

Cleveland Park Citizen Association Minutes for Board Meeting via Zoom – July 1, 2020

In attendance Barr Weiner, Alice Kelley, Elizabeth Ferenczi, Hans Miller, Alli Bernstein, Tom Miller, Isaac Bowers, Naihua Duan, Melody Molinoff, Todd Pearson, Mike Rifer, Susan Shinkman, Sauleh Siddiqui, Jennifer Ward, Jamie Wickett

I. CPCA Goals for board members

In the inaugural board meeting, members expressed priorities for the coming year ranging from a focus on visible, achievable goals affecting the quality of life in Cleveland Park to ambitious ones tackling wider issues which also encompass CP. Examples of specific goals mentioned were improving the quality of sidewalks and street crossings, helping the Connecticut Ave commercial strip become successful, making the neighborhood more family friendly and open to younger families, and fostering open communication with neighbors to help the whole neighborhood come together. Examples of wider issues also affecting Cleveland Park are anti-racism, public schools, affordable housing, and the comprehensive plan.

Treasurer's report

Due to a change in the bylaws, members no longer need to the approve budget, which will be made available to members with a reduction in the number of budget items to five or six. The Treasurer also discussed ways to improve checks and balances regarding budget matters. CPCA currently has built up reserves partly because it has stopped holding more costly events (e.g., Cleveland Park Day). Surplus funds could be used to build the community, grow the organization, and pay for staffing. Up to now CPCA has saved money by relying on board members who have rotated off to help handle tasks such as maintaining membership and email lists, but most work is performed by the Board.

Committees

The board resolved to rely more on committees to research issues and present to the board crisp, well-researched proposals for action. To unite the community and attract wider audiences, the board discussed ways to further engage members and invite/attract people with different views.

Membership renewal and growth

Growing the organization will require intensive outreach to tenant and other organizations to recruit members. Surplus funds could be used to work with a marketing firm to build a robust mailing list of CP residents and thereby amplify influence. The board also discussed the need for a clear and concise value proposition explaining the benefits of joining CPCA. As for any neighborhood association, one clear value proposition is our advocacy for issues important to the community, amplifying the voice of neighborhood residents. Another valuable role, critical to the first, is building relationships and promoting discussion within the community – to be the glue that holds CP together. A third is using CPCA's convening power to organize events reflecting the diverse interests of the community and providing forums to keep the community informed and enhance communication. Given the labor intensive nature of all this work, however, a key to success will be getting more members involved through CPCA committees, rather than simply relying on the Board.