

Kim Russell's Remarks at GPA Annual Meeting
May 3, 2020

It has been a great honor to lead GPA over last 2 years – and what an unpredictable, wild ride it's been.

My goal for GPA from the outset was to connect the established, long term residents living in Grove Place with the relative “newbies” in Grove Place and the East End and BUILD COMMUNITY together.

We've had meetings, hosted parties, offered opportunities for civic engagement and CONNECTED with each other.

Over the last year we successfully challenged the proposed development at 58 University as out of character with our neighborhood design standards and the unique character that makes Grove Place so special –

We were successful because we all worked together – we clearly demonstrated our ability to **show up, speak up and advocate** to protect what all of us have worked years to build – a neighborhood filled with people who care for each other and committed to always improving city living.

We hope that more was accomplished than stopping the development at 58 University. We have shared with the city representatives the problems we identified with process and engagement and ideas on how we can do this better together moving forward. We want to be viewed as a partner and resource, not as the enemy.

We then faced another unexpected challenge – Covid 19. This deadly, unpredictable virus has worked to disconnect us as we've been forced to shelter in place. As an organization, we needed to figure out new ways to communicate and connect. We are all at risk – but we have many in our area that are especially vulnerable that we have an obligation to all we can to protect them from the disease.

Initially, our goal was to make sure all of you were OK and had the help that you needed.

We've been there for each other in so many ways and I know we will continue to watch out for each other.

As an organization, we want to stay informed and connect with each other. For awhile at least, we'll need to do that through technology and through masked conversations appropriately distanced.

We're learning as we go and want to hear your ideas on how we can continue to improve.

I look forward to the day when we can all be back together again. But there's 1 thing for sure in my heart – that this pernicious virus won't stop us from building an even stronger community together.