

WeCAN General Membership Meeting
Minutes
January 14, 2014
Prepared by Leah Rounds

AGENDA

- 6:00 Healthy Potluck Dinner
- 6:20 Call to order and Announcements
- 6:30 Police Officer Report
- 6:40 An update from Councilwoman Susan Shepherd
- 6:45 Presentation by Mayor Michael Hancock
- 7:15 Adjourn

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 6:20pm by Chad Reischl following a healthy potluck dinner

Announcements

- **Celebrate West Colfax 2014** – Friday Jan 17 from 4-7pm: Join WeCAN, the West Colfax BID and Sloan's Lake Citizens' Group for a happy hour party on the 17th floor of Metro Village Apartments. (1523 Quitman) Free food, beer, wine and live music provided.
- **Open House regarding St Anthony's:** Wed, Jan 22rd, 5:30-7:30pm at Confluence Ministries: EFG will be showcasing developers and their projects/renderings, drop by for a few minutes and take a look. Cameron from EFG thanked everyone for participating in past meetings. Now moving into specific plans, and there are three developers already signed on and have concept plans. There will be retail along Colfax and market rate apartments. There is a design committee and they could use people to serve on this.
- **Low-Cost Trees available for West Colfax Residents:** Denver Digs Trees is once again offering street and yard trees for Denver residents. Trees are only \$10 for West Colfax residents (a \$100+ savings). Applications are available at www.theparkpeople.org and the deadline to apply is the Feb 15th. – **If you'd like to help spread the word**, a group of volunteers will be canvassing the neighborhood on Saturday Jan 18th from 9-noon. They'll meet in front of Colfax elementary – contact Chad at chad.reischl@wecanddenver.org if you'd like to attend, a small breakfast will be provided.
- **WeCAN's Board Meeting:** Will be on January 29th at 6pm downstairs, all are invited to attend
- **WeCAN's next General Meeting:** will be on Feb 11, at 6:00 pm. The meeting will be a kick-off for Denver's new Sustainable Neighborhoods Program's that WeCAN was chosen to participate in.

- **Recycle metal** to support WeCAN: call Bill Baker, 303-946-8230 or email bigbuddy2@comcast.net
- **“Box Tops for Education”** program, bring your box tops to WeCAN meetings and Leah Rounds will take them to the local schools to support their programs.
- There is a raffle tonight, with all proceeds going to the new library endowment fund. \$3k has already been raised with a goal of \$5k so WeCAN can sponsor a reading room.

Denver Police Department update by Officer Reiner

- Pamphlets were made available to business owners on how to best protect your business at night. There has been a recent pattern of business burglaries at night. 3 people were apprehended in connection with a robbery last night.
- “Puffers” are still being stolen. The weather is colder and there is a temptation to leave cars running, but this makes them more prone to auto theft.
- Q&A
 - Were there gunshots around 14th and Tennyson last night? Around 10:30 there were gunshots being reported from Sun Valley to Sheridan
 - Comments on the hostage situation at 7-11 this week. Much of the information has already been out on the news. It is an on-going active investigation.

Council Woman Susan Shepherd of District 1 in NW Denver

- Congratulations on being chosen as one of the “Sustainable Neighborhoods”
- Papers on the basic rules and regulations of marijuana sales and consumption from last month’s meeting were handed out. Be aware that the rules in Denver may be different than the surrounding areas.
- In regards to the re-development of St. Anthony’s
 - Thanks for the support at December’s GDP meeting. This will be a positive uplift and catalytic opportunity for the neighborhood.
 - There is a lot of negativity coming from other areas of town on this re-development. These people have not attended EFG’s meetings or been a part of this process. A petition has been circulating to stop this development, without the consideration of the needs of this neighborhood
 - Zoning discussions will take place when specific plans are brought up. There will be no preemptive rules set on buildings before specific plans are in place on residential, commercial, etc.

- Encourage those against this plan to reach out to WeCAN. Everyone deserves to be heard, and there will be a full and fair discussion when the zoning comes up

Mayor Michael Hancock

- Thank you to Susan Shepherd for her work on council
- Introduced a few members of his team: Michael Sapp, Neighborhood Liaison; Rachel Chapparo, Deputy Director of Community Affairs; Rocky Piro, Manager of Community Planning and Development; Jerry Tinianow, Chief Sustainability Officer; Steve Ferris, Director of Development Services
- The state of the city of Denver is strong and growing. Unemployment has dropped to 6.2%, below what it was pre-recession of 2008. 1000 new companies have opened up. Denver is considered one of the top five cities for employment. Fiscally sound. Able to add new policemen and firefighters last year (there had been no new hires for the 5 years previous to that).
- Last spring issued “My Denver Card” to kids, which give them access to rec centers, pools, the library, and more services to be added. 90k kids are eligible, and after 8 months of the program, 37k kids had signed up. There was a lower incidence of youth crime last summer, and 2.5k teens went to work this past summer.
- Denver has an opportunity to be a bigger part of the global stage. DIA is a big part of this, and non-stop international flights now go to Tokyo, Mexico City, and more. This will open doors for businesses and allow Denver to connect and gain opportunities.
- Q&A
 - The brand of Denver is very strong and positive right now. With the Broncos and all the other positive things going on in Denver, the news has focused on the legalization of marijuana. Has there been anything positive come out of the marijuana publicity? It is still too early to tell. Very proud of the way city employees have handled this and made it a smooth process. Businesses have been working closely with the city to ensure it goes smoothly.
 - EFG has done a great job confirming with the neighborhood about the process of re-development at St. Anthony’s. There have been reoccurring complaints about density and green space from outside neighbors. Comments? This issue has been brought to our attention from both sides. Susan has done a good job talking to everyone involved. There is going to be challenges/strong opinions as this project goes along. This is a catalytic opportunity for the neighborhood and the Mayor supports it. Rocky Piro’s comments on this – He grew up in district 1 and has worked hard to get developers and the neighborhood on the same page. Real proposals still need to come in.

- There will be high-end residents at St. Anthony's, will there be mixed-use too? A city is richer, more vibrant, and healthier when it has a diversity of housing. Mixed income is a priority for this neighborhood.
- Is there an estimate on jobs created for this project? Will have to get the economic forecast.
- Will there be any medical services added to the neighborhood? Denver Health is focused on providing medical care to this area. Castro is being redeveloped to serve this purpose and another medical building is being built in West Denver.
- How can we increase ratings of schools/improve school performance? Mayor's office works closely with DPS, Superintendent Boesberg, and school board to attract programs. There has been economic and social analysis of the area. There is a need to work with DPS to turn challenging schools around. There are charter schools interested in the area.

Additional Announcements

- Dan Shah of the West Colfax BID has fliers about this Friday's party. "Discover West Colfax" fliers also available with QR code.
- Ben Stetler (former WeCAN Co-President) shared his thoughts on the negativity surrounding the St. Anthony's redevelopment, as he has been very involved in the process. He sees this as a catalytic opportunity for the neighborhood. Challengers to the project asking for immediate rezoning before it is necessary. Ben is troubled by the tactics and approaches being used by this small opposition group. There should be a full debate around the facts, and the opposition group has not been honest when presenting its side. The debate should continue, but there needs to be education on the facts, and not just fear tactics.
- The raffle drawing raised over \$230 for the library endowment fund.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15pm

Respectfully submitted,

Leah Rounds

Secretary

West Colfax Association of Neighbors (WeCAN)