

## **LINDEN HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the regular monthly meeting, August 4, 2020**

**LHiNC Board Members present:** Adam Beck, Ed Bell, Steve Birch, Leah Fish, Peter Gilbert, Robert Haider, Judy Hornbacher, Barbara Lunde, Elizabeth McDonald, Bjorn Olson, Linda Picone, Wendy Ponte and Abdi Sahal

**LHiNC Board Members not present:** Tom Harlan and Lauren Linderman

**Executive Director:** Becky Allen

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

#### **Ward 13 Update** - Council Member Linea Palmisano, MPRB Commissioner Meg Forney

City Council Member Linea Palmisano was joined by MPRB Commissioner-at-Large Meg Forney to provide an update on the homeless encampments in area parks. CM Palmisano reported that the park board had begun a permitting process for encampments. Council has allocated \$8M to three new shelters; and if people in encampments choose, there are beds available.

Commissioner Forney said under the Governor's orders, those at risk cannot be evicted from the encampments. However, MPRB Commissioners have moved a resolution to limit the amount of tents and how many parks can have homeless encampments. There is an encampment on the NW corner of Lake Harriet. St. John's Episcopal Church is supportive. But the entire project is underfunded, and staff has reinvented itself to try and handle this.

When asked to explain the permits, Commissioner Forney said they are 2-week permits that are renewable. A permit comes with a portapotty, trash pick up, fence, and handwashing station. Lake Harriet, maximum is 12. A new encampment has been approved for the archery area by Bde Maka Ska with a maximum of 25 tents.

When asked if encampments are a way of life in the parks or an interim solution, Meg Forney said, "This is a remedy and not a solution. Winter is coming, so we need to do something to get people into shelters. It might bubble up in spring again."

#### **Charter Commission Ballot Measure - Letter of Support** - Robert Haider

LHiNC Board Member Robert Haider drafted a statement for the board calling for the Charter Commission to put two Public Safety amendments on the November ballot - one from the City Council and one from the Charter Commission.

- On June 26, the City Council proposed an amendment to the City Charter that would create a new Community Safety & Violence Prevention Department and remove the Police Department from the Charter. [See the Council's proposed amendment.](#)
- On July 20, the Charter Commission introduced its own proposed amendment that would eliminate the minimum required staffing levels in the Police Department. [See the Charter Commission's proposed amendment.](#)

After discussion, the board voted 7-2 to submit the statement as written by Robert Haider to the Charter Commission prior to its August 5th meeting. The statement appears below:

*Dear Chair Clegg,*

*The murder of George Floyd has shone a light on the well-documented history of systemic racism that has plagued our city since its founding. There now exists at this moment in our shared history an urgent need for transformational change to community safety and policing in Minneapolis. The Linden Hills Neighborhood Council (LHiNC) recognizes the urgency of this moment, and we believe that voters must have the ability to weigh in on a Charter amendment to determine the future of community safety in Minneapolis.*

*The current City Charter places outdated restrictions on how the City and our elected leaders can work for our safety by dictating a minimum level of staffing. It also places sole control over the Police Department in the hands of the Mayor. Neither of these barriers exist for other City departments. That must change before we can achieve, for the first time in our history, fair and equal outcomes for every resident.*

*We believe that the best path to finding solutions to the problems facing our community should consider input from the community itself. It is the peoples' democratic right and responsibility to ensure proper oversight and accountability from the departments that we fund. While the demands for change in public oversight are not new, this level of broad public support is.*

*LHiNC applauds and stands in solidarity with the various Black, Indigenous, and People of Color-led grassroots organizations who are leading the call for change, and we echo their call. We respectfully ask you to fulfill your civic duty by supporting expedited*

*approval of a Charter amendment so that Minneapolisians can make their voice heard on the November 2020 ballot.*

## **Financial Report - Steve Birch, Becky Allen**

### NRP Language Modification Vote

In June, the board voted to contract \$130K of NRP housing dollars for PROPEL's affordable housing program. To do so, the Board has to modify the language of an existing NRP strategy: the Senior Development Fund. The Board reviewed the following language modification during its July meeting:

*LHiNC proposes expanding the language of an existing strategy.*

*The proposed change would be under the Senior Development Fund strategy. LHiNC proposes expanding the strategy to include: "or to provide low-income housing options throughout the City of Minneapolis."*

*A portion of these funds (\$18,390) would be used to fund PROPEL's affordable housing working capital program to provide loans to nonprofit housing developers to develop affordable housing in the city.*

The other \$111,610 has been contracted without modification from the following NRP strategies: Affordable Housing (\$100,000) and Home Improvements (\$11,610).

A motion was made to approve the language modification. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

### NRP Funding for Lake Street and Northside Businesses

Executive Director Becky Allen also reported that the NRP funds approved by the board for We Love Lake Street (\$12,500) and the WBC/Northside Funders Group (\$12,500) in the wake of George Floyd's murder and the aftermath have been approved by the city and allocated to the appropriate groups.

## **Events Committee Update**

### October Election - Elizabeth McDonald

In 2019 there were two ways to vote for the neighborhood Board of Directors:

- 1) Fill out and submit a ballot at the Park Board Building
- 2) Attend the annual meeting and vote in person.

Last year, the LHiNC Board considered electronic voting for the Annual Meeting as a way to increase voter participation. An ad hoc committee formed (Bjorn, Linda, and K. Elizabeth) to look into electronic voting, and ultimately recommended that we include electronic voting for the 2020 Board election. At that time, the Board was not in agreement to move forward with electronic voting and instead opted to increase the number of ways to vote to the following:

- 1) Fill out and submit a ballot at the Park Board Building
- 2) Fill out and submit a ballot at the Linden Hills Library
- 3) Attend the annual meeting and vote in person.

Current Situation:

At present, none of the three options in the resolution are possible due to COVID-19.

Proposed Options:

- 1) reconsider electronic voting, using other Minneapolis neighborhood councils who currently use electronic voting as a guide.
  - o Pros: ease of voting, no contact, good for the environment, ease of counting ballots
  - o Cons: the Board decided not to do this before
- 2) Ask neighborhood businesses who have donated to LHiNC in the past to host a ballot box (e.g., Tilia, Sebastian Joes, Great Harvest, Clancey's)
  - o Pros: aligns with board's desire not to have electronic voting, is more physical locations than we have had before
  - o Cons: voters would have to print out their own ballot, this could increase contact during COVID (e.g., small spaces that people would be turning in their ballots), and would require more of business owners who are already struggling to manage a new business model.

A motion was made to accept electronic voting for the 2020 board election. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

**Immigration & Refugee Virtual Speaker Series** - Becky Allen

Abdi Sahal, Judy Hornbacher and Becky Allen have been working with Michelle Rivero from the [Minneapolis Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs](#) to put together a series of virtual talks

focused on issues impacting immigrants and refugees in our community. They are inviting speakers from organizations focused on addressing the critical needs of immigrants and refugees to bring light to these needs and let people know how to help. Part one of the virtual speaker series will take place Wednesday, August 12 from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. and will feature Michelle Rivero, Director of the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs.

## **Committee Updates**

### Community Engagement - Peter Gilbert/ Wendy Ponte

- The committee heard an update from MPRB on the playground updates expected for LH Park. MPRB plans to engage the community through online forums and surveys to get feedback on their design. When the first draft of the design is finalized, LHINC will help MPRB gather feedback through our email list, website and social media.
- The committee is updating the submissions guidelines and requirements for the e-newsletter, now that it is the main source of sharing information.
- The committee is pricing a postcard to increase e-news subscribers.
- The committee is considering sponsoring an event called Anti-racism Conversations in Linden Hills provided by an improv group called Danger Group Productions. Three other neighborhoods have sponsored this event. Board member Judy Hornbacher attended the event sponsored by Kingfield and Lyndale and will report back next month.

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

- The committee just had a successful buckthorn pull in William Berry Woods with a half dozen volunteers.
- Trolley path looks beautiful. Five to six volunteers, including Ginny Halloran and Connie Pepin, have been working on it all summer. The Healthy Soil Project, also on the Trolley Path, is also going well.
- Metro Bloom Rain Garden Project is on hold till next spring. We can select the homes that will get the rain gardens this fall, so they can move forward with consultations and then provide them in the spring.
- Adam Beck and Robert Haider are working on a web page for the committee

### Zoning and Housing - Tom Harlan/Lauren Linderman

- The committee has been on hiatus, but variance requests are picking up, so they will meet this month.

### **MPS Update with Question & Answer Period** - Ira Jourdain, School Board

MPS School Board Member Ira Jourdain attended the meeting to address parents' concerns, after the district announced that it would begin the school year with online distance learning. Below is summary of main points of his update:

- MPS will begin the year in Phase 2, which means distance learning with supports. Students will do online distance learning, but also be able to go to certain district sites for support.
- The superintendent has said they are going to determine which phase to go to based on Governor and MDH recommendations, which is based on how many positive cases are in a county. For our superintendent, he is looking at infection rates in Minneapolis and Hennepin County, paying close attention to rates in the BIPOC community.
- 40% of staff and students want distance. As the governor has said, if parents want distance all year, such as families with immunocompromised children and/or family members, we are prepared to do that for them.
- I don't anticipate us doing distance learning all year. Right now, the district has decided on distance learning for the month of September and will keep monitoring COVID numbers. I would expect it to go into November. I think we will be hybrid at some point.
- Learning will be a little different from spring. Children will log in daily and interact with their teacher daily. Teaching will be done live or prerecorded; there will be set schedules for these interactions. Teachers will still have office hours to answer questions and emails. The district wants engaged learning vs online worksheets. For high school, I believe students will meet with each teacher each day. Science labs are one of the biggest hurdles. We are still looking at this.
- We do recognize that we have students that do not do well online, so we are trying to develop ways for teachers to reach out, such as having APs, paras reach out to them online.
- The district will provide the necessary technology: PreK - 2 students will get an iPad and students in grades 3-12 will get a Chromebook.
- Teachers will receive professional development for online learning at the end of August.
- The school district is still going to have welcome back to school events, including a walk through the school. Everyone will be required to wear a mask. The week of August 24, schools will start putting out their site activities, meet and greet with teachers, etc. That is when you'll find out about daily schedules; the district is leaving that up to the individual sites and principals.
- Parents should still call and reserve their students a spot on the bus: 612-668-0000.
- Regarding sports, Minnesota state high school league has laid out guidelines for fall sports. Sports will take place without fans. Football and volleyball have been moved to the spring.
- The district will still be doing food distribution starting September 8, all across the city

- When asked if CDD will continue: Yes. I am amazed that they are going to move forward with [CDD], while trying to move forward with this right now.

The motion was made to adjourn. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.