

WeCAN General Membership Meeting
Minutes
October 8, 2013
Prepared by Leah Rounds

AGENDA

- 6:00 Call to order
- A message from Susan Shepherd
- Police Officer Report
- Update from Del Norte on the Avondale Apartments (going up at 14th and Irving)
- Councilwoman at large Robin Kneich – to talk about affordable housing in Denver
- Update on library fundraising by WeCAN
- Vote on change to the bylaws
- Announcements and Adjourn

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 6:05pm by Chad Reischl

Council Woman Susan Shepherd of District 1 in NW Denver

- The election is coming up, ballots will start being mailed next week
- Ballots drop-off locations are the Scheitler and Highlands Rec. Centers
- There are 4 city initiatives on the ballot, 3 are clean-up measures, and the last is a Referred type dealing with retail marijuana
- Measure 2A is a retail marijuana tax
 - The tax being asked for is only applicable to people who buy the product
 - Still don't know how big of an industry this is going to be (tourism, etc.).
 - There needs to be people in place to regulate these businesses, inspect hazardous materials, police and public safety needs may need to be increased. There needs to be money to pay these people
 - It is a 3.5% tax rate at the city level, with the option of raising it to as high as 15% without going back to the voters.
 - City and state tax rate is at 20%, roughly the same as a pack of cigarettes
 - Licensing done at the state and city level, need to cover these costs
 - Need funds for education, outreach, health programs, keeping it away from youth, etc.
- Measures 2B, 2C, and 2D are related to the operations of government, to make it leaner and more efficient – Change titles, update, simplify language, etc.
- Fall leaf drop-off at Sloan's Lake, Nov. 10, 17, and 24
- St. Anthony's demolition continues. Expect to present to the planning board and go to public meetings with their vertical plans (guidelines for vertical structures, buildings will actually look like. etc.)
- Two new interns, Maggie Thompson and Jenn Hughes
- Newsletters will be strictly electronic from now on, sign-up online

Update from Diane of Del Norte on the Avondale Apartments (going up at 14th and Irving)

- Del Norte building housing for low-income and special needs populations
- They worked with the Urban Land Conservatory to buy the land at 14th and Irving to build an apartment building (near the new library and future retail). It is right next to several bus stop and near 2 light-rail stations
- It was previously a gas station and a dry cleaner, and as such a brownfield site, and the contamination had to be cleaned up. As a non-profit they got funds to help with the clean-up. They've also added streets and put in a large underground water filtering system
- The Avondale Apartments will have 80 units, 1, 2, and 3 bedrooms. First floor will hold Sunshine Academy (will be a 4star Qualistar program) daycare center with and outside play area. 2nd floor with be new Del Norte offices
- Floors 3-7 will be apartments
- Building will be a lead platinum energy rated, now a high gold
- 2 floors of secure parking
- Amenities include a party room, fitness center, possibility of holding community classes
- 1 bedrooms will be 750sq.ft., 2 bedrooms at 1100sqft, and 3 bedrooms at 1300sq. ft. All will have a balcony
- It will be affordable housing on a sliding scale for low to moderate-income families (60% average median salary. Rent is \$950/mo for a 3 bedroom, \$890/mo for 2, and \$750 for 1.
- Expect to finish in August 2014. Will have a opening day party
- Pillar Properties will be the management
- Will rent out one floor at a time, starting with floors3, 4, and 7
- Q&A
 - Will parking be underground? Couldn't dig so parking is at ground and 2nd floor
 - What is a LEED platinum rating? It is the highest energy efficiency rating. This will lower utility costs for renters
 - What will security be like for those living there? The daycare will be very secure, they had specialists design cameras. The garage will have roll down gates. Have to have a code or call to be buzzed into the building. Del Norte offices will be on site. Two live-in managers on site.
 - What are the requirements on the applicants? What happens when they have friends and family come live with them? Renters have to sign a one-year lease and go through a background check. Managers and management right on site. There is that need to protect our assets
 - When will they start taking applications? There is a sign on-site with a phone number to apply, already taking applications
- Paid \$20 for development, \$15 million going towards construction. Received \$1 mil in stimulus funds, \$590k from CO for clean-up, and the rest was private donations (roughly \$18mil)

Michael Sapp, works as a neighborhood liaison for Mayor Hancock, representing the mayor's office at RNOs across the city

- "Cabinet in the Community" meeting coming to the neighborhood to talk about priorities in the neighborhood. Scheitler Rec Center, Sat. Nov 2, 9-11am. This is an opportunity to make connections in the NW community.

Denver Police Department update by Officer Sloan

- Shooting at Metro Manor last week, a dispute between the resident and a manager over an inspection. The tenet left and came back with a handgun, he shot the manager in the legs twice and she is in stable condition. He shot himself shortly before police arrived. This was an isolated incidence.
- There is a safety meeting at the Manor this weekend, and making sure people who own guns understand gun safety.
- Otherwise it's been quiet with no recent big events
- Q&A
 - Car chase on 16th and Conjeos? They were robbery suspect, three juveniles, ages 14-16. District 4 chased them into District 1.
 - The Elementary school was not on lock down during the Metro Manor incident. The suspect was already in "custody," so no need to have a lock-down. The scene had already been rendered safe. DPD needs to work on better communication with the schools.
 - How to get rid of the prostitutes? DPD does have undercover stings. They are not supposed to hang out on Colfax along Sheridan and Irving. How can the community help? Need to get rid of the John's; prostitutes go where the business is. Need to get the girls housing, resources, etc. Are there program available, not just jail? Have a mandatory class they are supposed to attend, but the girls make their own choices.

Councilwoman at large Robin Kneich

- Has a newsletter to sign up for, it covers bigger city updates and issues
- Robin has lived in North Denver for 2.5 years
- Worked a lot on housing and community organizing in low-income areas. There is great concern for middle and working income people, wages are staying flat while housing and inflation increases.
- Focus is on housing since it is difficult to work on the income side. Can't go in and force a wage increase at businesses
- Denver needs to attract working class jobs, but also need to have housing costs that are move inline with those wages
- Questions
 - There is a need for higher-level housing, is affordable housing distinct from this issue?
 - Are there resources for single parents? For people who don't know how to take care of their properties, are there resources available to learn?
 - What are the different levels of housing (work-force, HUD, etc.)?

- Gentrification, how is our neighborhood be affected with all the changes occurring?
- Answers
 - In Public housing, majority of people are seniors and disabled who are not working. Minority are families
 - AMI, Average Median Income, for a family of 4 is \$77k on average in Denver.
 - All low-income housing was once concentrated in one area (the old model), now there is a shift towards combining these vulnerable people (low-income, those making under \$30k) with a mix of market rate housing.
 - Work-force housing are those making about \$50k and still can't afford median housing costs in Denver (teachers, Police, etc.)
 - Have various demographics living in the same area, not have that concentration of any one. Development along Park Ave. that included market-rate housing to the mix is an example of this success.
 - How can a neighborhood help and keep the diversity? Plan ahead. Having mixed incomes is a great thing, but it doesn't happen on its own. Making new and affordable housing a part of any redevelopment plan. Need to intervene to assure new, affordable, attractive housing
 - Where to see more projects like Del Norte? Look to see where the city is involved. Need to have conversations with institutions leaving the neighborhood. Advocate for mixed incomes and the need for good design

Update on library fundraising by WeCAN – Barbara Baker

- Still collecting for the library endowment fund/paver. The fundraising party came very close to the goal of \$1500, only a few hundred short. We qualify for a \$1000 match by the DPL Friends Foundation
- Raising \$5000 would give WeCAN the naming rights to a study area. We have one more year to fundraise, do we want to go for raising \$5000 and is there anyone to help? Do another party? Any other ideas?
- This is an opportunity to do something even larger for our neighborhood and having a WeCAN presence in the library
- A dispensary along Colfax wants to start becoming more involved in the West Colfax neighborhood. The library fundraising may be something they can help with
- The board will meet next week on this issue. Possibly doing a fundraising challenge set by a WeCAN member.
- Q – Could the metal recycling program contribute funds? It would divert funds away from the newsletter. Dispensary, and other businesses, could sponsor the newsletter instead.
- There was a motion, seconded, and all voted in favor of extending library fundraising for one more year with a goal of \$5000.
- More specific information will go into the newsletter on how to help with this

Confluence Ministries is fundraising. 30 packs of apples for \$20. They will deliver for you.

New Member Drawing – Gift certificate to Lake Steam Baths

Announcements

- West Colfax Next Steps: Planning Students from UC-Denver will present their alternative plans for West Colfax on Oct 22nd at 6pm at Confluence. They would love your feedback.

Vote on change to the bylaws - All voted in favor to amend the bylaws.

Current bylaws state: “no co-president shall serve more than two consecutive terms”

Proposed amendment: “In order to encourage fresh, new and innovative leadership within the organization, WeCAN's co-presidents shall serve as a team for no more than two years. A single co-president may stay on for an additional (third) year, however, in order to train an incoming co-president.”

The WeCAN board is meeting next week. All those interested in becoming more involved are invited to come.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm

Respectfully submitted,

Leah Rounds

Secretary

West Colfax Association of Neighbors (WeCAN)