

## **LINDEN HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the regular monthly meeting, November 12, 2019**

**LHiNC Board Members Present:** Adam Beck, Steve Birch (Chair), Jane Elias, Leah Fish, Robert Haider, Tom Harlan, Judy Hornbacher, Lauren Linderman, Barbara Lunde, Elizabeth McDonald (Vice Chair), Bjorn Olson, Linda Picone,

**LHiNC Board Members Absent:** Ed Bell, Wendy Ponte (Secretary) and Abdi Sahal

**Executive Director:** Becky Allen

*The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. The November agenda and October minutes were approved.*

#### **Linden Hills Treasure Award: Tonya Orstad**

LHiNC awarded one of its annual Treasure Awards to Tonya Orstad for her service to the community. Tonya designed the new Linden Hills kid-size t-shirts for this year's festival and continues to create community on her block by organizing National Night Out, as well as an annual winter get together.

#### **Park Update**

Linden Hills Park is requesting funding from LHiNC for the House of Music musicians who played at this past August's Corn Feed at a cost of \$300. LHiNC has traditionally paid for the event music, but since Park Director Scott Erasmus was on parental leave all summer, the request was not made. The park is now asking if LHiNC will pay for the music, after the fact. Steve Birch made a motion to approve funding of \$300 for House of Music. The motion was seconded and unanimously passed.

#### **Linden Hills Library - New Teen Program - Elizabeth Wambheim**

Librarian Elizabeth Wambheim presented LHiNC with a proposal to officially contract NRP funds in the amount of \$4500 that had been originally designated for "Teen Library Connection" in NRP Phase II (adopted in 2005). The funds would be used to create a safe, inclusive space for teenagers in Linden Hills Library and to fund teen programming. Elizabeth pointed to the importance of the new teen program, saying that cultivating a space in the library that teens can claim ownership of sends the strong signal that these patrons are valued and welcome. The remainder of the funds will be used for teen program development or execution, either to pay for the fees of invited speakers or to purchase materials. The redesigned space, as well as new programs, were developed in conjunction with a focus group of teens from the neighborhood.

Elizabeth's presentation was followed by discussion about how NRP funds work for the benefit of new board members. A Scope of Service for this request had already been circulated to the board prior to the meeting. Tom Harlan asked where would the additional money for programming go, concerned about it going to a general library fund. Teresa Mercier of the Linden Hills Library said the donor budget allows the library to identify set money for set projects. This money will be designated for Teen Library Connection.

Elizabeth McDonald made a motion to approve the Scope of Services, contracting \$4500 of the NRP Funds designated for Teen Library Connection to be used towards the presented teen project at the Linden Hills Library. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

The board invited Teresa Mercier to come back next month to provide an overview on the Mapping Prejudice Project hosted at the library over the summer and fall. LHiNC supported the exhibit opening and the screening and discussion event at the park building.

### **Jager Statue Fundraiser Update (Steve Birch/Becky Allen)**

Jager, the beloved shop dog of Settergren's, passed away this fall. A resident of the neighborhood approached LHiNC with the idea to raise money for a memorial statue outside of Settergren's. Mark Settergren supports the idea; the resident has gotten bids from several artists, and Mark has selected one. They want to launch a GoFundMe campaign to raise \$10K for the statue. The resident asked if LHiNC would 1) host the GoFundMe campaign, so donors would feel confident in the cause, and 2) financially support the campaign through a grant. At the last board meeting, the board decided to help publicize and support the fundraiser, and to donate up to \$1K, if the campaign is able to raise \$9K. But the board decided to put off deciding on hosting until some research could be done. Discussion included questions as to whether other neighborhood councils had hosted similar campaigns, discussion about the importance of tax deduction (only available if LHiNC hosts), and concern about setting a precedent for future neighborhood requests. In the end, the board decided not to host the campaign. A motion was made to support the GoFundMe campaign and to allow the organizer to include LHiNC in the description as a supporter. Amendments were added to make sure LHiNC approves the description on the site (by Adam Beck) and that the text on the site includes a disclaimer that contributions are not tax deductible (by Tom Harlan). The motion with amendments was seconded and passed unanimously.

### **Treasurer's report**

Tom Harlan presented the Treasurer's Report. LHiNC is currently sitting at \$75K in checking and savings. LHiNC is preparing NRP and CPP reimbursement requests, which means that once those are submitted, the board should be at \$100K. Bjorn Olson asked if there is a cycle to the expenses? Tom: Major expenditures are the grant cycles, festival, and Taste. Becky and

Tom are going to meet to look at audit recommendations and create a better schedule; they will present to the Executive Committee first and then bring to full board for a vote.

### **Ward 13 Update - Linea Palmisano**

City Councilmember Linea Palmisano provided a Ward 13 update including:

**Communication** - The city recently did a communications audit about how the city communicates. How well does communication work in Linden Hills? Where do people get their information? CM Palmisano expressed her concerns about Nextdoor being an information gathering place, since information is not always accurate. She asked that people post back to the site, after calling or emailing for more information. She also suggested calling her council office, 311, and/or making a police report. Her office provides a Ward e-newsletter once a month - unless communicating snow emergency, etc. The board suggested adding Linea's email sign up to her column in The Line.

**2040 update** - Elimination of R1 (single family, and single family plus ADU) will begin Jan 1, which means people will be able to build up to a triplex on properties once zoned as R1. She pointed out that many single family homes will not be effected by this. Next zoning change will be around intentional communities, such as a sober house, co-op of people, etc. Also coming is the exclusionary zoning ordinance, which will require developers of multi-family dwellings guarantee that a certain percentage of units be affordable.

**4D Program** - CM Palmisano is eager to get in front of landlords to discuss the 4D program, which has a deadline of Jan 8. Landlords can get a tax break (40%) on units, if they agree to keep rent at an affordable level for 10 years. CM Palmisano requested help getting the word out.

**Referencing maps and metrics** - CM Palmisano shared some maps and data with the board about crime rates in Linden Hills. She said there is no other neighborhood that has safer crime metric. Most incidents are property crimes and crimes of opportunity. Property crimes are on pace to be lower than last year . Violent crime is down and is at the lowest rate of anywhere in the city. She asked LHiNC to let people know about this data and resources to see the data for themselves (available online via the police dept website).

**Budget** - The tax levy was set at the end of September. Last week, 88 people spoke about the budget at a public hearing - mostly about public safety, affordable housing, healthy seniors program, transequity issues. The next opportunities to weigh in on are Dec 4 - input on Mayor's budget recommendations; then a week later, the city council goes through mark up; and finally another public hearing on Dec. 11, so community can voice how it feels about those amendments. Afterward, council modifies where necessary and budget gets formally endorsed.

### **ELECTRONIC VOTING**

Steve Birch invited the board to discuss the possibility of allowing electronic voting for board elections. Currently the by-laws only allow absentee ballots to be filled out on paper and submitted in-person to the park building, which has restrictive hours during the school year.

Discussion:

Linda Picone - It's the 21st century. Seems like it would be worth a try.

Steve Birch - I think it would be fine to do electronic.

Bjorn Olson - What do the other neighborhood organizations do?

Tom Harlan - The by-law committee sampled 7-8 other neighborhoods' by-laws. For general elections, they don't allow it. Even for political elections, can't electronically vote. But these by-laws are supposed to be looked at and moved around.

Linda Picone - I'm looking at the issue. 80 people voting is not a lot of people. How do we engage more people?

Leah Fish: It's a hard time slot for people with kids (6-8pm).

Robert Haider: In general elections, voting participation has grown with early vote. Maybe have voting go for longer.

Steve Birch - Maybe put ballot collecting boxes in more locations.

Elizabeth McDonald - I'm still in the pro electronic camp.

Steve Birch makes a motion to form a sub committee to look into increasing voter participation in LHiNC board elections and come back with a proposal in February. The motion was seconded and unanimously passed. Elizabeth McDonald, Linda Picone and Bjorn Olson volunteered to serve on the sub-committee.

## **BOARD OFFICER ELECTIONS**

Becky Allen introduced the candidates, all running unchallenged:

- Chair: Steve Birch
- Vice Chair: Elizabeth McDonald
- Secretary: Wendy Ponte
- Treasurer: Tom Harlan

Each candidate provided a short summary as to why they were running. Robert Haider made a motion for acclimation. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Communications Committee** - Elizabeth McDonald

- Welcome guide being delivered to those requesting one
- Brief discussion about a Linden Hills survey; plan to dive deeper in next meeting
- Motion to change the name from Communications to Community Engagement to encompass more community outreach. The committee voted to present the full board with the motion to officially change the name of the committee to Community

Engagement and update its responsibilities to include: communications, outreach, and community projects. Wendy Ponte (LHiNC) and Peter Gilbert (LH resident and committee member) will co-chair. Motion was seconded and unanimously passed.

### **Environment and Sustainability - Leah Fish and Robert Haider**

The committee will vote on 3 projects voting at its next meeting on November 19:

1. 2020 Healthy Soil Plan - The committee has been working on this project successfully for the past year. They will vote on a new proposal for phase 2 of the project and bring to board in December
2. Increasing residential composting by targeting renters. Had a representative from Lowry Hill East come to their last meeting. The neighborhood partnered with Wedge, so renters can drop their compost at the Wedge. LHiNC now has a blueprint and could replicate it. We could give renters accessibility to composting bins.
3. Rain Garden Initiative - Metro Blooms is a non-profit that works with different non profit organizations throughout the city. The organizations find 10-15 interested and committee homeowners, then Metro Blooms designs rain garden, costs are split between homeowner and organization. If LHiNC wants to participate, we have to let them know by December 15.

Leah will head compost program. Ginny Halloran will lead Healthy Soil for next year. Robert is leading the Rain Garden. The committee meeting is at 7pm on November 19. At 6pm, holding a viewing of soil is the climate solution. Snacks and wine will be provided.

### **NRP Committee - Robert Haider**

Robert Haider, Abdi Sahal and Becky Allen have been working on a plan to develop a better process for LHiNC committees and board members to understand NRP funds and to activate them. Robert is working on summarizing the history of NRP; Abdi is working on spreadsheets that will allow everyone to access the numbers; and the group is working on creating a process for committees to understand what funds are available and then apply to use those funds. The plan is to present to the executive committee first and then convene a Committee of the Whole to present the information in January.

### **Zoning Committee - Lauren Linderman**

No new business was on the agenda for the last meeting. At our next meeting, we will further explore the funding question that we brought to the board last time, involving a general strategy on how LHiNC should approach the spending of NRP housing funds.