

Victory Heights Community Council Meeting Minutes
April 20, 2021

Meeting called to order by President Ben Cober at 7:01 PM. Eighteen people present via Zoom chat.

Tara Beck with the city's HOPE Team, the successor to the Navigation Team for homeless outreach, did a presentation. They are now under the auspices of the Human Services Department, instead of the police department. The pandemic and lockdown has had a big impact on dealing with encampments and how workers interact with them. Unlike the Navigation Team, which was tasked with clearing illegal camps, "The HOPE Team doesn't do encampment removal work." "It's about leading with outreach...and downplaying official encampment removal." We can still report encampments via the Find It, Fix It app or calling the city's Customer Service Bureau. HOPE does not decide which camps to remove, instead it goes through various city departments (parks, METRO, SDOT, etc) in order to determine the impact a site is having and the best solution to deal with it. "There's a pretty high threshold to make that decision," she said. "Environmental impact is important" when deciding to act or not and how it might be prioritized, which is why we may see different response times to various camps.

Dean Allsopp, city councilperson Debora Juarez's District Director, updated us on recent city budget activity. They are currently allocating money provided by the recent American Rescue Plan Act which will go to things like vaccines and testing, food assistance, homelessness, immigrant support, child care, business recovery and transportation. Secondly, on Monday they'll be voting on Community Relief Funds which has \$18 million still unspent. Plans include using it for the clean city initiative, and funding the food program through the end of 2021. Sound Transit currently has a survey on its site for voters to choose what they should prioritize, seeing as pandemic losses have created a shortfall in their funding. Locally, our interest would include getting a light rail stop on NE 130th Street. In District 5 news, the Lake City Memorial Triangle is about to be dedicated, the National Archives on Sand Point were saved, the Seattle Indian Center has been sending volunteers, and a Tiny Home Village will be placed somewhere (TBA) in District 5 with the proviso that homeless people in our district get first crack at it. The Northgate Pedestrian Bike Bridge is assembling along the freeway, soon there will be closures in order to erect the pieces over the roadways. On April 16th, SPU did a cleanup in the area around the Pinehurst Safeway.

Metro route 75 which currently serves Northgate Way will be replaced in October with new route 20 that will be running every 15 minutes in order to serve the new light rail station there.

The March 27th inaugural Neighbor Labor event was a success with plenty of volunteers who helped clear out blackberries and debris from a fallen tree in a neighbor's yard. There was so much yard waste that volunteers brought over their bins, as did many of the neighbors, so it could be hauled away. Ben showed a great before-and-after video. The following weekend, they took on the park, cleaning up the playground and tennis court. A dozen people went down to NE 106th Street just east of the intersection with 15th Avenue NE and removed a huge swath of blackberries. They'll be back on 25th as well, if you'd like to help out. It looks a lot better now.

Ben did a presentation on Growing The Community. In January we consolidated three different Facebook groups into one (Victory Heights, Seattle, WA) as our "go to" place to interact with folks. From

just 150 members four years ago, we now have 355. There's also been an effort on Next Door as well to introduce folks to our community organizing and what's going on. Using the mailing list has proven very effective, it was promoted with 800 fliers earlier this year that were printed up and physically distributed on nearly every street in Victory Heights. Food Truck Friday is also a good place for outreach (more about that below). There's been lots of growth on the mailing list, especially when a flier campaign in 2020 helped spread the word during the lockdown.

Food Truck Friday has been very successful so far, with two trucks per week, each of which has tripled our minimum order targets. Needless to say, they are very happy. The hours are 11 AM to 2 PM each Friday through September next to the co-op preschool in the park, participating trucks are posted on the Facebook group each Thursday.

Mayor Monday kicks off on May 3rd with the first of 11 (so far) out of the 15 announced candidates for Seattle Mayor scheduled, one per week, to join us for a zoom chat starting at 6 PM, giving us a 30 minute presentation (i.e. a speech), and then open the door for us to provide feedback and questions.

Ben has proposed a new event, a 4th of July fireworks display in the evening in the park. These would all be "safe and sane" ground-based pyrotechnics, nothing in the air. Apparently we can apply for a permit with the fire department for permission. We'd have to buy the fireworks ourselves using a fundraiser, similar to how we paid for the utility box art project (see below). The more we raise, the more stuff we can shoot off. There seemed to be a consensus that we should pursue this, assuming conditions on the ground allow (i.e. it's not too dry, or pouring down rain that night).

Brad Cummings said a King County Councilman spoke at the recent Lake City Neighborhood Alliance meeting, topics included vaccines and the pedestrian bridge.

The Utility Art Box project hit a big milestone, SDOT approved the artwork (one piece had to be reworked at the last minute to avoid confusion with a stop sign), all the permits are in, the art is being submitted to the printer in the next two weeks, and then volunteers will need to clean the boxes before application.

Ann Forrest reported the Spring Craft Fair went very well last weekend, aided by great vendors and even nicer weather. They'll do another one this fall maybe. The Scavenger Hunt will be held on Sunday, May 23rd with maps being distributed that day in the park. You can either participate on the day, or on your own later. There are no prizes, just fun. The Community-wide Yard Sale will be Saturday June 12th. Maps will only be released at 9 AM that day to prevent early birds. And the Black Lives Matter Memorial committee is meeting to come up with a permanent display, we'll have more news next time.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Submitted by Ryan Johnson
Victory Heights Community Council Secretary