



HAPPY NEW YEAR, 2023!

I HOPE EVERYONE HAD A great holiday season and is looking forward to a safe and happy 2023!

As the new year begins, there will be lots of activity, starting with the 34th Annual Home Tour in February, followed by the Willo Neighborhood Association elections in March.

This will be my last President's Column. I have lived in Willo for 24 years and have been President or a board member for 12 of those years. My term ends in March 2023.

I dedicate my final column to the memory of Bob and Alice Zajack, my neighbors on Cypress who lived across the street. They reminded me very much of my grandparents, also immigrants from Eastern Europe. Bob asked me to help with traffic as he was afraid of being hit by speeding cars racing from 7th Avenue to Central via Cypress. I told him I would 'look into it.' I hope I have made them both proud.

SOME NOSTALGIA

I remember my first term as President very well - like it was almost yesterday.

The Light Rail and its impact on Willo were being discussed. What about our streets... we are cut through haven to Central... what about the Willo Walk proposal (now called Tapestry on Central)? And most importantly... What will we do about 1st Avenue North of Holly? Can we stop the

pending completion of 1st Avenue from Holly to Thomas? What can we do about the empty lots on McDowell Road bordering Almeria? Why do we need a website? What can we do about the vacant lots on McDowell Road bordering Almeria? Why can't I build a two-story addition and add a garage to my side yard?

Those were the issues that the Board of Directors and I faced back then; I learned a great deal about strategic priorities, communicating with various stakeholders, learning patience through knowledge of the subject matter, and exercising diplomacy skills as I represented the largest historic neighborhood in the city.

NOW SPEED UP TO TODAY

My third term ends in March 2023. I have decided not to pursue a fourth term. Yet, I will continue to participate in a guidance role as President Emeritus to ensure a smooth transition and provide continuity for the new president and board.

The WNA and community participants accomplished much over the past six years. My heartfelt thanks to board members, past and present, all volunteers, and stakeholders, whose dedication and participation made these accomplishments possible. You are sincerely appreciated.

SOME OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT WILLO



ON THE COVER:
61 W. WILSHIRE
THE HOME IS
PART OF HOME
TOUR 2023
SEE PAGE 13
FOR DETAILS.
PHOTO BY ADDISION DENT
(WINDSOR)

NEIGHBORHOOD ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE PAST SIX YEARS ARE:

◆ A six-year strategic collaboration with the City of Phoenix for the redevelopment of a safer, community-oriented 3rd & 5th Avenues, instrumentally advocating for the \$5 million budget to pay for the project's construction... starting in early 2023. Heartfelt thanks to everyone

(continued on page 7)



(continued from page 3)

who attended and stood up at budget and City Council meetings with me for the last three years. We did our best to collaborate with all stakeholders in this long process.

◆ Finalized the FAA Flight Routes Agreement between Willo, FQ Story, Roosevelt, Encanto-Palmcroft and the City of Phoenix. Cost to WNA \$25,000 in legal fees, funded from Home Tour profits. Thank you to the homeowners who have graciously participated by sharing their homes to raise funds over the years.

◆ Secured Block Watch Grant funding for the past two years to help pay for WILLOPHX.COM, Kids Club, and Luminarias. We had not received such funding previously.

◆ Led the opposition against Raising Cane's at 7th Ave/Thomas (Old Duke Photography Building).

◆ Negotiated the Cambridge & Virginia Avenue Project for single-family residences, finally eliminating the option of an APS substation on the site.

◆ Challenged multiple zoning cases to uphold the Willo Conservation Plan protecting the neighborhood's historic tax incentives, directly impacting all of us. This was never easy, but I was elected to uphold the Willo Conservation Plan.

◆ Met with City of Phoenix officials and suggested changes to the Historic Preservation Office, improving communication and consistency on cases affecting the historic character of Willo.

◆ Initiated and established the Four Corners Leadership

Group, comprised of 4 historic neighborhood presidents (Willo, FQ Story, Encanto-Palmcroft, and Roosevelt) to collaborate and share information.

◆ Collaborated with stakeholders on the Central/NW Corner Thomas project to support the construction of a medium-high-rise office complex.

◆ Facilitated the installation of 5G Towers in Willo, the first Historic Neighborhood in Phoenix to install 5G, one of the more difficult challenges of my terms.

◆ Initiated communication with the City to work towards securing Bond Funds to address flooding and drainage issues.

◆ Orchestration of five successful Home Tours.

◆ Established a Communications Committee to oversee Willo's media presence, including both Willo's Facebook pages and Willo Sells pages.

◆ Redesigned WILLOPHX.COM for ease of use, including a ZOOM link to all board meetings.

◆ Revised *Inside Willo* Magazine to continue a free full-color neighborhood communication resource printed 10 times a year.

◆ Provided the strategic foundation for the successful Willo Architecture & Photo Book, which was entirely produced and printed using WNA Home Tour funds exclusively.

◆ Provided ongoing support for Annual Willo Luminarias.

◆ Launched Willo Food Truck Wednesdays in response to Covid lockdowns.

◆ Increased support for Willo Kids Club and G.A.I.N. events.

The WNA Board works very hard to find a balance between the demands of the growth of Phoenix and the protection of the historic character and quality of life of the Willo neighborhood as outlined in the Willo Conservation Plan. We work diligently to reinforce that the Willo Neighborhood Association is not an HOA and that the Willo Conservation Plan is why the WNA was formulated in 1986. No one pays dues.

The community spirit and dedication to our neighborhood by elected (not appointed) board members and teams of volunteers made these accomplishments possible. The hard work of residents devoting their time and effort to make Willo events, publications, activities, and our media presence successful is responsible for making Willo one of the best and most prominent Historic Neighborhoods in Phoenix.

In closing, it has been an honor to be President of the Willo Neighborhood Association for the past six years. This column is my last as President. However, I will remain active in the neighborhood and look forward to working alongside the new generation of Willow leadership.

I thank you all.

*Sincerely,
Dr. Robert L. Cannon
WNA President*

Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in." The author is unknown. ■