



Blackstone Neighborhood Association
General Membership Meeting Minutes
July 26, 2022 **6:00 pm**

People Present: 12

Mark Maser, president, called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm. on Zoom.

Minutes of the last meeting: approval was moved by Jim and seconded by Cathy and approved unanimously.

Financial Report: Curt stated that the balance is \$3297 in unrestricted funds and \$2121 in the beautification fund. Income from the tour project has come in. The current net amount in that fund is \$14,732. He has received a few more dues. Curt reminded the group that dues are \$20 per household, payable to the treasurer.

Membership: Maser asked that members encourage their neighbors to join. Or to provide contact information to Maser or Stuberg to be contacted for membership.

A By Law Change was proposed. The following ByLaw change was proposed by Curt Snodgrass and seconded by Jim Farho. It passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 4 - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Eligibility for Membership.

Any individual (at least 18 years of age) or business, who resides or owns property within or near the association boundaries is eligible for membership in the association. A member is any eligible individual who has paid the annual dues for the current calendar year.

Section 2. Fees and Dues.

Dues: Annual dues, in amounts set by the Board of Directors, shall be payable by households and business members each calendar year. Dues will be collected by the treasurer. Dues shall not be prorated for a partial year membership. Dues shall be used by the association to cover the costs for postage, printing, photocopying and other such expenses necessary in carrying out the day to day business of the association or any special projects approved by the executive board.

Neighborhood Construction Developments:

No current report on the properties at 517 and 521 S. 38th Avenue.

The eight story GreenSlate development on Farnam between 37th and 3th Street has begun. It is expected to take over two years to complete. Expect the crane to arrive soon.

Noddle Development continues to close 38th Street between Dewey & Jackson. They have stated that it will open again in August.

The Burlington Development at 38th & Leavenworth's street closure will continue to at least year end.

Maser reported that Dundee neighbors attending a committee meeting were very interested in our "locally landmarking" project, as they are seeing an increase in construction incursions into their neighborhood.

Beautification:

Rhonda reported that planters are in full bloom. Thanks to those neighbors who are caring for the containers they have adopted. Be sure to water in this summer's heat. Pinch back the sweet potato vine, as it is growing well, in spite of the heat.

Home Tour:

Mark gave updates on the home tour, including that the brand new website is now live. He gave us some dates to save. Monday, Sept. 19 a lunch with Mary Creighton Maxwell, local humorist who grew up in the neighborhood. Saturday, August 20 will be a volunteer recruitment event at the Nest, part of Nite Owl on Farnam. October 7 a patron party in the Cloud Room of the Blackstone Plaza. The tour is set for October 8 and 9th - 10-4 on the 8th and 12-4 on the 9th. There will be a brunch on the 9th with Mary Shimmel Bernstein whose father owned the Blackstone Hotel.

Maser reported that BNA has received about \$18,000 in grants and sponsorships, as well as in kind support of about \$15,000. The steering committee believes it is on track to meet its goal of \$25,000 net proceeds from the tour and events.

Ten properties will be on the tour. Advance tickets are now on sale. \$20 tickets are available on the website. Tour weekend tickets will be \$25 at the door. Many tickets have already been sold.

We need more volunteers. Sign up is on the website.

Benefits of the tour project include the creation of an association website, a bimonthly newsletter and the ability to take payments on line. All which will help to better communicate with neighbors and the community.

Social:

We still need a social chair. We will assess a holiday gathering after the tour project.

Midtown Neighborhood Alliance:

Kathy reported that the last MNA meeting focused on pedestrian safety – as a result of the example set by the BBID and its attempts at calming traffic on Farnam. A committee devoted to such will be formed.

MNA is also working to better share with the community the work that it does – tree planting, mini grants and more.

MNA will be our fiscal agent for purposes of the tour.

MNA is taking nominations for their good landlords award.

Blackstone Improvement District:

Jim Farho and Matthew Oberst reported for the BBID.

- A Pilot project to reduce traffic lanes from 36th to 40th on Farnam St. started in May. And has proved successful. Pedestrian safety drove the change. The BID funded the engineering of the change for the city to implement. This pilot will run until the final project's hardscape changes are funded. Goal is to be part of the 2023 construction cycle. BID requested \$2M in infrastructure funding from Rep. Don Bacon's office. Should know if approved September or by year end.
- BBID has created a mechanism for feedback on this project and would appreciate your response.
- The Streetcar project and the BBID street project are cooperating as both plans move forward.
- The streetcar is currently planned along Farnam Street traveling in both directions in the traffic lanes. It will run from 10th Streets to 42nd Street, possibly to SaddleCreek if the Med Center is persuasive in its efforts to move the terminus farther West. There will be two stops in Blackstone – possibly at 36th and 40th Streets. At Tenth Street it will also service the BaseBall Park and Arena/Convention Center.
- Safety is paramount for the BBID. It currently funds patrols in the area. But may be moving to off duty policeman. The city of Omaha's SE Precinct has suggested it will be placing mounted and bike patrols in the area, but have not yet been seen.
- Bids are now being taken for the Christmas lights project on Farnam Street. Lights are expected to in place by November 1 and remain lit through the winter season.
- BID has approval for smaller banners for acorn lights. The smaller banners can be changed by the BID and reflect events. Farnam Fest, 2nd Saturday events, Maha events, neighborhood tours, etc.
- All street lights have been upgraded to LED to promote safer, well lit sidewalks and streets.
- New mural will be created on the upper west exterior wall of the Mula building.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at **7:26 pm** following a motion by Jim, seconded by Ron.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mark Maser *for*

Scott Jones

Secretary, Blackstone Neighborhood Association