

# PINKNEY NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION MEETING OUTCOMES

Hybrid Meeting: D South at LMH and on Zoom, March 18, 2023 Meeting called to order at 10:02 a.m.

**MEETING PARTICIPANTS:** Jeff Allen, Kara Berger, Cammie Braden, ? Carlsen, Eric Carlsen, Shelly Carlsen, Tom Carlsen, Makenzie Clark, Lynn Ellis, Kevin Elliott, Peggi Englehart, Joyce Donham, Eleanor Gardner, Rebekah Gaston, Kim Heck, Shane Heiman, Lori Lange, Aidan Lau, Ann Lavaty, Konnie Lefler, Paul Liechti, Bart Littlejohn, Lynnette Littlejohn, Brandon McGuire, Pat Miller, Tara Moore, Patricia Orton, Jamie Reed, Josh Spence, David Unekis, Jen Unekis, Amy Van de Riet, John Woziak, Ken Wallace

## **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

One item was moved up on the Agenda: Neighborhood cleanup; and Brian Bradfield from LMH will be invited to a future meeting. *Motion was made to accept the Agenda by J. Spence, 2<sup>nd</sup> by P. Liechti. Voice/hand-raise vote. Motion carries.*

## **APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY OUTCOMES**

Motion to accept Feb. meeting outcomes. *Motion by P. Miller, 2<sup>nd</sup> by J. Spence. Voice/hand raise vote. Motion carries.*

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

- **Account balances:** Checking \$735.89; Savings \$223.67; Petty cash \$194.21.
- **Upcoming expenses:** Coordinator fees and spring communication to neighborhood.
- **Dues:** Dues are being accepted at the PO Box 125 or drop off at 345 Mississippi porch box. \$1/prs; \$2/hhld.

## **REPORTS**

- **President's Report** – Meeting protocols were stated. Attendees on Zoom and in-person introduced themselves.
- **LAN Report.** A Neighborhood Permitting Program was announced with its goal to decriminalize parking tickets.

## **APPROVAL OF REPORTS**

Motion to accept all reports as presented. *Motion by E. Gardner, 2<sup>nd</sup> by J. Spence. Voice/hand raise vote. Motion carries.*

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

- **Potential Closure of Pinckney School.** Pinckney PTO secretary Rebekah Gaston gave a short presentation: 65% of students receive free and reduced lunches, it has the lowest percentage of white students in a Lawrence elementary school, and is a Title 1 school, which designates it to receive \$200,000 annually. The School Board seeks to close Pinckney and Broken Arrow schools to save \$300,000 to \$400,000 annually per school. Most Pinckney students would be sent to Deerfield. Many points were made. Concerns:
  - **Transportation.** Students will need to cross McDonald Drive at 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, and there are no sidewalks leading to the intersection. Busing is currently provided to students who are a 2.5-mile distance from their school; Deerfield is 2.1 miles.
  - **School serves a community in need.** When it was renovated, it was retrofitted with showers, washer/dryer and a pantry to serve its vulnerable population.
  - **Equity is at the heart of this issue:** racial and socioeconomic.
  - **School has a culturally significant history.** In the 1940s, a group of African Americans demanded the school stop segregating its students; this is a significant civil rights action that pre-dates Brown v. Board of Education. A PSIQ has been filed with the National Historic Register. If it succeeds, Pinckney will be only one of three schools in Kansas to be on the Register. The original school building was on the school's current front lawn, and it was the school that Langston Hughes attended. For a school to be continuously operating in our community with a history so noteworthy is nationally important and could be a draw for other students in Lawrence to attend.
  - **Building recently underwent a millions-of-dollars renovation.** It still has a debt from its renovation, which will take 10 years to pay off.
  - **Deerfield is at capacity.** Boundaries are not logical.
  - **Consulting company did a poor job.** It did not take into consideration the potential growth of Lawrence. The new, nearby Panasonic plant will employ 4,000. The consultants' focus was so narrow that innovative ideas on how to overcome budget shortfalls were not explored – only school closings were proposed.

- **Pinckney could have been considered as a location** for the child center that is proposed for the Medical Arts building.
  - **Property values will be affected.**
  - **Information is online;** those who plan to speak at the March 25 public hearing need to sign up at the school by 2 p.m. that day or pre-register at [publiccomment@usd497.org](mailto:publiccomment@usd497.org). People most affected may not attend.
- **Cleanup of neighborhoods.** A member of the Coalition of Unhoused Advocates spoke about its efforts to support the unhoused and its outreach efforts. Ten recommendations were provided to the City; some progress has been made. Recommendation #8 is to help clean up homeless encampments in Pinkney, East Lawrence, North Lawrence and Brook Creek. The two-pronged approach will start with a self-clean-up effort of the camps by the houseless with community participation and then focus on a specific park or trail in each neighborhood – to be identified by the neighborhoods. The City has asked that cleanup take place post-Pallet shelter opening. PNA is generally supportive of these efforts, however further discussion is needed.
    - *Motion by J. Spence to discuss at a future meeting. 2<sup>nd</sup> by E. Gardner. Voice/hand raise vote. Motion carries.* The item will be placed on the April agenda. Kevin Elliott will be invited to participate.
- **Pallet Shelter Village.** Brandon McGuire gave a short presentation on the proposed village, which will be located on North Michigan St. There were many concerns expressed:
    - **Short time frame.** PNA was just notified this week that a vote will take place on Tuesday on three items: 1) to rezone the property; to approve the purchase of the old Veritas school property, and to purchase 75 pallet homes. PNA and its residents need more time to understand the project.
    - **Location.** There are no close-by services, i.e., grocery stores or retail. What other locations were considered? What about the land around the existing Lawrence Shelter? It has the ready resources nearby. The term “shovel ready” is not accurate since all the Veritas buildings need to be demolished. There is no burden for homelessness borne by central and western Lawrence neighborhoods. The impact is on Pinkney, North Lawrence, East Lawrence and Brook Creek.
    - **Rezoning.** The property values of nearby homeowners will be negatively impacted. Zoning is put in place to protect owners.
    - **Lack of a plan.** The plan for managing the site has not been developed. Who is eligible to locate there? How will the site be managed? What specific services and resources will be available on site to assist those in crisis? How will those living there be eligible and moved to permanent affordable housing? What is the incentive to move out? There was no data on success rates presented.
    - **Safety.** How will safety be managed, especially with a children’s center across the street? For those using the Lawrence Loop? Police presence is not visible in the area.
    - **Floodplain.** Part of the Veritas site is in a floodplain; 75 pallet cabins most likely will not fit in the non-floodplain area.
    - **Negative Impact.** There is a potential double negative impact for the Pinkney neighborhood of construction of the shelter village and the possible closing of Pinckney Elementary School.
    - **Expense.** The high cost of purchasing the land: \$700,000, the shelters at \$750,000 and the demolition of Veritas (TBD). Can this money be utilized differently for a bigger, longer-term impact on homelessness in our city?

PNA feels very strongly that the City needs to give the neighborhood more time to better understand the project. A motion was made and unanimously passed: *“Pinkney Neighborhood Association implores the City Commission to delay a vote on this issue until it can be fully vetted with appropriate hearings.” Motion by K. Heck, 2<sup>nd</sup> J. Spence. Voice/hand raise vote. Motion carries.* The motion and the neighborhood’s concerns will be provided to the city in advance of its commission meeting.

#### **MISCELLANEOUS**

- The KU Big Event is April 15.
- The Pinkney Parks clean-up is April 29, with a goal to expand to more than the cleanup of one park. J. Spence and S. Heiman are spearheading.

*A motion to adjourn was made by E. Gardner; 2<sup>nd</sup> by J. Spence. A Yes Vote is indicated by leaving the Zoom. Motion carries. The meeting adjourned at 12:58 p.m.*

FINAL