

RPIA Board Meeting Minutes – September 21, 2020

The board meeting of the Ryan Place Improvement Association was held via Zoom on Monday evening, September 21, 2020 with President Tim Keith presiding and Sarah Geer as secretary. A quorum was established and the meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance: Tim Keith (President), Ryan Scharar (Vice President) Sarah Geer (Secretary), Jen O’Connell (Treasurer), Kipp Baker (Communication), Jake Neal (Membership), Jason Jones (Public Safety), Jeff Schroeder (Activities), Chris Ebert (Historic Resource), Ryan O’Connell (Ryan Place Drive Street Director), Josh Gardner (6th Ave Street Director), Chris Gee (5th Ave Street Director), Kendall Wells (College Ave Street Director)

Others present included: John Belknap

Special Reports

- S. Adams Homicide Update
 - Tim has provided a few general updates via Facebook. The detectives and investigators are not able to share much since it is an ongoing investigation but we are assured that the neighborhood at-large is not at risk given what they know about the incident.
- NPO/General Crime Update
 - Tim reminded the board that we’ve been lacking an NPO presence since Summer 2019, which is a big part of our public safety strategy, particularly as relates to minor crime and police communications.
 - In terms of other safety strategies, Tim noted that we don’t have a specific budget. He is cautious to establish a general line item and would prefer to see proposals for specific strategies related to surveillance, patrols, etc.
 - For instance, we may want to consider investing in higher quality cameras at high-traffic points that could capture license plate details.
 - Jason has done a bit of research on this and the level of cameras that can do this are very expensive. We could possibly explore a cost-sharing option with the city.
 - Kipp wants to follow up with Jason to discuss a potential lead for a source of cameras.
 - Jason mentioned that residents have asked him about the possibility of securing private security for the neighborhood and offered to contribute funding for it.
 - Tim shared that we do have a new NPO assigned – Isiah Garner. He’s very familiar with Central Fort Worth. We should lean on our NPO to confirm and message best practices for safety for residents.
 - Question: to what extent do we engage with the Citizens on Patrol/Code Blue group? Is this an opportunity we should pursue? Should we recruit more volunteers?
 - Jason suggested that we could share information and offer to help coordinate among residents who are interested in Citizens on Patrol/Code Blue. Perhaps share info via the newsletter?

RPIA Board Meeting Minutes – September 21, 2020

- Jason mentioned that the police have shared there is not enough capacity to increase police presence in our neighborhood beyond what we already have.
- Josh noted that burglaries are crimes of opportunity and hard to guard against even with a regular citizens or private patrol. He is in favor of pursuing additional surveillance/cameras.
- Tim shared that we do not expect the new NPO to have a Facebook presence as part of a revised practice by the police to maintain professional relationships with NPOs and residents and to reduce noise/maintain security in online conversations. Email is the recommended format for communications.
 - Question: how many emails do we have in Constant Contact now?
 - Kipp: ~458 people (for reference, there are about 900 homes in the neighborhood)
 - We may need to promote signing up for Constant Contact to increase penetration.
 - Kipp suggested we may want to consider a mass texting format. Tim also mentioned the possibility of utilizing a neighborhood app.
 - Kipp suggested we may want to consider NextDoor.
 - Jason offered to take the lead on strategizing about neighborhood safety communications and other strategies. Tim appointed Jason to chair an ad hoc Safety Committee and Jason invited any board members who are interested in participating to reach out to him.
- Tim suggested that during our regular October board meeting (10/21/20) we include a public safety conversation on the agenda to include the new NPO, Ann Zadeh and Pete Munoz (Constable-Elect). We could promote the opportunity in the newsletter.

Report Summary/Notes

- President
 - The Nomination Committee has been established. The positions coming up for election are:
 - President
 - Director of Finance (Treasurer)
 - Director of Historic Resource
 - Director of Membership
 - Director of Activities
 - In addition, the Director of Communication will be open as Kipp is stepping back. Tim is open to considering splitting the communication role but requested Kipp to summarize the current responsibilities of the role so that the committee can consider whether the position could/should be restructured.
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RPIA Board Meeting Minutes – September 21, 2020

- Members of the nominating committee are:
 - Douglas Cooper (Chair)
 - Sarah Geer
 - Mary Jane Debenport
 - Ruth Karbach
 - Cade Lovelace
- Tim shared that there has been a trash/dumping issue on Lipscomb. Kurt Nielson has offered a trash bin that was originally purchased for neighborhood use and could be placed on that road to see if that helps with dumping.
 - Question: would the city recognize the bin for municipal trash pick-up? Tim said that's something we need to explore.
- Vice President
 - Ryan wanted to add a safety comment: in general, investing in public safety seems like a valuable use of RPIA funds.
 - Ryan noted that they've had trouble with the recycling bin at Daggett – people putting trash instead of recycling, which makes him concerned about whether the Lipscomb bin would be effective.
 - Nothing else to report from VP perspective
- Secretary
 - Sarah distributed draft minutes for RPIA board meetings held in June 2020 and August 2020 electronically to board members. Any edits/comments/questions?
 - After discussion it was clarified that Ryan Scharar seconded a motion in the August meeting.
 - **Jake moves to approve the minutes for June and August as edited. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
 - Sarah mentioned that a sidewalk repair company reached out to see about promoting their services in the neighborhood.
 - Tim cited concerns about formerly endorsing a contractor. Residents should engage in the vetting/decision process directly.
 - Kipp mentioned option of doing an article that might mention the company as one of several options. We can also encourage them to purchase a newspaper ad.
- Treasurer
 - Jen distributed a financial report electronically to board members.
 - Jen shared that we have renewed our D&O policy, so there is no gap in coverage
 - Jen reported that we've had some steady/regular resident contributions, and there is still significant savings from cancelled events.
 - Jen reminded the board that we do have budget available for Halloween safety initiatives.
 - Question: how have we used those funds historically? We haven't had historical funding but this allocation was prompted by a lost child situation in 2019. Historically, the neighborhood had Elizabeth blocked off (and some other streets), which created safe space for adults in the street and kids on the sidewalk.

RPIA Board Meeting Minutes – September 21, 2020

- Membership
 - Ruth distributed a welcome report via email
- Communication
 - Nothing more to report
 - Tim is working to collect final menus for special edition October newsletter to promote local restaurants.
- Activities
 - Halloween – we know there will be kids but we expect traffic would be lower than a normal year. We discussed encouraging porch/house decorations and reminding residents about current guidance/restrictions on gatherings for the protection of public health (and encouraging compliance). Tim reminded the board that there are not RPIA-sponsored aspects of Halloween. We need to be careful about promoting anything, we don't want to drive traffic.
 - Jason likes general ideas that in a normal year we would have streets blocked, lost/found station, block captains with special vest/signage, etc.
 - CCRP has decided to fully cancel any activities for this year given the continuing challenges with COVID.
 - Jeff reached out about possible drive-in event idea and will provide an update as soon as he receives a response.
- Historic Resource
 - Chris is working on an inventory of marble markers in curbs showing street names and he is monitoring for damage due to construction projects.
 - Tim noted that we did not have any notice on recent street construction projects. The city blamed COVID for limiting community outreach on upcoming projects.
 - Currently, crews are working on curbs on Elizabeth from S. Adams over to Hemphill. Jen will follow up to confirm connection with Safe Routes to School project.
 - In a few years, we expect more extensive resurfacing work on Elizabeth.
- Public Safety (see Special Reports section above)
- Infrastructure – Douglas not present
 - Elizabeth curb update (see above under Historic Resource)

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Geer
Secretary