

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING - OCTOBER 29, 2023 4PM

CHARLOTTE SQUARE COMMUNITY ROOM

AGENDA

After this meeting, we will have a dedication for the tree planting donated by Sandy Shapiro in memory of his wife, Miriam Shapiro, a long time dedicated member. A plaque will be mounted at 13 Selden Street. Bob and Pam DiPaola will host a gathering for members after the dedication at their home at 65 Windsor St. (corner of University Ave).

Guest Speaker: Charles Reeves, Director of the Southwest Neighborhood Service Center (SWNSC). For general NSC information, see <https://www.cityofrochester.gov/nsc/>

Charles distributed two handouts (“NSC Services, Responsibilities and Operations, October 2023” (see separate document); and a list of available city maps you can find at: www.cityofrochester.gov/nbdmaps.

The Fall City leaf pickup for SW will be November 20th-24th.

The SWNSC meets once a month. They get lots of complaint calls – noise ordinance violations; dogs barking; garbage problems; intense lighting at Charlotte St. and S. Union across from Charlotte on the Loop (still not in accordance with City Code).

Charles said the City is trying to address placement options for the homeless, due to persistent issues with the homeless population (panhandling, sleeping on private property, urinating etc.) Unfortunately, many people still want to remain homeless and refuse help.

Banners for Grove Place – The Dormitory Authority has funded \$50,000 grants for, among other things, City neighborhood banners. The life expectancy of banners is usually 10 years. The City wants to install more permanent banners with metal bands. See photo of the new metal Genesee Riverway Trail banner. Charles said that GPA could contribute some of our funds in addition to the City’s grant funds, so we can get the banner design we desire. Richard will ask Daisy Algarin, NSC Director.

The SWNSC handles problems with zombie homes. Roz mentioned a dilapidated home on East Main St. with unkempt landscaping; she has complained for over 2 years. Problems with broken windows blocked up.

Charles said Dan Rivera is responsible for contacting the owners to make repairs immediately. Dan Rivera has been a regular inspector for our area. Brett Stephenson was recently hired as a new SWNSC code enforcement inspector.

Questions arose concerning the building on University Ave. next to the vacant lot that the Veterans Outreach Center (VOC) owns, and the rules concerning when the City requires permits for certain actions on such parcels. Charles said that service businesses that only do take-out meals do not need a permit. A permit is required to create gardens on vacant parcels and to sponsor entertainment events.

Suzanne suggested that Charles, Dan Rivera and the new enforcement officer join us in a walk-about of the problem areas.

Problems on Windsor St. – large tractors that make deliveries to the Eastman School Dorm are blocking traffic, destroying trees and grasses. Charles said the State DOT needs to be contacted to help with these issues. Scott Frame’s committee is handling this; we will wait for their assessment before pursuing the state DOT.

Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Issues.

Drivers use city streets as a speedway, especially University Ave. between Chestnut and Scio, and all over East Main St. Drivers create a racing route in this area. They are violating the City noise ordinances, and present a danger to pedestrians and other drivers. Charles said that Commissioner Rich Perrin, Director of Public Works, is aware of this misuse of these streets. This issue must be addressed with the Inner Loop North infill planning. [Note: Your Secretary has discussed this issue with local police officers: they cannot do a high speed chase to catch these violators. And even if they could catch them, they will only get a fine and then go somewhere else and continue to misuse the streets.]

The City has contracted with a company that provides rental electric scooters and bikes. People use their smartphones to pay for their use. They are allowed by the company to drop them off almost anywhere. The company fails to collect them on a regular basis. Charles is aware of this problem and changes must be made in how the items are collected. Also – regular cyclists are using the sidewalks and electric wheelchairs are being used in the streets. City should educate the public on the safety rules.

Downtown Policing – We noted that the police department office has moved from downtown. A special Unit for Violence Prevention is rumored to be moved into that space.

We need a separate Downtown neighborhood service center because center city is growing.

BUSINESS MEETING

Treasurer’s Report- Rick McGrath said that the balance in the GPA account is \$11,086.40. There are now 45 individual members and 5 business members. Three new members joined and paid Rick today. Individuals pay \$30 each and businesses pay \$35.

Membership Update- Roz Goldman is new Chair. Reminder: Our fiscal year starts in May and ends in April. Voting members are only those people who are up to date with their dues payments. Annual dues payments are requested after the April Annual Meeting. The dues funds help with flower pots, banners, and potentially may fund future GPA social events.

Public and Neighborhood Safety - Pam DiPaola provided the following report: Safety Committee Meeting PCIC. In Jan-Feb. 2023 there were 300 cars stolen. Smash and grab is a youth crime incited by TikTok. The County Executive, Sheriffs Department and the RPD have started new program: when offenders are caught, they are immediately sent to Rush Youth Detention. They receive the social services each particular individual needs help with. In September 2023 there were only 36 thefts, which proves this program is working.

Note: The PCIC is also working with Hyundai and Kia. Certain models of these cars do not have theft immobilizers, whereby computer chips in car keys and steering columns must recognize each other before the engines will start. Kia manufacturers started to correct this problem earlier this year.

Pam also asked the Chief of Police to come to our meetings to hear our concerns.

UR Behavior Unit Update –A meeting with UR was held. Scott Frame, Rick Massie and Bob DiPaola attended. The UR wants to become a GPA member. A membership form was provided after the meeting.

Carlson YMCA Update – Suzanne wrote to Charles Reeves in August about the YMCA property. They are not taking care of the gardens and there's garbage accumulating on the property by the playground. There's a raised curb that presents a safety hazard. Charles replied that the Y is still responsible for upkeep of the facility while there's a pending/potential sale to the University of Rochester. He will contact the Y's supervisor for remedial action.

Planned Parenthood Protestors – The City eradicated the buffer zone around PP. Now the protestors are in the PP driveway. Sandy Mayer, Sandy Wright and Bob DiPaola have been working on this nuisance for two years. Not much police enforcement except for one policewoman who is there every week.

The East End Green - The City is constructing another concrete foundation at the corner of Charlotte St. and Pitkin St. that is larger than the three other seating areas on S. Union St. We anticipate that the City may install benches for conversational areas, or a large picnic table. Please continue to use this green space.

Carpenter Alley – Mark Wilson reported on a conversation with Chris West about 20 Windsor St. and 540 E. Main St.

20 Windsor St. (the former Downstairs Cabaret) - Chris W. told Mark that he is still pursuing with the City approval of his proposed eight 2BR apartments at the building formerly used by Downstairs Cabaret on 20 Windsor St. backing up to Carpenter Alley. His façade permit application has been submitted. He obtained a permit for a dumpster permit for Oct 1 and it arrived on Oct. 6th.

Work will begin soon for conversion into apartments. Information was received from Robin (a resident at 38 Windsor, who drives the Alley daily): it looks like the plywood "door" in the Alley behind 20 Windsor Alley had been tampered with and/or someone is getting inside. Subsequently, it was found that the plywood door was not securely attached. That has been fixed.

540 E. Main: While Chris West purchased the building about 90 days ago, and progress is delayed and planning is on hold because the prior owner, Chris Kowalsky, hasn't moved his belongings from the property.

Chris Kowalski had 90 days after the closing to vacate all his stuff. The 90 days expired on October 5th. Chris West believes it is unlikely the space will be vacated. As of October 7th Mark has not seen action at 540 E. Main.

Regarding the neighborhood's questions and complaints about very loud music at the premises: Chris W. invited four bands to practice on the rooftop in September. Chris W. said there are no plans for future practices. (As mentioned at the meeting, real entertainment activities require a permit.)

Parking Lot at corner of Scio St. and Main St abutting Carpenter Alley- Chris West was under contract to purchase the plot from Chris Kowalski, the current owner. There are issues and questions being worked out. Then Chris Kowalski told Chris West that “[the RCSD] School has first rights, so our deal is off”. Chris West got his money back and his deal with Chris Kowalski fell through. Can we obtain definitive information that RCSD is in fact buying that property? Do we have any contacts as to the parking lot from the RCSD side?

Holiday Party –On Sunday, December 10th in the early evening we will have a celebration of an all-holiday party. Usually a dinner. Part catered, part bring a dish to pass. More information forthcoming.

Possible Guests for future meetings -

Invite police officers assigned to the SWNSC for Q & A.

Invite Ernest Lamour, the new President/CEO of the Carlson YMCA (in place for 6 months).

Invite Linda Kingsley, Corporate Counsel for the City (who will leave the position at the end of this year). Topics: Neighborhood Disturbances; changing the code that exempts religious free speech (which allows the protestors at Planned Parenthood on University Ave. to continue to disrupt the neighborhood).

Motion to Adjourn – by Richard, seconded by Suzanne.

Meeting adjourned at 5:15 pm.

Respectively submitted,

Judy Loeb, Secretary