

SONA Monthly Meeting
March 3, 2016
Minutes

Attendance: Karen Bluvas, Duane Brooks, Joel Cota, Oscar Duran, Vince Furlong, Roger Garcia, Garry Gernandt, Delores and Gabriel Gomez, Krystal Kozawa, Mary Locati, Norita Matt, Rachel Meier, Dorothy Patach, Charles Posey, Tim Potter, Athena Ramos, Julie Smith, Kimara Snipe, Jeff Spiehs, John Synowiecki, Maj. Todd Thielke, Mary Thompson, Anna Wilcoxon,

Visitors: Charles Isom (for Senator Fox), Michael McGuire (Deer Park NA), Megan Walker (MAPA), Michael Filshow (MAPA), Officer Kinnaman, Officer Babel, Tony Vargas (Dahlman/OPS schoolboard), Ryan Morrissey (Neighborworks), Shirley (visitor from Beals), Jim Rogers (Congressman Brad Ashford), Bill Stott (Hanscom Park NA)

Meeting called to order 7:03pm

Welcome & Introductions

- New Member - Bill Scott – New President of Hanscom Park Neighborhood Association
- Norita Matt - SONA will be presented a Community Development Award on March 31. She will be providing additional information to everyone.

Minutes - Tabled until next meeting

Treasurer's Report – Tim Potter

- Cash in/Cash out is just about equal
- Balance: \$38,811.97
- Savings: \$5000.00
- Transferring remaining funds shortly

Police Report

- Robberies are down
- Seeing an increase in stolen autos, but also an increase in recoveries. OPD has identified some of major key players. One party was in jail but it is currently out.

Public Officials Report

- Gary Gernandt - Omaha City Council
 - Marty Gray – Public Works is retiring
 - 25th & Vinton: application to start a new recycling center
 - Convenient store application for 36th & Drexel
 - 32nd & Q Bridge - a huge amount of trees removed to make way for new bridge that will be put up in preparation for roundabouts at 42nd & Q
 - Sewer Program is on budget and on schedule
- Joel Cota - Mayors Office

- Neighborhood Grants released 2 weeks ago. Anyone can go online and submit an application. There will be a workshop on March 9 for interested applicants to receive mentoring and assistance with the application. The deadline is April 1 to apply.
- Roger Garcia - Metro Board
 - Getting into budget season and will approve the budget in late August or September. There is no inkling of increases. Recently, the board elected new officers to district committee and there are 2 representatives from South Omaha.
- Tony Vargas – OPS School Board
 - Board passed comprehensive sex education standards updates. OPS is engaging in community conversations at high schools to make sure parents are involved.
 - Board is still following through on bonds which means they are in process of buying and designing spots in South Omaha - 60th & L High School and possible 2 elementary schools. Will start buying with the next bond.
 - Workshops were held on 2 major issues: absenteeism and suspensions. District is working to improve multi-tiered programming to ensure students with behavioral problems are receiving appropriate supportive assistance.
- Nicole Fox - State Legislature (Contact info: nfox@leg.ne.gov)
 - 2 bills passed today:
 - Make insurance companies act quicker on appeals after the denial of a case. Current state law has a typo that gives them 30 extra days, and this bill corrects it.
 - Make it easier for people who are engaged in natural hair braiding to open their own businesses.
 - LB 1009: Deals with K2 or spice and would allow law enforcement/state regulators to identify copycat products. Fine would be implemented.
 - Budget coming up and legislature going into all day sessions next week.
 - If neighborhood members have any events are coming up, she will promote them on blog and push out through Facebook.
- Senator Mello - State Legislature
 - Senator is working on a number of bills including Infrastructure & Roads bill and securing funding for Offutt Levy Project.
 - Appropriations committee - putting together a balanced budget and almost done
 - Bills passed: Landbank Statutes and Neighborhood Notification bill
 - Body-worn cameras – Putting in place a regulatory framework for body-worn cameras used by law enforcement. Senator is currently working with the Crime Commission and OPD. This would be a framework so not all law enforcement agencies would have to do the exact same thing, but at least some standards of practice in place.
 - School Readiness Tax Credit - package of tax credits aimed at helping lower the cost of child care and also increasing quality, especially for those who work in the child care work force who we know often aren't paid high salaries. These credits would help them as they move towards more advanced certification.
 - PACE - Financing tool so that property owners can make energy efficiency updates to their property in a way that is more accessible and helps to secure financing to make those updates. The loan would stay with the property itself.
- Jim Rodgers – Congressman Ashford (office number: 402-916-5678)

- Education Focus Week (2 weeks ago) – Congressman met with groups of teachers from Douglas and Sarpy County and it provided him with information to take back to DC. He also met with superintendents from Douglas and Sarpy counties and culminated with an education seminar with 70 students from across the congressional district.
- VA is going to work on building a new facility where the currently facility resides. \$56 million has been allocated and \$80 million will be raised from here within the community.
- August – collaborating with USDA to follow up to sustainable urban agricultural seminar from last year and continue forward with more partners

One Omaha

- Young Professionals Summit was today. They had a community development track and everyone was talking about neighborhood associations.
- Just a reminder to update your information in the neighborhood directory.
- One Omaha is partnering with 5 other nonprofits to put on Citizens Academy. If neighborhood association members want to know how city works One Omaha will sponsor them for the program.
- Neighborhoods Grants – Please think about applying.
- Don Preister mentioned the article on Page 5 of February Omaha Reader newspaper about One Omaha. There was also an article about Habit for Humanity and utilizing energy efficiency.

Old Business

- South Omaha Banquet: June 2, 2016 @ Kroc Center - Sponsorship Letters/Packets available and will be sent out to potential sponsors. We are currently looking for a contact person that will take phone calls and answer questions, but need to be available during the day. Planning committee is still looking for a speaker and award nominations for Volunteer of the Year and Project of the Year. If you have someone who deserves a pat on the back, this is your opportunity to nominate them. Send nominations to Duane, 402-651-6963 or dpjabrooks@msn.com.
 - Speaker suggestions: Bill from Lauritzen Gardens or Oscar Duran
 - Sponsor List - Heath Mello is supposed to get a sponsor list. Rachel will make sure he gets to Duane.
- Promise Zone Application – The City of Omaha has finalized the application for the Promise Zone designation. We should hear back in or around April. SONA has a seat on the executive committee for this group.
- City Sprouts South – There are multiple benefits of a community garden. Over the last year, the group has worked to develop the garden and host events such as the block party and the Halloween village. As of Jan. 1, 2016, \$50,000 was provided from the UNMC College of Public Health for the community garden project to use it as a platform for fostering health and community in South Omaha. This year, the group is planning on a series of community workshops in English and Spanish about cooking, nutrition, and gardening. Beds available in the garden for community organizations. Joel Cota will check with the city about putting up a sign that says “no vehicles” to keep vehicles off of the property.

New Business

- New Member Applications - Spring Lake Park Team request from Janet Bonet was presented. Motion to approve membership. Motion carried.
- Scholarships for NUSA Conference – Idea was brought up by Oscar last month and so far 1 person submitted a request, Mark McGuire with Deer Park. Motion to approve request for scholarship. Motion carried. The deadline for any other scholarship requests is March 31, 2016.
- MAPA – Presented information on the Transportation Plan and facilitated an interactive discussion about goals & strategies.

Neighborhood News & Partner Updates

- Central High School – Our fundraiser raised enough to fund 4 girls in Afghanistan to attend school.
- Boys Town – We will be hosting a Civics 101 class on March 30, 2016.
- Kroc Center - Please attend Lent fish fries to support our scholarship program. Also the Extravaganza Program Easter will be taking place soon.
- Julie Smith – There will be a Civic Health Summit on April 2, 2016. ONE will host a workshop before next SONA meeting on how to engage new leaders.
- Green Omaha Coalition - Appreciates contributions that were made and Kroc Center. Thank you to Restoration Exchange. Call World Herald about the Food Express if you don't want it sent to your home, 402-444-1000 and give them the address of where they are laying or where they shouldn't be delivered
- Aksarben N.A. will be starting a community garden with Lifegate Church. They will also be hosting a Candidate Forum.
- Tony Vargas – There will be a School Board meeting on March 7 and March 21 @ 6:00pm. We hope to keep engaging people to attend and participate.
- Mayor's Hotline email: hotline@cityofomaha.org
- Athena Ramos -Deer Park Revitalization Effort will hold its first meeting on March 16 at the Apollon, 18th & Vinton St., from 9 – 10:30 am.

Meeting adjourned 8:30pm.