

Victory Heights Community Council Meeting Minutes
March 19, 2019

Meeting called to order outside the preschool (the key didn't arrive until 7:06 to let us in) at 7:02 PM by Treasurer Brad Cummings. Fourteen people in attendance.

Annie Tran, with the city's Ethics & Elections Commission, gave us a presentation about Democracy Vouchers. Every Seattle resident should have them by now (sent out after the February primary this year, instead of first thing in January two years ago). Funded by an initiative to provide for publicly funded elections, this is a way for citizens to contribute to (for now) city council candidates in a grass roots effort to widen the field. In 2017, 20,000 people used the vouchers, which were funded up to \$3 million. The leftover money was rolled over to this year, making \$4.2 million available this year. The commission also has on its website Candidate Introductions, 150-word statements submitted by the candidates (about 40 so far, but the filing deadline hasn't closed yet). In order to qualify for public funds, a candidate needs 150 small-dollar (\$10 or more) donations, the signatures from 150 residents, half of whom need to be in the district they are running in, and to abide by spending limits. To use your vouchers (you get four, "spend" them all on one candidate or spread the wealth), just fill them out and mail them in the postage paid envelope. You can also go online (you'll have to sign up and create an account), drop them off at various locations, or hand to a candidate in person. Check the commission's website first to make sure your candidate hasn't already hit the limit of vouchers they can accept or yours go to waste (no take backs). Keep in mind that public information laws mean any campaign contribution (including the vouchers) are a matter of public record with your name attached. But donation lists can't be used by candidates or other solicitors.

Steve Zemke with the Seattle Urban Forest Commission, gave an impassioned speech about the city's tree ordinance. His main points were the city has a (not great) tree ordinance passed in 2001 that says "exceptional trees" must be replaced if taken down, but it's not being enforced. And attempts to pass a new (slightly better) ordinance keep failing or merely being passed as resolutions. This fight has been going on for 10 years now, with a few victories (an expansion at Ingraham High School that was moved to save some trees), while meanwhile a lot of developers taking down trees without any replacements, often by employing dodgy workarounds like claiming they were "endangering a structure." Much like the Lorax, "someone needs to speak for the trees," and in Seattle that person is Steve Zemke.

Brad summed up the Lake City Neighborhood Alliance meeting earlier this month. The North Precinct introduced their new captain, Eric Sano, a 35-year veteran of the SPD. Apparently he's very responsive to emails (at least Brad's). There is a big development coming in Lake City between the Value Village and Selera, with the pawn shop and other buildings being torn down to be replaced with senior and affordable housing. The farmer's market in Lake City opens on June 6th.

After a nasty home invasion of an elderly resident on 20th Avenue NE north of Northgate last month, Office Heinz has been patrolling the area, often parking on 20th to keep an eye on things. Apparently she is a fan of cookies.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM. Next meeting on April 16th.

Submitted by Ryan Johnson
Secretary, Victory Heights Community Council