

VNA meeting 2/28/24

Present: Doug Carlson, Wendy Fearnside, Leon Maurer, Roz Woodward, Benjamin Blitz, Bethany Nelson, Ann Rivlin, Chris Conrad, Rachel Bennett, Alder Tag Evers

Minutes from previous meeting were approved.

Reports and committee updates

President's report

- application is in for neighborhood grant to repair sign at entrance to neighborhood
- noted that Vilas block party needs new host . Has always been the Saturday after school gets out but date is flexible

Treasurer's report

- VNA website is coming due in May and will be approximately \$250-275, paid for last year by Leon Maurer, and Chris Conrad asks if he can have our debit card number to pay for it. Rachel and Chris will connect about that.
- Over half of advertising revenue for 2024 has been paid, with about \$4000 total expected

Alder's report (Alder Tag Evers)

Issue 1: Alder Myadze on Madison's east side has submitted a proposal to remove the owner-occupancy requirement for ADUs (currently it is required that the owner either reside in the main structure or in the ADU). Reportedly this is because one resident in Alder Myadze's who owns multiple properties has a son who needs a home and so he would like to build an ADU. ADUs to date have generally accommodated a family member. Tag thinks this change makes sense and has added his name as a sponsor.

Tag recommends a book called "Arbitrary Lines" which explores zoning changes

that different cities around the country are exploring, noting that many are quite random and arbitrary.

Issue 2 is re. the 2025 budget which is facing a \$27 structural deficit. He distinguishes between the operating budget and capital budget, the former being larger. Starting in the 2000s, the Wisconsin state government decreased the amount of state revenue to our shared budget, and in 2011 the rules were changed re. the levy limits, and it is difficult for municipalities to explore other ways of raising revenue (e.g. Madison can't charge sales tax). Tag notes there will be a referendum proposed to the voters to make up the deficit, but also to decide what services to cut (e.g. less frequent garbage pickup, etc.). Anticipate a public meeting to hear more about this.

Questions from meeting attendees:

- Re. ADU, Ann Rivlin asks if the ADU proposal comes because Alder Myadze has had a specific request from only one resident, or if there has been a larger number of requests. Answer: others have requested. She voices appreciation for Madison's city services.
- Re. budget, Benjamin Blitz voices concern that the city will continue to ask for a referendum every 2 years as opposed to operating realistically within the limits of its budget. Tag replies that they will look at a mixture of options including making cuts, but it will be "difficult to cut our way out of this." He also notes the new voting maps may result in Madison getting a higher percentage of shared revenue, noting that Madison is getting a smaller amount per capita than other Wisconsin municipalities.
- Re. ADU, Wendy Fearnside expresses that she doesn't understand the rationale behind the proposal. Tag expresses that the rationale is to increase housing availability, and that cities across the country are seeing this as an incremental way to increase density. Wendy notes that ADUs impacts the next door neighbors primarily, especially (at least in our neighborhood) if it's a two-story ADU, and wonders about having requirements/setbacks. Tag notes that he's noticed in the past that a resident might complain about a house being built next to them that's taller than theirs, while not recognizing that their own

house is taller than the one adjacent on the other side. He notes change is always difficult.

- Re. ADU, Chris notes disappointment that this proposal is reportedly because of one resident in Alder Myadze's district and expresses concern that, eventually, developers will take advantage of this and build more ADUs. Tag doubts this and does not foresee expansion of ADUs throughout the city in large quantities.
- Re. ADU, Doug mentions that it's possible that a specific neighborhood meeting could potentially be held in the future on this topic. Alder Evers adds that he could provide more data regarding number of ADUs in the city, etc..
- Wendy Fearnside wonders if we could have imagined 5 years ago that now, over 20% of our single family housing stock is owned by large investment corporations. Tag states this is not true in Madison.

Joint Campus report (Doug)

Brief note that the new "bendy buses" won't be able to get around traffic circle on Randall and Dayton and will block traffic briefly when picking up and dropping off

Newsletter (Doug)

Vilas newsletter going to printer and should be distributed next week or so.

Social (Bethany)

Block party needs hosts. Date can be flexible although traditionally the Saturday after school gets out

Zoo and Vilas Park liaisons (Ann and Wendy)

- Ann Rivlin notes that our parks department has taken advantage of warm weather and removed some diseased trees and invasive bushes in Vilas park. There is a meeting March 21 11am-12:30pm where they're going to discuss tree maintenance plans. All interested parties are invited. Please meet in tennis court parking lot. Wendy Fearnside adds that Sally Lehner has helped her understand that one reason for the work is that the oak trees in the Vilas park need space to grow. She notes the goal is to achieve both the goals of ridding

invasive species and giving trees the space they need to grow while also preserving the feeling that you're in a woods.

- Upcoming 3/2/24 "Freeze for Food" 5k/10k. Expect more activity
- Zoo: There will be an overhaul of the giraffe exhibit (almost fully funded) that will start in 2025. Construction bids to go out in 2024. They understand the construction will impact the neighborhood and Ann provided some ideas of how to mitigate that. She feels the giraffe exhibit will be an exciting change. Zoo reaccreditation is upcoming. Zoo lights was very successful this year. Efforts were made to encourage people to use rear entrance.
- Upcoming Zoo events: May 4 "Party for the Planet", June 22 donor event for about 1000 guests, July 27 Brewfari ticketed after hours event, Volunteer night in August (about 400 guests) , and Member night sometime this summer
- Bethany queries whether it might be possible someday for the VNA to get involved with Boo at the Zoo, such as handing out candy. Ann Rivlin will ask.

Conclusion and next steps

March 11 is the next Madison Planning Commission meeting re. ADUs. Wendy wants to know if the VNA wants to join with other neighborhood associations in making a statement. However, Doug states the nearby neighborhood associations were unaware of this until now. Timewise we would need a special zoning meeting next week if we wanted to have make a statement. We will discuss and decide on next steps.

Next scheduled VNA meeting is April 10.