

SONA Monthly Meeting  
February 6, 2016  
Minutes

Attendance: Karen Bluvas, Mike Boyle, Duane Brooks, Joel Cota, Oscar Duran, Vince Furlong, Garry Gernandt, Carol Haas, Krystal Kozawa, Mary Ann Krzemien, Mary Locati, Rachel Meier, Chris Miller, Madeline Moyer, Charles Posey, Tim Potter, Athena Ramos, Julie Smith, Kimara Snipe, Jeff Spiehs, John Synowiecki, Tom and Joyce Theiler, Mary Thompson, Anna Wilcoxon

Visitors: Gary Christian (In Common), Jerry McGuire (One World Health), Michael McGuire (Deer Park), Chris Carithers (Election Office), NeEtta Gillespie (Arts for All), Charles Isom (Senator Fox office), Brian Kruse

Meeting called to order 7:05pm

Welcome & Introductions

Treasurers Report – Tim Potter.

- Nothing new to report. Everyone should have received a financial statement via email. If you did not receive, make sure to talk to Mary Ann to make sure you are on the list.

Elected Officials

- Mike Boyle – Douglas County Commissioner
  - Douglas County Board working on a project due to death of an inmate at a facility. Many inmates suffering from mental health issues. There is a full medical facility at 17<sup>th</sup> & Leavenworth facility, and may be looking to expand for a specific mental health clinic.
  - There is a special unit for Veterans in Douglas County because they have unique needs. County would like to have this done without raising taxes.
- Garry Gernandt – Omaha City Council
  - City is still solvent. Brittany – Executive Director has tendered her resignation from the Land Bank. Councilmen Gernandt and Gray are working with the board to fill the vacancy.
- Representative on behalf of Senator Nicole Fox
  - There are many big issues coming up in the legislature. For updates or concerns, please contact [nfox@leg.ne.gov](mailto:nfox@leg.ne.gov).
- Brian Kruse
  - Primary election is coming up in May and the General election in November. You can request an early voting ballot by going to office, website or calling. Early ballots can be mailed back into the office or dropped at the South Omaha library in the special box. If any questions or want someone to come to a neighborhood association meeting to speak, please let the office know. (402) 444-VOTE
- State Senator Heath Mello
  - Senator is currently working on a number of bills that are important to SONA membership:
    1. Expand neighborhood notifications for business improvement districts and zoning.
    2. Home-care consumer bill of rights (carried forward from last year) - Families receiving care in their homes will have a better understanding of aspects of liability and consumer protections
    3. Improve general Nebraska consumer protection statutes (bill on behalf of Attorney General)

4. Broader Medicaid expansion as a way to provide access to healthcare to 77,000 currently in the coverage gap in Nebraska.
  - Please email or call office with any questions and concerns. The office also sends out emails weekly so you make request to be added to the list.
- Police Report
  - Everything going well in South East precinct. Area has had some higher profile incidents involving auto thefts South of I-80 by a ring of people working together and related through methamphetamine activity. Officers have identified a lot of individuals involved. Several arrests have been made. Lots of autos recovered.
  - Gang activity near 30<sup>th</sup> & V including graffiti. There is a current operation going on.
  - Robberies do appear to be on the rise. Officers are keeping an eye on banks, gas stations, etc.

#### One Omaha

- Tomorrow is deadline for Spring Clean-up.
- Seed money for ONE Omaha Leadership Program has been secured; however, more fundraising needs to be done.
- Mayors Grant will be released on February 8, and they will be due due 04/01/2016. There is no theme this year. A workshop will be held for applicants on March 9.
- ONE would like to help alliances and associations to build their capacity. To that end, ONE will offer workshops before SONA meetings. Please let Julie know what topics would be of interest such as fundraising, engaging youth, Nextdoor.com, etc. One idea suggested by SONA member was on how to cultivate new leadership in associations.
- Fundraising opportunity for associations to sell concessions at Werner Park. Association will get 10% of whatever is sold. Contact Nick Korth at (402) 738-5122 or via email [nick\\_korth@comcastspectator.com](mailto:nick_korth@comcastspectator.com)

#### Mayors Office

- Step Up Program is open. The goal this year is to get 600 youth employed from June 6 – August 12. For more information, visit: [www.stepupomaha.org](http://www.stepupomaha.org)

#### Old Business

1. NUSA Conference - NUSA conference will be here in 2017. Attendance averages about 750 people. Several people from Omaha will be attending 2016 Conference in Memphis.
  - NUSA Conference Registration Scholarship – Oscar Duran
    - MOTION: To support 4 conference registration scholarships for SONA members to attend the 2016 conference. (Made by Duran, 2<sup>nd</sup> Snipe). Motion carried. Scholarships approved.
    - Flyers distributed for February 5, 2016 Fundraiser for Memphis bus trip
2. SONA Banquet: June 2, 2016; Theme: “Celebrating 50 years of South Omaha Leadership”
  - Looking for sponsors for the banquet. Sponsorship letters are available. The goal is to raise \$10,000.
  - Duane Brooks is the Awards Chairman. Please contact him to nominate a person or organization for an award or to volunteer with the event. (402) 651-6963

#### New Business

1. Strategic Planning – SONA will be undergoing a strategic planning process over this year. More information to follow.
  - Good plans are built on foundations of strengths. To start thinking about the strengths of

South Omaha, everyone participated in small group discussions.

- Strengths include:
  - Strong “roots” and family histories
  - Ethnic traditions and cultural food
  - Caring
  - Work ethic
  - Pride
  - Community leadership
  - Generosity
  - People and relationships
  - Diversity and inclusion
  - Access to elected officials
  - Unity and a sense of community
  - Entrepreneurialism
  - Authenticity
  - Feels safe
  - Vibrancy (people out on the streets)

2. Promise Zone Designation – SONA is partnering with the Empowerment Network on the application trying to create one zone that consists of 21 census tracts in North Omaha and 12 in South Omaha. The poverty rate within each of these tracts ranges from 10% - 45%. If Omaha is selected it will provide points that you could use when applying for federal grants. The application requires goals and strategies encompassing six categories: education, health and safety, transportation, housing, and economic vitality. The deadline is February 23. If selected then we will need to find partners to help implement the strategies. The city is working on developing a one page overview of expectations for partners. The designation is good for 10 years and is modeled after the Enterprise Zone (Heath Mello). This designation allows cities that bring grassroots organizations together a better chance of getting federal funding. Omaha was not selected last year due to a lack of civic engagement.

#### Neighborhood News & Partner Updates

- Restoration Exchange
  - Restore Omaha Conference (11<sup>th</sup> year) on March 4-5, 2016 - If you own or live in an older building (residential or commercial) and are looking for ways to keep it together and strong you should attend. Cost is \$20.00 for reception on Friday evening and \$35.00 for conference on Saturday.
  - Walking Tours – Two different tours available in South Omaha: (1) Vinton Street commercial district and the (2) South 24<sup>th</sup> street commercial district
- Boys Town - Starting a grief support group for those who have dealt with loss on February 10 at 5pm.
- Victory Boxing Club - Next Saturday is “Fight Night” \$10.00 per person
- SOVIP will have a meeting next week.
- SOBA is extending an invitation for people to join. Meetings are on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month at noon.
- ONE Omaha – There is an application for Citizens Academy for Omaha's Future, which teaches people about different city departments.
- Omaha Central High School is hosting a fundraiser for sister school in Afghanistan because it's hard for girls to get healthcare and education. The Multicultural Night will be held next Saturday from 6-8pm at Omaha Central High School. There will be a food gallery, performances, and fashion show. They are looking for donations of food from different cultures or traditional garments to showcase. Cost: \$10.00. There will be free babysitting
- SONA is on Facebook. Please like the page: [www.facebook.com/SONAOmaha](http://www.facebook.com/SONAOmaha)
- Janet Bonet - Spring Lake Park Team officially registered with state now and are back to working on the park now.

- Heartland 2050 Winter Summit sponsored by MAPA will be held on February 24 from 8am-12pm at the Kroc Center. It is free to attend. The keynote will be Margaret May
- Arts 4 All - Classes are under way. We are celebrating our 10<sup>th</sup> year and are always looking for fundraising and friend-raising partners.
- Election Commission can train registrars. If you interested in working the polls on Election Day in your neighborhood, you can be paid or make it a fundraiser and have money go toward your organization.
- Mary Ann Krezmein - Omaha Woman Magazine has article on grant recipients and many are members of SONA.
- Dorothy Patach South Omaha Community Garden (20<sup>th</sup> & N St.) – has garden plots open for organizations or neighborhood associations. To register for a plot, please see Athena Ramos.
- South Omaha Library – You can check out seeds for free. A number of classes are upcoming about backyard chickens, bees, and starting seeds.
- Duane Brooks - Reminder of kick-off for Neighborhood Clean-up will be held on February 7 at 5:30 pm
- Garry Gernandt - Zero Graffiti International Conference will be in Omaha, May 22-26, 2016.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45pm