MEETING SUMMARY
Neighborhood Revitalization Board

February 5, 2020, 5:00 p.m.

Call to Order/Roll Call
Meeting called to order at 5:06 p.m. by Tom LaPointe

Roll Call by Leslie Berckes:

Present: Kelly Kennedy, Tom LaPointe, Jan Goode, Leslie Berckes, Frank Owens, Molly Hanson, Chase Holm, and Kari Warren

Absent: Alex Piedras and Marge Ramsey

Staff: Chris Johansen, Director and Dolores Briseno, EAA

Attendees: Anna Loiocomo, Spencer Burton and Mark Cooper

Approval of Agenda
Motion to Approve: Kelly Kennedy; seconded by Kari Warren

Motion carried (8-0)

Approval of Minutes
Motion to Approve: Kelly Kennedy; seconded by Kari Warren

Motion carried (8-0)

Chairman's Report/City Council Actions
Chris Johansen: Two items of discussion from the Council: Greg Lewis resigned from the NRB and Chase Holm was appointed by Councilman Coleman.

Chase Holm introduced himself to the Board.

Approval of Revision to Neighborhood Recognition Policy
Chris Johansen: The Revision of the Neighborhood Recognition Policy was brought before the board at our last meeting. We are looking for approval tonight.

Tom LaPointe: Do I have a motion?

Motion to Approve: Kari Warren; seconded by Chase Holm.

Motion carried (8-0)

Housing Services Board
Chris Johansen: Greg Lewis served as the Neighborhood Revitalization Board appointment to the Housing Services Board and the reason for that position was because the Housing Services Board had oversight over the Community Action Agency. When the Community Action Agency moved from the Neighborhood Revitalization Board to the Housing Services Board, there was an agreement with the Neighborhood Revitalization Board that they would appoint a member to Housing Services Board. Four or five years ago, the Community Action Agency left the City and now is IMPACT. That connection with the Housing Services Board is not there anymore. It is up to the Housing Services Board to decide if they will keep or get rid of the Neighborhood Revitalization Board seat.
The Months Ahead and the Future of the NRB

Tom LaPointe: I thought we should take 20 minutes to discuss the future of the NRB. Chris, can you update us on the meeting with the Council on the item we sent to them months ago?

Chris Johansen: Regarding that issue, there is nothing new scheduled with the City Manager. I can offer two suggestions though. One, I can resend the letter. Two, you, the Board, can meet with the Council member who appointed you and discuss it with them. The reason for the delay with the NRB meeting with the City Council is the Council wants to see how Invest DSM functions and what NRB’s role is. The City Manager made his budget recommendation, which included $200,000 for neighborhood grants which will go through the process to finally allocate.

Tom LaPointe: Is this a line item? What is the timeline?

Chris Johansen: The budget will be approved at the March 23 Council meeting.

Jan Goode: It will be dispersed through who?

Chris Johansen: Through the city. Funding could be used for capacity building on small projects in neighborhoods.

Molly Hansen: I was interested in the liaison position you had mentioned?

Chris Johansen: It’s on our org chart. The position won’t be available until probably fall. The position will be the go-to person for the neighborhood associations.

Leslie Berckes: Chris, can you explain to Chase and I what was in the letter that went to the City Council?

Chris Johansen: A couple of years ago, the NRB looked at the City Code language that established the NRB and appointed a subcommittee to recommend revisions. The Board sent a letter to Council requesting a meeting to discuss the proposed changes.

Kelly Kennedy: Chris, grants for when?

Chris Johansen: July 1 is when the next fiscal year starts. It’s worth discussion with the Board. The NRB hasn’t been asked what the money should go towards.

Tom LaPointe: Who made the recommendation?

Chris Johansen: CZB recommended this to the City Manager. CZB did their study. They made the recommendation to the City Manager and Council.

Tom LaPointe: CZB recommendation? They wanted NRB abolished.

Chris Johansen: CZB wanted to create Invest DSM. This Board was to serve in the distribution of those grants. I don’t know the Council’s opinion.
Tom LaPointe: Regarding neighborhood associations, some neighborhood associations have a stronger presence. If the neighborhood’s use money for capacity building, what would that look like?

Chris Johansen: Throwing some ideas out there. I would suggest first meeting with Neighborhood Associations for input. Looking at how to get people to meetings may be their number one issue. Raising money, non-profits, etc. are somethings that neighborhood’s struggle with. They can use the money for different things. We should have Neighborhood Associations come in and give us ideas.

Chase Holm: Another example is the year of the tree. Cities have planted fruit trees in neighborhoods for the homeless. If you get people interested in a project, you get them to join and interested in being president or a member of the board.

Leslie Berckes: Kind of like when I went to my first Neighborhood Association meeting and they asked me to be on their board.

Chris Johansen: Burn out of older neighborhood association leadership is a reason for demise of those associations.

Tom LaPointe: Meredith and Carpenter went through that. Chris, can you give me three words that you could use to talk about and present what Neighborhood Associations need?

Chris Johansen: Capacity building and succession of leadership are very important to Neighborhood Associations. We must ask what is the intent of funding from the Council. Then we have a Public Hearing. But let’s keep the scope wide.

Tom LaPointe: I presented this idea to Chris about spending 20 minutes discussing the future of the NRB. NRB still exists. It’s built into the City Ordinance. I think those who were appointed should reach out to their council person to discuss support of $200,000 grants to be used to build capacity, sustainability and the betterment of the neighborhoods.

Chris Johansen: Let me underscore that NRB is NOT going anywhere.

Tom LaPointe: Great. So, I have a homework assignment. First, we’d like to acknowledge our audience members. Would any of you like to speak?

Spencer Burton: My name is Spencer Burton. I live at 4324 Forest Avenue. I moved here from Portland, Oregon. I have been active in several Neighborhood Associations. I’ve had success with several grant programs. This led to projects to plant trees, a mixture of yard work, murals, market projects. We worked on a small park project which was combined with another grant. Small grants can give you credibility to get other projects done and to receive other grants. One of the best things you can do is get a newsletter out. Let the neighborhood know what is going on. Also, you need to have something to bring people to come to Neighborhood Association meetings to pitch ideas. Thank you.

Tom LaPointe: Thank you for your information.
Frank Owens: Chris, do you remember small grants?

Chris Johansen: No, I don’t.

Frank Owens: Back in the days of enterprise counties (funds) that were distributed by United Way, you could enter a competition for a grant. It was utilized for capacity building. For some Neighborhood Associations, capacity building has different meanings. If we have 50 neighborhoods at $200,000, we can look at $4,000 as a starting point. You know, start out on an even playing field. And if there’s left over, that money goes into a pot.

Jan Goode: I was part of a board that applied for and was given two of those grants. They were given on alternating years. We used one to host a National Night Out. It was successful. The money helped start that for our neighborhood.

Tom LaPointe: From who did you receive the grant?

Frank Owens: United Way administered the funds. The money came from the Enterprise Fund.

Tom LaPointe: Is it now defunct?

Chris Johansen: Yes. The Enterprise Fund is now defunct.

Kari Warren: Does the City assist with National Night Out?

Chris Johansen: Possibly, the police, but not the City.

Leslie Berckes: I’d like to talk a little about the liaison position and shared best practices of Neighborhood Associations. How does something like “year of the tree” get passed along to Neighborhood Associations? What are the City’s proclivities to making sure these get passed down to the neighborhood level?

Chris Johansen: We are going through a reorganization. The liaison position is part of the reorganization. So, it’s happening.

Tom LaPointe: The homework before the next meeting will be for us to talk to our Council member regarding the $200,000 and the liaison position.

Kelly Kennedy: What are you waiting on?

Chris Johansen: The appropriation will be on July 1. There are several positions that need to be hired before. That money is in the budget proposal. You don’t have to talk to city council about this item.

Tom LaPointe: Then the homework is revised for us to talk to our council member about the $200,000 grant.
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Board Liaison Updates

Polk Co Housing Continuum and NFC:

Tom LaPointe: Marge is out tonight; due to medical reasons. So, we have no report for Polk County Housing Continuum or NFC.

Rebuilding Together:

Tom LaPointe: I have not attended this meeting yet. I’m awaiting approval from the Board.

Chris Johansen: I’m to meet with them next Monday, probably not about you, Tom. I can talk to them about it.

Kari Warren: Regarding board liaisons, are there going to be different organizations brought in and should we have liaison’s in?

Tom LaPointe: You are talking about Invest DSM. Invest DSM is a freestanding organization. They report to the City Council and Polk County.

Kari Warren: Were there other organizations suggested by CZB?

Chris Johansen: No private organizations. Not put out of the city.

Leslie Berckes: In some of the districts, we’ll have stakeholder groups. But discussing it now, it’s not definite.

Adjourn the Meeting

Motion to Adjourn: Frank Owens; Seconded by Kari Warren.

Motion carried (8-0)

Meeting was adjourned by consensus by Tom LaPointe at 5:45 p.m.