

Little Bohemia Neighborhood Association
Meeting notes, March 5, 2015

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

Co-chaired by Lindsay and Mark

Introductions.

Housing Update regarding HSA Properties - Tom/Mark

29 Douglas (the big brick house) and 280 Forbes will be on the Tour of Homes. The exteriors may not be done, but they're for sale "as is." Landscaping and exteriors to follow as weather permits.

The house beside the Stone Saloon on Smith has been approved for relocation to the 41 Douglas lot. The HRA subsidy approved was larger than expected. Our letter of support helped!

Becky Errigo from Neighbor Works Home Partners presented to us about the HRA properties they've acquired. The duplex at 337/339 Goodrich is being rehabilitated. The owner intends to live in one unit and rent out the other.

NWHP has also acquired lots at 376 Sturgis and 314 Harrison. The city is selling half of the Harrison lot to the DuPays at 306 Harrison. The other (tiny) one-and-one-half lots are being combined into a single larger lot. Becky circulated three tentative floor plans/designs for the houses NWHP is planning to build on these sites. Balancing cost and visitability requirements are a challenge for both; for the Harrison site, having no alley creates further difficulty. Both houses will be to LEED-certification standards for new construction. The hope is to put it out for bids within a month or so.

We briefly talked about the possibility for a garage. There's not much flexibility, given the small size of the lot. We were asked about driveway/turnaround space versus yard, and the general preference is for yard. We think this would be more likely to attract families, and stay consistent with the other large-yard properties in our neighborhood.

We also filled Becky in about the, ahh, unique bedrock situation in our neighborhood (it's very close to the surface). This will affect the design of basements. Some landscaping and fencing can be included with the construction. We ask NWHP to be sensitive to neighbors' concerns about fencing and drainage.

Becky offers to draw up a few more ideas and come to a future meeting to discuss them with us. We're grateful for the opportunity to weigh in!

Banfil Street Property Idea from Mitch Lark. Mitch lives near here, in Highland Park, and owns the lots at 428 and 430 Banfil Street. (These have been *de facto* 'community gardens' for the last few years.) Mitch likes the 'tiny house' concept. He is interested in ideas for building small houses (<500 square feet) on these properties, probably as rental units, and distributed sheets outlining his 'tiny townhomes' concept. City zoning restrictions may be a challenge: as it is now, with two separate lots, Mitch would need a variance for anything other than two single-

family houses. Mitch currently owns and rents out a house, so he has experience as a responsible landlord. We talked briefly about his ideas, including off-street parking, current trees versus garden space, and Mitch's desire to work with those of us who live in the neighborhood. We certainly appreciate Mitch's consulting with us.

If Mitch were talking about building energy-efficient and 'green' single-family dwellings, we'd be immediately enthusiastic. However, based on our difficult history with 'bad' rental properties and landlords, we're sensitive on the subject. The burden is on Mitch to come up with a plan that addresses the LBNA's concerns. We'll welcome Mitch to future meetings to discuss his ideas as they develop.

Mitch also mentions that he welcomes people who might want to garden on these lots over the summer. Please contact him directly if you're interested—mitchstpaul@gmail.com, (612) 270-6706.

275 Erie Street Property Update. Betty from Fort Road Federation did further research on the property and found the following:

- It was originally a Czech church, and a book has been written about it!
- 2002 Truth in Housing report was done for a single family residence
- 2003 Truth in Housing report was done for a duplex—no permits
- 2005 Certificate of Occupancy was done for a triplex—no permits

Basically, for at least the last decade, the residence has been a triplex without having a permit for a triplex. "Not good and not going to happen again."

The house has recently changed owners. The new owners have applied to rebuild it as a duplex and are trying to get neighbors to agree (and sign papers to that effect). The immediate neighbors have objected and we have supported them. Though some building has been done, the owners do not have a permit for construction. If you see any construction being performed on this house, please call the city and report it.

Home Tour Update: Marit

- April 25th and 26th
- 29 Douglas and 280 Forbes will be highlighted in the packet, and all houses will be open for tour during the event.

The city has not announced a big cleanup. We may want to organize our own for the neighborhood, say on April 18, the weekend before the Tour. We're tentatively penciling a cleanup in for that day, weather permitting. We may also have LBNA flyers available for visitors. Bring ideas to the April 2 meeting.

Fiscal Agent Update: Meredith and Mark

Mark and Marit met with Jerry at the *Community Reporter*, and the *Reporter* has agreed to serve as the new fiscal agent for LBNA. Mark and Marit will write up a formal letter to make the deal official, and then transfer our funds.

Garden Tour: Mark

Saturday, June 20th - 8th Annual West End Neighbors Garden Tour - Uppertown and Uppertown Triangle. Joe Landsberger is heading this up. This will include yards and gardens, since some residences landscape with distinctive features that might not “qualify” as gardens, or the expectations of gardens. Examples could be a distinctive structure, pavers and paths, fencing, etc.

2016 - Victoria Park

2017 - Little Bohemia

Meeting is March 26th at 6:00 at Fort Road Federation Offices. Get involved now and learn how it works! (This will be helpful as we prepare for the 2017 tour.)

Pleasant Place and CRP Grant Update: Jennifer G. Jennifer circulated a revised set of plans for Phase I from MnDOT. The planting will start in May, from Smith to Western: volunteers are needed and strongly encouraged. We need to provide our own tools. Would Leitner’s be willing to assist us? Perhaps Home Depot would donate some tools as well.

MN Tree Care Advisors will advise us about tree planting, and inspect the inventory MnDOT is providing. Minnesota Master Naturalists is providing volunteers. Jennifer is also asking for information about perennial plantings. Journeys School and the DNR Forestry School will meet with Jennifer in two weeks to talk about a potential work-focused study program for the Journeys students. This may also help us with long-term maintenance. Jennifer is also exploring a partnership with Women On Bikes; she hopes to have more information for our April 2 meeting.

CIB Grant Presentation: March 31st. Mark will present our grant proposal. He will touch base with Jennifer over the next couple of weeks to identify potential partners, who can write letters of support for our proposal.

Problem Properties / Safety Concerns. The city has a program for painting intersections, with a goal of slowing down traffic. The city provides design help and paint, but neighbors do the actual work of painting.

The brick house on Sturgis is still vacant. Jeffrey Austin has approached the owner with a first pass at an offer, and it’s being mulled over. It’s in pretty bad condition and Jeffrey will be talking to the West Seventh Federation about it.

The city has approved demolition of the arson-damaged house on Sturgis. The owner is walking away from it.

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

The next LBNA business meeting will be Thursday April 2, 7:00 PM, hosted by Jenny at 295 Sturgis Street. Send agenda ideas to info@littlebohemiastpaul.org

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