

Urban Neighbors Board Meeting

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Second Floor Meeting Room, Nonna's, 1 S Mickey Mantle Drive, Oklahoma City, OK 73104

Present: Jeff Bezdek, Mark Gibbs, Paige Gregory, Steven Newlon, Brett Price, David Remy, Holly Shelton

Minutes

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM by Brett Price, UN President.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the December 2, 2008 UN Board Meeting were approved.

III. Financial Report

Mark Gibbs distributed a Financial Report for December 2008, noting that it had not been a busy month. Brett Price reported on a successful meeting that he, Paige Gregory and Mark Gibbs had just had with Karen Arbogast who is a bookkeeper for various home owner associations and comes well recommended. A motion was passed unanimously *authorizing the Executive Committee to move forward and expedite hiring Karen Arbogast as a bookkeeper.*

IV. Membership Report

Mark Gibbs reported on the current membership numbers – Resident, Associates and Businesses. The email list used for the UN e-newsletters now has over 1100 email addresses and there are remarkably few requests to unsubscribe.

V. Social Report

Holly Shelton talked about arrangements for the January Social at Iguana on Thursday, January 15, 2009 where Steve Mason will present some development proposals and solicit input from UN members. The February Social is currently scheduled for February 5, 2009 (to avoid clashing with Chocolate Decadence) at the Red Dirt Emporium where Steve Lackmeyer will be signing copies of his new book on Bricktown. The March Social is scheduled for In The Raw and a Wine Dinner may be held at Red Prime in late January.

VI. Marketing Report

Paige Gregory discussed delivery options for the UN newsletter and was looking at an increase in the website monthly fee to \$50 for better features. She said she was ultimately looking to be able to use a system that had the membership database on line and easily accessible. After hearing that the current gmail account was sometimes difficult to work with, Steven Newlon recommended looking at the Google Professional Email package. Brett Price asked Paige Gregory to determine which was the best such package. The topic of an RSS feed was brought up again and Paige Gregory indicated it is on the list of website improvements.

VII. Arrangements for AGM

Mark Gibbs updated the Board on plans for the UN's first Annual General Meeting, to be held on Thursday, February 19, 2009, likely on the second floor at Tapwerks though this has yet to be confirmed. He stressed the importance of ensuring a quorum of 15 voting (Resident) members being present. The Board felt that Tapwerks with a cash bar at the back of the room would be a more conducive location for ensuring good attendance compared to

the more austere classroom that had been used at the Downtown Library for the November 2008 UN Business Meeting where quorum was only just reached. As a further incentive he proposed and the Board unanimously *approved expenditure of up to \$200 for providing two free drinks for Resident Members at the AGM.*

VIII. Proposed Changes to UN By-Laws on Membership

Mark Gibbs briefly reviewed proposed changes he had drafted for the By-Laws and these met with general approval.

IX. Year End Report

Paige Gregory proposed producing an Annual Report. Mark Gibbs circulated the letter that had been sent to all UN members with the Bricktown VIP Cards which highlighted many recent UN achievements and it was agreed that this could form the basis of Brett Price's President's Report at the AGM.

X. Board Nominations Process Update

Brett Price briefly reported on the current arrangements to solicit nominations for the Board. Mark Gibbs clarified that the purpose of the Nominations Committee is to ensure, as far as possible, that there is a slate of candidates for the open positions. It should not act as a gatekeeper but, as with other volunteer organizations, encourage people to run who may not be sure about doing so.

XI. UN Endorsement of Canal Extension Proposal

Paige Gregory referred the Board to a packet she had prepared that contained proposed text of a resolution of support for extending the canal and a longer set of details and benefits. The latter had been prepared by the Bricktown Association who have been leading this initiative and were looking to gain support from Downtown non-profit organizations. There was strong support in general for the proposal amongst the Board. Jeff Bezdek distributed some options for additional text that would set the proposal in a larger downtown framework; his second option was preferred by the Board. There was discussion of whether a full vote from the membership was needed or whether a change to the By-Laws was needed to authorize the Board to take positions on issues such as this. However, the general sense of the Board was that it had sufficient authority already – and indeed was expected – to pass resolutions such as this. A hesitance to do so in the past was attributed to the organization being just formed and still developing. The Board then unanimously *passed a resolution supporting the canal extension proposal containing Jeff Bezdek's second alternative for additional text and pending approval by email of language regarding a residential focus.* [The final version of this resolution was approved by the Board via email on January 29, 2009 and is attached.]

XII. New Business

Holly Shelton said she had been talking with Southwestern Publishing and Paige Gregory asked to be involved in anything relating to advertising. Paige Gregory talked about ideas to encourage people to go out and about in the neighborhood, preferably at the same time. These included an "extended crawl" on the same day of businesses and other institutions where a card would be punched at each location. This was observed to be potentially a good way to recruit new business members. Other ideas included a scavenger hunt and urban hide and seek. Steven Newlon asked about a reciprocal membership of the Chamber of Commerce in the UN since the UN had just paid membership dues to the Chamber. Mark Gibbs pointed out that the Chamber's existing membership would not be due for renewal until after the UN AGM in February.

XIII. Announcements
None.

XIV. Adjourn
The meeting was adjourned by Brett Price at 7:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Mark Gibbs, Secretary



Resolution of Endorsement

January 29, 2009

The **Urban Neighbors Board of Directors** voted to support the city's original plans of **extending the canal** west between the Ford and Cox Center. The Urban Neighbors Board is encouraging the city of Oklahoma City to consider this idea as plans are made for downtown development. Potentially connecting the canal into the Myriad Gardens would provide a much desired connectivity.

As plans are developed for the future of downtown Oklahoma City, the Urban Neighbors Board believes that a canal extension would play a vital role in connecting Bricktown to the Oklahoma River, Central Business District, Ford and Cox Centers, the Myriad Gardens, the new Devon Tower and the proposed new convention center and hotel. Additionally, this extension would significantly improve the walkability of downtown OKC, a key asset for any downtown.

With this extension, **downtown residents** would enjoy an enhanced quality of life with improved access to Bricktown and the Oklahoma River. Additionally, easier access to downtown green space, both old and new, would be an asset.

The Urban Neighbors Board prefaces its support with a desire for such a plan to be incorporated into an overall master plan for the area affected and that timing of such an improvement be appropriate to overall connectivity plans within the downtown area.

A canal extension would provide the following key connections:

- Proposed convention center and hotel to Bricktown and the Oklahoma River
- CBD and Devon Tower to Bricktown and the Oklahoma River
- Myriad Botanical Gardens to Bricktown and the Oklahoma River
- Core to Shore area to Bricktown and Oklahoma River
- Ford and Cox Centers to Bricktown
- Meridian Hotel corridor to Myriad Botanical Gardens, Arts District and CBD

A canal extension benefits:

- Downtown residents
- Myriad Botanical Gardens
- Ford Center, Cox Center, plus their tenants and users
- Central Business District businesses and workers
- Bricktown District
- Arts District

- Boathouse community
- River users
- OKC Convention and Visitors Bureau, convention industry
- OKC Chamber, business recruitment specialists and those who market Oklahoma City
- Sporting event promoters
- Future Core to Shore businesses and residents
- Downtown hotels
- Meridian Avenue hoteliers and guests
- Downtown event attendees
- Tourists
- Mayor Cornett's fit city initiative
- Oklahoma City taxpayers

This extension would fundamentally change the canal from an attraction to a pedestrian thoroughfare. It would create a situation where the canal is a preferred walking route rather than a place that has to be sought out. As pedestrian counts increase exponentially, canal development would be almost certain to follow.

We, the Board of Directors of Urban Neighbors, representing key stakeholders of our downtown, urge all of the beneficiary parties identified in this document to join us in supporting the inclusion of a canal extension in all future plans for downtown development.