Willo Neighborhood Association

Board Meeting Minutes

April 14, 2022

Board members present: Robert Cannon (President), Brad Brauer (Vice President), Opal Wagner (Secretary), Aaron Moñtano Searles, Sandra Lefcovich, Patrice Wappel, Erika Gagnon, Charlene Gum, Jeremy Schachter, Ann Bommersbach, James Varela

Not present: Linda Doescher, Kush Govani

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Robert Cannon, Board President

Opal Wagner provided a recap of the 3rd and 5th Avenues improvement project and introduced guest speaker, Kini Knudson, Director of Streets Transportation Department for the City of Phoenix.

Kini Knudson explained that the City Council generally does not change the draft CIP (Capital Improvement Program) and in the final CIP, they just approve the total amount (which includes the construction funding for the 3rd and 5th Avenues improvement project through Willo). It is fully funded in the fiscal year 2022/23 budget. Design completion is pending, and the City is in the process of acquiring temporary construction easements ahead of construction. The projected construction timeframe is 9-12 months.

Board Members and Community members then asked questions, which were answered by Mr. Knudson as follows:

Q: We have $4.5-5M in the budget. What happens if we go over?

A: We have contingency funds throughout our project if some project costs are coming in higher.

Q: South of 3rd Ave. on McDowell Rd. there is a 2-lane bike lane adjacent to a one-way street. That doesn’t seem safe. What signage will be in place to make sure drivers are aware of bikes coming from the opposite direction?

A: Yes, we have concerns. Bollards have been hit. I’m hoping and expecting more and more people get used to this change in traffic and signage. It takes time. We’re addressing this with taller bollards that are more visible and putting cameras at Roosevelt and 3rd. There is going to be a timeframe where people will get used to it. What has or hasn’t worked on the south leg will inform the design of the bike lanes north into Willo.

Q: Where do we find information on the new design for those who didn’t attend the meetings?

A: The webpage has the roll plots and videos of all the public meetings. (phoenix.gov/streets/3rdand5thAvenuesNorth).

Q: I’ve spoken with Chris Manno on parking issue on 5th Avenue.

A: I believe the parking issue is being addressed in the design phase.

Q: I’m right on 3rd Ave. It’s hard to look right sometimes because of all the cars parked along the street.

A: That’s always a balance – there is a demand for on-street parking that needs to be met.

Mr. Knudson said his team will provide Willo with a further update when the design process is 100% complete.

Zoning Update: Brad Brauer reported the Hearing Officer on 89 W. Lewis denied a Certificate of Appropriateness for a non-permitted front porch cover and ordered the porch cover be reconstructed back to its original size. The homeowner has appealed to the Historic Preservation Commission and the appeal will be heard on April 18th at 4:30 p.m. Instructions for signing up to speak are on the City’s website.

Bob Cannon added the letter he sent to the City on behalf of the Board gave the City until May to respond to our concerns on 78 W. Cypress and 309 W. Monte Vista with respect to lack of consistency with Historic Preservation. The deadline we asked them to meet is by our next meeting on May 12th.

Communications Update: Sandra Lefcovich reported the Communications Committee had completed the switch from the Willo Home Tour Facebook page to the Willo Neighborhood Events Facebook page, which is open to the public. Events pertaining to Willo Kids Club, Happy Hours, etc. will not be on the public page, but it will contain info. on events open to the public, such as the yard sale, Home Tour, luminarias, etc. The committee is working on the willophx.com website to streamline and refresh everything. David Roth-Gonzalez has set up a Google account so that we can store all documents related to Willo. Sandra then presented the Disclaimer and Waiver for photographs taken at Willo events and a Minor Child Photo Release Form that she had previously emailed to the Board members.

Opal Wagner made a motion to approve the Photography Waiver and Minor Child Photo Release Form to be used at all Willo events. Charlene Gum seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Social Media Update: Jeremy Schachter reported Willo’s social media is going great. He has been posting engaging posts and removing posts that are not allowed. Everyone is using it as a resource and that is what the Facebook page is for. It is serving its intended purpose.

Willo Kids Club Update: Bob Cannon reported there is a Willo Kids Club event this Sat. at 4pm at Lewis Park. An Easter egg hunt and Easter bunny photos and treats will be combined with an Earth Day celebration. Sheryl Haarman is leaving, and Samantha Keating will be taking over as WKC co-chair with Valerie Gentz.

Potential Concerts in Willo: Bob Cannon introduced Willo neighbors Alison Daniels and Nick Harper to present their ideas for potential quarterly concert events to be held at Walton Park. Alison and Nick explained they have lived in Willo on and off for the last 20 years. When Covid started 2 years ago, they began holding porch concerts at their home, inviting neighbors, and ended up holding 33 shows over that year. The concerts stopped a year ago after a complaint was made resulting in a fine. They would like to explore once again hosting live music concerts in Willo with the Willo Board’s support to bring the neighborhood together. Alison said she believed this could be done fairly inexpensively and she is pricing out port-a-potties. Street closure application is $400. She said if they had $2,000 to spend quarterly, they could provide a free music Sunday afternoon in the park. Bob Cannon asked Alison to summarize her proposed budget in an email to him.

Board members and neighbors asked questions of Alison and Nick and commented as follows:

Q: Do you plan on asking people for donations to attend?

A: When we did it before, it would be 100% tip based. People would be welcome to donate individually to the band.

Q: Would it be publicized outside of the Willo neighborhood?

A: That is up to the Board.

Comment: I like the events, but I think they should be self-sufficient. I disagree with asking the Board for any money and they need to follow the rules for closing the street, getting port-a-potties and, if they have to, to provide security. I disagree with asking the Board to give money for this.

Comment: I agree when the concerts first appeared it was a relief from the unknown that the pandemic presented us at the time. I like the idea of the music, but I also agree with the idea that the committee think of ways to be self-sufficient in doing that. We are a residential neighborhood, not a public venue.

Q: Have you reached out to people on Monte Vista and Holly to see if they are okay with having the concerts at Walton Park?

A: We have some, but we will go door-to-door to talk to all of them if that is what is needed.

Bob Cannon said the 2022-23 budget has to be approved at next month’s meeting. He asked Alison and Nick to send their budget requests to Linda Doescher, Treasurer.

Bob Cannon stated he will re-confirm all committee assignments in May, and anyone can be on a committee. The 2022-23 budget will be finalized at the May 12th meeting. The annual By-laws review and update will be on the June agenda.

Opal Wagner, Secretary, made a motion to approve the March 10th regular meeting minutes and the March 22nd special meeting minutes. Sandra Lefcovich seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Social Committee Update: Nikki Armstrong reported the May 13th Happy Hour will be hosted by Jan and Kevin O’Rourke, 501 W. Cypress. Nikki is stepping down as Social Committee chair and will assist with transition to the next chair of the committee.

Block Watch: Brad Brauer reported he needed help with Block Watch now that he is also chairing the Zoning Committee. Erika Gagnon volunteered to take over Block Watch leadership.

Bob Cannon reported the focus of our May 12, 2022 meeting will be the budget and committee chairs.

Brad Brauer made a motion to adjourn. Patrice Wappel seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.