

Little Bohemia Neighborhood Association
Meeting notes, January 7, 2016

Meeting hosted by Mark Fangmeier and Lindsay Kimball, 455 Banfil Street, 7:00 PM

Co-chaired by Lindsay and Mark. We began with round-robin introductions.

Sign up! We need hosts for future meetings. Mark circulated a sign-up sheet. May and December are social gatherings, with no business agendas. There is no meeting of any kind in August (instead we have National Night Out). We are still looking for someone to host next month's meeting on February 4th, if you are interested in hosting please email info@littlebohemiastpaul.org.

Holiday lights. We put up lights on some of the City-owned houses, and it's time to take 'em down. Mark asked for volunteers, and signed a few folks up. 11:00 AM on Saturday January 9 is the gathering time. Unless someone wants strings of older lights (no one does), Mark and Lindsay will recycle them. Extension cords can be returned to Evan.

Home Tour. This will be the fifth year in a row Little Bohemia has participated. Renovations, small houses and architecturally-interesting homes are particularly desired. The Tour will be April 30 and May 1. Marit can connect people with the organizer: call her at 612-290-9332 or send email to maritbrock@gmail.com. If you need more information before you make a decision, the organizer is happy to talk with you. Federation-rehabbed homes have been on the tour before, and may be again (though we hope those homes will be sold before the Tour).

Housing RFP Update. 47 Douglas (right beside the alleyway), 69 Garfield and 2 vacant lots are up for proposals. There's progress, but no significant update.

Properties. These are two vacant houses in our neighborhood:

292 Sturgis Street: this property has not yet gone through foreclosure. The owning bank is just sitting on it. The City has condemned it: it needs significant repairs before it can be inhabited, and is now category 2. Because our neighborhood is doing much better, there is no money available from the City to rehab it. What we need is for a developer or contractor to acquire it. Until the house is designated category 3, the City won't force action. If we see problems, please report them to the City: ultimately this pressure may sway the owner into doing something.

251 Forbes Avenue: this is owned by a bank/trust/property management firm. After a long period of no activity, it has been listed as vacant by the City. Ergo, the owner is now under some pressure to sell, or pay for City-provided services. If you see that snow is not being shoveled, or grass is not mowed, call the City at 651-266-8989. This is St. Paul's 'complaint line.' The City is happy to shovel or mow, and then charge the owner for the services!

Current Problem Properties/Safety Concerns. 'Eddie and Pam' are still blocking Evan's driveway easement. The red Porsche is parked on the street, gathering snow. The parking

enforcement officer is supposedly going to take action. Unfortunately Pam, the property owner, refuses to believe the facts until the City tells her so officially—and the City does not seem prepared to do so until/unless Evan brings an action, which would cost him some cash. Would a fence firm do such a survey, particularly if Evan wants a fence erected?

The red Porsche has no plates. It is parked on the street on Forbes Avenue. Please call Parking Enforcement during daytime business hours at 651-266-5585 and report this vehicle. If enough of us do so, perhaps the City will tow it. Hey, perhaps we should call our new City Council person, Rebecca Noecker, and enlist her help!

Bike Path Planning, Phase 2. Phase 1 covers the portion of the bike path from Western Avenue to Duke Street—really, Western to Goodrich, where the hairpin turn is located. The path from St. Clair to Goodrich and Western to Grand will be repaved, probably during summer 2017. Water access should be added in Pleasant Park. Crosswalks should be put in on Grand and on St. Clair.

Phase 2 will require another contract, if we're willing. It will involve some further planting and maintenance, but no designated garden areas (like in Pleasant Park). Ideas? Erica would like to see some trees planted for noise abatement. Aspen, sumac, a few evergreens and some ground cover—such as native wildflowers—seem desirable to many people, especially if we put the trees toward the top of the hill, with the butterfly-attracting flowers closer to the bottom. Perhaps some raspberries, or buffalo berries? Hops? Milkweed? Butterfly bush? Joe Pye weed?

There was some vandalism to the first phase of tree plantings. We can, if we choose, get a few more seedlings of the same type in Phase 2 and replant them. Maybe some beehives? (Does the U of M still do the program where they will care for hives if we're willing to host them?) Maybe some signage to describe the native plantings? (Could we get the Journeys students to make some such signs for us?)

Journeys is interested in doing a forestry program of some kind. Those students would be available to help do maintenance on our plantings. Are there other groups we would want to aid us during Phase 2—or do we want to do it all ourselves? We don't want to burn ourselves out, but neither do we want to take on a huge additional responsibility. We think having both regular monthly events plus individual sign-ups (as we do with the trash collection in Pleasant Park) will work most effectively.

We like the name “Little Bohemia Trail.”

Additionally here are Jennifer Gehlhar's notes that she will be submitting to our MnDOT representative:

Goal: To re-naturalize the area, allowing for continued growth over long term and less maintenance than park-like area of phase I (phase I has several planting beds [including

all along wall] that require regular weeding, etc., and this phase II will not have that level of maintenance)

Specific Plantings:

Trees - aspen, evergreen stands (to help reduce 35e traffic noise, provide shelter for wildlife/birds/butterflies/bees). May move some of damaged trees in phase I to phase II so as to plant park-perfect specimens at Pleasant Place (for safety, appearance, longevity).

Other woody plants - sumac, raspberries, buffalo berries, other thorny plants

Perennials - flowers, grasses, drought tolerant; specifically milkweed, Joe Pye weed, hops (hops @ Western, between path and wall)

Mulch - for phase I area (to add larger rings around trees, fill in gardens and along wall where needed) and for new trees in phase II

Design note - create continuity from phase I to phase II

Other - add signage for taxonomic names (Erika can weld, others in community may want to help to make this a fun project)

Other - Get bee hives. There's a program at U of M.

Other - Find watering resource for 2016 season (St Paul Forestry watered for us in 2015), perhaps a local Fire Station

Next steps: Hand off notes to MnDOT for review and to sketch up a landscape design for our review (maybe by March)! Get resolution from City to officially designate LBNA as maintenance group for phase II.

Remember to call 651-266-8989, and report nuisance properties to the City!

The next LBNA business meeting will be Thursday, February 4, 2016. If you would like to host the meeting or have agenda ideas please email info@littlebohemiaspaul.org

If you find glaring errors in these notes, please send corrections to sisk@macalester.edu