

York Neighborhood Association Board of Directors Meeting

Marlins' Café, 514 Potter Street

March 22, 2023 Minutes

Approved: Motion 2023-04-26.1 ✓

Present: Colin Beazley (President), John DeOrio (Treasurer), Élan Engel, Mark Ellis Walker, Jeremy Ferrera, Opie Knechtel, Rebecca Hobbs, Tom Scott. **Quorum satisfied.**

Excused: Anne Mackie, Chris Donaldson (Vice President).

Guests: Megan Doyle, Mars Lindgren, Kevin Cussen.

The meeting got started at 6:39pm with an informal round of introductions of all present, indicating their history with the neighborhood and the Board. A quick straw poll as to home owners and renters found a good mix of both was represented.

1. Election of 2023 Board Officers

Chris had indicated his intention to remain in the post of Vice President and emailed his goals for that role ahead of the meeting, so Colin moved to retain him as such; Élan seconding, the motion passed unanimously. Opie volunteered to take on the position of Treasurer from John; Mark so moved, John seconded, and she was unanimously approved.

Mark then put himself forward for another turn as Secretary, figuring Tom was probably ready to take a break from it again, and he was voted in after Jeremy so moved and Tom seconded. Finally, Colin confirmed that he would like to continue as President for the year. Tom so moved, Élan seconded, and yet another unanimous vote brought the election of Board Officers to a satisfactory conclusion.

2. New Board Members

Guests Mars Lindgren and Megan Doyle volunteered to join the Board, each having attended a prior YNA meeting, and were gratefully voted in amidst discussion of the skills and resources each brings (such as Megan's grant-writing and construction background). Guest Kevin Cussen indicated that he will probably offer to join us too after attending a subsequent meeting for eligibility. Anne Mackie had indicated in an email ahead of the meeting that she will now be stepping down from the Board for a much-needed break, so the Board now consists of 11 members.

3. 2023 Board Priorities

Colin gave us a recap of 2022's committee formations and activities: the Parks one looking to involve and engage the community in the renovation of Rock Hill Park anticipated for late 2023 and into 2024, the Social and Events one intending to focus on priority events as such but also as opportunities for gathering feedback from York neighbors on what else they want the Board to be doing, the Public Safety one looking into possibilities for traffic calming, and the Historic Preservation one pursuing the interactive-walking-tour project in partnership with City staff.

In an open discussion of these projects and priorities, it was noted that hosting more community events is a desired goal in part because YNA events are positive, not about problems or anger, and therefore opportunities for fostering social engagement in an effort-free environment. Rebecca

indicated that it would be good to make kids a central aspect of events, in part to keep them occupied. Megan suggested that Nelson's would be a great venue for activities such as Open Mic Nights and small-scale events; Mars informed us that a Board Game Night would be starting soon there. Élan also observed that we could get more students involved in the neighborhood via such events. Later in the meeting, two other local-event suggestions were raised for the YNA to possibly sponsor: a blood draw (Tom) and a solar-light drive (Élan).

Regarding parks, Colin noted that the Parks Department is now actively paying more attention to Rock Hill. Much fun talk ensued about possibilities for events and renovations there, including the idea that a live-music event could be organized not as a YNA event per se but as one by Bellingham's music community (which might be a way to get it permitted by the City without using our one annual freebie which is usually for the Annual Picnic).

Discussion about the *Yorker* newsletter touched on possibilities of perhaps doing just three a year, also possibly pushing for more of a digital presence for it. Megan asked as to whether we've ever reached out to Western Washington University (WWU) regarding partnering with *their* print shop for production and/or student involvement as an opportunity for journalism students to get experience and credit.

As an ancillary topic, Rebecca raised the subject of having a regular YNA digital news presence, perhaps monthly, to supplement or even in part substitute for the printed newsletter; Kevin indicated that he has some experience with the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to produce content from existing news sources and that that might be something to utilize for such an effort. Tom also noted that meetings of the Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission (MNAC) are a good source of potential local-news content of relevance to our community. Colin asked Rebecca to prepare a proposal of the digital YNA news presence for the Board to consider and discuss at an upcoming meeting.

4. Single-Family Designation Being Eliminated

Tom reported on a recent and very fast-moving move to banish "single-family" zoning, something obviously very relevant to York, and noted that results of such a change would include increased population density which in turn pushes housing costs up. He suggested that it might be something the YNA would want to write to our legislators about but acknowledged that there wouldn't be unanimity from us in doing so. A quick look into the status of this as a legislative vote indicated that it is already up for a vote in the Washington Senate, so it may already be a moot point.

5. Small & Simple Grants

Grants for up to \$5,000 are available this year, Colin reported, with applications due at the start of May, and he noted that the City was looking for things that don't require much permitting. Anne had suggested an interpretive/informative sign for Harriet Spanel Park to explain to visitors who Spanel was, with content already largely available in the form of the brochure she produced for the park's renaming ceremony (from Franklin Park) in November 2022.

In an open discussion of ideas, four main ones emerged:

- A. Rebecca suggested that bulletin boards be established around the neighborhood to serve the sort of role currently provided only by the one outside Nelson's; this received much positive response.
- B. John asked if grant funds could be obtained for events; Tom says that's not something we've done but that it might be OK.
- C. Improvements to the Lakeway corridor were suggested, such as plants and/or a mural near the I-5 underpass, possibly in combination with the City's efforts to rework that famously problematic traffic situation as described in Chris Cuomo's presentation at the YNA meeting in October 2020 (?). In the same area, there is still the possibility of putting up welcoming banners along Lakeway; Tom notes that, although the City portrays their installation as being a hassle, WWU puts up stuff all the time...and maybe we could somehow piggyback with them to switch ours in when theirs go out, for example.
- D. Another traffic-calming project Rebecca floated as a positive remedy of bad traffic at the Potter/Humboldt intersection is something perhaps akin to a public-art mandala in Happy Valley.

6. Final Thoughts

Colin will compile Small & Simple Grant ideas and send them out to the Board for consideration ahead of a vote at our April meeting (or possibly sooner if the early-May deadline makes that impractical for waiting before a proposal can get underway), with interested Board members to do some general cost research in advance.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:05pm.

General Action Items: Review list of Small & Simple Grant ideas to be circulated by Colin and follow up on any specific requests therein to do some basic cost research.

Individual Action Items:

Colin: Compile a list of the Small & Simple Grant ideas currently proposed and distribute via email for Board members to consider and research. Work on getting Opie established as Treasurer with our bank.

Rebecca: Prepare a proposal of the idea of a monthly digital YNA news presence for the Board to consider and discuss at an upcoming meeting.

Tom: Add new/prospective Board members' email addresses to the Board email distribution list.

Mark: Work with Opie to establish YNA invoice/receipt templates. Transcribe and distribute minutes for this meeting for Board review. Update Board list on website and Board contact-info roster.

Respectfully submitted, Mark Ellis Walker, Secretary.