



## Board of Directors Meeting Minutes – November 15, 2023

Board members in attendance: Richard App, Bryan Cody, Denise Cook, Jeremy Czubko, Suzanne De Haan, Chris Ervine, Carolyn Ferrari, Liz Hoonhorst, Laura Joyce, Rebecca Klesmith, Abigail Larimer, James Scozzari, Matthew Smith

Absent: Jeffrey Fawcett, Wayne Norlin

Staff in attendance: Barbara Draughon, Laska Nygaard, Maria Zache Starkey (remotely)

Guests in attendance: several neighbors.

Call to Order: 7:xx pm

1. October Minutes: Motion to approve and second, carried unanimously.
2. Treasurer's Report: 2024 budget to be reviewed in executive session following the open meeting.
3. Public comments:
  - a. Neighbor read a personal statement to the HHA board to inform of feeling publicly shamed by another neighbor attending the community forum on density. She advised that more neighborly discourse be encouraged at future HHA events.
  - b. Neighbor expressed concern that terms such as "emergency" and "crisis" were used at the forum in referring to the need for 14,000 new units by 2027. Such terms discourage true, thoughtful analysis. Questions not addressed at the forum include, how does recent development factor into the goal of 14,000 new units by 2027? How many permits for future construction are being issued by 2027? What are the estimated price points for these new units and do they take into consideration the median income?
    - i. Lack of such analysis can lead to the use of incendiary terms like NIMBY ("Not In My Backyard") and others.
    - ii. CALL TO ACTION of the HHA board:
      1. Oppose the proposed increase in occupancy from four unrelated adults to six.
      2. Request that Heritage Hill become designated an overlay district so that its unique needs as a federally recognized historic district be considered and not indiscriminately bound by the citywide overall strategic plan.

- c. Neighbor thanked the organizers of the community forums, and, noting that Heritage Hill is currently 27% owner-occupied, our goal isn't to reduce occupant density, but to not increase it. He also noted that when zoning issues are presented as "rights", unique neighborhoods like Heritage Hill lose their voice and eventually their uniqueness.
  - d. Neighbor suggested, in light of prior neighbor's feelings of being verbally attacked, that procedures and training for conflict management be implemented.
4. Committee Reports:
- a. Administrative: In light of heated discussion and various disrespectful statements and personal attacks that occurred at the two community forums, expectations for respectful conversation will be stated by hosts at all HHA events in the future
    - i. Rebecca Klesmith, who as a medical professional has extension training in conflict de-escalation, volunteered to conduct training for HHA staff and board members.
  - b. Nominating:
    - i. Committee selection: Suzanne De Haan (chairperson), Mary Robinson, Jim Payne, Jim Talen, and Lisa McManus.
    - ii. Candidates: Liz Bracken, Chris Ervine (incumbent), Julia Hawkins, Liz Hoonhorst (incumbent), Laura Joyce (incumbent), Kimberly Lucas, Jim McClurg, Jennifer Meeks, Jeff Phillips
    - iii. Absentee ballots will be available November 30. It is recommended to call ahead for an absentee ballot since there are occasional staff shortages during business hours of 9 am to 5 pm. Ballots submitted before the annual meeting on December 12 will be transported in a locked box to the annual meeting. In-person voting to occur at the annual meeting between 6:30 and 8:00 pm. Votes will be tallied by the nominating committee between 8:00 and 8:30 after which the five new board members for 2024-2026 will be announced.
  - c. Home Tour:
    - i. Four single-family homes and two apartments currently volunteered – need one more.
    - ii. Suzanne's homework assignment for board members: provide names and/or addresses of one potential future home tour host.
    - iii. Suggestions to appeal for hosts at the annual meeting and on social media.
  - d. Community Engagement:
    - i. Annual meeting at Sweet House December 12
    - ii. Caroling December 10
  - e. Fundraising
    - i. Liz and Denise selected Printify to maintain website and inventory of merchandise. They will meet with Barbara to work out website login procedures. Hoping to be operating by December 12.
    - ii. Rich suggested they consider The Mitten State (formerly on Bridge Street). While costs at Printify are lower, working with The Mitten State would be supporting a local business.
  - f. Land Use:
    - i. Community forums/Zoning roundtable discussion groups – Approximately 100 people attended each of the two meetings. Rowan Brady, planning consultant and a member of the HHA land use committee, opened the meetings with introductory remarks and summary of relevant terms. Break-out sessions followed by comments and feedback followed. Land use committee to issue a written report.
  - g. *Ad hoc* committees:

- i. Relocation:
    - 1. Don Rietema completed most of WOOD TV's punch list *pro bono*. Still need to work with WOOD TV about items of theirs left in the basement.
  - ii. Tech/Website:
    - 1. Meeting with Code for Good West Michigan went very well. Website is still in development but the framework is in place.
    - 2. Jeremy proposed to make the Tech/Website committee no longer *ad hoc* but permanent. Barbara to check bylaws to determine the procedure for creating a new permanent committee.
- 5. Staff Reports: see handout.
- 6. Old Business:
  - a. Rich apologized to the neighbor present for how she was addressed by another participant at the HHA community forum and assured her that he has been targeted, too, and can relate to her feelings. He reiterated that, as he has maintained throughout his term as president this year, "We cannot choose our neighbors, but we can choose to be good neighbors."
  - b. Reports of harassment and intimidation of customers at adjacent businesses from protesters at Planned Parenthood. GRPD advised that there has been no enforceable actionable items but there has been an increase in police presence.
- 7. New Business:
  - a. Rich announced the grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony for Mammouth Distillery on Wealthy Street, Friday, November 17.
  - b. Stoffer Home annual event. No record of permits at the city. Reports of traffic and parking problems.
- 8. Adjournment for executive session to discuss 2024 budget: 7:54 pm