



**North Loop Neighborhood Association
Board Meeting Notes**

**May 27, 2020
7:00 P.M.**

**Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83054653005>
Call-in #: 312-626-6799 (mtg ID: 830 5465 3005)**

11 of 11 Board members were in attendance: Tim Bildsoe, David Crary, Francesco Parisi, Dana Swindler, Jackson Schwartz, Diane Merrifield, Mike Binkley, Scott Woller, Jenn Brewington, Bri Sharkey-Smith, and Ron Sliwinski.

Neighbors in attendance: Representatives from TractorWorks, Itasca, downtown Minneapolis, and Tower Lofts.

1. May Board Meeting called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Tim.
2. **Motion is made by David, seconded by Diane, and unanimously approved by the Board to approve the Board meeting agenda with no changes.**
3. **Motion is made by Ron, seconded by Jenn, and unanimously approved by the Board to approve the April Meeting minutes with no changes.**
4. Neighborhood Engagement
 - a. Esther Agbaje is running as the DFL-endorsed candidate for District 59B which covers downtown, the North Loop, and parts of North Minneapolis. She is an attorney with volunteer work focused on affordable housing and building pathways to home ownership. Her platform also emphasizes job creation, small businesses, and climate change with an equity lens.
5. Finance Report – David Crary
 - a. NLNA is in a good financial position. More discussion available under New Business.
6. Secretary's Report
 - a. No secretary's report.
7. NLNA Priorities and Committees

- a. Root District – Jackson Schwartz
 - 1. First virtual public meeting to be held on June 24th. These meetings will be held quarterly and led by the three Root District work groups. Goal of the meetings is to engage the public and produce action steps.
 - 2. Working with local artists on a mural/public engagement project. Fundraising is underway – NLNA to look into sponsorship opportunities.
- b. P+Z Committee – Francesco Parisi & Ron Sliwinski
 - 1. The former TMBR project is being transformed into an apartment rental building. The architects, Tushie Montgomery, met with Rock Island lofts who approved the new design. Proposed structure is 38 feet shorter than the original, at seven stories. Cheaper materials will be used overall.
 - a. **Motion is made by Francesco, seconded by Dana, and unanimously approved by the Board to write a letter of support for the apartment rental project at 100 3rd Ave N with the conditions that they invest in landscaping and that they use brick for exterior material.**
 - 2. Parallel Cafe is looking for approval to build a fence surrounding their event space.
 - a. **Motion is made by Francesco, seconded by Tim, and unanimously approved by the Board to write a letter of support for the addition of a fence at Parallel Cafe.**
 - 3. 418 3rd Ave N is undergoing a core and shell rehabilitation with Historic Tax Credit funds and approval by HPC.
 - a. **Motion is made by Francesco, seconded by Tim, and unanimously approved by the Board to write a letter of support for the core and rehab project at 418 3rd Ave N.**
- c. Business Engagement – Dana Swindler & Jenn Brewington
 - 1. Trying to find new ways to re-engage customers and let them know that small businesses are open. Retail traffic has been slow to rebuild. Many small businesses are on the cusp of closure.
 - a. Specifically, financial support and a change in narrative about shopping at small businesses is needed. – “We’re local and we’re safe!”
 - a. Mike will look into creating a video compilation of interviews with customers coming out of small businesses to help dissipate fear about shopping during this time.
 - b. Scott will look into producing 6-8 inch sidewalk stickers that say “The North Loop is Open”. These would be given to business owners who can stick these outside of their stores with an arrow pointing into their business. **Motion is made by Scott, seconded by Dana, and unanimously approved by the Board to use \$100 of NLNA funds to produce these stickers.**
 - 2. Restaurants and bars are navigating the challenges of serving customers with masks, given the Mayor’s new order that requires masks to be worn inside public buildings. This especially impacts fine dining institutions.
- d. Parks & Beautification – David Crary & Bri Sharkey-Smith
 - 1. All but 37 new trees in the North Loop are being watered by the City. Those 37 trees are watered by roughly 12 volunteers.

2. TractorWorks is looking into demolishing 3,000 square feet of the south-easternmost point of the building to make room for the park/public passageway from Washington to 3rd. Park Board has been cooperative and engaged with the upcoming park plans.
3. James Rice Park cleanups have been put on hold until City paperwork has been processed and approved. Paperwork legally assures that cleanup efforts will not harm the existing environment and that the City will not be liable for any volunteer incidents.
- e. Community Engagement – Scott Woller & Bri Sharkey-Smith
 1. “No Pee Zone” signs have been created at \$1.77/sign to be distributed around the North Loop. 3rd St has been covered already.
 2. Wayfinding sidewalk sticker graphic has been made and ready for production. The stickers are meant to adhere to the sidewalk with roughly a one-year life. They will be used to help visitors find their way to businesses around the North Loop. They cost roughly \$10-15 each with the intent of producing 35 stickers at a total cost of \$350-450. Stickers are 13 inches long.
 - a. **Motion is made by Scott, seconded by Diane, and unanimously approved by the Board to use up to \$500 of NLNA funds to cover the cost of these stickers.**
 3. Future neighborhood events are still on hold. We have not made a determination about the North Loop Food Truck Fair yet.
 4. Minnesota is leading the country in Census turnout. Hennepin County has a high level of participation.
- f. Communications – Diane Merrifield & Mike Binkley
 1. Website traffic was 40% higher in April this year than in April 2019. Most website traffic is directed from Facebook, thanks to Mike’s video stories.
 2. NLNA has 10,000 followers on Instagram. The number of followers has doubled since October 2019.
 3. Working with the web developer to determine updates to the site, including an interactive map.
 4. Hosted an online contest to have people submit their most creative masks to promote mask-wearing in the neighborhood. The contest had about 40 entries with three winners who received gift cards to local restaurants as their prizes.
 5. North Loop historic building signs are moving forward with production and installation. Considering donating them to the owners of their respective buildings to make sure they’re installed and to take the financial burden away from businesses.
 - a. Plan is to start with producing/installing 10 signs. Goal is to gradually create more signs and eventually build a history tour of the neighborhood.
 - b. The signs cost \$37 each to produce and about \$100 to install.
- g. NL Dog Park – Mike Binkley & Jennifer Brewington
 1. Cleanup event on June 6th at 11am. Rock rakes will be provided.
8. Unfinished business
 - a. Welcome Sculpture Update – David Crary
 1. Welcome Park monument is done. Artist is recommending that we stain the concrete surrounding the monument for \$1,500, but this may not be

worth the cost. Overall feedback of the monument has been very positive!

9. New Business

- a. We have ~\$92k in the budget that we need to allocate over the next seven months for City budget planning purposes. The City is currently planning their 2021 budget for neighborhood associations. With a ~\$200M deficit projected for the City in 2021, we are not overly optimistic.
- b. We typically receive roughly \$30,000 each year from the City to cover operations. The Board currently has an extra \$25k in the 2020 budget that could be carried over into 2021 if City funding is lost.

10. The next board meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 24, 2020.

Adjourned at 9:01 P.M by Tim.