

GROVE PLACE ASSOCIATION - GENERAL MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 26, 2023

CHARLOTTE SQUARE COMMUNITY ROOM (and by Zoom)

Attending Online – Tom Fink, John Goldman, Suzanne Mayer, Scott and Kathy Frame.

Guest speaker: Chris West, owner of the former Downstairs Cabaret property.

Treasurer Update: \$11,189.56 total balance.

City Planters - Pam DiPaola reported that there's been no progress with the City purchasing new planters.

Banners subcommittee – Now the City Committee is called Signage Committee. March 3rd is next meeting. There are 15 different neighborhoods requesting banners.

Membership Update: We have a few potential new members pending: Alex Lesser at CS; Dex and Trish at 15 Selden; a Richmond bartender named Trevor (boyfriend of CS resident with the pig). Also Daniel, a Richmond busser who rents on Gibbs. Somebody at CS with a dog named Ophelia. Adam Beirton (Chick'NOut owner). Gavin Rice, ESM sophomore, who is very interested in history. Interested neighbors need much more information and outreach. Get membership applications to them.

Block F – Richard reported the status of the open parking lot across Eastman Theater (where they put the Speigel Tent for the Fringe Festival). In 2011 the City sold the parcel to the University of Rochester with the caveat that they had 5 years to develop it, and if they failed, the City had the right to revert ownership back to the City. The City has never enforced that clause. So UR has owned it for almost 13 years. UR has never developed it during the 5 year period the City originally gave to them. There were representations from the City that the neighbors abutting Block F would have the opportunity to give input. Nothing has happened.

55 Windsor St. Mark Siwiec owns this and the row houses on Gibbs St. and a dirt parking lot on 51-55 Windsor St. Plows push excess snow against privacy fences and has damaged them. The plow also puts snow on sidewalks making pedestrian passage difficult. Many GPA neighbors have sent concerned emails and photos to the City. They plan to make a presentation on Wed. March 1st before the Preservation Board. The Chair of the Preservation Board is one of our GPA area neighbors. Suzanne said that parking lots will not be included in the new zoning plans. So should we advocate for improvement before the new zoning is finalized?

Bob Keck commented: Mark wants to legalize his side-lot parking property. It's not conforming, but still legal, no matter what new zoning is put in place. But Mark wants to merge the two lots he owns. The landscaping changes require Preservation Board approval. Mark wants to get a variance from the Zoning Board to remove the fence. GPA could ask for clarification on what's going on, and what consequences will new zoning laws have on the side parking lot. Bob opines that we should make sure this lot will not be made permanently legal. The ideal would be to advocate for a Special Permit. That's a better option since they can be for a limited time period vs. a permanent variance.

URMC Wellness Center Subcommittee. Update by Bob DiPaola. He has had discussions with UR representatives to express our concern about the traffic congestion and noise on Windsor St. which will be impacted by the UR's plans for the Wellness Center. There has been a proposal to build a bridge from the East End Garage and the UR Wellness Center property. Many are concerned that a bridge is not conducive to a welcoming pedestrian.

RDCC Walkabouts and BID updates. Sally Millick reported:

RDCC is sponsoring walkabouts. Sally, Mark and Judy attended the first meeting and walked East Main St. to University to the Charlotte Square Pocket Park. Issues – no place to lock bikes, sit on benches, no trash receptacles.

Re: BID – each neighborhood has to decide whether to accept the concept and let the City know our concerns. The BID tax will be a tax on both commercial businesses and residents in the City BID district.

Greenlight Internet Access: Farran Briggs called Greenlight to learn if they could expand to the Historic Grove Place neighborhood. She was told that they have abandoned any expansion because of the City is not entertaining putting cables across or under E. Main St. So it's not a neighborhood advocacy effort that will make the decision. Richard will contact the Dir. Of Public Works to see if this can be resolved.

Update on Protestors on University at Planned Parenthood. Sandy Mayer reported that the past Saturday there were many people, singing with loud speakers, signs abutting the PP building. All of this is against the City ordinance. Sandy's group is still trying to get these protesters to the mediation table.

Charlotte/Union/Pitkin greenspace: The City has given further assurance of starting this Spring to create a green space.

270 on East "ARTWALK" on Union St frontage - still pending. The City has been made aware of Christa's failure to follow through on that part of its project.

New GPA Brochures: We have concluded that GPA should not spend money on a new brochure. Word of mouth is more important and efficient. We have asked if the Membership application can be posted on the GPA the website.

Presentation by Chris West:

20 Windsor St. Chris West is studying various residential alternatives for the former Downstairs Cabaret site. He first proposed 8 apartments but he doesn't like the first concept design. Chris wants entrances both on Windsor St. and Carpenter Alley. He will present at a meeting at the City Preservation Board on March 1st and hopes to start up in April.

540 East Main St. Chris wants to develop this parcel on corner of Scio St. and East Main St. behind the Peppa Pot restaurant as a music festival space with a temporary tent and stage for a 2 year trial period. The stage would face University and the school property. He'd like to get the City to close down Scio and University when there's an event. He has a producer friend who might help create a music studio in the basement for students and small groups. The parcel is not in a preservation district so the main concern will be noise violations and congestion.

New Business. Pam DiPaola has proposed that GPA provides funds to plant a tree in memory of Miriam Shapiro, a long time and loved resident of Grove Place. Sandy Shapiro may choose its location.

The next GPA General Members meeting is Sunday, March 26th at 4pm at the Charlotte Square Community Room. David Riley will be our guest speaker and will provide an update on the Inner Loop North project.

Meeting adjourned at 5:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Loeb, Secretary