

***...Listen, Learn, Ask and Transform how we do community work***

Community Building Committee  
Minutes. November 18, 2020  
Recorder: Susan Larson-Fleming

Attending: Jerry Stein, Susan Larson-Fleming, Lynn Von Korff, Kyra Nygard, David Frank, Jenna Hoge, Kaaha Kaahiye, Vera Marshall, Ben Tuthill, Amy Kaminsky, Jeremy Schlitz, Alison Bell, Ashley Zapata.

1. Welcome, intros, agenda approval.
2. Alison Bell reported on the collaboration between the PPA Transportation committee, the Pratt PTO, Prospect Park Garden Club and Community Building looking at improvements to the Pratt playground, Malcolm avenue street configuration and traffic calming on Malcolm and creation of a play area on Tower Hill across from Pratt. The Jackson project has emerged as a core component of the project to create an updated playground, community gathering place and implementation of traffic calming initiatives for what is now a playground, with a street (Malcolm ave. ) closed off daily for play and Tower Hill. Money has been secured from PPA for construction of wooden planters, a hopefully more effective and more visible way to block traffic from encroaching on the play area during the school day. Planters will be constructed spring of 2021. On Nov. 7, members of the Garden Club, , Pratt PTO and PPA Transportation committee came together to clear a significant portion of the Tower Hill hillside between Malcolm and the big rock, and guided by a Mpls Park Board representative. About 30 people came together on a warm Saturday morning to clear buckthorn and brush from the area. Work will have to be repeated in the spring.
3. The collaboration with Eastside Neighborhood Services to provide an experiential educational program at Luxton is up and running. PPA endorsed this project at urging of the Community Building Committee, and money to support the program was raised from neighborhood residents. 40-50 children are participating. Right now it is only funded through the end of 2020. The Director of Eastside and staff from the program will attend our next committee meeting. Eastside Neighborhood Services is a social service agency serving Northeast and Southeast Minneapolis.
4. University District Alliance (UDA). Lynn and Susan have been officially appointed as PPA representatives to UDA. No meeting has been scheduled. Lynn is also part of a temporary committee, with members of the Good Neighbor Fund and the University's Office of Off Campus Living, looking at how neighborhoods surrounding the university will be impacted by the proposed changes to City funding and if/how the Good Neighbor Fund can support neighborhood organizations, Lynn will report on this initiative at the next meeting.
5. Ashley Zapata reported on the Pratt PTO's hearty endorsement of the Jackson Project to honor the family as part of the new Pratt playground. Ashley shared the document she and Jerry presented to the PTO. Many ideas for fundraising for this project are coming together. Minneapolis Public Schools do not fund playgrounds but must approve changes to property. It was noted that Marvel and Helen Jackson were members of AKA, a historic Black sorority, when they attended the University of Minnesota. There is a photo of them at an AKA meeting at the Univ. of MN. Ashley is also a member of this national sorority, as is newly elected Vice President Kamala Harris. AKA might be a source of funding support.
6. Jenna and Ben reported on the Renters and Tenants subcommittee. The first meeting was attended by 10 enthusiastic people. Noted that Prospect Park is primarily renters. Over 900 flyers, in both English and Somali, have been distributed and have information about PPA's

renters' rights survey and blog, both on PPA's website. Information gathering, started by Community Building pre Covid, identified the vast network of rental properties in Prospect Park. Person to Person interviews were cut short by Covid restrictions. Information gleaned from the surveys will be added to information data trove. So far 35 responses have been received. Next meeting of this group is December 9. Plan is to meet on the 2nd Wednesday of the month. Budget for 2021 for this subgroup is in process and will be submitted in early 2021. Initial funding for this initiative came from neighborhood NRP housing monies.

7. Kaaha noted that the Tenants' Rights Handbook with curriculum has been completed. Now looking for appropriate platform so that it can be accessed on line. Kaaha will send the draft of the Handbook to committee members for input.
8. Communication. Members asked for clarity regarding the various committees/attempts at outreach by PPA. The NROC committee started as a PPA subgroup creating events such as the house tours and a series of walks in various areas of the neighborhood such as the University of Minnesota, the border residential changes on the St. Paul edge and the new developments north of University. The creation and passage of the PPA racial equity policy was due to work of this committee. Much activity for a couple years but has since petered out. Community Building started sometime after the demise of the NROC committee and has tried to focus on listening. Jenna noted the phrase from the PPA website, Community Building section: "Listen, Learn, Ask and Transform how we do community work." Community Building held multiple meetings and interviews throughout the wider community to develop priorities by finding out what people were thinking about. The work on the completion of the walkway arose from this process. Our vision has been that we exist in a community of communities and community listening means that there is a responsibility to follow up. However there is need to evaluate how information is communicated by PPA and the various committees and communities within Prospect Park. Jerry will meet with a few people before the next Community Building meeting to explore actions to suggest, including opening a conversation with the PPA board. Lynn, Vera, Kaaha, Jenna and Ben, expressed interest in joining with Jerry in this discussion.
9. Next meeting is Wednesday, January 6, 2021 at 4.