

Victory Heights Community Council Meeting Minutes

February 16, 2021

Meeting called to order over Zoom by President Ben Cober at 7:03 PM. Fifteen people attending.

Rick Swing and Lynnette Spear did a short presentation about their work as Forest Stewards with Green Seattle Partnership and all the work they have done in the Thornton Creek greenbelt over the years. The Partnership has logged over one million hours of volunteer labor since 2005. Recently Rick and Lynnette got a grant to help them in their mission to clear out invasive plant species and replant native plants, ferns and trees in the Kingfisher and Knickerbocker sites of the creek. They also remove ivy that starts covering tree trunks and then pile it on makeshift wooden platforms where it eventually dries out and dies. "It's pernicious." Volunteers can sign up at the Green Seattle Partnership website to work with them on select dates: <https://seattle.greencitypartnerships.org/event/calendar/?park=thornton-creek-park-2>. You can also find an app that downloads a map you can use for reference while walking around.

The plan is to have a guest speaker each month at our virtual meetings including our biggest "get" yet, city councilperson Debora Juarez will attend our meeting on May 18th.

This month we are helping out the Show The Love! Campaign, to send (belated) Valentine's Day cards to local healthcare workers at Meridian Center For Health. Please feel free to place your fantastic cards inside the clear storage bin beneath the Victory Heights Playground Community Message Board between Friday, February 19th and Friday, February the 26th. Collected cards will be gathered each night by the Victory Heights Community Council and delivered to the Center on the 26th.

In March we're going to organize volunteers to go around and perform yard work for those who need it.

And starting in April through to September, once a month we are going to have a different food truck visit our neighborhood! A chance to support local businesses and maybe get a change of pace from the same food you've been cooking for the past year. Times and locations to be announced.

At some time in April in lieu of a garden tour this year we are teaming up with the folks who do the Walking Craft Fair (probably April 17th) so people can get around and explore our neighborhood. Another possible event is an Urban Homesteading Tour around the end of summer, checking out those houses where goats, chickens and bees are doing their thing right here in Victory Heights.

Amber Benson is taking over the Teen Feed which we will continue to contribute one meal a month and stick to our teriyaki chicken and rice dish, which apparently the kids love. Folks can also roast vegetables or make a dessert such as brownies or cookies. Our next dates are March 2nd, April 12th and May 10th. Sign up here:

<https://signup.com/group/386025564011>

Utility Box Art update: There have been Monday night artist Q&As via Zoom, there's still one more to go. Six of the eight pieces are finished, the next step is having Seattle Utilities, CenturyLink, and Comcast sign off on them, and then off to the printers they go.

We have a discussion about the community message board in Victory Heights Park. For the past eight months or so it has mainly been used for signs supporting Black Lives Matter and there was concern they might be crowding out community messages. It's also been vandalized twice and been refreshed but there is concern about it being an ongoing target. Everyone was invited to share their thoughts for a minute each:

- Board is skewed on this topic, like to see more diversity
- Like it the way it is

- Who has posted the signs? What's their thoughts? (2 people said this)
- Is it folks just passing through the neighborhood posting or our neighbors?
- Is this the original intent of the board?
- Take down the signage but a permanent acknowledge of some sort of BLM, perhaps something painted by the traffic circle or on the fence in the park
- Put a memorial on the back of the board
- Tell a story on the walking path. Avoid spending money on something that can be vandalized though.
- Would prefer diversity on the board. Maybe post guidelines for its use to let people know we support BLM but also it's for other uses as well
- Get more input from the community before making a change. Clear the board and start fresh but pay tribute to BLM. Use NE Seattle's sign for BLM support along with a photo of how the board looks now
- I liked that it grew spontaneously but it's a community board and can't be co-opted. Add loose rules about content, duration of postings, but mention BLM
- It is a community board, want loose rules, but not have BLM occupy the whole board. Acknowledge but share. "Let it evolve into what it was meant to be."
- It's a community board and it's nice to include the community in the discussion. Think of it both/and (like BLM stuff and values the neighbors have)
- Take a photo of current board and putting up NE Seattle Council's sign of BLM support. Painting the fence in park. Nice simply-stated guidelines with a time limit for postings going forward. People can post in their own yards if they want to. "It is for the community...it shouldn't be dominated even though [BLM] is an incredibly important subject."
- It's tricky. At work on every 3rd Friday they clean out the fridges, whether your stuff is in there or not. Apply the same logic here. Let people know the guidelines. Refresh on a regular schedule. A permanent piece to commemorate it. Some fundraising to help the movement: "making [our support] real."

Vaccine appointments: how to make them without a computer? We've set up a hotline, flyers are going out (since nobody who needs this will see it online) that can have people call 804-557-4273 to leave their name and number. One of four volunteers from the community council will call them back and get their particulars and then set up an appointment on their behalf. We have no idea how popular this may or not be but we're going to give it a try. The State also has a hotline for assistance: 1-800-525-0127.

Meeting adjourned at 8:17 PM. Next meeting is on March 16th.

Submitted by Ryan Johnson

Secretary, Victory Heights Community Council