

**Little Bohemia Neighborhood Association**  
**Meeting notes, July 7, 2016**

**Meeting hosted by Tom and Marit Brock (ably assisted by dog Junior), 74 Garfield Street, 7:00 PM**

Co-chaired by Lindsay Kimball and Mark Fangmeier

**Introductions!**

**Wilder Foundation presentation.** Family Independence Initiative - Tina Sykes, Wilder Foundation Family Liaison. Responding to the high degree of poverty in St. Paul, this initiative partners with individual families to form groups, “cohorts,” of 5-7 additional families to support and help the FII family. Cohorts meet once a month and set goals collaboratively. Cohorts agree to provide data to the Wilder Foundation monthly, and receive monthly computer stipends to do so. This data is collated and presented to policymakers, demonstrating that lower income families can and do better themselves (and their neighborhoods) by working together. ‘Family’ can include shared households. Tina helps cohorts get set up and started, so that all participants clearly understand the expectations and benefits. She also audits and reviews the data families submit. The Family Independence Initiative started in Oakland and has spread to a number of American cities, including San Francisco and Boston. The program is now launching here in the Twin Cities. See <http://www.wilder.org/fii>

Marit puts in a plug for the Wilder Foundation’s community leadership development program. Sarah has also been through this and speaks well of it.

**Grand Stop discussion.** Gas station at Grand and Smith Avenues - Britney Schuller. While the property was vacant, it was rezoned as traditional housing, T1. The buyer petitioned to have the zoning reversed back to mixed use, B3, and this happened. The neighborhood did express several criteria for the gas station, some of which were written into the lease. The property owner does not seem to be living up to many of these criteria (notably long-term parking of cars under repair, the wooden fence, concrete barricade, etc.) There have been 65 police calls to this site since September of 2013, mostly thefts, drunken/disorderly behavior and traffic accidents. Oddly, many of these happen between 2:00 and 4:00 PM.

Mark notes that the new owner had to apply for a variance to reopen the gas station. The owner approached LBNA and asked for our help to get this; we did so. Many agree that the homeless people camping on the property is also problematic at the Burger King nearby. Erica spoke with the manager once, who replied with something vague about reporting to the regional team. Hm.

There seems to be a consensus that, at the least, we need to bring the owner into our group to discuss our expectations. We should be clear on what we want to see done and have deadlines. We might see about asking one of our regular police officers, and a small group of LBNA members, to participate. Mark and Lindsay will convene a small group to work on this. We’ll also look into the Burger King. This is owned by a retired physician from Children’s Hospital, Leonard Garr and his daughter Cynthia Garr.

**Little Bohemia Trail.** Updates and next steps - Jen Gelhar. Much has been planted! There is mulch yet to disperse. Can we get a person appointed to collect the piles of discarded weeds, clippings, etc.? Maybe set up a compost heap? Jen points out that the St. Paul yard waste collection site is nearby (beside the ice skating arena). Nikki has a black yard waste container in her alley, and is willing to accept waste for disposal.

The water meter and a hose attachment is set up, on the fire hydrant at the apex of Harrison and Western. There are combination locks, and Lindsay will share the combinations. These fittings will stay in place until it gets cold in late fall. Ted and Jen have already donated two soaker/drip hoses. Perhaps we can get a few more, then get a list of volunteers to connect these and turn them on for a few hours at a time.

Has there been thought of collecting donations for the bike path? Mark will talk with our financial agent. Maybe we could join into Give To The Max Day, and also collect funds during National Night Out.

Two oaks remain to be planted. Erica would like one across from her house. Sure thing!

We have a tentative date of Saturday morning, July 9, for the oak planting and mulching. Stringing/hanging mesh or chickenwire for the hops and clematis would be Sunday July 17 at 3:00 PM. Details will be up on the LBNA Facebook page.

**Update on 314 Harrison Redevelopment/Zoning Variance.** Requested by Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity - Sharon Lynch. Lindsay circulated the variance request from Habitat (the sidewalk setback is the point of the variance). The variance hearing will be July 18. A letter of support from LBNA has been requested. We're good with it, so Lindsay will draft and send this letter.

**National Night Out Planning.** Tuesday August 2, Pleasant Place. Can we get Burly the Oak?! Requests are in for police—K-9, mounted, motorcycle cops, SWAT, whatever they got. DeGidio's may offer food. How about Summit and Bad Weather? Do we invite churches—Piercing Faith, St. Stan's? There will be flyers produced and many of us are volunteering to distribute them. Potluck. BYOB. Bring bug spray.

**Problem Properties/Safety Concerns.** There's a public hearing about the future of 451 Goodhue, July 26 at 9:00 AM in City Hall, room 330. This house does not have historic designation and the city is considering demolishing it.

276 Forbes is still odd. There is a lot of foot traffic to and from here, particularly first thing in the morning. Is there drug dealing? Fencing low-grade stolen goods? We don't know. Keep your eyes open. A call list will be started.

300 Sturgis is a rental property and the tenants are not the best. Jen reports that there's been a lot of yelling and drinking. They've already put together a call list.

475 Banfil has had several incidents, including a domestic violence call and at least one event where the block was sealed off and many teenagers taken away in handcuffs. There were a lot of fireworks shot off from 7:00 PM to about midnight, loud enough to set off alarm systems. The owner, Mark has found, is a retired hedge fund manager who lives in Minneapolis on Mount Curve Boulevard. Mark called the owner, as did some other unhappy nearby homeowners. There have been reports of drug sales. A call list is expanding.

Marit suggests we dig up the LBNA letter to landlords, update it, and circulate it to the landlords of these properties. Good idea!

The historic firehouse has been broken into recently. There will be a conference call next week to update stakeholders about development plans. Negotiations have been extended for a further 30 days, through mid-August.

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

The next LBNA business meeting will be at 7:00 PM, Thursday September 1, hosted by Evan and Abbie at 38 Douglas. Send agenda ideas to [info@littlebohemiaspaul.org](mailto:info@littlebohemiaspaul.org)

If you find glaring errors in these notes, please send corrections to [sisk@macalester.edu](mailto:sisk@macalester.edu)

\* \* \* \* \*

### Upcoming Events

- **Grand Oak Opry** - July 16th from 7:30 PM to 9:30 PM at 273 Goodhue Street with Martin Devaney performing.
- **Full Moon Garden Night** - July 19th from 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM along Little Bohemia Trail. Pick weeds, pick up trash, prune, rake, and plant. Bring your gardening gloves!
- **Grand Oak Opry** - July 23rd from 7:30 PM to 9:30PM at 273 Goodhue Street with Mina Moore performing.
- **The First Annual Great Ward 2 BBQ** - July 31st from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM at the small picnic shelter at Cherokee Regional Park. RSVP via EventBrite form: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1st-annual-great-ward-2-bbq-tickets-26122374726>
- **National Night Out** - August 2nd from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM at Pleasant Place (Harrison Avenue and Garfield Street)
- **Grand Oak Opry** - August 13th from 7:30 PM to 9:30 PM at 273 Goodhue Street with Roe Family Singers performing.
- **Full Moon Garden Night** - August 18th from 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM along Little Bohemia Trail. Pick weeds, pick up trash, prune, rake, and plant. Bring your gardening gloves!