

VNA Council Meeting Minutes - June 2023

Wednesday, June 28, 2023

6:30 p.m. via Zoom

Term Ending 2023

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

Term Ending 2024

Bonnie Gruber
Lee Lazar - Absent
Leon Maurer - Absent
Michael Rewey

6:30 Call to Order

- Meeting Rules: Remain on mute unless talking.
- 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>
- Approval of May Meeting Minutes - approved.

6:35 Camp Cantina @ 1501 Monroe St. Alcohol License Application (at ALRC July 19)

- Co-Owner, Gabbi Mendoza (daughter of main owner of restaurant). Mother, brother, father and Gabbi running the restaurant together.
- Concept turned into reality this past year. Excited to find Stadium Lofts location.
- Mexican restaurant with a few items which have a twist on them. Brother comes to the restaurant with varied experience and excited to bring that to the meals they offer.
- Fully staffed on Badger football game day. Mike suggests also looking at the volleyball schedule as well. Thinking through hiring private security for game day.
- Family friendly type restaurant. Aware of alcohol over-consumption in the area.
- Hours will respect tenants in the building. Hours 11AM-9PM T-R, 11AM-10PM F-S + weekend brunch. Patio: the plan is to keep it open the same hours as restaurant. Patio does lock to keep people in so they aren't going back and forth. Security at top of mind. If noise becomes a problem, will respond appropriately.
- VNA recommends to the ALRC granting the alcohol license for Camp Cantina (Cocina Mendoza LLC) located at 1501 Monroe Street as applied. 4 in support, none opposed, 1 abstain (3 N/A).
- Goal to open in mid-August.

6:50 Vilas Rain Garden Upgrades w/ Phytoremediation (Corner of Adams, Mound, Campbell)

- Bri Stevens, City of Madison Intern & Grad Student – UW Madison Landscape Architecture
- Bri used to live in the neighborhood and walk by the rain garden. Offered support
- VNA Rain Garden started in 2014.
- Currently, there's a great opportunity for upgrades. Add plants that will pull contaminants of soil and a welcome center for the neighborhood.

- Agrecol-great company outside of Madison that provides sod. Idea to add prairie plants with sod. Primarily prairie plants in the rain garden with irises and other plants currently thriving to be relocated to the welcome center.
- Create a system within the garden space that will help the catching. The way it's constructed now, the pipe can get stuck. Goal to make it run efficiently and take pressure off of the city systems. Raising the drain will make a huge difference.
- Roz extends thanks to Doug for moving this forward and taking care of the garden for years.
- Priorities: A. Rain Garden/Bioretenion, B. Poplar Stand, C. Welcome Garden, D. Mound, E. Circular Deck. The circular deck that will allow 3-4 people together and perhaps even sit on chairs with table. Additional LED lighting that would be a community resource going into the fall. (see attachments to email)
- Bethany raises ideas of community engagement and art which Bri said there could be many opportunities.
- Next steps: Underground- ordering the stone that goes underneath and digging out the space where the stone will be laid. After initial digging out, a few volunteers to sculpt the elevation to ensure it's where it needs to be. Then, the bioretention, followed by the deck, art, etc.
- We will recruit volunteers to assist in the digging and Doug offers thanks to Bri for reaching out and being involved in this effort.

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

- Attended meeting with Kristi Mauer regarding the grocery store. Went through initial concept/design. Plan to meet again in September.
- Alcohol licenses- appreciate the participation of the neighborhood and grateful to ALRC for listening to the neighborhood's concerns.
- Jensen's Auto moving forward.
- Redevelopment for Welcome House moving forward.
- Meeting with owners of Hong Kong cafe tomorrow. Will encourage work-force housing opportunities as well. Priority for Tag to support nurses who work in the nearby hospitals to be able to live and walk to work.
- Traffic speeds: received an email from Captain Freedman today regarding a traffic intervention. They have plain clothes police officers at locations that resulted in 21 citations. Several incidents of people not being attentive.
- Police aware of drag racing on Monroe. Call non-emergency (608-255-2345) number if you hear anything so they can respond appropriately.
- Controversial vote: large developer looking to do luxury market-rate housing. Tag hopes to meet with the developer to provide a density bonus. To Tag, it is problematic if we are displacing individuals who have access to affordable housing with luxury housing.
- Ben asks about housing and urgency and the city will respond considering the number of people expected to move into the city in the coming years. Discussion ensues regarding [State Street development](#).
- Ben shared the [Housing Snapshot Report](#).
- The feedback Tag gets from students is that they need more affordable housing.
- Tag feels passionate about ecological and human scale impacts regarding development. Affordability will not be solved completely by building endless units. It's much bigger. Always open to feedback and criticism.

- Doug notes the common goal is for balance. Thanks to everyone for their input.

7:15 Reports & Committee Updates

- President's Report
 - Thanks to everyone for the neighborhood block party.
 - Thanks in advance to Sarah who is helping to coordinate the [4th of July Bike Party](#).
 - Alcohol licenses: Regent Mini-Mart approved by ALRC last Wednesday. There will be no single serve cans in the pantry. No liquor and keg sales as requested.
 - One and Only targeted for opening July 24/25.
 - Gallo Taco/Taverna targeting September for opening.
 - Kettle Black moving forward.
 - Lallande moving forward.
 - Doug picked up VNA archives from Betty McDonald's son. Will have a Vilas Archive at the Monroe Street Library.
 - Tomorrow is the first 'Walk With A Cop' at 7PM- first that we have had in many years. There will be a 1 mile loop. Meet in parking lot at Monroe Street Library.
- Treasurer's Report
 - Healthy financial standing.
- Standing Committees
 - Social. Chair: Bethany Nelson.
 - Volunteers for 4th of July Parade. Popsicles will be distributed at the 'cheese' playground.
 - Bethany encourages anyone to step up if they want to participate or lead projects. And a special thanks to Sarah for making so much happen.
 - And a special thanks to Bethany for everything she does for the neighborhood.
 - Zoning. Chairs: Ben Biltz and Wendy Fearnside
 - No additional updates that haven't been discussed.
 - Mike discusses the opportunities to put up canopy trees near affordable housing units on 1233 Regent Street. [Notes](#) distributed June 26.
 - Membership. Chair: Mary Clare Murphy
 - Edgewood. Chair: Craig Stanley
 - Transportation. Chair: Mike Rewey
 - Mike highlights [meeting notes](#) from the June Transportation Committee meeting. Question regarding [sharrow](#).
 - Ben shared the [Greenbush Safe Street](#) document and [Safe Streets Madison](#).
 - Planning bike event on Thursday, August 24. Likely 1900 block of Jefferson. Event primarily aimed for kids to learn how to bike safely. Mike will be sending out a save the date soon.
 - Doug notes stop at Drake and Randall will be a bus stop.
 - Mike notes they are looking at Harrison at Monroe light and issue of cars zipping by in the far right lane. City considering sign with 'look' sign.
 - Doug asks if flashing light could also make a difference. Mike likes that idea and will move forward.
 - Thanks to Mike and Sally for their ongoing support of the neighborhood.
- Liaisons & Appointments
 - Joint Area Campus Committee (JCAC) Appointee: Doug Carlson
 - University, Campus Drive, Park and parts of Johnson will be affected for the foreseeable future.
 - Vilas Ink Editor: Bonnie Gruber
 - Bonnie getting inquiries from businesses regarding advertising. Doug shares its great news and a wonderful source of revenue for VNA.
 - Bear Mound Park Liaison: Eileen Thompson (no update)

- Block Captain 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
 - Doug notes he is working with Leon. More updates to come.
- Vilas Park Liaisons: Wendy Fearnside and Ann Rivlin
 - (Via Ben): Parks Division is anticipating implementation of Vilas Park plan in 2026.
 - Planning to remove Dinosaur playground soon.
 - Setting up meeting with Tag and neighbors in July.
- Zoo Liaisons: Bonnie Gruber and Ann Rivlin
 - Bonnie notes meeting with Zoo regarding parking issues, including parking on the grass. Outcomes of meeting to be determined.
 - Bonnie concerned with parking issues. Does not want the park to be turned into a parking lot. Messaging imperative so that people know where they can park, bike, walk.
 - Bonnie shared that the liaisons have suggested repainting the current stalls so they are more visible.

Adjourn at 8:19PM.

Future Meeting Dates: (Wednesdays @6:30 via Zoom)

- Weds. July 26 (fourth Weds. through October, Nov. 15, Dec. 13)