

VNA Council Meeting Minutes - February 2023

Wednesday, February 22, 2023

6:30 p.m. via Zoom

Term Ending 2023

Doug Carlson, President
Rachel Bennett, Treasurer
Regan Botsford, Secretary
Wendy Fearnside

Term Ending 2024

Bonnie Gruber
Lee Lazar
Leon Maurer - Absent
Michael Rewey

6:32 Call to Order

- Meeting Rules: Stay on mute unless talking.
- Approval of January minutes - Rachel motioned, Regan seconds approval. Regan to make very small edit and minutes approved.
- Join the listserv: Send an email to VilasNA+subscribe@groups.io
- Website: vilasneighborhood.com Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/vilasna>
- Donations: (Dues no longer required) <https://www.vilasneighborhood.com/take-action>

6:35 Old Business:

- Damaged Vilas Neighborhood signs update (Doug & Leon)
- Repair may cost around \$2,000 – could consider a grant (deadline for Neighborhood Grant was Monday), or everyone working together to restore signage.
- Plan to remove the sign that is deteriorating near the 7/11 when the weather cooperates.

6:40 Reports & Committee Updates

- **President's Report**
- All of the alcohol licenses have been approved to date.
- Garth's will be serving coffee now.
- *Discussion on Family Occupancy to follow.*
- **Treasurer's Report**
- Checking account has \$5,085. Thus far in 2023, we have received over \$1K including advertisements and donations.
- **Standing Committees**
 - Social: Chair: Bethany Nelson
 - Discussion of renting out an ice rink for Vilas neighborhood event and discussion to invite Regent, Greenbush or D-M. "Final Skate at the Shell." Perhaps request a donation for admission and put towards the repair of the signs. (The last day The Shell will be open is April 19).
 - Charity drive went really well over the holidays. Bethany unable to move it forward again without help. Bethany will reach out to Dundgeon-Monroe's garage sale and find out if others in the Vilas Neighborhood would want to join.
 - Sarah B. adds book club will take place tomorrow night. Klara and the Sun will be discussed.
 - Zoning: Chairs: Ben Biltz and Wendy Fearnside (move occupancy/family def'n to end)
 - Demo moving forward on Chabad House.
 - Urban Design Committee is looking to tweak ordinances in the area so the Zoning Committee will be keeping an eye on things.
 - Membership: Chair: Mary Clare Murphy (no update)
 - Edgewood: Chair: Craig Stanley (no update)
 - Transportation. Chair: Mike Rewey

- Mike wants to get another committee member. Mike wants to look into the snowplows clogging up the sidewalks.
- Missing sidewalks on a few surrounding streets and can be troublesome for people. Mike notes that the city will be looking at sidewalk access to bus transit locations.
- **Liaisons & Appointments**
 - Joint Area Campus Committee (JCAC): Appointee: Doug Carlson (no update)
 - Vilas Ink Editor: Bonnie Gruber
 - Thanks to Doug for getting all of the ads this issue. Bonnie has started to get the articles together. If you have anything to add, please let her know by Friday, February 24. Any questions or suggestions, please also let her know. Thanks also to Pat who has been very helpful.
 - Bear Mound Park. Liaison: Eileen Thompson
 - Block Captains Coordinator: Roz Woodward (no update)
 - Listserv. Co-Moderators: Brad Ricker and Ankur Desai (no update)
 - District 13 Alliance Liaison: Lee Lazar (no update)
 - VNA Website Webmaster: Leon Maurer (no update)
 - Vilas Park Liaisons: Wendy Fearnside and Ann Rivlin
 - Wendy notes that there was supposed to be a meeting to discuss the 'Swiss Cheese' park, but the neighborhood input meeting has been deferred due to better examination and coordination with the Ho-Chunk Nation regarding the native mounds surrounding the area.
 - Zoo Liaisons: Bonnie Gruber and Ann Rivlin (no update)

7:00 Alder Update (Tag Evers, District 13)

- *(move occupancy/family def'n to end)*
- Heritage Plan meeting took place this morning and focused on viewpoints in and around the watershed to protect the rustic and natural beauty of Lake Wingra should any future development take place.
- Tag notes his work in the Dark Sky, along with Ann Rivlin.
- Ann also working on the Annie Stewart Fountain. At this point, we are finalizing a survey. Discussion about moving the statue indoors because it needs to be covered in the winter. The fountain no longer works. Restoring it to its original status is cost prohibitive.
- New development proposal on the table for Jensen Auto Shop on Regent Street (corner of Vilas and Greenbush). They are going to request five stories. Looking at doing a mixed-income housing for teachers and nurses and also fixed-income housing. Tag believes it could help activate new projects to serve community. Doug asks about the 15 feet requirement for development. Tag will be looking into it. Doug also asked about the old chiropractic building. Tag will also look into this.

7:10 Discussion of Change to Occupancy Limits via Family Definition (Ald. Evers & Zoning Cmte)

- Ben notes this went in front of Plan Commission and passed unanimously as written. Two more committees to go.
- Doug submitted two comments on behalf of VNA, as well as personal comments. Doug will refile our statement to the Common Council noting this is not accomplishing our goals and we would like this examined further.
- Brad encourages the VNA to take a position as this is moving forward so quickly.
- Wendy concerned with much of the proposal. Many potential adverse impacts that need to be considered.
- Tag shared that this is likely to pass. Tag surprised that the delay wasn't seriously considered. Tag and Alder Vidaver (D5) will be meeting with staff on Friday to identify process to track

impacts. Tag less concerned about impacts in areas such as District 13. Tag is more concerned right now about how housing challenged teachers, nurses, single mom have difficulty because the rents are so high. Tag will vote no on this.

- Tag has identified four areas that he is hopeful that the city will start tracking to measure the impacts.
- Wendy feels there are two major areas- the affect on the transient impact on the neighborhood, and the party houses which are not the majority. The solution has to be broader rather than the number of people in the house.
- Bonnie wants us to talk about the neighborhood in a positive way and focus on the environment and families. One thing we should be promoting is programs to make purchase of homes affordable for those who haven't been able to buy homes in the past.
- Tag shared an example from a Greenbush Association meeting and how they would like to be more welcoming to renters. He encourages Vilas to do the same.
- Doug encourages everyone to file comments and make your voices heard.
- Discussion of assaults: perpetrator has not been caught. Tag shared safety steps with neighbors. Tag also reached out regarding updating the street lighting. Police continuing to monitor and look for suspect.

Adjourn at 7:58PM.

Future Meeting Dates: (6:30 via Zoom)

- Weds. April 12; Weds. May 24 (then fourth Weds. through October)