

**Old Town Triangle Association
Monthly Meeting of the Board of Directors
July 14, 2009, 7:00 p.m.
1763 N. North Park Avenue**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Fern Bomchill Davis, President

Attendance

Present: Chris Beer, Matt Beer, Martha Connolly, Fern Bomchill Davis, Debbie Day, Phil Graff, Alice Huff, Jeff Pines, Emily Rose, Dirk Vos, Michael Warnick
Administrators: Shirley Baugher, Leslie Wolfe

Approval of Minutes

There was one change to the Minutes. In the Condo Report, a figure of \$3,500 was given as the amount saved for use on plumbing repairs. The actual figure is \$2,600. The Minutes were then approved as amended.

Treasurer's Report *Martha Connolly*

Martha reported that all Income items were normal except for Art Fair income. She pointed to income figures for fund-raising events (First Sight Party) and Art Fair revenues. She further reported that Expenses were also normal except for Art Fair; specifically fund-raising expenses (First Sight Party), and general Art Fair Expenses. She is going to work on a budget showing comparisons between budget items for current and previous years, and comparisons over time.

She announced that she would soon be sending Committee chairs requests for their 2010 budgets. Budgets will be due on August 28, and will be presented at the September meeting.

Committee Reports

Art Fair **Chris Beer, General Chair**

Chris said that she had received many positive comments about the fair from visitors and artists alike, many proclaiming it the best one ever. Several pre-fair and fair activities contributed to its overall success.

- **Whole Foods Promo Party.** On the Tuesday evening before the fair, Whole Foods on Huron held a promotion party showcasing a few artists and the Old Town Cookbook. Chris and Emily greeted visitors, talked about the fair, and took people to meet the participating artists. It was a very successful event and will probably be repeated in 2010.

- **First Sight, Friday Night.** The First Sight was effective on a number of levels. Attendance was good and all who came enjoyed the event immensely. They commented on the effectiveness of the display of items in the Silent Auction, the improvement in food offerings, and the overall enjoyment of having a special “Ship Ahoy” cocktail and a professional mixologist to serve it. The Committee kept expenses down and increased profits over the previous year.
- **60th Old Town Art Fair.** Both artists and food vendors seemed to be very happy with their participation in the fair. Food vendors have requested more space for 2010, and most artists are anxious to return. Despite the Saturday morning rain, attendance was good, almost matching last year.
- **Thank You Party.** The Thank You Party was well-attended despite the rain, and volunteers ate and danced with much enthusiasm.

Overall indications point to a very successful event. Early estimates show a net income of \$269,000, a \$7,000 increase over 2008; but this is only an estimate. The gross income was \$369,000, which is excellent. Despite the rain, the Gates were only \$4,000 less than last year. Expenses came to about \$100,000 (not all bills have come in). Every Committee spent about ten percent less than was spent in 2008.

The program catalogue was eliminated this year, and there were fewer merchandise items for sale. Chris said her goal was to sell as much merchandise from previous years as possible.

We ran out of programs on Sunday, due in part to some programs being spoiled by the Saturday rain. Only 10,000 programs were ordered this year, compared with 12,000 last year. Last year, however, there were many programs left over.

Surveys are being sent to all artists to collect feedback on their impressions of the fair and how well their work sold.

Most Committee chairs have agreed to return for the 2010 fair.

Historic District/Planning & Zoning Jeff Pines, Chair

Jeff spoke at some length about the controversy arising over the rehab of the property at 1809 N. Sedgwick. He recounted that the problem began after the owners had received a permit to rehab the house. During the construction, a second-floor wall collapsed. The police were called and stopped work on the project. Both the Buildings Department and representatives from Landmarks came out and surveyed the scene. A determination was made to demolish the building. The City took the owner to court and imposed a \$15,000 fine because of the method of demolition. A negotiated settlement among the City, Landmarks, and the owner produced the following decision:

- The owners will pay a \$15,000 fine
- Owners are limited to the shape of the old building: front facing gable
- Height will be 27' to eave, 35'4" to peak
- The overall height is 5'6" greater than the old building, but there will be no dormers, bay window, or entry porch

- Width is 20', which requires a 1' administrative variance and is 6" narrower than the old building. There is also a 9" administrative variance for the front-yard setback to align with the house to the South.

At the conclusion of his report on 1809, Jeff requested that the HD/PZ Committee be expanded and stressed that we need people on the committee who understand the Landmarks ordinance. Fern and the Board concurred. Fern will appoint new members to the committee and asked for recommendations from the Board. Jeff further added that it would be a good idea to have someone from the Zoning Board come to an HD/PZ meeting and explain zoning laws to members.

A question was raised about the status of the old Ranalli's building regarding construction in excess of their permits. Jeff replied that the matter was still in litigation when last checked.

Membership Michael Warnick, Chair

Michael had no new issues to raise.

Neighborhood Improvements Dirk Vos, Chair

Dirk discussed the sidewalk brick replacement program being proposed for the neighborhood. He explained that the program has three main advantages: the new bricks look good, they are safer than the existing brick walkways, and they enhance home value. The program will be run similar to the parkway tree program. OTTA will provide 20 percent cash back to Triangle neighbors who replace and/or repair the parkway and/or sidewalk brick work next to their home. Program guidelines include: pre-approval by OTTA, use of heartland flashed st. edge PVR2-1 std. bricks, and installation done by OTTA preferred contractor. Some neighbors on Menomonee and Eugenie have already had the brick work done. It looks very nice, and is also reasonable, about \$1,000 per household. He stressed that the program is for repair and replacement only—not tearing out concrete and putting in new brickwork.

Dirk wants Board input and comments on the program; and suggested putting \$10,000 into the Neighborhood Improvements budget to fund the activity for 2010.

Contributions Alice Huff, Chair

Alice said that there had not been much activity in terms of contributions over the past month. A sum of \$250 was sent to the Midwest Buddhist Temple for a full page ad in their Ginza Holiday book. We will use the same ad as was included last year, which showed the OTTA logo and listed the various activities conducted by the Triangle.

A check for \$10,000 was mailed to Lincoln Park High School for the purchase of musical instruments for their band/orchestra program upon receipt of the completed request form.

To date, we have spent \$30,850 of the \$45,000 budget allocation.

Alice noted that no new requests had come in during May or June. She suggested we might want to seek out other organizations to be recipients of the OTTA Contributions program.

CAPS Shirley Baugher, Liaison

At the last CAPS meeting, Beat 1814 officers stressed the need for vigilance and attention to personal safety during the summer months. Already, two attempted armed robberies have occurred in the neighborhood: one on West Willow and one on Mohawk. Fortunately, nothing of value was taken, and the offenders were taken into custody, identified and charged. In addition, there was a home invasion during which perpetrators climbed a fence and got into the second story of a home while the owner was out. They filled a large garbage bag with valuables, but dropped them to the ground and ran when they heard the police approaching. In all three of the above instances, bystanders or neighbors witnessed the crimes and called police. In yet another incident, thieves climbed a large fence, went into a garage, locked the door between the garage and the house, and stole the owner's car. Neighbors are urged to take every possible safety precaution, and to attend the monthly CAPS meetings.

Art School/Gallery Leslie Wolfe, Administrator

Leslie called Directors' attention to the current gallery show by artist Claire Rosean. The paintings are both quirky and whimsical, and reflect the artist's desire to turn her work into book illustrations. She noted the very positive response to a one-day figure drawing class by instructor Tom Francesconi.

President's Report Fern Bomchill Davis

Fern turned her attention to enhancing membership on the various committees of the OTTA. She said she wanted to have at least two non-Board members on every committee, and asked that the Board give her their recommendations for additions during the coming week.

She suggested that there be a special newsletter issue devoted to each committee, beginning with the Historic District/planning & Zoning Committee. The issue should explain the mission of the committee: who they are, why the group exists, and what they do. It might also recommend a membership term. She stressed that it is also important for the committee to explain what they don't do: namely offer legal opinions and analyses. The group exists to assist the community in understanding the guidelines and preparing their plans accordingly.

She raised the issue of the newsletter, and wondered if we are realizing the full possibilities of our publication. She suggested that we might want to consider doing a complete hard copy less frequently.

New Business

OTTA Membership Survey Emily Rose, Director

Emily and Chris have prepared a survey to be disseminated to Triangle membership for the purpose of getting feedback on their feelings about the OTTA. Survey items deal with length of membership, benefits of belonging to the organization, interest in committee membership, and whether or not the association is meeting the needs of members. A separate section asks for reaction to and participation in the various activities of the OTTA and recommendations for other events not currently offered. In an attempt to determine the extent to which OTTA members use available technology, the survey asks if members use the new web site, receive and read e-mail updates, and would be willing to receive the newsletter electronically. Other sections deal with membership expansion, newsletter interest, committees, and general thoughts. The survey will go out via e-mail and regular mail and asks that recipients respond within ten days to two weeks of receipt. Responses will be compiled and studied.

Several directors offered suggestions and recommended additions to the document.

Emily also distributed a set of Emma e-mail database guidelines, explaining brand guidelines, e-mail procedures, and an Emma e-mail database summary, which the Board found very helpful.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.