
DMNA Council Meeting Minutes for 10/04/23

6:45 pm, Zoom remote call

IN ATTENDANCE

Diego Saenz, Catherine Jagoe, Lisa Grueneberg, Tom Huber, Daryl Sherman, Dennis Trest, Kathy Engebretsen, Brad Boyce, Renie Schapiro, Dahn-young Dong, Sandy Stark, Ann Clark, Tag Evers, Laura Checovich, Tracy Lewis, Shawn Schey.

PROCEDURAL

- Call to Order: 6:45 p.m.
- There was a unanimous vote to approve the agenda.
- There was a unanimous vote to approve the August meeting minutes.

ALDER'S REPORT

- In response to a question from Dahn-young Dong about construction currently underway on the future Chabad Madison Jewish Center at 1713 Monroe St, Tag believes they are constructing a 2-story gathering place for Orthodox Jews but has no other information; the project went through the normal approval process. He can research any specific questions that people have.
- Tag already attended Bay Creek NA meeting tonight via Zoom and has to leave early to go to the Arboretum NA meeting in person. He has three NA meetings on the same night.
- Common Council voted 11-8 to save Rudi the pig. The vote to amend the city ordinance on pet animals was close because of concerns that other residents might want a donkey or a horse etc. Tag is glad it was approved.
- It is budget season for City staff. Last month, the Mayor announced her 2024 Executive Capital Budget proposal. Tag is on the Finance Committee and submitted several amendments e.g., \$1 million for loans for capital improvements for community organizations. Adjustment in Capital Improvement Program to advance work on Brittingham Boathouse, which is in disrepair.
- Recreational greenspace will be created at the Triangle on S Park after the Pik 'n Save is demolished. Tag is pushing city staff to price this out and put it in the timeline for next year's budget.
- The Mayor's Executive Operating Budget proposal was just released. Tag will introduce some amendments to provide funding increases for neighborhood community facilities.
- Heather Stouder and Bill Fruhling from the city's Planning Division met with Tag and the Lake Wingra Task Force, which is working on how to safeguard the Lake Wingra

viewshed. Ben Yahr has identified 3 locations on Lake Wingra and created projections of what could be seen if 3, 4, 5, or 6 story buildings go up nearby. Lake Wingra has more natural views than any of our other lakes and we should try and preserve that. We can't veto building projects, but we can address reflectivity of future buildings, lighting design, and ensure that the color palette fits in with lake.

- Tag met for the first time with Andrew Manion, the new president of Edgewood College who started on June 1, 2020. Since the stadium controversy, there are now three new administrators for all three campuses, grade school, high school and college. President Manion met with Tag to talk about the fence on both sides of the Park and Pleasure Drive. Edgewood College want the lakeside fence removed entirely and want the City to repair the EW fence side. During that meeting, they talked about the fact that the EW Liaison Committee has not met for several years. President Manion agreed to talk with the other 2 administrators to arrange an initial meeting with Tag and the 2 new presidents of DMNA and VNA. Tag thinks this is encouraging and reiterated to President Manion that Edgewood is his constituent also and he takes his position as their alder seriously.
- Oral arguments took place Sep 26 on EW's appeal to Circuit Court on their federal religious discrimination case. Here is a link to the recording:
(<http://media.ca7.uscourts.gov/oralArguments/oar.jsp?caseyear=23&casenumber=1175&listCase=List+case%28s%29&amonth=>
The justices sounded puzzled by EW's argument about religious discrimination and interrupted EW's counsel a lot. The City Attorney's office feels positive about the outcome of the case at this point. If the Circuit Court of Appeals (3-judge panel) turns EW down, EW can appeal again. If turned down a second time, they could take the case to the US Supreme Court.

Discussion:

Shawn asked whether—if EW pursues the case to the US Supreme Court—they would be allowed to change their arguments? Tag thinks that would not be allowed.

Brad asked about the cost to the city of attorney fees. Does the city have different costs depending on different outcomes of the case? Tag: Right now, this falls under city insurance because the city was sued by EW, so the city is not paying out of pocket.

Diego mentioned the issue of the recent Edgewood HS Homecoming Dance, acknowledging that the as the college president, Manion was not responsible for it. Discussion ensued about the amplified music from 8-11pm at the Homecoming Dance. EHS claimed they had a permit, but the City Building Dept told Tag that no such permit was issued. EHS had off-duty MPD officers in attendance. When neighbors complained about the noise, the officers said EHS had a permit. Diego called the police non-emergency number because the noise at his house, with all the windows closed, was so loud. The person on the line also said EHS had a permit but that there had been many complaints.

Tag will follow up with Madison Midtown Police District chief Jason Freedman, because if MPD officers were perpetuating a falsehood, there should be a process to insure that does not happen again.

More broadly, Tag thinks this situation underlines the need for the City to update and revise its noise ordinance. Ordinary residents are required to apply for a permit for loud noise for a private party or event, but some non-residential entities are not, e.g., Nakoma can shoot off fireworks before Labor Day without a permit and without notifying anyone ahead of time.

Laura asked for clarification about the noise ordinance, and asked Tag to do due diligence in establishing whether it is in fact true that Edgewood did not obtain a permit for the dance, since so many people believed they did have one. Tag: the ordinance talks about disturbing the peace and tickets could have been issued on that basis, but it makes “disturbing the peace” a judgment call on the part of police who are responding to complaints. There should be a process similar for a non-residential entity as a resident who wants to hold a loud event.

Brad: the Good Neighbor Gathering had to get a permit and pay a fee to have amplified music.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Dennis reviewed DMNA’s income and expenses for September.

Income: Total \$939.90
Expenses: Total: \$6,262.77
Current Membership: 23

Discussion:

Brad noted that a membership total of 23 was very disappointing. Much discussion ensued on why that figure is so low, including the fact that it is normal, since the new membership drive year has only just begun; and that the block captains’ work on the membership drive was delayed by the long wait for the directory, which was promised to us well before Labor Day but was not, in fact, delivered to Kathy until September 22.

Kathy still has 5 vacancies for block captains. Ann suggested she tap council members directly, and Lisa will announce the vacancies on the DMNA e-news bulletin.

The treasurer’s report was accepted by unanimous vote.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

- Diego did an interview for News 3 Now in response to an article about Madison being most neighborly city. Link to that interview is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sml8VGm2480>
- There was no communication from Edgewood High School prior to their Homecoming dance. Diego hopes we can get back to a position of communicating with Edgewood.

Diego is cautiously optimistic about meeting with the new college president, with Tag and the VNA president. Shawn would like our 3 liaisons to be mentioned at that meeting. Diego hopes that Tom, Marc and Daryl will continue, because they have been extremely reasonable.

Discussion:

Laura Checovich asked for background on the Edgewood Liaison Committee. She thinks Tag's description of Edgewood's failure to communicate with neighbors in advance about the Homecoming dance as "reprehensible" was incendiary and might damage communication with Edgewood were they to be aware of it. Daryl says the Liaison Committee have always considered themselves a separate entity to the alder.

Shawn described her 18 years of experience on the Liaison Committee as mostly peaceful and positive. Would like relations between EW and neighbors to get back on their usual good terms.

AGENDA ITEMS

- Brad: Good Neighbor Gathering update. The gathering was held on Sep 10. It was a child-forward festival at Brittingham Park with variety of activities. It featured WHA, the Library, Parks Dept, and musical acts. It's the most diverse group that we have had for GNG. The band that closed things out has played in many locales and they commented that this was the most diversity that they had ever seen in a festival. DMNA gave out 250 bags of goodies for children. Estimated attendance was just under 500. Budget was \$13,000. Donations received and leftover funding means there is already \$2,000 for next year. Brad would like to get another big group involved in organizing. Good Neighbor House was the organizer this year, helped by a church. Sponsors included Thrivent and DMNA (we donated \$500).
- Chabad new construction. We don't have any further information on that at this time.
- Ann moved that the entire Council fervently thank Catherine and the directory committee, especially Sandy and Kathy, for completing the 2023 directory, despite many setbacks. Seconded by Daryl. Motion passed unanimously.
- Daryl moved to adjourn. Ann seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:02pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Catherine Jagoe