WILLO NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

JULY 19, 2021

The meeting convened at 6:00 p.m.

Officers present: Bob Cannon (President), Brad Brauer (Vice-President), Opal Wagner (Secretary) and Linda Doescher (Treasurer)

Board Members present: Ann Bommersbach, Kush Govani, James Varela, Sandra Lefcovich, Jeremy Schachter, Aaron Montaño Searles, Erika Gagnon and Patrice Wappel

Board Members absent: Charlene Gum

3rd/5th Avenues Update and Possible Action

President Bob Cannon opened the meeting with a discussion of the latest update from the City of Phoenix Streets Transportation Department on the 3rd and 5th Avenues improvement project from McDowell to Thomas Rds. (posted on willophx.com). The project is of vital importance to Willo and has been ongoing for 4.5 years. The update from the City of Phoenix states the construction phase of the project remains unfunded. Willo neighbors attended multiple budget meetings for the FY 2021-2022 City budget to advocate for funding for the project. Despite this, the project was not included in the current budget. Bob Cannon said he would like to hear from stakeholders regarding next steps. He said he gets multiple calls weekly on wrong-way drivers, speeders and other traffic safety concerns. The Willo Conservation Plan has specific directives on traffic.

Jeremy Schachter said he thought Willo should put more pressure on the City to fund the project.

Ann Bommersbach said more pressure in the form of emails, calls and contact with Councilwoman Pastor may be our best pathway.

James Varela said since he lives right on 5th Ave., completion of the project is a safety concern for him. He sees people racing down the street daily. He thinks completion of the Sonoran Bike Path angle is a good way to keep up the pressure.

Brad Brauer stated that – living on 3rd Avenue – he sees traffic safety issues every day. The fact that we didn’t get anywhere with this in terms of budgeting is pretty frustrating. We should be keeping the pressure on the City to fund the 3rd and 5th Ave. improvements in whatever way we can.

Sandra Lefcovich said she agrees with keeping up the pressure on the City to fund the project.

Aaron Searles said there is all kinds of traffic on Edgemont, people who “punch it” to try to make the green light. He said our best bet is to get a council advocate to go to the City Council.

Bob Cannon said the 90% design phase has been pushed to September. The Roosevelt neighborhood had their project completed in year 8. We are going in the right direction, but we are losing momentum without a plan for funding the construction phase.

Beth Plasencia said Doug’s expertise was able to get the City of Phoenix to understand that there was a design flaw where they were doing their transition to two lanes on 3rd Ave. Doug convinced the Streets Transportation Department to move the transition to two lanes north of Windsor (instead of Cambridge). Beth suggested reaching out to St. Joe’s for support. Bob Cannon questioned whether St. Joe’s would be a partner in this.

Bobbi Ryals said she is willing to do whatever needs to be done - make phone calls, write letters, or anything else that will help.

Brent Kleinman, President of Encanto-Palmcroft Historic Preservation Association, said Encanto-Palmcroft will help/join Willo in getting this done sooner rather than later. He recently saw 3 cars making u-turns on 3rd and 5th and he questioned the safety of having the project continue for the next 2-3 years unfunded and half done, and said, “We’re here to support you in this.”

Anne Muhich (500-block of W. Virginia) said she will support anything we can do to get the capital budget approved to improve traffic and wrong-way driving, stating, “I don’t understand the current economic position of the City, so I support whatever is necessary to get the budget approved”.

Bob Cannon said, “The numbers don’t add up to me.” He also said, “The Sonoran Bike Path has a huge hole in the middle of it, called Willo.”

Opal Wagner made a motion that the Willo Neighborhood Association Board authorize its President Dr. Robert Cannon, to write a letter to the City of Phoenix urging the City to prioritize funding for the construction and completion of the 3rd and 5th Avenues improvement project. Brad Brauer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Block Watch Grant Approved

Linda Doescher announced that the Willo Neighborhood Association received a Block Watch grant for over $9,000 to fund luminarias, Kids Club and Willo’s website. She said, “We’re signing it now and it’s several pages long. I’ll be taking a class when I get back from my next vacation. There’s a lot of rules and regulations we have to go through. It will be for this year (2021).” Linda said this grant is a huge help especially with our loss of revenue from cancellation of the 2021 Willo Home Tour due to Covid-19.

Beth Plasencia asked if there has been an uptick in crime in Willo. Brad said everyone should be sure to lock their car, but he was not aware of any other specific issues. He said we may be losing our CAO, at least temporarily, due to a shortage of officers in patrol.

Zoning Update

Tom Doescher (Willo Zoning Committee chairperson) said the project at 1st Avenue and Holly was initiated in 2017 as a proposal for 8 townhouses. He said we were recently notified the project was back up and running with 6 townhouses now proposed, all facing Holly. Tom said the lot on Holly has been nothing but a place for trash to accumulate for years and, “It will be really great to see something there other than a parking lot.” Tom said the applicants had a neighborhood meeting on July 15th and would be meeting with the Willo Zoning Committee on July 29th.

Tom reminded neighbors of the August 26th hearing on Raising Kane’s and said it was important for neighbors to attend. The issue is especially concerning for neighbors who live on Edgemont, Windsor and Cambridge close to 7th Ave. due to increased traffic concerns near the intersection of 7th Ave. and Thomas Rd. Bob Cannon said Willo’s official letter has been filed with the City and posted. Meeting info. is on willophx.com.

Willo Home Tour 2022

Bob Cannon said other neighborhood presidents are excited we are having a 2022 home tour and are curious to see what the attendance will be in light of Covid-19. Bob asked that willophx.com be updated.

Sandra Lefcovich reminded everyone that she needs a Home Tour article for the Sept. issue of *Inside Willo*.

Brad Brauer announced that the first Home Tour meeting will be on Sept. 8, 2021 at 6:00 pm at 302 W. Monte Vista. Andrea Meury has volunteered to run ticket sales again. Early bird ticket sales are up and running on Event Brite.

Teresa Fontana is working on procuring homes for the tour. She said she’ll be adding some garden tours as well to “mix it up a little bit” and add an outdoor option for anyone who may not feel comfortable with Covid-19 precautions in February. Getting the PR piece going is her focus as well.

Brad Brauer asked about obtaining billboard advertising. Bob Cannon said we need a logo before that can be addressed. He suggested a homeowners’ meeting in Oct.-Nov. to plan for spacing, etc. vis-à-vis Covid-19.

Old Business: Willo’s next neighborhood happy hour will be in October – the first since the Covid-19 pandemic.

New Business: None.

Brad Brauer made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jeremy Schachter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:54pm