



Historic Water Tower Neighborhood

OFFICERS

President

Jeff Bentoff

President Elect

Dawn McCarthy

Treasurer

Adrienne Houck

VP Events

Joe Libnoch

Secretary

Dawn McCarthy

VP Membership

Thea Kovac

Past President

Sandra McSweeney

TRUSTEES

Area 1

(LaFayette Pl. to North Ave.)

Mary Beth Geraci
Larry Presberg
Lise Sadagopan

Area 2

(North Ave. to Newberry Blvd.)

Michael Barna
David Brust
Maria Costello
Lloyd Dickinson
Barbara Elsner
Angela Jacobi
Jeff Jordan
Bunkie Miller

Area 3

(Newberry Blvd. to Edgewood Ave.)

Camilla Avery
Mark Falci
Jennifer Runquist
Eric Waldron

MINUTES

Monthly Business Meeting
October 6, 2010
Marcia Coles Community Room
Lake Park Pavilion

1. Call to Order: 7:10 p.m.
Absent/Excused: Mary Beth Geraci, Lise Sadagopan, Michael Barna, Maria Costello, Angela Jacobi, Jeff Jordan, Camilla Avery, Mark Falci, Eric Waldron.
2. Program / Guest Speaker
 - Jim Plaisted, East Side Business Improvement District (BID #20) Executive Director: speaking on the BID's proposed design guidelines and update on BID activities

The East Side BID was formed in 1998. East Side BID board members include owners from Beans & Barley, Alterra Coffee Roasters, Wisconsin Paper Board, Murray Hill Pottery Works, onmilwaukee.com, Hooligans, and Small Animal Hospital.

Jim explained why the East Side BID decided to begin the BID Design and Development Guidelines Project. As new development occurs in the district the business owners have seen holes in the zoning codes, allowing signs, building heights and materials, etc. that detract from the district as a whole. The BID hired architect Jim Piwoni. Jim Piwoni previously created the Third Ward Design Guidelines and contributed to the Southeast - City of Milwaukee Comprehensive Plan.

The draft for the proposed guidelines is available at: <http://www.theeastside.org/categories/14-design-and-development-guidelines-project>. Per Alderman Kovac's request there will also be a copy of the draft available at the East Library. The main controversy in the community is over height. The maximum height is 6 stories. Details of the minimum height are being debated. Design guidelines follow a formula for height. The approval of the guidelines is still in process. The BID board must approve, and then the guidelines will go to the city.

If the Common Council approves a General Plan Development rezoning in the BID, the rezoning would trump the BID guidelines, but presumably the Common Council would consider the BID guidelines when approving a GPD. Or, if the BID denies a plan, there is an appeal process. The Third Ward ARB has never been over-ruled.

Jim commented that the sink-hole had an effect on business but was open to traffic for the film festival. Alderman Kovac explained that the sink-hole occurred because an approximately 100 year old sewer pipe collapsed. The DPW did a very good job, working 16 hour days.

Latitude apartments are approximately 35% full already. And there are tenants interested in the retail space. There is also interest in some of the other retail vacancies in the BID.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- Jennifer Runquist moved and Joe Libnoch seconded a motion to approve the minutes. The motion passed.

4. Reports of Officers

▪ President's Report

○ Historic Downer Avenue Popcorn Wagon

Jeff Bentoff reported that he and Dawn McCarthy met with Mike Eitel and Lynn Hartwig to discuss the restoration of the Downer Avenue Historic Popcorn Wagon. A small committee, to include Downer Avenue merchants and HWTN members will be formed to consider the options for restoration and placement. Pieter Godfrey has offered to store the wagon. Sarah Kimball has asked to be on the committee and has a contact who is interested in contributing to the restoration. Mike Eitel is to get back to Jeff regarding the current location of the wagon.

○ 3DNA – Ten neighborhood associations were notified and assured of HWTN's continuing interest in communicating and working with their organizations. A NA "president's council", to meet every other month, was suggested as a possibility for keeping each other informed. HWTN will add contacts from the NAs to the HWTN distribution lists, to receive the agendas and minutes. Elected representatives and other neighborhood stake holders were also notified, and reminded, that HWTN is not represented by 3DNA. HWTN requested that communication continue to be direct to HWTN.

○ Activity at Bradford Beach. The programming at Bradford Beach has mostly followed the terms of the lease, and when reminded that the music on Thursdays was not to be amplified, they stopped. More "junk" has been added to the beach, according to one member.

○ Air Show – This past summer the Air Show organizer advertised extended hours before getting a permit from the city. The county didn't work very well with the neighbors, concerning complaints that the noise was more than they had been told. Supervisor Gerry Broderick should keep us informed. HWTN should be proactive for 2011. The number of days and the number of hours should be reduced and the show should be moved away from the residential neighborhood.

- Treasurer's Report - Adrienne Houck presented the treasurer's report.

5. Committee Reports

• Buildings & Institutions

○ Recent meeting with Mercy Housing proposed subsidized housing project between Murray and Farwell Avenues

Mercy Housing invited a few neighborhood association representatives to review the new plans for housing at the US Bank/City parking lots. The style is similar to Latitude. When the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported on the new plan (www.jsonline.com/business/104319514.html) a letter was sent to Tom Daykin regarding HWTN's position.

We voted to oppose this project in June because of a number of concerns, and we cannot consider a change in our position without a presentation from the developers to our Building & Institutions Committee or our full board and a vote.

Issues that have been raised by residents include that:

· The city's official Northeast Side Plan does not contain provisions for workforce housing and instead recommends a boutique hotel at this site.

- *These projects would add to traffic and parking congestion at a time when the neighborhood impact of Columbia St. Mary's new and larger hospital is unknown.*
- *Reasonably priced rentals seem to exceed demand on the East Side, and there is no need to add to the inventory of available rentals.*
- *Potential designs and materials are not attractive, and residents who have seen the latest plan feel it is not pedestrian friendly.*
- *There appears to be no need for using scarce federal dollars to subsidize housing in this area.*
- *This site appears to offer a better opportunity for a development that would benefit the area.*

Height was only one of many residential issues, and based on a brief review of the plan, we are uncertain whether even the height issue has been adequately addressed.

We hope that city officials will require public hearings and a deliberate process on any plans for a city land sale and rezoning for this important potential development site. The developers only very recently made available its latest plans, and only to a very small group of residents on short notice. If Mercy decides to pursue the plan, we feel they have much work to do with all the neighborhood groups, businesses and individuals in the area.

As one of several residential associations in the area, Historic Water Tower Neighborhood continues to join others that oppose this particular project, although we are not automatically opposed to any development at this site.

We also urge the city to consider other proposals for this site and to issue a request for proposals for other uses that have been discussed, including the boutique hotel recommended in the city's Northeast Side Plan.

- Other Committee Reports

- Downer Avenue Merchants Association: Mary Wasielewski reported that there are no new tenants on Downer Avenue, although there has been new interest recently. DAMA will have Festive Friday on the first Friday of December, December 3rd. The stores will be open late and there will be other activities.

6. Q&A with Ald. Nik Kovac

- Alderman Kovac addressed the question of why the city hasn't done an RFP for the City parking lot at Murray and Thomas. He said the lot is not large enough by itself. Any proposal would have to include the US Bank lot, so the City acts in cooperation with US Bank.
- On a separate but similar issue, there will be an RFP for the East Side Library, and Westbury Bank, for housing and a drive through.
- Alderman Kovac spoke more specifically about Mercy Housing. He will have a town hall meeting. The project has lots of contingencies, including the fact that Mercy Housing is applying for WHEDA tax credits, and US Bank has serious concerns about any disruption of the bank's drive through lanes. Mercy Housing people have been meeting with the Alderman, US Bank, Sts Peter and Paul and NA representatives. According to a comment at the meeting, Mercy Housing has not accepted invitations from Greenwich Village NA to present the new plans at one of their association meetings. Alderman Kovac was asked if the Mercy Housing plan would need to meet the proposed Design Guidelines for the BID area. He responded that the Design Guidelines will be a consideration, even though they have not been approved yet. Alderman Kovac spoke about the importance of the public process and public input. He gave as an example the UWM dorm, Riverview Residence: the public pressure made the building look better and public pressure, with the Milwaukee River Overlay guidelines, prevented UWM from building as close to the river as UWM had wanted. Other comments, from meeting attendees, included: Greenwich Village Neighborhood Association will make a decision about the new plans at their October meeting. And Mercy Housing is shooting for approval in November or December.

- While discussing whether there is a need for housing and a question about Mercy Housing's market study, Alderman Kovac was asked if he knew how many foreclosed properties there are in the 3rd District. He did not, but his office followed up with the information. There are 56 foreclosed properties at this time. The City of Milwaukee web site, www.mkedcd.org/foreclosures, has foreclosure information.
- Ald. Kovac was asked about the vacancies on Downer Avenue. Alderman Kovac responded that he has pushed Joel Lee, the owner/developer, but he recommended that the community put pressure on Joel Lee as well.
- Ald. Kovac was asked if he had any comment about the news that Milwaukee is now the 4th poorest city in America. He responded that Milwaukee has the Lake and other assets; Milwaukee has been dealt a good hand but it's been miss-played. We're on the brink of a renaissance or becoming like Detroit. People say they leave the city for 3 reasons: crime, taxes, and schools. Ald. Kovac believes the real reason is schools. Alderman Kovac is optimistic about the new Supervisor but there are lots of problems.

7. Unfinished Business

- Mercy Housing

Adrienne Houck moved, and Sandra McSweeney seconded the motion:

Historic Water Tower Neighborhood (HWTN) urges the city to reject any sale of city land or any rezoning including plan developments for any privately or publicly owned properties in BID 20 unless the final, approved plans meet the BID 20 Architectural Review Board Draft Guidelines.

The motion passed unanimously with one abstention.

A letter regarding the HWTN position will be sent to Alderman Kovac.

8. New Business

9. Announcements

10. Adjournment

Adrienne Houck moved and Larry Presberg seconded a motion to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.