



**North Loop Neighborhood Association
Board Meeting Notes
February 25, 2015
7:00 PM – 8:30 PM
Heritage Landing, 415 1st Street North**

Attendees: Philip Ailiff, Dave Decker, David Frank, DJ Heinle, Bryan Hollaway
Fritz Kroll, Diane Merrifield, Karen Lee Rosar

Absent: JR Maddox, Brent Nelson, Scott Woller

- I. February Board Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM
- II. **A motion is made (Bryan), seconded (Karen), and approved by the Board to approve the February Board Meeting Agenda.**
- III. **A motion is made (DJ), seconded (Fritz), and approved by the Board to approve the January 28, 2015 Board Meeting Minutes.**
- IV. David reminds attendees that Committee Chairs and Board Officers are determined at the February Board Meeting, and that the Board still does not have a Treasurer.
- V. Council Member Presentation – Council Member Jacob Frey
 - No Council Member Presentation this month
- VI. Finance Report
 - No Finance Report this month. A new Treasurer needs to be selected.
- VII. Neighbor Comments
 - Sue Jahn, National Night Out: Sue requests that - if a contribution is to be made to National Night Out in 2015 by the North Loop Neighborhood Association – to please make the contribution through Sue only. The Board committed to supporting National Night Out and will support Sue's efforts.
- VIII. Committee Reports
 - A. Marketing and Promotions – David Frank for Scott Woller
 - A New York Times reporter is working on an article about the North Loop Neighborhood.
 - The North Loop Neighborhood will also be the cover story of the Mpls. St. Paul Magazine in April.

- It is suggested that the North Loop Neighborhood Association partner with another Neighborhood Association to hire a part-time administrative person for 10-20 hours per month- something for the Board to think about.
- The North Loop Candy Grab is scheduled for Saturday, April 4 at the North Loop Playground located at 4th Avenue North and West River Road. Pacifier, Corner Coffee, Corner Church, and Minneapolis Downtown Families are all partners for the event. **A motion is made (Fritz), seconded (Diane), and approved by the Board to contribute \$700 to the event.**
- Scott requested that David ask if the Board wanted to put together the “Welcome to the North Loop” bags again. Scott is willing to coordinate. In the past, the North Loop Neighborhood Association has contributed \$250 and businesses are charged \$50 to advertise/provide “schwag” for the bag. **A motion is made (Fritz), seconded (Bryan), and approved by the Board to create the “Welcome to the North Loop” bags again and to donate \$250 to the effort.**

B. North Loop Business Association – Brent Nelson

- No update this month.

C. Website Update – Diane Merrifield

- Diane emailed the North Loop Website Report (January 2015) prior to the Board Meeting.
- Diane reports “another good month” including 2700+ visits with the average duration at over three minutes per visit and an average of 88 views per day. The amount of “Contact Us” inquiries and level of interest in joining the Directory continues to increase. Diane suggests that the administrative person Scott recommended could help with the responses in the future.
- Bryan asked what is clicked on most frequently. Diane replies “In the Loop” and the Directory are the most popular, and the Home Page and Events often visited as well.
- Bryan asks if there is a way to alert folks when new information is posted on the website. Karen replies that there is not, but the same information is usually posted on Facebook as well.
- Please see the North Loop Website Report (January 2015) attached.

D. Planning & Zoning – Dave Decker and DJ Heinle

- Hennepin Theater Trust: The Hennepin Theater Trust did a presentation on branding and discussed a colored walkway to stretch from the North Loop to the Walker Art Center.
- Open Streets Event Series: the Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition would like to do an Open Streets event on either Washington Avenue or 1st Street this summer; the event would include a three block stretch in the North Loop; outreach will need to be done to the businesses that will be effected; David describes Open Streets as a “very cool community event; Karen suggests the neighborhood should support the event and “show the City this matters to us”; **A motion is made (Karen), seconded (Fritz), and approved by the Board to “decidedly support” the event and contribute \$1000 to the event if it happens.**

- Nicollet-Central Modern Street Car Update: a “great presentation” included updates on the timeline, funding, and upcoming milestones including the environmental assessment kickoff; two stops are proposed in the North Loop- one stop at Hennepin Avenue/ 2nd Street North and the other stop at West River Parkway/ 1st Street North; **A motion is made (Dave), seconded (DJ), and approved by the Board to provide a letter of support for the two proposed street car stops in the North Loop and for the initiative in general.**
- Response to Washington Avenue Improvements presentation on 01/28/15: At the Annual Board Meeting on January 28, 2015, Bob Byers with Hennepin County presented plans for Washington Avenue improvements in an effort to get the word out and get feedback; since the presentation, Ethan Fawley, the Executive Director at Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition, suggested the Board take an official position and to include added width for bicycle ridership safety- east of the railroad bridge to Hennepin Avenue to create a buffer for bikers rather than the proposed 5’ bicycle lane running parallel with the traffic lane; Fritz states his concern that this solution makes conditions even worse for pedestrians- David states that this is a striping project only, and that pedestrian improvements will likely be at the top of the priority list for 2015; Fritz asks if anyone has made potentially impacted business and property owners aware that one lane of parking will be eliminated in order for the striping initiative to occur- multiple tenants at the 218 building will be affected by the removal of 11 parking spaces; David states the parking spaces are not owned by the business/property owners and therefore nothing is being taken from them; Dave reports the Planning + Zoning Committee is on board with this amendment so there isn’t a 3-block break in the striping effort, and suggests this is a safer solution for people to travel by bike to downtown; more conversation is had about the potential impact of business and property owners; **A motion is made (Dave), seconded (Bryan), and approved by the Board to draft an amendment to the striping plans that Bob Byers presented to create a buffer for bikers rather than the proposed 5’ bicycle lane parallel to the lane of traffic between the railroad bridge and Hennepin Avenue.** One Board Member was opposed due to concerns for existing business and property owners. DJ reports he has given Bob Byers a “heads up” that a proposed amendment is would be in the works.

G. Livability – Greening & Lighting Update – Fritz Kroll

- Conservancy through the Downtown Council: a strategic framework, mission, and vision effort are currently underway for a land conservancy to be created through the Downtown Council; the team is just starting to mobilize and plans are very general; Fritz suggests its too early and too general for the Board to have specific concerns or suggestions at this time

H. Livability - North Loop Park Initiative – Karen Lee Rosar

- No update

I. Safety and Livability – Phil Ailiff

- The next Block Club Meeting will “be on the books soon”

- The next Pedestrian Advisory Committee Meeting planned for Wednesday, March 4 from 4-6 PM in Room 333 of City Hall.
- Next Court Watch is scheduled for Friday, March 13 at 10 AM at the Main Library
- 200 Citizens' Academy positions now available.

J. Minneapolis Downtown Families Update

- No update this month.
- Need to determine how information will continue to be shared with the Board.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

A. Revolving Loan Fund Update – J.R. Maddox

- No update this month.

B. Farmers Market Advisory Group Update – Karen Lee Rosar

- The next meeting is scheduled for March 6 at City Hall; market relocation during Nicollet Mile construction will be discussed

C. 2020 Partners Update – Karen Lee Rosar

- Karen reminds the Board that a \$2000 contribution was made to 2020 Partners last year and suggests renewing for the same amount this year; Bryan asks what the funding is used for- Karen states the funding is used to pay the part-time administrative staff and occasional consultants; Karen also reminds the Board that the 2020 Partners members and steering committee are all volunteers and suggests viewing the website (<http://the2020partners.com>) for more information; **A motion is made (Karen), seconded (Diane), and approved by the Board to contribute \$2000 to 2020 Partners again in 2015.**

D. DNG Update –

- No meeting, and therefore no update this month.

X. NEW BUSINESS

- Community Garden – Bryan Hollaway: Bryan introduces the community garden concept he began working on with Scott Woller (Board Member) and Rick Gauger (University of WI-River Falls Professor) including an explanation of benefits to the neighborhood, potential locations, and possible methods including raised-bed gardens and straw bale gardens; Bryan is curious of other individuals or groups in the community have expressed similar interest; both DJ and Karen state they have heard other community members are interested in this effort; Bryan will work with Diane to get something on the website for other interested parties to contact Bryan and will continue to move ahead with the concept; Please see the Community Garden Considerations handout attached
- Annual Meeting Review: the Board discusses the Annual Board Meeting held on January 28 at Aria turned out “really well; Dave suggests holding off on Planning + Zoning motions at the annual meeting; David agrees and states

others have suggested not doing the financial report at the annual meeting either; the Board discusses the Annual Meeting being for guest speakers, committee updates, and “other”

- March Board Meeting: the March 2015 North Loop Neighborhood Association Board Meeting will be held at The Paxon; enter off 1st Street
- Board Committee Chairs: Committee Chairs will remain the same for 2015
 - Marketing and Promotions – Scott Woller
 - North Loop Business Association – Brent Nelson/Scott Woller
 - Website – Diane Merrifield
 - Planning + Zoning – DJ Heinle/Dave Decker
 - Pedestrian and Bicycle – Karen Lee Rosar/DJ Heinle
 - Livability/Greening & Lighting – Fritz Kroll
 - Livability/NL Park – Karen Lee Rosar
 - Safety & Livability – Phil Ailiff
 - Sustainability/Community Garden – Bryan Hollaway
- Board Officers: Board Officers for 2015 are determined
 - Treasurer: Karen nominates Brent, but David will confirm his interest after the meeting (as Brent is not present)
 - Secretary: DJ Heinle
 - Vice President: Diane Merrifield
 - President: David Frank

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM.

North Loop Website Report (January 2015)

Source: Google Analytics

| Summary | 2014 | 2015 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | Jan | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
| Total Site Visits/Sessions | 1,567 | 2,736 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Visits per Day | 50.54 | 88.26 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Unique Visitors | 1,198 | 2,051 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pageviews | 5,900 | 10,458 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pages per Visit | 3.77 | 3.82 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Duration (minutes) | N/A | 3:11 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bounce Rate | 45.05% | 46.42% | | | | | | | | | | | |
| % New Visitors | 72.37% | 69.04% | | | | | | | | | | | |

Visitor Flow: Most visitors come via the Home Page (common pages visited include Directory, About Us, NL-Kids, Stay in the Loop)

| Geography | 2014 | 2015 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|-------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| (Percent) | Jan | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
| Minnesota | 81.10 | 78.36 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Minneapolis | 48.12 | 52.30 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| St. Paul | 4.02 | 4.06 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Suburbs/Outstate | 26.99 | 22.00 | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Device | 2014 | 2015 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|-------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| (Percent) | Jan | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
| Desktop | 73.58 | 69.81 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mobile | 16.21 | 21.75 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tablet | 10.21 | 8.44 | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Traffic Source | 2014 | 2015 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| (Percent) | Jan | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
| Organic search (search engines) | 66.50 | 72.55 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Direct to Northloop.org | 24.63 | 17.51 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Referral from other site* | 8.23 | 8.19 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Social media** | .64 | 1.75 | | | | | | | | | | | |

* Top referral sources included Bring Me the News, Visit-TwinCities, Heritage Landing.

** Top social media sources were Facebook and Twitter.

20 January Contact Us inquiries and info@northloop.org emails. Plus 4 new subscribers (3 unsubscribe – after annual meeting email invitation)



North Loop Neighborhood Association

Community Garden Considerations

The North Loop Neighborhood Association (NLNA) is exploring options for a community garden to be implemented within the neighborhood. This exercise is intended to see what interest the neighborhood has in a community garden and determine the feasibility of such an endeavor.

Several community gardens exist within the Twin Cities (e.g. Dowling Community Garden, Satori Community Garden) and hundreds more are thriving in cities across the nation. The gardens vary in purpose from beautification to food production to education. However the benefits of these gardens are fairly well defined. An article published in the American Journal of Public Health states:

“Community gardens enhance nutrition and physical activity and promote the role of public health in improving quality of life. Opportunities to organize around other issues and build social capital also emerge through community gardens.”

Additional benefits of a community garden include:

- Community gardens foster the development of community stewardship and identity
- Community gardens bring neighbors together from vary backgrounds for a shared purpose, which may become a focal point for organizing to address social issues
- Community gardens reduce crime by bringing more eyes on the streets
- Community gardens are a great teaching tool for youth and adults alike to learn about what it takes to grow food, to learn job and life skills like patience and attention to detail, and to learn about environmental sustainability
- Community gardens provide an inexpensive source of nutritionally-rich foods
- Community gardens are a stress relief for gardens and help them feel part of something larger than themselves
- Community gardens add beauty to the community by creating green space for people to retreat to as an contrast to the typical urban environment
- Community gardens have been shown to increase property values in the immediate vicinity where they are located (studied in New York)

Location of a Community Garden

The location is vital to the success of a community garden. Considerations have to be made to account for each of the following factors to determine the best location:

1. Access to water
2. Access to sunlight
3. Ease of access for gardeners
4. Visibility to passers-by (pedestrians or drivers)
5. Security of the site
6. Longevity of the site to be used for a community garden

Initial conversations on the topic have considered three potential sites. Each has its own pros and cons which require additional research. Additional site will certainly be open for consideration throughout the exploration and design phases of this project.

Site Option #1: Proposed Park Space



Approximate address = 747 North 3rd Street

Owner = Schafer Richardson

Pros:

- Site is the proposed location for a future park
- Easy access for pedestrians off 3rd Street (not-accessible to vehicles)
- Close proximity to residential buildings
- One point of contact for development approval

Cons:

- Minimal visibility being tucked behind a large parking lot and existing structures
- Access to water?

Site Option #2: Highway Right-of-Way



Approximate address = 225 North Washington Ave

Owner = Unclear Government Ownership

Pros:

- Visibility to both drivers (existing 394 and on Washington Ave) and pedestrians
- Easy access immediately off of Washington Ave
- Relatively close proximity to residential buildings

Cons:

- Unclear authority of ownership
- Condition of the site currently (debris from the highway and slope of terrain)
- Access to water?

Site Option #3: Fire Station



Approximate address = 1101 North 6th Street

Owner = Minneapolis Fire Department (Station #4)

Pros:

- Security being next to the fire station
- Potential longevity of the site to be used as a garden
- Possible access to water off of the fire station

Cons:

- Very difficult access for gardens as this is very far from residences
- Zero visibility

Construction of a Garden

Community gardens come in all different shapes and sizes. The design that best fits a North Loop community garden will depend on funding, public interest in gardening, and restrictions of the site. Initial conversations have focused on two forms of gardening with the preferred method being straw bale gardening.

Form Option #1: Straw Bale Gardening

Description: Rather than constructing a container with soil placed inside, a straw bale serves as both the container and the soil for plants. The straw is held together by string which is top with a thin layer of top soil. After two to three weeks of exposure to rain and sun, the bale begins to decompose which means it is “conditioned” and ready to plant.

Pros:

- Typically a significant cost savings over constructing raised beds with purchased soil
- Easy installation on any surface type
- Clear designation of ownership plots
- Highly visible due to their raised nature
- Ideal planting conditions with no weeds or soil remediation needed
- Previous year’s bales can be broken down and spread as mulch



Cons:

- Bales decompose which means they have a ~2 year life span
- If the bale is not tightly secured, straw may fall out of the bale and spread easily

Form Option #2: Raised Bed Gardening

Description: Creating a container to hold fertile soil above the existing surface. Typically 6-8 inches deep, raised beds can vary greatly in size and shape. The standard community garden uses beds about 4’x8’ to give gardeners ample space for their use.

Pros:

- Typical form used in existing community gardens which means gardeners and the community is expecting this style of gardening
- Well-constructed beds can last for multiple years with minor maintenance needed
- Allows for clean, fertile soil to be added on top of the existing surface
- Facilitates more varieties of plants than a straw bale, particularly root vegetables and corn



Cons:

- Represent a significant cost to install depending on the material chosen
- Should not be used on sites with contaminated soil as plant roots may penetrate through the raised bed to the soil below

Additional Considerations Needing Further Exploration

- Funding source(s)
- City ordinances governing community gardens
- Long term ownership of the garden
- Advertising of the garden
- Gardener membership requirements