Willo Neighborhood Association

Board Meeting Minutes

May 12, 2022

Board Members Present (virtual or in-person): Brad Brauer (Vice President), Opal   
Wagner (Secretary), Linda Doescher (Treasurer), Ann Bommersbach, Sandra Lefcovich, Kush Govani, Erika Gagnon, Charlene Gum, Aaron Montaño Searles, Patrice Wappel

Absent: Dr. Robert Cannon (President), Jeremy Schachter, James Varela

Approval of Minutes – Opal Wagner reported she had received no edits to the draft April 14, 2022 minutes previously emailed to the Board. Aaron Searles made a motion to approve the April 14, 2022 minutes. Patrice Wappel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Zoning Update - Brad Brauer reported no response had been received to the Board’s letter of concern sent to city officials in March regarding the handling of historic preservation cases in Willo. A response to the letter was requested by May 14th. Brad made a motion authorizing Dr. Robert Cannon, Willo Board President, to send a follow-up letter if a response was not received. Linda Doescher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Brad reported 78 W. Cypress has been granted a permit to build an in-ground pool in the front yard. Neighbors have expressed concern about the large excavator that has remained in the front yard since April 22nd despite multiple calls to City of Phoenix Neighborhood Services Department.

525 W. Almeria has a Zoning Adjustment hearing set for May 26th on an application for a 12’ structure in the back yard with zero setback. The Historic Preservation Office informed Brad they were unaware of the project. The owner is an LLC.

The former Hob Nob’s/Luana’s building on the SE corner of McDowell and 3rd Ave. is applying for zoning to become a wine shop. They are planning on live music M-Th until 10pm, and on weekends until midnight.

1500 N. Central – Brad met with attorney Nick Wood on Fri. May 6th regarding the development at the SW corner of McDowell and Central. The plan is for a 250’-high, high-end apartment complex. There will be access points on 1st Ave. The project will have 370 units, 70% studios. No variance is required. The units will be rentals.

Communications/Inside Willo/Social Media Committee Updates – Sandra Lefcovich reported she and Linda Doescher have been working on cost-saving measures for Inside Willo, including getting quotes from different printers. The June issue is almost done and will be the last one for the summer. July and August there will be on-line versions and email blasts and analysis of who reads it, etc. Future plans include shorter stories in the magazine that will direct readers to willophx.com to obtain more information online as a cost-savings measure to reduce the page count of Inside Willo. Potentially advertising may go up 10%. It has not increased since 2017.

Communications is status quo and will be supporting the 2023 Home Tour Chairs Linda Doescher and David Roth-Gonzalez, including pre-written posts and press releases.

Treasurer’s Report - Linda Doescher reported she had emailed a copy of the financial report to the Board. April 30th was the end of the fiscal year. Financial activity shows how we ended up at the end of the year. We have some accounts receivable that won’t be paid that we need to write off. We are in the red this year (expenses exceed income). We’re still recuperating from cancellation of the 2021 Home Tour due to the pandemic. There is also a statement of financial position which is what we’re worth, essentially if we closed shop today. Blockwatch funds total $2.76; Checking Account: $48,400; Edward Jones Investment Account CD: $71,000. We had to withdraw $20,000 out of the investment account in 2021-22 to cover expenses. Accounts Receivable is at $6500. Total net worth equals $131,000.

Erika Gagnon made a motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report. Sandra Lefcovich seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Willo Quarterly Music Proposal Alison Daniels and Nick Harper reported they had put together some budget items for their proposed concerts and sent them Linda Doescher, including $1200 quarterly for a band, port-a-potties: $300, street closure: $400 per application.

Questions from Board Members and Neighbors to Alison and Nick:

Q: What about insurance?

A: Linda was going to talk to insurance agent.

Q: What are the amounts for stage rental, barricades? Who sets up and who cleans up? You have to leave it like it came – none of this is in the budget at this point because the program hasn’t been approved and we need this information in order to consider it. Can you answer this at this time, or do you need further info?

A: We need more time to collect this info.

Q: How do you ensure the concerts are for Willo residents only?

A: It will only be advertised in Willo.

Q: Will the bands know this as well and abide by it?

A: Yes.

Q: Lewis (or Broadmoor) park is easier to close off. How about having the concerts there? Have you gotten approval from nearby neighbors?

A: We can knock on doors if you require that.

Q: Do you have any questions about the additional information we need to have this ready for a motion and possible vote in June?

A: We’ll get it taken care of and provide the information with more lead time before the next meeting.

Comment by Linda Doescher, Treasurer: You also have to ensure people understand there is no alcohol permitted at these concerts. The insurance carrier raises the rates significantly if there is alcohol at an event. Home Tour is different because we get a license (which is a big expense). I want to make sure that illegal alcohol is not going to happen.

2022-23 Budget Update: Linda Doescher presented the budget as previously supplied to all Board Members by email. On Mon. the Board met in executive session (non-voting meeting) to discuss the budget. One of the things we talked about is reducing the costs for Inside Willo, and we have been thinking of everything to bring costs down: Less issues, keeping pages to no more than 24, no inserts, increasing advertising rates by 10%, getting more advertisers. Even then we are projected to still be underwater a bit. We are experimenting with electronic and email versions this summer when we don’t publish anyway - putting more information on the website. Other non-Home Tour costs include rental of meeting space, insurance, etc. We’ve got an aggressive approach to increase Home Tour income next year. The Blockwatch grant has not been included in the budget because it is not approved yet. Office and administrative expenses are also included, as well as landscaping, water bills to keep the roundabouts and parks watered, purchase flowers, decorations, etc. We need to start paying back the investment account with Home Tour proceeds to offset what we withdrew this past year.

Erika Gagnon made a motion to approve the 2022-23 budget. Charlene Gum seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Streets and Traffic Safety Committee Update – Opal Wagner reported she had received communication from the City of Phoenix Streets Transportation Department that the 100% design for 3rd and 5th Avenues improvements through Willo will not be completed before the end of summer. The City has committed to providing us an update at that time.

Willo Kids Club - Samantha Keating and Valerie Gentz will be taking over the leadership from Sheryl Haarman, who is moving. There will be a planning meeting in August. A Sept. 10th back-to-school event is in the works with details TBA. Kids Club also plans to have a Halloween event, winter event, Easter/Earth day, event, including an Easter egg hunt, for 2022-23.

Willo Blockwatch Update: Erika Gagnon reported Officer Ben Harris informed us he has been assigned as our CAO again. His area of responsibility has doubled, however. We’re still looking for Blockwatch captains for some blocks. Erika has created a half-sheet flyer to hand out or as an insert in Inside Willo. She plans to list the Blockwatch captain for each block in Inside Willo and email each Blockwatch captain to let them know we will be setting meetings with Officer Harris and putting a Blockwatch tab on our webpage.

Neighbors reported tools were stolen from a garage by a person riding a scooter. On Cypress a suspicious person was trying to open car doors and trunks. Another suspicious person entered a back yard on Virginia. Brad Brauer advised to call police when such incidents occur and reminded everyone that someone digging in the trash is also probably looking over back yard fences, looking for crimes of opportunity. Digging in the trash is a civil offense. Call the non-emergency Phoenix P.D. number for such incidents.

Social Committee Update: Nikki Armstrong reported the next Happy Hour is tomorrow (May 13th) at Jan and Kevin O’Rourke’s home, 501 W. Cypress, from 5:30-7:30pm. The next Happy Hour is scheduled for Sept. If anyone wants to volunteer for summer, let her know. Nikki plans to step down as Social Committee chair and we need someone to lead the committee going forward.

Brad Brauer congratulated Linda Doescher and David Roth-Gonzalez for being named the Willo Home Tour co-chairs for 2023.

Old Business: None.

New Business: Our next meeting will be held on June 9, 2022.

Linda Doescher made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Patrice Wappel seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.