

SOSNA Board meeting

May 25, 2005

Meeting Minutes

Board members in attendance: Matt Corcoran, Richard Gliniak, Stephanie Greene, Gail Harrington, Ann Hoskins-Brown (Chair), John McHugh, Juanita James, Ted Lee, Sharon Melvin, Tony Moretti, Soledad Perez Gillespie, Sam Porter, Les Robbins, Marni Showell

Others in attendance: David Feldman (Executive Director), Eve Lewis (NAC Director)

The meeting was called to Order at 7:10 by the Chair, Ann Hoskins-Brown.

Agenda Change

The developers who had requested to meet with the Board regarding potential partnership for development of properties at 17th and Carpenter wanted to postpone their presentation for a future Board meeting, and were not present at this meeting.

Board Check-in

The Chair asked Board members to each share what they had done in support of SOSNA the past month. Each Board member took turn describing their SOSNA-related activities for the past month.

Outreach Committee

The Outreach Committee will be meeting at noon tomorrow. There were questions raised about the leafleting done by SOSNA, and the scope and process of disseminating information to neighborhood residents about SOSNA activities. It was requested that the committee review having a monthly newsletter, which would include a listing of upcoming SOSNA meetings.

Minutes

It was noted that there was one typographical error on page 3 of the previous month's meeting minutes. Richard Gliniak moved to accept the minutes, as corrected, seconded by John McHugh, passed without dissent.

NAC Director's Report

Recommendations were made to the Outreach Committee regarding newsletter production, including format, information to be included, and frequency of production. The NAC Director will be working with the Outreach Committee over the next month to develop more specific recommendations to present to the Board. Distribution of the newsletters was discussed, and will be reviewed in committee. There was active discussion about the use of advertising in the newsletter to cover the costs of production and distribution. The benchmark for this is Queen Village Neighborhood Association's newsletter, which was described by the NAC Director. The revenue from their advertising enables QVNA to have professional layout, printing, and to mail the newsletter.

There is a concern about the filing deadline for applicant to present at monthly Zoning meetings. This effects the turnaround time for production of the agenda and leaflets to distribute both at the General Meeting and throughout the effected areas of the neighborhood. It was requested that Zoning Committee review this in their meeting this month.

A further zoning issue was raised, regarding establishing an application fee for having a proposed project reviewed at SOSNA zoning meeting. Attendees were split on this, but all agreed that if there were a fee,

it would be necessary to have a hardship provision for homeowners submitting applications related to their primary residence.

The NAC Director will be scheduling her vacation during the period when General Meetings are suspended for the summer.

The letter from Daniel Banks, engineer, was distributed, describing his findings with regard to the work being undertaken at 1924 Pemberton Street.

Finance Report

Tony Moretti provided summaries of the items in his written report.

IRS lien: IRS is in the process of reviewing, and should be releasing \$1,000 soon. Another \$5,000 is still under review, but is likely to be refunded.

Bookkeeper: The part time bookkeeper is off to a good start with all invoice backup information completed through March. All January and February invoices are in to OHCD, and March invoices are in process for all three programs. By June Board meeting, all OHCD invoices will be up to date.

Account adjustments: Blue Cross/Blue Shield have finally removed Drew Menten from SOSNA roles, and are making adjustments to billing. State Workers compensation insurance is also being resolved, but probably won't get final adjustment until the end of the calendar year, due to State Workers accounting procedures.

Finance reports: The general fiscal health of the organization was reviewed, as were detailed reports for cash on hand, and outstanding accounts payable. Two budget formats were reviewed, based on Treasurer's and Chair's formats for projecting annual expenses and revenue. These budgets do not separately allocate overhead expenses among the various programs of SOSNA. Use of Economic Development funding from Pathmark was reviewed. These funds are being kept separate from general SOSNA funds. They are not required to be fully spent within the fiscal year.

LaSalle Non-Profit Center

Wm Penn Foundation declined to fund SOSNA's comprehensive strategic planning proposal. SOSNA has already paid \$3,000 to LaSalle for strategic planning. At Chair's request, the consultant from LaSalle, Jason Alexander, prepared three different scopes of work for strategic planning, at three different price points, with increasingly expanded list of services. The two proposals with more limited scope were presented, and discussed at length. They focus on short term stabilization, and do not include long range planning steps.

There was protracted debate regarding the costs and benefits of the two scopes under review, particularly related to the different scale of stakeholder interviews. Timing of the planning process was also discussed, in part related to the timing for hiring a fulltime Executive Director. The Interim Executive Director reminded the Board that he was expected to be in place for three to six months, and was now serving for eight months. He strongly urged the Board to have a fulltime ED in place by September 1 to provide fulltime oversight of staff and operations, to more actively pursue fundraising, and to begin implementation of the planning process with LaSalle. He urged the Board to begin advertising immediately for a fulltime ED to begin receiving resumes, and to provide sufficient lead time to have a full time ED in place by September 1.

A more in depth discussion on the purpose of planning followed, and identified three main uses for the planning process:

- As a tool for funding when approaching traditional foundations,
- To define the role of the organization and its mission,
- To re-evaluate the organization in relation to changes in the neighborhood, and in relation to other organizations.

Debate returned to the choice of more extensive stakeholder interviews, at a cost \$2,000 higher than the more limited proposal. Several Board members, including Richard Gliniak, Juanita James, and Les Robbins, each offered to contribute \$100 each towards the cost of the more extensive proposal, in order to reach out to a broader range of stakeholders. John McHugh made a motion to proceed with the strategic planning proposal with more extensive range of stakeholder interviews, seconded by Sharon Melvin, approved with one opposing vote from Tony Moretti.

Real Estate Development/1627 Christian Street

The Board discussed the organization's role with regard to real estate development, mainly focused on the current proposed project at 1627 Christian Street. David reported on his meeting with Jeff Tubbs Project Manager at the RDA, regarding requirements of the RDA for redevelopment proposals. If the project is to provide affordable housing, the RDA would transfer to property to SOSNA for "nominal cost" (\$1); if the project is for market rate development, it would be transferred at market rate. A recent appraisal for the property done by the RDA arrived at a value of \$110,000.

Past SOSNA projects were reviewed, and it was noted that all of these were done with development partners who managed the actual construction process. In the instances where projects were for rental housing, project management is done by the outside development partner as well. The history of SOSNA's involvement with 1627 Christian was also reviewed for the benefit of the more recent Board members.

There were several concerns voiced. These included the opportunities SOSNA has missed over the years by not pursuing real estate development projects. There were concerns about staff and Board capacity to oversee and/or actively manage a development project. There was also very active discussion about how real estate development fits with the organization's purpose and use of resources, and the philosophical differences between the organization working on affordable housing or market rate housing; there was strong sentiment expressed about the organization not participating in market rate housing development.

It was agreed that this would be an ongoing discussion. Tony Moretti, Les Robbins, and Ted Lee agreed to work as a committee to further explore these issues and 1627 Christian specifically.

Gardens

The Chair reported on the garden at 20th and Catharine Streets. All efforts to save the garden have been exhausted, and home builders have started clearing the site. The RDA is working with SOSNA and the Council President's office to accumulate a large enough number of contiguous sites for an alternate garden, ideally at 22nd and Carpenter Streets, through to Montrose Street.

The resolution included with the agenda to establish a "SOSNA Friends of Open Space" was briefly discussed, and passed unanimously.

Outreach

Newsletters are a key priority for outreach to the community. The next one is to be out by the June 8th General Meeting, with the next two going out in August and October. There will need to be outreach for advertising to cover costs of producing and distributing the newsletters.

There was a concern that SOSNA address any negative feelings in the community about the organization, and clarify any misunderstandings about the organization and its role in the community. Suggestions were made to have bulletin boards throughout the community to post SOSNA meetings, as well as other

notices related to services the organization provides. This would add to outreach through leafleting, which continues to be a difficult process.

Sharon confirmed that on Saturdays prior to zoning meetings, zoning committee members meet at the SOSNA office to organize leafleting, and confirm which blocks have already received zoning agendas. Other Board members are encouraged to assist John and the rest of the zoning committee with this task.

A motion to adjourn was made by John McHugh, seconded by Les Robbins, approved without dissent

Meeting was adjourned at 9:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted

David W. Feldman
Interim Executive Director