

Seward Neighborhood Group
Community Development Committee
Meeting notes

January 9, 2024 | 7:00 - 8:30pm

By Zoom and In person at Redesign Inc. (2619 E. Franklin Ave.)

Attendees:

- CDC members: Sheldon Mains, Rebecca Blumenshine, Michael Sedki, Carissa Hansen (note taker), Steve McCauley (SNG Board member), Sara Rothholz Weiner (Chair).
- SNG Board members: Terri Barnes, Mary Pumphrey (Board President).
- SNG staff: Ella Quainton.
- ReDesign staff: Andy Hestness, Abby Romero.
- Guests: Becky Alper, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Commissioner

Meeting notes:

1. Update from Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) - Commissioner Becky Alper. Commissioner Alper gave updates on three different park projects of interest to Seward:
 - **Brackett Park:** Tennis courts and pickle ball courts have been re-stripped in 2023. Approximately \$44,000 has been allocated in MPRB's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for landscaping and habitat improvements at Brackett Park.
 - Commissioner shared that staff had put forth a plan for new plantings on the hillside adjacent to the ramp to the greenway on the north side of the park. Committee members indicated that this was the only and a very popular tot sliding hill in the park and that new plantings is not in concert with community needs and use.
 - Committee asked if staff had reviewed this with the neighborhood at any point.
 - **Matthews Park:** There are no planned allocations for Matthews Park at the moment. The group discussed needed improvements at the park, including shade structures at the wading pools and fixing the width and coverage of the paved path running through the park. Commissioner Alper recommended neighbors continue to email MPRB with requests like these so they stay on the Board's radar.
 - No additional allocation of funds
 - Community has asked for shading element near the wading pool.
 - FOLLOW UP. SNG CDC to write letter to Park representatives requesting shade element at Matthews as this comes out of another budget. Copy Becky on this correspondence. SRW to follow up.
 - **Normanna Triangle:** MPRB allocated approximately \$65,000 in park dedication fees to Normanna Triangle last year for improvements. It

has allocated another \$30,000 to the park in CIP funds. Next, MPRB needs to assign a staff person to the Normanna project to implement the improvements. That staff person will have to oversee a site survey and environmental study before improvements can begin.

- An email from Commissioner Alper provided the contact information for the Park staff.
 - Regarding pathway needs (deteriorating pavement along 24th Street) at Matthews Park, our contact is Chris Des Roches cdesroches@minneapolisparcs.org from Asset Management and Adam Arvidson from Planning aarvidson@minneapolisparcs.org
 - Regarding neighborhood's request for shading structures, Adam Arvidson is developing a program for next year's capital program
 - Regarding Brackett Park's CIP allocation for enhanced natural areas conflicting with sledding, Adam Arvidson is the contact
 - For bigger and broader issues, the contact should be Assistant Superintendent of Planning Michael Schroeder mschroeder@minneapolisparcs.org
2. Working relationship among CDC, SNG Board, and SNG staff in 2024:
- Sara led a discussion regarding how the CDC can best collaborate together and work with SNG Board and staff in the new year, especially in light of Michael Jon's departure.
 - This year Sara will serve as CDC Chair and Phil Musseig will serve as CDC Secretary.
 - Sara, Phil, and Sheldon formed a Steering committee and plan to meet on the first Monday of each month at 10am at Cafe Racer to discuss the CDC's activities and what work needs to be done that month (e.g., letters to write, contacts to make, community meetings to attend, etc.).
 - Sara anticipates that 2024 will be a very active year for the CDC, requiring more work and advocacy from the group than years prior.
3. March planning session:
- CDC will dedicate its March meeting to a planning session to give the group dedicated time to brainstorm what it should address and prioritize in the future.
4. SNG CDC will begin a process to advocate for re-definition by the city of the demarcation of the Seward Neighborhood and the Longfellow Neighborhood. At this time, each neighborhood's By Law describe a different demarcation that the city follows. The city's current plan goes through the city's proposed new 3rd precinct site.
- FOLLOW UP. SNG CDC to send letter describing the issue to

multiple individuals at City Hall, Planning. The letters shall be copied to Longfellow. Philipp Muessig with Sheldon to lead this effort

- SNG CDC is in conversation with the new Co-chair of Longfellow Neighborhood's Community Development and Equity Committee – Michael Jon Olson.

5. Third Precinct:

- CDC wants to connect with someone at the City to get involved in Third Precinct planning this year. Would like to know timeline, design objectives, community input plan, etc. Third Precinct will remain a standing CDC agenda item going forward.
- FOLLOW UP. SRW to reach out to contacts at City Hall to learn more

6. I-94 planning:

- Bridges over I-94 need rebuilding in Seward and vicinity. A group of community leaders (including Sheldon and Andy) have been meeting to discuss how to best facilitate pedestrian crossing over I-94 in the rebuild. The group is also addressing environmental and historical concerns associated with the rebuild. Sheldon and Andy will continue to provide updates.
 - FOLLOW UP. Sheldon and Sara to attend the upcoming I-94 meeting regarding the 106 Historic processes, led by Mead and Hunt.

7. Updates on neighborhood initiatives and task forces:

- **36th ART:** Terri gave an update and showed a video on the progress of 36th ART. Phase I is complete with a majority of the bridge painted in collaboration with Hiawatha Academy. Phase II will involve painting the bridge's girders and archways.
- **Redesign update:** Abby gave an update on Wadaag Commons, ReDesign's affordable and supportive housing project. Construction will begin Q1 of 2024.
- **SNG Board update:** Steve will serve as the SNG Board liaison between CDC and SNG Board in 2024 to help keep the groups collaborating and apprised of each other's activities.
- **26th Avenue:** No updates.
- **AGRA:** In December, Rebecca and Steve met with Casey of Wellington Management, the property management group for the affordable housing project at the former Perkins site. They discussed parking concerns, and Casey expressed willingness to help enforce parking restrictions in the neighborhood. The meeting attendees also discussed the possibility of SNG hosting a welcome party for the new AGRA residents when the property opens.

END