

EPIC General Membership Meeting

Minutes 9/13/2007

The next EPIC meeting is:
Thursday, October 11th, 2007 @ 6:30 PM
Holy Rosary Church
2424 18th Ave. S.
Enter door on 18th Ave. side under the "OFFICE" sign.

EPIC Board Members Present:

Paul Wichman (PW); Linda Leonard (LL); Rosie Cruz (RC); Mary Gonsior (MG); Carol Pass (CP); Earl Simms (ES).

EPIC Members Present:

Kate Scamp (KS); Chiffon Williams(ChW); Ming Wijono (MW); Juliet Thompson (JT); Jennifer Bjorgo (JB); Jane O'Connor (JO); Brad Pass (BP); Stephanie Allen (SA);

East Phillips Residents Present:

Youngho Paul Kim (YPK); Christopher Flugge (CF); Jean Flugge (JF); Doug Vanderveen (DV); Tim Essenburg (TE); Joani Essenburg (JE); Sherman Wilburn (SW); David Ness (DN); Eduardo Batista (EB); Paula Weikle (PW); Cedric Wash (CeW); Nikolas Winter-Simat (NWS); Sharie Winter-Simat (SWS); Stacie Suedkamp (SS).

Guests Present:

Shirley Heyer (SH); Jana Metge (JM); Julia Eagles (JE); Lonny Doub (LD); Gary Schiff (GS); Don Greeley (DG);

6:35 Mary Gonsior (MG) chaired the meeting, called it to order and asked for introductions.

-Agenda approved with no changes

-Minutes approved with addition of our motion asking Karen Clark to reintroduce "Dime a Drink" legislation in the special session

REPORTS:

- East Phillips Park. 27 people spoke in favor of the West side of the park for the location of the community center – no one spoke for the East location. The park commissioners voted 7:1 to place the building on the West side of the park. Additionally Dick Mammen replaced Eileen Kilpatrick as the project coordinator and the community will now be included in design decision making with the Architect and Park staff.
- Gary Schiff spoke about bonding dollar request to the mayor and that his budget would be out next week.
- Jana Metge announced Clean Sweep Oct 13 and details including brkfst at Welna's @ 9:00 AM & lunch at Stewart Park @ noon.
- Joint crime control meeting Thursday Sept. 20 at St Paul's Church @ 15th Ave. S. & E. 28th St.
- Julia Eagles, the Phillips Community Energy Coop (PCEC) representative, reminded us of their services and annual meeting Oct. 1 at Park House.

7:13 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHIFF:

-Crime and street blocking

Gary introduced officer Mike Davis and spoke of meeting with the 16th Ave block club earlier this summer. 25th St is one of two [24th and 10th Ave in midtown the other] "hot spots" for prostitution and

dealing. He spent time in the Vanderveen home and watched open dealing in spite of police numbers up to the highest in 7 years and lots of money lost for police under President Bush.

The cameras on Bloomington might have made it harder for side streets and drug traffic. At his meeting with 16th Avenue they discussed three ideas:

- 1) A movable camera
 - 2) Connection with Super America where management asked for 30 days to see if new staff could make a difference in the up to 90 x a day the 'button' is pushed.
 - 3) Diverting traffic to interfere with drug buying from cars.
- A grant made the purchase of a mobile camera possible. The wireless network will make it easier to move about. It will go on 16th Ave. at E. 25th St. initially.
 - Gary reported a letter from SA stating "We decided the store doesn't fit our long-term strategy". They don't sell their property to other gas stations or convenience stores so we don't know the future of the property.
 - The barricades on 17th Ave. became available from public works when they had extra ones from building a pedestrian lane for the 10th Ave bridge. Gary apologized for lack of communication with East Phillips, Midtown Phillips and the schools, whose bus service was disrupted, regarding the unexpected placement of the barriers.
 - Gary is committed to doing better than "containment" and "displacement" of criminal activity.

Discussion: Earl requested a stop sign immediately on 17th, where vehicles must make the turn.

People said 29th St. and 16th Ave. need morning squads for kids and buses.

Mike reported that the police can't deal with foot and bike traffic crime with the blocked intersection, but a camera will go on 16th Ave and 25th St. soon. Violent crime is down according to police statistics.

Neighbors disputed this claim.

Many reported that quality of life issues such as loitering with intent, and soliciting for drugs and prostitution are observed to be much higher.

7:30 Mary asked for comments

-Doug asked us not to forget that the barriers are effective to scare customers

-Flugge family members reported people plugging their cell phone chargers into the outside outlets of SA to do business and that they had lots of traffic in the alley including people smoking crack and parking on their property

-Joani Essenberg reported that the block club asked for help and apologized for not including everyone and inadequate notice

-Someone suggested using barriers in other parts of East Phillips

-Jana said move them as necessary; urged that we create a virtual block club email list and network with other blocks; noting that empty squad cars parked on streets and purposeful 'rumors' through hangouts that police are renovating buildings scared people away; urged us to write impact statements and to use geographic trespass; * alerted us that sentencing guidelines may decrease penalties.

-Sherman said he was willing to try "anything that will work"

-Linda noted that people are driving on sidewalks and asked if Park Police are cooperating with the foot/bike traffic off 25th St

-Carol urged more communication and partnership within the neighborhood

*Officer Mike's phone is 612 673-5788

-Mary inquired about 911 and lack of police follow-up when a crazed large male tried to beat down the doors of two town home apartments which terrified the residents. She needs to give Mike details on date/time. The 911 center is separate from the city government.

*Gary reassured us that next time we'll connect better with Midtown and East Phillips and Weed and Seed about these problems.

7:55 PROBLEM PROPERTIES - DON GREELEY:

-Carol remarked about 'safe houses/safe cars' and that we know some addresses. The citizen patrol closed 13 crack houses in the past; we have lots of sex offenders; we must deal with housing as part of the crime problem.

-Rosie said 2923 16th Ave is open and Don said it can be boarded again; 2601 18th Ave is empty. Gary said to call 311 immediately when buildings are open after boarding

8:03 Landlord Lonnie Doub noted that he knows about problems in his properties and gave some details about 2609; 2612; 2726; 2624 and said it is hard to nail down which apartment unit causes the trouble.

-Juliet challenged him to have more stringent screening criteria.

-Jana noted that his name comes up 'very often' in crime meetings.

-Nicholas, a neighbor to properties on 16th Ave asked for a new group of tenants and offered to help find them.

-Jennifer claimed to have been in his buildings 'smokin' and.....' for years and said 'shut it down'.

-Carol challenged Lonnie's claim to have responsible caretakers stating 'your caretaker was a dealer'

-Chiffon said St. Stephens [sp?] has hired her to assist with the homeless and mental health problem people and that she might have resources

*Don Greeley's phone is 673-3482

He noted the nuisance law as a resource and said we need to work with a new county attorney

-Dave remarked "heartening to see everybody contribute here. We're all in this together"

8:28 DEVELOPMENT UPDATES:

2601 Bloomington may be making progress with plans to convert the building to a retail center

Open Arms at old Commodore site will happen

2931 Bloomington has work to do, but one live-work unit is sold

PRG is working on land development N of greenway

8:35 ALLINA MOTION:

There was confusion about the nature/purpose of the motion so a motion passed to postpone this item until the next general meeting.

8:40 NRP Future Funding:

NRP is in trouble; Mayor's budget to be out soon. We need to fully fund police, but it was pointed out that funding for NRP that has been diverted to other uses since 2004 was not spent on police or fire.

There is a meeting at the 5th precinct on Sat. to rally for more police funding and to distribute "50 New Cops" yard signs. Jana will go.

8:50 Linda/Dave moved to adjourn

Respectfully...Linda Leonard