



Prospect Park Board of Directors Virtual Meeting: December 9th, 2024, 6:30pm

Board Members Present: Steve Brackett, David Frank, Ian Goridisher, Nico Vasilopoulos, Eric Amel, Britt Howell, Jeff Barnhart, Jerry Stein, and Lynn Von Korff

Community Members: Susan Larson-Fleming, Eric Lind, Mary Britton, Joe Ring, and Vera Marshall

Guests: Alexandra Deyoe, MN Daily Reporter

Call Committee Meeting to Order: *Quorum*. Meeting Called to order by Eric Amel at 6:32pm

Announcements/Updates: none

Organizational Business:

2025 University of Minnesota Good Neighbor Fund applications (Documents 1, 2, and 3).

Motions to approve the three applications were presented one at a time as follows:

- **Motion to approve Jackson Family Project application:** Jerry Stein presented the Jackson Family Project’s GNF application. The Jackson Family Project will use \$9,600 for educating and involving the wider community through the life and writing of Helen Jackson’s son Roger Wilkins. Nico was excited about the project, adding it will make a terrific engagement project and attract U students. David and Lynn had read the book and highly recommend it. ***Approval: The Jackson Family Project 2025 GNF proposal was approved without abstentions.***
- **Motion to approve Environment Committee Tree Planting:** Mary Britton presented a PPA Environment Committee GNF application for \$800 for tree planting in front of Venture Academy on University Ave at 27th. She obtained approval from the city for the location of the plantings as well as the type of vegetation (Goldfire Ginko *Ginko Blob*) and will get some help from students to implement the project. Mary withdrew the motion after learning from Eric Lind that Metro Transit will construct an e-line stop at the planting location this summer, which might disturb the freshly planted foliage. Lynn suggested Environment could apply for a Prospect Park Legacy Fund grant this spring. PPCLF funds grant of this size (up to \$1,500) and their project completion deadline might accommodate planting trees after construction. ***Motion withdrawn.***
- ***The Tower Hill Committee withdrew their motion to approve a project to remove Buckthorn from Tower Hill Park to explore working in partnership with the Prospect Park Garden Club.***

Motion to Create a Subcommittee to hire a Tenant’s Rights Community Organizer. Lynn presented the motion: the board approved the new position in 2023, and funds were approved in our 2024 budget, but position has not been filled yet. Funds used for this project and position are restricted by NCR contract as part of PPA’s Tenants’ Rights NRP strategy. (The hiring process was delayed by

the merger exploration in 2023-2024, which involved significant volunteer time, including organizing extensive community outreach.) In past years board and community members led our tenant's rights project but given fewer resources we need a community organizer to fill this role. Lynn volunteered to Chair the search subcommittee with the task of publishing the job application, recruiting candidates, conducting interviews, and hiring a candidate. Jeff Barnhart would like the subcommittee to emphasize dialogue between the future Tenant's Rights Community Organizer and local business owners as well as tenants. Lynn clarified that the new hire will work with volunteers (PPA members)—the position is designed to organize area renters who will determine their own project priorities. The primary focus of the position is to give support to renters, so they have someone to speak to and provide resources.

Proposed Motion: Eric Amel called the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Committee Reports

Environment Committee: Mary Britton spoke about 25% by '25's significant success reducing fossil fuel consumption in the neighborhood and what's in store for next year. She spoke about changing the infrastructure of the homes in Prospect Park. There have been some great steps forward in the neighborhood. Next year Mary will host more workshops on tax credits and benefits for homeowners in the neighborhood. More details can be found in Environment Committee meeting minutes.

Tower Hill Park Committee: Joe Ring spoke regarding the City of Minneapolis's developments on the construction project on the tower. Details can be found in Tower Hill Committee minutes. There has been a myriad of delays and recently the city's forensic engineer discovered the platform is structurally unsound and will need repair, in addition to the steps. Joe also spoke about Buckthorn infestation upon the park. The Committee was developing a plan to work with Great River Greening (a local organization). Prospect Park Garden Club holds stewardship through the parks department to remove Buckthorn, so Joe wants PPA to work collaboratively with the garden club. Very Marshall said the garden club would be happy to help support the project and work with the PPA Tower Hill Committee, and there is likely a temporary communication delay between the two groups. They will work together to plan next steps.

Transportation and Safety Committee: Eric Lind reported efforts to hear community concerns and ideas since April. He feels this committee is a beneficial as a conduit to direct community members to resources for their grievances. He has also been in touch with a Seward Community Group that would like to collaborate. There have been complaints regarding parking on East River Parkway and East River Terrace, and safety concerns that come with the high traffic volume in that area. He would also like to explore holding a joint Transportation/Land use meeting next calendar year.

Land Use Committee: Eric Amel talked about Project Pride in Living work engaging the neighborhood regarding their very early-stage project to develop affordable housing at the old Wells Fargo location on University Avenue & Emerald. He also spoke on continued development at the MX on campus. The University of Minnesota is quietly moving along with this huge project. Find more on their website.

Jackson Family Project Committee: Jerry Stein and Susan Larson-Fleming said the committee is focusing efforts on the Roger Wilkens/Jackson Family community engagement project mentioned earlier. The new playground equipment has been installed at the Jackson Family Playground at Pratt, but there was an unforeseen subterranean structural issue that delayed installing a couple pieces of playground equipment. They also announced that there will be a Jackson Day in the spring. Stay tuned.

Finance and Admin Committee:

- **Glendale Resident Council Community Partnership Engagement Grant:** Lynn updated the Board about the \$20,000 Glendale Resident Council Community Partnership Engagement Grant. The City could not contract the grant, despite its approval, because the project was only open to Glendale residents. This legal stumbling block is not limited to this project – NCR could not complete PEG contracts for other neighborhood groups as well because of this city legal requirement. It’s a tough situation because Glendale needs a resident council. Lynn is working with the volunteers who helped prepare the initial grant – and provided an alternative draft of project grant – that would be eligible. Hopefully they will apply again in 2025.
- **PPA fund raising update:** PPA has raised about \$3,400 in unrestricted gifts so far this year. Although our goal was \$4,000, we are in a sound position financially.

Other Business

Review and approve meeting minutes and reports

Board/ Community Meeting, October 28, 2024 (Document 5)

Environment Committee, September 10, 2024, (Document 6)

Tower Hill Park Committee, September 21, 2024 (Document 7)

Jackson Project Committee, October 3, 2024 (Document 8)

Motion: Ian motioned to put those minutes into the record. *Approved* by all present board members.

PPA Organizational Announcement: Lynn encouraged folks to think of people who might be interested in running for the board in 2025. We will have 8 open seats and need to recruit at least six candidates to run in our 2025 board election this coming May.

Adjourn. Eric Amel adjourned the meeting at 8:14pm.

The next Prospect Park Board and Community meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 27th, 2025. This will be a virtual meeting only. Zoom invites to follow.

Respectfully submitted by Steve Barnett, PPA Board Member and Secretary