



**Old Town Triangle Association
Monthly Meeting of the Board of Directors
Aug. 9, 2011
1763 N. North Park Avenue**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Phil Graff, president

Attendance:

Directors Present: Daniel Barson, Debbie Day, Tom Bracken, Phil Graff, Jeffrey Smith, John Knoche

Absent: Jacqui Thams

Executive Director, Arts and Operations Director: Dee McKinsey, Leslie Wolfe

Also in attendance: Approximately 50 members of the association, Patrick Butler, Booster reporter, Inside Publications.

President Phil Graff convened the meeting at 7:05 p.m. Before the first item of business, Association Member Karen Pfendler called for a Point of Order and presented Board Secretary Debbie Day with a sealed white envelope. Karen stated that a Special Meeting of the Membership was held on the evening of Aug. 5, 2011 and its purpose was to hold an election to fill three OTTA Board vacancies. Pfendler said the envelope contained both the results and minutes of the meeting. There was a request that the envelope be opened, with immediate dispensation at the Board meeting, as well inclusion of the minutes in the regular board minutes for the night.

Graff stated that there was no time to review and digest the contents of the envelope. He went on to say that the Aug. 5 meeting was not properly convened, violated the bylaws, and disenfranchised many members of the association.

Pfendler asked if it was Graff's "intention to seat the three newly elected board members." Graff said it was not his intention. Discussion from the audience ensued regarding the bylaws and moving the board vacancies into the new business section of the meeting. After several additional comments from the audience, Graff informed the audience that he intended to tightly control the meeting.

Approval of Minutes: Board Secretary Debbie Day moved for the approval of minutes, seconded by John Knoche, and affirmed by the rest of the board members attending.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer John Knoche said that the end of the year report would be available on or before Aug. 31, either online or at the Triangle office. He also said that at least a "preliminary view"

be presented by the committee chairs prior to Sept.1. The approval process would then be ready at the October Board meeting.

Knoche announced the appointment of a new accounting firm Mulcahy, Pauritsch, Salvador & Co., Ltd., which he said is larger and specializes in both government and not-for-profit work. Knoche will be asking the firm about applying to the IRS to change the accounting reporting dates to more closely align with the board election cycles. Without the change each new board will continue to "inherit" a budget they did not create, which is not optimal to be effective. He also announced changing the association bank to North Community Bank at the corner of Wells and North to replace Northern Trust, based on location and convenience.

Art Fair: Knoche distributed a draft version of a chart illustrating the historic revenue and expense categories of the Art Fair. While explaining it was a preliminary view, he stated that the resulting Art Fair income (revenues – expenses) has been down for the past five years. He also said attendance appeared to be flat. Joan Goldstein, who has served as an Old Town Art Fair volunteer for 23 years, stated that the economy is making all fairs trend down. Knoche concluded by stating that he would continue to work on a more detailed analysis of the fair.

At this point in the meeting, Goldstein was recognized as the incoming Art Fair committee chair. Several members of the audience objected to her being named to the position, because she did not live in the Triangle as stipulated in the bylaws. It was pointed out to the audience that Joan would be a non-voting member, had volunteered for the fair for many years, and possessed a very deep knowledge of both the fair and fund-raising.

Other potential solutions were suggested. There was then discussion of modifying or amending the bylaws, as there had been some precedent for art fair chairmen living outside the Triangle, but many were opposed to this concept. Graff said he would entertain a resolution from the board to support Goldstein as chair, while also working toward a resolution to the matter. The resolution was so moved by Knoche and seconded by Day. During the discussion, Board Member Tom Bracken said he was not comfortable modifying the bylaws.

As discussion grew more heated, Goldstein said she had told Graff she could not assume the chairmanship if there were these deep objections, and said she could not work in the current environment. She then left the meeting. The subsequent discussion can be summarized by: 1) Goldstein was very well qualified, but 2) her residence outside the Triangle was an issue for many members who did not want the bylaws changed or suspended for a defined period.

Capital Improvements: In his brief report, Graff noted the new floors; that the windows would be replaced next year; and that Don McDougall was working on repairing the doors on the building. The doors also allow access to the condo units above. There was a question as to whether the condo association shared in any of the cost of door project, remained open and will be subject for follow-up.

Communications: Jeff Smith said the newly re-formed Communications Committee held its first meeting last month and was reviewing agenda items, such as a redesign of the website; interns who would work on various projects, and requesting volunteers to help with messaging.

Contributions: Knoche said that applications for OTTA contributions to outside organizations are due twice a year: Nov. 15 and April 15. He noted that former Board Member Sue Apey had created a body of materials to support the efforts of the committee and the contributions process was well-documented. He said he also hoped that Apey and Tom Midura, former board member, would continue to serve on that committee.

Events: Graff discussed the recent reading by Thelma Reyna at the Triangle; and several other potential events.

HD/PZ: Dan Barson stated that Second City had initiated a community night on Aug. 16 to introduce neighbors to the location, their expanded space within Pipers Alley, and gain input. He also stated there had been issues raised by neighbors regarding new, potentially video (dimensions, but not pictures had been presented) signage. Members of the audience discussed what they had heard about the signage to date. Barson concluded by introducing two new committee members: Neil Katz and Laura Miller. He stated that the committee, both new and existing members, were working on clarifying its mission. He said his goal is to open up the process on the committee, make it a resource and a group that “residents run to, not from.” He also said that the committee is working on getting a replacement landmark plaque for Menomonee and Wells, replacing the stolen plaque.

Membership: Knoche says that iBOT (I Buy Old Town) program has enhanced membership in the OTTA. He discussed having worked with the Old Town Merchants Association, but that the focus was on individual merchants joining the program. He also talked about an incentive to drive participation in iBOT and the association, including a dinner for four in someone’s home served, and supplied by, board members.

Neighborhood Improvements: Tom Bracken talked about the proposal at the last NIC meeting to ramp up tree care in the Triangle with a plan to spend \$75,000 annually for two years to take care of Triangle trees. Members of the committee added from the floor that they were preparing a comprehensive plan which will be presented to the board in a subsequent meeting. Trash bins paid for by the Association were then discussed – as the maintenance of the cans needs to be more frequent / better timed. Finally, the members of Ald. Smith’s office were planning to clean up the silt and debris at Ogden Park at 11 a.m., Wednesday, Sept. 10, and those interested in either talking to representatives of the Alderman’s office, or helping with cleanup should come to the park.

Neighborhood Relations: Day discussed a recent robbery at North and Sedgwick’s at knifepoint at 10 a.m., and urged residents to be careful. She also discussed changes in the Webster street / Lincoln Park hospital development that occurred after Michele Smith became alderman that would lighten the truck traffic and density of the area, which had been objected to by several residential associations during the winter. For those members who would like to receive Alderman Michele Smith’s update newsletters, please log on to her website <http://www.ward43.org/index.php/contact> and click on “Sign up for our Email Newsletter”.

President’s Report: Graff passed on his report until the conclusion of the meeting.

Executive Director Report: Dee McKinsey noted that competition for the Triangle dog calendar was fierce, called for additional entrants, and noted that entrant was in attendance at the Board meeting.

Old Business: Noting the work that had been going on for months with various board and association members, marked up bylaws, noting the recommendations were distributed. Based on a motion by Bracken, seconded by Smith, the changes in the bylaws were adopted.

New Business: Graff discussed with the board having a resolution that would allow Joan Goldstein to serve as chair. Several suggestions were proffered from the audience, including having someone else serve as chair in title, and having Goldstein head the art fair – an idea that she had earlier rejected.

The discussion turned back to the first topic of the meeting – the three vacant seats on the OTTA Board. There was at least a 30-minute discussion on this topic. The process for electing board members was reviewed. There was recognition by most, if not all, that this neighborhood was divided and without working together, the neighborhood was being damaged.

The discussion turned to one of having a election, voted on by entire OTTA membership. Alan Lougee, who was one of the three candidates presented at the Aug. 5 Special meeting, withdrew his candidacy in favor of a Triangle-wide election. Secretary Day will lead the process which was decided to include a call for Directors, a “meet the candidates” night, and a special election to be timed with the September members meeting. The motion was made by Day and seconded by Knoche. This recommendation was approved by the Board.

NOTE TO THE MINUTES – the communication re: the last paragraph was posted to the OTTA website and sent via email to membership on Thursday, Aug. 11.

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