

Victory Heights Community Council
Meeting Minutes September 15th, 2015

Meeting called to order at 7:01 PM by President Victor Hernandez. Thirteen people attending.

Since the last meeting in July the streets were successfully “microsurfaced” and the Neighborhood Night Out (NNO) happened on August 4th. A lot of donations covered all the NNO expenses and then some. Going forward, the plan next year is to let individual blocks organize for NNO and instead have a separate community-wide event on a different date similar to what we’ve done in the past (potluck, display tables, etc). We’ll need to rebrand though, perhaps “Bite of Victory Heights”?

Brad Cummings reported on the latest North District Council meeting on September 2nd. Seattle Department of Transportation representative Art Brochet spoke about the Lake City Way improvement project. Work at the intersection of 24th Avenue NE, NE 104th Way and Lake City Way (LCW) is nearly finished after costing \$900,000. The crosswalk will be replaced by a full traffic signal at that intersection, including a left turn arrow for northbound cars on LCW turning onto 24th. Work along LCW at 110th, 125th and 145th continues. Designed but yet unfunded are improvements at NE 95th, 20th Avenue NE, and NE 137th. There has been increased patrol along LCW courtesy of the Washington State Patrol (LCW being also State Highway 522) upwards of 85 hours per month. Average speeds are actually down, the state patrol now says inattention (i.e. using mobile devices) is a bigger problem than speeding on LCW.

A lengthy discussion about drug dealing and use around the park ensued. Needles have been found by the preschool building and suspicious parked cars are frequently seen along 19th Avenue NE. A former block captain wanted to put signs in the park but this is not allowed by the city’s Parks Department. Surveillance cameras are also a non-starter for the city for liability and privacy reasons. And adding lights to the park may be very expensive (as they must be installed and maintained by city workers) and encounter a lot of red tape. But there is still a number of things concerned citizens can do. First, is call 911 *anytime* you see suspicious behavior. This can include people hanging around the park at night when it is closed (and clearly not involved with either kids or dogs), or any occupied car you see parked on the street that does not belong to a resident. Even if the police arrive too late to do anything, that call is recorded and registered as a statistic. If we want to get any sort of action from the city, we need to document there is a pattern showing a clear problem, and that is established by 911 calls. Secondly, while the park won’t let us post signs, there’s nothing preventing the residents directly across the street from putting up small yard signs saying the neighborhood is watching and recording suspicious activity. If every single house along 19th had a similar sign, it would send a clear message. Third, while the city doesn’t want to get into the surveillance business, nothing prevents a homeowner from setting up a camera and recording what happens in a public place (i.e. the street and in the park). Posting a video of obvious drug activity would get a lot of attention focused on our neighborhood, and not the kind of attention drug dealers want. Finally, after November we will have our own district representative on the city council. Although District 5 is enormous, their job is to serve our community, and bringing these issues to our representative might grease the wheels of city government for action.

Someone was worried about registered sex offenders moving into the neighborhood although it was pointed out that this merely means we know who the convicted felons are, but what about the ones already living here who haven't been caught yet? Also, in some cases, these people who have served their time and had their lives ruined, were convicted when they were teenagers and are now in their 30s. Keep your kids away from them but give them a break. Victor was going to look up what distance legally registered sex offenders must stay away from places like our preschool.

Metro bus service is changing in 2016, as per the article on the blog (<http://t.co/QOyF8DwqVv>). The 72 is being eliminated completely, and the 73 will be moved over to Roosevelt and not have any weekend service. To get downtown, riders will be expected to either catch a 372 on Lake City Way and then walk 1/3 mile to the Husky Stadium Light Rail station, or go up into Lake City and catch a Sound Transit 522 bus.

The next meeting is Tuesday, October 20th. Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Submitted by Ryan Johnson,
Secretary, Victory Heights Community Council