

**Blackstone Neighborhood Association**

**General Membership Meeting Minutes**

**July 27, 2021 6:30 pm**

**People Present: 72**

Mark Maser, president, called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm. We were gathered in the beautiful ballroom of the newly restored Cottonwood Hotel. They were gracious hosts, providing an open bar for attendees. A number of media were present to cover the meeting.

Minutes for the previous General Membership meeting were approved.

Curt Snodgrass gave a treasurer’s report and invited people to pay their annual membership dues of $20.

Rhonda Stuberg gave a membership report and also invited people to pay their annual membership dues. She passed around a sign up list for all the folks who were there to let us know who they were and if they wanted to become members or subscribe to the email list.

New City Councilperson Danny Begley was introduced and spoke briefly to the gathering.

Mark Maser announced plans for an upcoming home and building tour, probably for the spring. There will also be a virtual tour—the first in the city. He appealed for folks to help with these projects.

Jim Farho introduced Matt Oberst from the Blackstone Business Improvement District to give the presentation on the Blackstone District Streetscape Project.

**Blackstone District Streetscape Project**. Our neighborhood has grown in population and businesses--$250 million invested since 2014 and 30 new businesses. And that growth is anticipated to continue, particularly as there is not sufficient housing in the area for UNMC’s expected growth. We also have concerns about pedestrian safety and furthering economic development. This has led to an effort to slow down traffic along Farnam in the Blackstone Business District.

The new streetscape will widen sidewalks, narrow driving lanes, and install signature lighting. These should enhance the area and help with safety, development, and growth. The estimated cost is $4.4 million. Fundraising is currently underway. An engaging video of the design plans was shown.

**Question and Answer session**. Topics raised included:

* Could we narrow driving lanes to 10 feet?—will be looked into
* How long is the construction cycle?—One year
* Could the signature lighting extend one more block to the west?—Will be looked at. It increases the costs of the project, but no principled reason not to.
* Can there be pedestrian crossways? Public works is not open to it. The Councilperson promised to pursue this further.

**Resolution.** Mark Maser read a resolution of support for the project. This was recommended by the Executive Committee. Moved by Rita Barney and seconded by Rosemary Fogarty. The resolution passed with all those voting voting in affirmation.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at **6:50 pm.**  Some people enjoyed a tour of the hotel, and some enjoyed the open bar and chatting with friends.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Scott Jones**

Secretary, Blackstone Neighborhood Association