

SEWARD NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP

Board of Directors

Minutes of meeting held March 23, 2022

The Seward Neighborhood Group board of directors met in a regularly scheduled meeting electronically, using Zoom, on Wednesday, March 23, 2022. The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:35 p.m. by President Lisa Boehlke.

The following board members were present when the meeting began: Doug Hicks; Ron Schlatter; Donna Ray; Sara Rothholz-Weiner; Jim Scheidt; Cheryl Robertson; and Tami Traeger; and Paul Landskroener.

Mary Pumphrey, Terri Barnes, Lisa Williams-Rolle, and Crystal Quinn were excused and did not attend the meeting.

Also attending was Michael Jon Olson (interim executive director) and Jasmine Epps-Flowers, SNG Community Organizer intern. Guests (some of whom joined the meeting after it began) were Anna Zillinger, Mike Trdan, Theresa Nelson, Celeste Robinson, and Robin Wonsley Worlobah also attended.

President Lisa Boelke called the meeting to order at approximately 6:40 p.m. with an Ice-breaker, asking attendees: "What about spring makes you happy?"

1. **Approval of agenda and minutes.** The board approved the proposed agenda for the meeting as provided in the board packet with the addition of the East Phillips Urban Farm as a discussion item. The board approved minutes of the meeting held on February 23, 2022.
2. **Introduction of Jasmine Epps-Flowers.** Michael Jon introduced Jasmine Epps-Flowers as SNG's new community organizer intern. Jasmine is a senior at Augsburg University majoring in political science and minoring in sociology and religion. She started working for SNG on March 1, 2022, as a paid community organizer intern and, when she graduates in May, will be a full-time employee thereafter.
3. **Report from Councilmember Wonsley Worlobah.** Councilmember Robin Wonsley Worlobah made an oral report summarizing activity at city hall on (a) implementation of a new city governing structure in response to the ratification of a "strong mayor" charter amendment in November 2021; (b) the relationship between the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) and a proposed consolidation of other public safety activities into a single department; (c) anticipated reports from the U.S. Department of Justice and Minnesota Department of Human Rights into the activities of the MPD; (d) proposals regarding the ownership and management of public housing in the city; (e) a vote on a new contract between the city and the Minneapolis Police Federation that is scheduled

to be held on March 24, 2022; (f) proposals to establish a municipal sidewalk snow removal program; (g) the redevelopment of the old Roof Depot site in East Phillips and the conflicting proposals by the East Phillips Neighborhood Institute organization and the city regarding the site; (h) development of a rent control ordinance authorized by voters in November 2021; and (i) Robin's planned meeting with Seward Redesign to learn more about its three main projects.

4. **Election committee report.** Michael Jon reported that the election for nine new board members is scheduled for May 14-16 with the results reported at the SNG annual meeting on May 18. The election will be held online using OpaVote and in person, with in person voting available in the SNG office for four hours each day. Board members who are not running for reelection are encouraged to volunteer to staff the in person voting in the office to assist Michael Jon. The committee will meet again on March 26 to figure out the details of how to administer the OpaVote online vote.
5. **Board Development Committee report.** Michael Jon reported that the Board Development Committee has met once to discuss recruiting board members and encouraging them to run for election. A call for volunteers to self nominate has gone out via multiple channels, with the assistance of Andrea from the Longfellow Community Council with whom we have a contract for professional communications services. We have received only two nominations for election so far, and we have nine seats to fill.

Michael Jon reminded board members that the most effective method of recruiting good candidates is to make personal contact with Seward neighbors and personally ask them to volunteer to run. Traditional news and social media and other methods of publicizing the election are important and necessary and we are using them, but by far the most effective method of recruitment is to be asked face to face.
6. **Community Development Committee report.** Sara reported for the CDC summarizing her written report in the board packet. In response to a question regarding Our Streets' proposed Twin Cities Boulevard project to redevelop Interstate 94 through the Twin Cities and the CDC's invitation to that project to make a presentation to the board, Sara stated that she also wants to hear from the ReConnect Rondo land bridge initiative, which may be an incompatible alternative plan for the redevelopment of I-94.
7. **Interim Executive Director report.** Michael Jon reported on his recent activities in addition to that already mentioned in the meeting. He has been working with Andrea at LCC to begin updating the SNG.org web site to remove outdated, incorrect information

and to populate it with newer, more current content. A lot has been done, but more is needed and he and Andrea are working on it.

8. **Approval of charter for Celebrate Seward Committee.** Lisa asked the board for its endorsement of an event she is planning for September, tentatively named Celebrate Seward (Lisa is open to suggestions for a more “snappy” title). She envisions the event as a means of celebrating Seward’s revival after two trying years of a pandemic and civil unrest. She intends to invite musicians to perform; that streets adjacent to Matthews be blocked off for food trucks and local restaurants to sell food, booths for Seward area artists, community groups, and others. She is working with the director of Matthews Center who can co-sponsor the event and provide in-kind assistance such as setting up a large stage for musicians. She has also spoken with Michael Wright, the founder of the Selby Jazz Fest who has given her a clear map of what needs to be done to mount such an event.

The executive committee has approved and recommended that the board adopt a charter for the Celebrate Seward Committee. The board unanimously approved adopting this charter. (This committee will be an ad hoc committee to coordinate planning for the event.)

A board member suggested that Jasmine be a member of this committee as part of her community engagement work to recruit participation from Seward neighbors who have not participated in SNG events in the past. Michael Jon agreed, and noted that a charter for the Community Engagement Committee (CEC) will come to the board for approval in April, and that the CEC will be Jasmine’s primary board support group for community engagement work.

9. **Approval charter for the Community Development Committee.** Michael Jon presented a proposed charter for the CDC that the executive committee has reviewed and recommends for adoption by the board. He noted that the CDC is the most active of all current SNG committees and has been operating without a charter for a long time. A proposed charter was considered by the board in early 2021 but was never adopted. The board approved the proposed charter for the CDC unanimously.
10. **Approval of letter of support for MPRB Teen Teamworks funding.** Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board commissioner Becky Alper (a Seward resident) asked SNG to send a letter to Minnesota legislators asking for them to support additional funding for the MPRB Teen Teamworks program. A copy of the letter of support signed by SNG President Lisa Boelke is in the board packet. The executive committee reviewed the request and

recommends that the board approve sending the letter. After a brief discussion, the board unanimously approved sending the letter as proposed.

11. **Approval of SNG ADA and Language Access Policies.** Michael Jon reported that the Minneapolis Department of Neighborhoods and Community Relations requires each neighborhood group that receives funding from the city to have a certain portfolio of policies and other documents. SNG has all the required documents except for an ADA Policy (dealing with accessibility for persons with disabilities) and a Language Access Policy (dealing with access for persons who are not proficient in English). He drafted two proposed policies based on model policies developed by the Birken law firm that contracts with the city to provide legal services to neighborhood groups. The executive committee has reviewed the proposed policies and recommends that the board approve them. The board unanimously approved adopting the ADA Policy and the Language Access policy.

Michael Jon noted that, even though SNG now has all of the required policy and procedure documents, all of them need regular review and revision. The review and revision are tasks in the board's annual work plan.

12. **Announcement of upcoming events.** Michael Jon made a brief report on four upcoming events.
 - a. **Jack's Hardware Block Party.** A block party will be held on Saturday, May 14, in the alley behind the buildings along Franklin between 22nd Street and Milwaukee Avenue. SNG is invited to have a table and be present. Michael Jon will be tied up in the vote at the office that day. Tami, Cheryl, and Donna Ray volunteered to staff the table.
 - b. **SNG annual meeting.** The SNG annual meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 18. The first decision we need to make is whether the meeting will be held as an in person event, a virtual event, or a hybrid of the two. After considerable discussion, the board decided by consensus that the 2022 annual meeting should be held virtually (i.e., electronically), and that it should be highly graphic, content driven, emotive, inclusive, and very focused on reporting SNG's activities in the past and future. The meeting should be of no more than an hour's duration. All graphics (e.g., slides) should be translated into English, Somali, Oromo, and Spanish. Sara suggested that board members take candid photographs of Seward and its neighbors for use in a photo montage or mosaic for use in the meeting.

- c. **Seward Garage Sale Days** The 2022 Seward Garage Sale Days will be Friday & Saturday May 20-21. Lisa has the lead in organizing the event. We will not charge a fee to households who wish to be listed on a map of sales or to receive yard signs. We will advertise the sale on Facebook, SNG.org, e-democracy, and other media. The SNG office will be used as a place to register for the sale and to receive yard signs.

The Longfellow Community Council will hold its neighborhood garage sales on June 24-26 and has offered to promote sales in the Seward neighborhood those days as well. SNG will have no direct role and LCC will organize the logistics (e.g., registration) but SNG will help to promote the event.

- d. **Franklin Open Streets** The first Open Streets event of 2022 will be along Franklin Avenue from Portland Ave. to 26th Ave E on Sunday, July 10. SNG will want a table & needs to be staffed—Michael Jon is talking to MCCA & Redesign to discuss sharing the table.

- 13. **Discussion of East Phillips Urban Farm issue.** Terry Barnes and other board members indicated by email that they wanted the SNG board to formally endorse the East Phillips Urban Farm project. The executive committee discussed the proposal at length and asked Terry to submit a draft letter and motion that the board could consider, but she was unable to do so before the meeting. Given that a vote on overriding the Mayor's veto of the city council's decision to rescind its earlier decision to build a city water department maintenance facility on the Roof Depot site is scheduled to take place the next day (on March 24), the board was unsure what it was being asked to do and whether it had enough information to make an informed decision on supporting the Urban Farm project, and took no action.

Paul and Ron noted that they are drafting a basic protocol for how requests for SNG support of projects and initiatives, whether in the neighborhood or affecting it, should be made, investigated, and acted on. In general, those proposing an action have the responsibility of providing sufficient information for the board to make a good decision, including information on both sides of controversial issues, but we do not have a clear process for receiving and acting on recommendations, especially when the request is urgent and if it is controversial. They will present a draft proposal to the executive committee and then to the board.

- 14. **Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Seward Neighborhood Group
Board meeting minutes
March 23, 2022
Page 6 of 6

The board packet is available to Board members here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1p7rF9XYqmtY8Hd-dxlpGcFHjBdXKvYYK>

ADDENDUM

Mary Pumphrey, who could not attend the meeting, submitted the following report for Seward Longfellow Restorative Justice for which she is SNG's representative. They were not in the board packet and are appended to these minutes.

Longfellow Restorative Justice Board of Directors:

- SLRJ began its move into the Ivy Building. We hope to be set up and ready for in-person meetings by April. The current mailing address will continue to be functional throughout the transition.
- SLRJ helped coordinate counseling support for residents of Bolero Flats where Amir Locke was murdered by police.
- Zipps Liquors sponsored an on-line fundraiser for the 2nd year with additional support from the Seward Co-op. Zipps started a "round-up" at the cash register for a charity each month. SLRJ was the recipient for January and February.
- SLRJ is contracting with Propel for Nonprofits to facilitate a strategic planning process - with an emphasis on how SLRJ can best use our resources and expertise to meet the needs of our community.