

## **MINUTES of the GPA Member Meeting of September 13, 2020 at 4PM via Zoom.**

**The topic for this meeting:** Mitigating the impact of the Planned Parenthood protests on the quality of life in the Grove Place neighborhood. Guest presenters/speakers included:

Alex Yudelson, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office, City of Rochester

Tim Curtin, Corporation Council, City of Rochester

[Michelle Casey, Planned Parenthood was invited, but was not present.]

### **Agenda:**

Call to order at 4:03pm. Attendance taken via a Zoom report.

Recording secretary's report dated May 3, 2020 (Annual Meeting). Copy of the minutes are on the GPA website.

### **Planned Parenthood presentations and discussion**

The GPA members who reside on University Ave. across from and near Planned Parenthood raised their many ongoing concerns and complaints about the actions of picketers who come from the suburbs to protest on University Ave. across the street from Planned Parenthood from 7:30am to 4:30pm every day. Some protesters block their driveways, stand in the street blocking traffic, paint in the street, and encourage drivers to honk their horns as they pass. Protesters have learned members' license plate numbers and their patterns of comings and goings. Members have contacted the police numerous times to register complaints. The police has refused to accept video proof of the protesters' behavior and have not been effective in enforcing ordinances prohibiting people from standing in the street and/or honking, and enforcing the consent decree injunction requiring protesters to remain in specific allowed areas near Planned Parenthood.

In addition, the protesters are not complying with Covid-19 state laws – not wearing masks and not social distancing. The residents do not feel safe in their own homes.

Residents have sought these solutions:

- Contacted Katherine Boder, Esq. of the ACLU NYS and Planned Parenthood state officials for help. Were advised to hire their own attorneys.
- Contacted City Neighborhood Associations. (There is no Neighborhood Service Center in the area at issue).
- Requested City to place no honking signs on University Ave. (Tim Curtin said that these are ordered and should be installed soon).
- Contacted the local District Attorney requesting prosecution of violators of the City ordinances. The D.A. refused.

Alex Yudelson advised that there is a balance to be made between protesters' First Amendment rights to free speech and the residents' rights to privacy and the quiet enjoyment of their property. The content and time of protesters speech cannot be controlled. He suggested mediation between the protesters, Planned Parenthood, ACLU and the neighbors.

Tim Curtin advised that the City has already done a review of ordinances prohibiting protests in residential neighborhoods and will direct his staff to update that review. He asked for written comments and will take our comments to the City to outline what protesters can and cannot do. He is aware of the groups involved in these protests.

Next Steps: the residents will compile a list of complaints/proofs of the actions of the protesters and their concerns and forward them to Alex and Tim.

(Note: the day after this meeting, the Mayor suspended Tim Curtin for 30 days relating to his involvement in the Daniel Prude investigation. Presumably his staff can take over these issues).

### **Treasurer's report**

Rick McGrath, Treasurer, reported as follows: We started May 1, 2020 with a balance of \$4,181. We took in \$2,295. We spent \$1046.00 as follows: \$510 for insurance, \$486 for plantings and \$50 for a memorial contribution for Carlos Mercado, who passed away on August 30, 2020. We also took in 54 individual memberships and 2 business memberships.

### **Committee reports**

Beautification Committee – Pam DiPaola reported that plantings were in during June. One pot was replaced at 6 Grove Place. We plan to store pots over the winter. We are trying to obtain trash bins for the neighborhood.

Development Committee – Richard Rosen reported that the Committee met on Zoom to discuss these topics: (1) The proposed townhouse project on the open lot facing Matthews and Scio Streets between City Blue and Speedy Cleaners. While we would have preferred to see the lot remain as open space, the project met the required guidelines and so we did not submit comments to the City. (2) Bob DiPaola suggested that GPA monitor the North Inner Loop fill project. See discussion in Open Forum.

Historical Committee – There are no members on this Committee. Its purpose is to keep the records of GPA meetings and activity up to date and organized.

Membership Committee – This Committee has several members but as yet no Chairperson.

Nominating Committee – No report.

Public Safety and Code Compliance – Pam DiPaola is the sole member. The first Community Information Meeting is scheduled for Wed. Sept. 16<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm at the Public Safety Building. The location may change due to recent events. The City Council has proposed to repeal their previously authorized funding of the police department to revisit that issue in light of the Daniel Prude and Black Lives Matter protests.

**Old business** - None

## **New business**

1. Bob DiPaola submitted a proposed resolution that would allow GPA members to have the authority to speak on behalf of GPA (as opposed to individually) concerning protests in the neighborhood, without going to the Executive Committee every time members have to communicate with the County and City government. Discussion ensued. The Executive Committee cannot delegate the requested authority. Kim Russell proposed alternative wording.

The following RESOLUTION was passed:

*Resolved, that the Executive Committee of the GPA is authorized to advocate for and express its support of all efforts that would improve the quality of life for those living in the Grove Place area related to any protests occurring in our neighborhood.*

Motion made by Kim Russell. Seconded by Pam DiPaola.

Ayes: 12      Nays: none

2. Re: The Arc of Monroe County/Conifer project proposal to be located at the corner of Union & University Avenues. The proposed building (currently called "U & U") will be built at the corner of Alexander St. and Union St. Since the project is within the NOTA area, we have no standing to comment. Judy Loeb provided some details of the project due to the interest of members.

## **Open forum**

Discussion ensued concerning GPA's involvement in the North Inner Loop Project. This will add 21 acres of new land/development in this area. The City planners view this project as a transportation project. We want the City to consider design criteria and the social impact of any new development. We will need to develop comments on these issues.

Hinge Neighborhood – There is an RFP for possible zoning changes in this area. The City is moving to eliminate R1 zoning. (GPA is in a C1 zone).

Adjournment at 5:42pm

Note: The minutes for GPA meetings are posted on the GPA website at:

<http://www.groveplace.org/meeting-minutes.html>

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Loeb, Secretary