

Minutes of the University Council Leadership Team, June 9, 2020

The June 9, 2020 online meeting of the University District Neighborhood Council began promptly at 6:30 PM with Marley Merchen (Jane Kelly's Work-Study student and Neighborhood Ambassador) acting as ZOOM host. In attendance were Dori Gilels (co-chair), Darcy Caron (co-chair), Jennifer Copley (acting secretary), Rick Caron, Julie Stephenson, Kelly Elam, Bryce Rowe, and Jordan Lyons (ASUM Neighborhood Ambassador Program Director), Jane Kelly (Missoula Neighborhood Coordinator).

Invited into the meeting were University District residents Will Fesperman, Jessica Tuberty (Bike and Pedestrian Board), Riley Butler, and Diane Taylor.

Dori chaired the meeting and asked that all in attendance introduce themselves. With approval of the leadership team, Dori invited guests to speak first.

Agenda Item 1: Discussion about Racial Profiling

Will Fesperman, UM graduate student, described a local incident during which a citizen called the police upon seeing an African American man merely looking under a car in the neighborhood. Seeking dialogue, Will brought the matter to residents of this leadership team. Will suggested educating University District residents about alternatives to calling the police in such matters, suggesting residents be encouraged to talk to others rather than to call the police when no threat is apparent. Rick Caron suggested that some elders in the neighborhood may act out of racial ignorance and fears occasionally steeped by the media. Rick added that we must work hard in our area to get to know our neighbors. Rick and Jennifer mentioned negative experiences of minority members of their families in the Missoula community. Jessica said that we need to engage with the police in neighborhood community-building. Neighborhoods, she said, can offer activities that build relationships. Julie suggested that at the fall meeting we could invite the police to speak.

Jennifer added that we must always confront racist acts. Will said we must be willing to question the racist attitudes of our neighbors.

Dori and Jane suggested that Neighborhood Watch could be a way to engage in cooperative relations. Will questioned such an approach, saying that Neighborhood Watch is more about being residents serving as "the eyes and ears of the police." He urged that we offer alternatives to calling the police. Jordan added that if we invite the Police Chief to a general meeting, we should invite another who could provide a counterpoint to the official police perspective. Rick supported Jordan's idea, but Dori asked the Leadership Team to reflect about the issue, later addressing together the best ways to educate our neighborhood about policing issues.

Jennifer pointed out that the Montana League of Women Voters recently completed a study showing a shortage of mental health resources in law enforcement matters. Julie found true that the same lack of resources in her health profession. Julie supported Dori's suggestion that at our next meeting the leadership team should revisit how best to educate the University District on matters discussed this evening.

Agenda Item: 9 Public Comment

Jessica Tuberty brought up issues from the Bike and Pedestrian Board, an advisory group with no funds. Jessica expressed concern that many residents do not know about neighborhood greenways like Gerald

Avenue. Such greenways are meant to encourage slower traffic to accommodate multiple usage by walkers, skaters, bikers, strollers and others who want to enjoy the neighborhood at a leisurely pace. The Gerald Street greenway, like many other greenways, connects to city systems (in the mountains on the east and the Clark Fork river corridor). Jessica asked the leadership team to consider publicizing the greenway system and, if possible, helping with signage.

On Thursday, June 11, from 5:00-700 PM, Jessica reported that the Bike and Pedestrian Board will sponsor an inaugural “slow roll” from Bonner Park to South Avenue and then back to Bonner Park. Residents are asked to wear masks and come with their families. This community outing, Jessica believes, will contribute to community-building, helping residents get to know one another.

Moving forward, Jessica hopes the Neighborhood Council will use its mailing list to get out information about such events. She suggested an interface with the University District and UM communication systems. Jane Kelly instructed Jessica to send her email address to Jane Kelly and Jane’s work-study student, Marley Marchen.

Agenda Item 3: Approval of March 3, 2020, Minutes

Members approved minutes after correction of the spelling of Jane Kelly’s last name.

Agenda Item 4: Treasurer’s Report.

Treasurer Bryce Rowe reported that we have not yet spent 53% of our budget, \$1264.11. Jane Kelly will send us all a copy of a city resolution describing how neighborhood councils can spend their money. Having not yet had a 2020 general neighborhood meeting, there remains a question about whether or not we can spend funds for such expenses as the printing of a neighborhood newsletter.

Agenda Item 5: Community Forum and University District Neighbors United COVID Reports

On the 27th of May Bryce attended an online Community Forum, but said he had nothing to report. The Neighbors United, said Bryce, have helped one elderly couple get groceries and another individual pay for dog food. They are searching for University District stories about COVID experiences and encouraging people to hold Friday barbeques in front yards, while maintaining social distance. A website is in the works, said Bryce, and pictures are needed for their website.

Agenda Item 6: ASUM Report

Jordan said he will gladly include in the newsletter activities mentioned by Bryce. The ASUM newsletter goes out to about 500 students. Jordan said that even with the shelter-in-place order in place, a few of his volunteers are still available to help with activities to improve U District quality of life, without increasing COVID risk.

Dori asked if students could provide some of the writing for the newsletter, and Jordan answered affirmatively, saying that he also uses better known guest contributors. Jordan indicated that his volunteers could help distribute Neighborhood Council newsletters. Jennifer and Rick volunteered to join ASUM volunteers, and Dori added her name to their list.

Julie asked if Jordan had gotten an email from a concerned resident living on Central and troubled by disruptive neighbors, members of a UM athletic team. Jane Kelly had recommended that ASUM would be good at mediating such an issue. Jordan did get the email and will follow through to see if the ASUM Ambassadors try to bring a solution. Jordan will contact the complainant.

Agenda Item 7: Office of Neighborhoods Report

Jane made an Office of Neighborhoods report, saying most Neighborhood Councils are not yet allowed to meet. Jane said she misses meeting with the councils, as the University District is only the second group to meet via ZOOM. More such online meetings are planned.

Agenda Item 8: Discussion of Plans for a General Meeting in the Fall of 2020 Janes said Neighborhood Councils and city leadership will wait until later in the summer or fall to make decisions about general meetings. Some, including Jane, have to wait until Phase 3 to participate in large meetings. Dori, mirroring Jane's directions, suggested that we put planning for a general meeting into the back of our minds, raising the issue again at our next meeting.

Dori suggested that, in the meantime, we start to put together a neighborhood/ASUM letter to neighbors. She suggested that we create a Google Doc so leadership team members can contribute information and items for consideration. Dori said she would like something put together in the next two weeks.

Marley suggested that ASUM contribute to our Office of Neighborhoods letter, with students doing a mock-up letter. Jane said that there is no particular Neighborhood Council newsletter format, but Marley believes she will be able to find a template for the newsletter. Dori noted that the letter should include our new logo and be available on the City of Missoula website, University District heading, listed under our priorities.

Agenda Item 9: Public Comment (again)

Diane Taylor thanked members for their attention to concerns addressed by the leadership team.

Julie explained that, with students on vacation, the University District Neighborhood Council has not recently met during summers months. Still, Julie expressed support for summer 2020 ZOOM meetings. Bryce, Jennifer, and Rick expressed support for these summer meetings. Darcy offered to help Dori organize the newsletter.

With the first Tuesday of July being the 7th, members agreed to meet via ZOOM on that date. Jordan asked that we include ZOOM contact information on the agenda for the July meeting.

The leadership team adjourned until July 7th.