

Willo Neighborhood Association
Meeting Minutes
Nov. 11, 2021

Call to Order at 6:32 p.m. by President Robert Cannon

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

Board members present: Ann Bommersbach, Sandra Lefcovich, Aaron Montaña Searles, Patrice Wappel, Charlene Gum, Kush Govani (via Zoom), Erika Gagnon (via Zoom)

Board members absent: Jeremy Schachter, James Varela

Total in Attendance: 32

Approval of Oct. 2021 Meeting Minutes: Opal Wagner reported she had received no corrections or additions to the Oct. 2021 minutes as previously emailed to the Board and posted on willophx.com. A motion to approve the Oct. 2021 minutes was made by Brad Brauer and seconded by Linda Doescher. The motion passed unanimously.

Invited Guest: Kini Knudson, Director, City of Phoenix Streets Transportation Department: Mr. Knudson was invited to give an update on the 3rd and 5th Ave. Improvement Project in Willo. Mr. Knudson was welcomed by Bob Cannon and introduced by Opal Wagner. He said the 3rd and 5th Avenues improvement project in Willo is still under design and his staff had run into some delays with the 90% design submittal. The delays involved determining the right pedestrian treatments on 5th Ave. He said, “We expect to get to 90% design completion in Dec. and have a [public] meeting in early January.” The project will first be vetted by Phoenix City Council members, and, after that is accomplished, the Streets Transportation Department will announce the date for the public meeting. He said the delay in the design phase will not delay the overall project, because the project is currently only budgeted for design—not construction. Land acquisition and right-of-way acquisition are the next steps. The 90% design submittal will determine what acquisitions might be necessary, but they are expected to be minimal for this project. Per the revised schedule, the 100% design phase will be completed in the 1st quarter 2022.

Funding for construction has not yet been allocated because of variability and shortfalls in gas tax revenues—the project’s primary source of funding—due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The shortfall of \$40M for the Capital Improvement Program caused this project to be trimmed from the budget. Current budget forecasts project the \$40M will be restored, so the Streets Transportation Department will be making an update to the CIP in mid-Dec. Mr. Knudson said he would commit to letting Bob and Opal know where the project stands once the Streets Transportation Dept. turns in the draft CIP update. The earliest the project could be funded would be July 2022 (for fiscal year 2022-23).

Mr. Knudson said he was aware residents had concerns about the condition of the bike lanes in Willo and his team is working on a solution. They don’t want to put new pavement down that might get damaged once construction begins. An intermediate solution is being worked on and he expects his team to have a solution in the next week or two.

Mr. Knudson then answered questions from Board members and the community:

Q: Will the infrastructure bill help with funding?

A: We are waiting for the President to sign it. We were planning on funding this 100% with local monies. The way that federal monies come down, they go to ADOT, and the State provides them to MAG [Maricopa Association of Governments]. We'll either have to compete for grants through MAG or apply for federal grants. That would likely delay this project. I am hopeful we can find enough funding to get this funded beginning July 2022.

Q: Wrong way traffic continues to be a problem. Can you put signage on the street itself? Could you speak to the acquisitions you mentioned?

A: We've evaluated larger signage south of Willo. We're evaluating increased signage for one-way streets. Right-of-way acquisitions include landscaping, curb gutters, etc. We try to minimize disruption to homeowners as much as possible. We design to minimize impact. I don't think there will be many acquisitions in this project. We may only need temporary construction easements [TCE's].

Q: Where is the exact transition to two lanes to begin on 3rd Ave.?

A: I don't have that exact information in front of me. From the roll plots we have on our webpage, it looks like Edgemont.

Q: Does the plan include separation from bikes and cars other than striping, which does not work?

A: Yes, I believe it is raised curb on 3rd Ave.

Q: Is there anything in Willo that would require vertical posts?

A: I don't think so. We want to limit breaks in raised curbs, but access points are necessary. I don't think we need many vertical posts at all in this area. We do want something in Willo other than vertical posts.

Q: Is there a way to mitigate traffic to make them aware to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks?

A: this problem is not unique to Willo. A Roadway Safety Action Plan is being worked on. We've seen a serious increase in fatalities. On Nov. 16th there is a citywide meeting on priorities for street safety.

Q: Why is 5th Ave. not the same design as 3rd Ave.? Little "bumps" don't seem very effective for separation of pedestrians and cyclists from cars. Why are they two different designs?

A: The Sonoran Bikeway is the primary reason. We're obviously accenting the bike infrastructure on 3rd Ave. 5th Ave. won't have the same treatment due to cost.

Treasurer's Report: Linda Doescher presented the Treasurer's report, including the following amounts: \$19,805.24 in checking account, \$98,000 in investment account (emergency fund). Financial Status: Net worth is \$141,000. The Blockwatch Grant money is included. Linda reported she is in the process of applying for the next round of Blockwatch grants, which is due by December 2nd. Net income is currently (-\$7100) due to Home Tour expenditures, which is typical prior to Home Tour. Brad Brauer made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report and Sandra Lefcovich seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Social Committee: Nikki Armstrong reported the first Happy Hour since March 2020 was held in October and was reportedly well attended. Happy Hour hosts are scheduled through May 2022 and starting in

June all hosting opportunities are open. Tomorrow's (Nov. 12th) Happy Hour will be hosted by Wylie and Lauren Carhartt at 518 W. Cypress. Dec. 10th is at Nikki and Al's house. Jeff and Adrian are hosting in January. The Social Committee has been reluctant to plan other activities because of the pandemic and have not been doing potluck/shared food at the Willo Happy Hours. Phoenix Spokespeople will have a luminaria bike ride on Dec. 23rd. It should be a big crowd this year. Willo Kids' Club has a separate sign up for a visit from Santa that will start around 5:30 pm Dec. 23rd. The bike ride will start at 6:30 pm.

Luminarias: There will an article in November's issue of *Inside Willo*. There is a link from Carrie to sign up online. Kush will put it on the website also. This year's luminarias were paid for under the Block Watch grant.

Willo Kids Club: Valerie Gentz reported there was a good turnout for the Kids Club and Celebrate Willo on October 30th. Santa will appear from 5:30-6pm on Dec. 23rd to kick off the luminarias bike ride with little presents for the kids and to promote a safe bike ride for everyone. WKC is also planning an event in Jan. (date TBA) with a fire safety presentation at Lewis Park by Phoenix Fire Department, plus playing in the snow for the kids.

Home Tour 2022 Committee: Teresa Fontana reported all the homes have been procured. She said the last committee meeting was very well attended. The committee is working through the big push for the brochure, ads, and sponsorships. There is already \$5100 in ad sales. Ticket sales are 6% above what they were at this time 2 years ago. Dec. and Jan. will be all about ticket sales. Forty-seven vendor booths are already committed – about half of our goal. There is a big push to get more vendors engaged. Volunteers is another area the committee will be starting to push in Jan. Our volunteer committee chair is new and putting together a great program for volunteer training, etc. Linda is working on operations pieces – permits, etc. Music acts are signed up for homes and the main stage. The press release was handed out. Thank you to Kush and Diana for the photos of the homes on the website. A link for Twilight Tour tickets will be added shortly. An event is being planned for homeowners to give them a preview of each other's homes and a cocktail get-together. The group is working on marketing outside of Willo as well.

Willo Photo Book: Diana Herman reported the book is in the 2nd round of edits. She thanked the 18 or so volunteers who volunteered to proofread the book. The book is 200 pages with contributions by various authors on a variety of topics relevant to Willo and its history, making it a book about preserving and promoting our neighborhood. Each of the photos contains info. about the home and there are about a dozen drone shots. The book talks about the variety of architectural styles and what was happening at relevant periods of history. Approximately 180 books have been pre-sold.

Inside Willo: Sandra Lefcovich reported the Dec. deadline for submissions is past and the issue is off to the printer.

Zoning Committee: Tom Doescher reported the hearing of the appeal of a 2-story garage/yoga studio at 309 W. Monte Vista is scheduled for Mon. Nov. 15th at 4:30 pm. We have two Historic Preservation hearings next week: 341 W. Wilshire is an application for a rear addition that will be slightly higher than the ridgeline; 113 W. Palm is an application to rebuild a pool house. Thus far, we've not received any staff report for either case from the Historic Preservation Office. The last two hearings we've had, we received the report on the weekend, giving us only one business day to digest, analyze and respond to the report. Raising Cane's has withdrawn its application to build a drive-through restaurant at 7th Ave. and Thomas. Aaron Klusman, the property owner, is going to repurpose the Duke's Photography building, instead. He is working with some local restaurants with the intention of coming up with something that is compatible with the surrounding historic neighborhoods. Thanks to everyone who spoke up on the Raising Cane's issue. The former "APS lot" has been sold. The new builder has reportedly committed to

completing the 28 homes that were planned. The former APS Subcommittee members will meet with the new owner and will then update the Board.

Block Watch: Brad Brauer reported a truck was stolen on the 500-block of Windsor. He said he learned that F150's are one of the 5 most commonly-stolen cars in the country. Both an alarm and a "club" were on the truck when it was stolen. It has not been recovered. Brad said we need more Block Watch captains, and that he'd like the captain position not to be just Block Watch, but to communicate with their blocks about luminarias, etc., also. His goal is a captain for each block, but there are about 7 blocks that currently have no one.

Welcome Committee: Carl Schurtz reported the committee is "chugging along" and will have more info. at the next meeting.

Old Business: None.

New Business: Bob Cannon reported he had been receiving calls from residents about sidewalk maintenance, yards with weeds, roofs in disrepair, etc. Bob clarified that the Willo NA exists to support and promote the 1986 Willo Conservation Plan. Willo is not an HOA. The City of Phoenix Neighborhood Services Department has jurisdiction over these issues and should always be called first. Bob clarified that the Willo NA does not pay for sidewalk repairs and homeowners are responsible for maintaining sidewalks adjacent to their property in a safe condition. New neighbors are given information in their welcome packets to educate them about the Willo NA.

Brad Brauer moved to adjourn the meeting and Patrice Wappel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m.