscapes that this was not his favorite proposal (for reasons Brad had articulated if giving away bags might discourage people from carrying their own, and restocking problems). Eileen and Brad had volunteered to be the committee that would be formed by the various neighborhood organizations to review projects and award the money, but no meetings have been scheduled as of yet.

Jim gave a comprehensive run down of the recent situation on 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue that resulted in a SWAT police raid last week with arrests for dealing heroin. The homeowner, who lives across the street, told Jim today he had put the house on the market, hopefully the solution to this problem. However, there is still drug activity going on at the property despite No Trespassing signs having been posted. Sometimes drug buyers would then head over to the park to use them, although a recent clean up there did not uncover any paraphernalia. Jim spent a lot of time before the bust coordinating with the police and taking down license plates and informing visitors to the house they were being watched. This apparently discouraged casual Johns but not the hard-core drug users who don't seem to care. They have a sort of underground network that lets them know where the drug dens, and especially abandoned houses, are in a particular neighborhood which they then exploit. There are two such properties currently on Northgate Way that are known to the city and police but supposedly policies don't allow the police to go

onto private property without the owner's permission (in some cases, it's a bank). Jim is currently working with the legal owners as well as the city attorney who told him today they've been dealing with this situation legally for the past year and a half. There is a lot of bureaucratic slow down and buck passing going around between the city and the banks, but it's clear that the squeaky wheel gets the grease. Calls to the city eventually result in action, and it's possible in time if we need to speed things up some sort of direct action via social media and perhaps even a dramatic YouTube video will get the kind of attention we want from authorities to crack down and/or sell these properties. Victor says he knows investors who would love to buy these distressed properties and use them to reinvigorate the neighborhood.

Another long term situation is the coming of more density on Northgate Way. Light Rail is coming (albeit in 8 years) and there will be pressure to rezone Northgate Way, possibly as far east as our neighborhood, and begin to put in tall multi-family buildings to increase density. But that's a fight for another day.

Donations to reimburse the council for the two Little Free Libraries have now hit \$230. Brad is still taking contributions if folks want to make them. Ryan pointed out the Libraries were good value for money and an asset that will serve the neighborhood for years. They are apparently popular and the earlier theft problem has resolved itself.

Eileen complained about cars parked in the street near the bottom of NE 104<sup>th</sup> Way just above Lake City Way. Parking enforcement should be called when cars are illegally parked like that. Hopefully tickets and towing will discourage this behavior in the future, particularly on a narrow street without a shoulder that is often used by pedestrians.

Overgrown trees were discussed. This is usually the responsibility of the property owner, the city only cuts trees that interfere with power lines. But they will cite homeowners whose trees are not a certain clearance above the street, so contact the city if you see a problem.

The Lake City Farmers market is every Thursday up by the library. Patronize it and then tell your friends on social media to help spread the word.

Brad has collected some video on the Barred Owls that frequent Thornton Creek near his house. Yea, nature!

A woman in a two-tone Subaru has been frequently seen following FedEx and UPS delivery vans and then blatantly stealing packages that are left on porches. She also has been rifling mail in unlocked boxes. Keep your eyes peeled although be aware several residents own similar-looking vehicles, so don't jump to conclusions.

Brad reports as of a month ago the encampment under the bridge had been cleared out.

The next meeting will be at Heidi Smeller's house, 1717 NE 105<sup>th</sup>, on July 15<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 8:26 PM.

Submitted by Ryan Johnson, secretary, Victory Heights Community Council