

Grove Place Association Meeting Minutes – February 17, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 4:10pm by President Kimberly Russell who introduced the current officers and welcomed all.

She then reminded all that our post-meeting social time will be at the recently-opened Peppapot Jamaican restaurant a couple blocks away on Main St. They have just joined, and this is part of our effort to support local businesses. It also recognizes that, as our association grows, there are fewer members who have the space to host an event for 50 or more people, not to mention the expense.

Treasurer Rick McGrath reports that we have \$5,646.36 in our bank account. A new budget will be approved at the next Board meeting.

Meghan DeFranco reported on the initial meeting of the Membership Committee at Charlotte Square community room on February 6, with Carlos Mercado, Chris Carretta, and Scott Zorn. Among near-term goals are ensuring the database is current and accurate; creation of an online Neighborhood Directory – perhaps with photos of residents; and a map of the neighborhood showing who lives where. All this is to improve communication and the cohesiveness of all who call Grove Place and the East End home.

V.P. Bob Keck reported on the proposed By Laws revisions that were distributed to all members by email prior to the meeting. Two major changes are defining a quorum as 25% of voting members present instead of the current 50% of all voting members; and providing for GPA to take an official public stance on an issue with a 90% vote of voting members present. As we had 30 members present, there was not a quorum present to take action. The proposal will be advanced again at our March 17th meeting with an option for members unable to attend to give their proxy to an association officer.

Suzanne Mayer informed us that the next C4 Meeting will be Meet City Council held at Grace Rd. Church at 5pm on Wednesday, March 20th. C-4 is a coalition of downtown neighborhood groups seeking to improve the quality of life in Downtown Rochester and to understand those issues that affect our lives. Coming together allows us to have greater influence.

Jim Martin reported on various projects in and around the neighborhood.

The Veterinary office remodeling at University and Gibbs is nearing completion.

John Nolan is working on his building across the street at the NE corner of Gibbs and University.

Plans are moving along for the improvements to the parking lot at 183 University

Nothing new on the “Herman Munster” building at 146 University

Steve Smith updated the group on 58 University. He, Suzanne, Bob, and Carlos met with Zina Lagonegro, Director of Zoning for the City of Rochester. They discussed the city process for review of development proposals in the Grove Place District with questions on how variations

from design guidelines are reviewed and or approved. The application for 58 University remains incomplete. Dan Dwyer was encouraged to continue dialogue with GPA members. We discussed the need for the GPA Development committee to be pro-active in asking for regular updates on developments in our neighborhood as the city does not always have an obligation to notify GPA.

No new report from the Arts Committee.

Kim spoke about the “Scenes on Scio” concept for the vacant lot at 62-44 Scio St. which could be a stop on a future Center City Arts Trail. This proposal requests that the City license the land to a group who would maintain and program it. It was 1 of 3 proposals received by the city. A discussion was held regarding possible roles GPA could play working collaboratively with a group of neighborhood stakeholders.

Nancy Martin spoke about the Book Club’s current discussion on “Pandemic” a book about the Great [Spanish] Influenza of 1918-1919. They meet again this Tuesday at 7pm.

Open Forum Segment

Discussion was had about the pattern of escalation between Chris Kowalsky, Executive Director of the Downstairs Cabaret, and neighbors over parking and snow removal. Concern was also raised about the Grove Place Association’s reputation in the community in light of the well publicized Herb Smith (RPO) incident. Many are concerned that his behavior is becoming less rational and more dangerous to those around him. GPA will reach out to our Neighborhood Service Center to discuss potential action to address concerns.

The meeting adjourned at 5:25pm, and a grand social hour was had at Peppapot with its owner and newest GPA member, Marlene.

Respectfully submitted,

Carlos H. Mercado, Jr.
Secretary