

## Public Realm Committee Notes

Thursday, April 4, 2019, 5-6:30 p.m.

Location: Conference Room B

Attendees: Chris Beckstrom, Co-Chair Jauston-Charles Campbell, Sandra Erickson, Tom Erickson, Jon Fure, Linda McBrayer, Crystal Meriwether, Co-Chair Jonathan Reisetter, Catherine Sweet.

Call to order and Introductions: Co-Chair Reisetter called the meeting to order and asked attendees to say their name and a favorite public space. Responses included the mall by the Eifel Tower in Paris; Kaposia Park in South Saint Paul; Lakefront Park and Bandshell in Hudson, Wisc.; Lake Park and former Mueller Airport in Austin, Texas; River Walk in San Antonio; the indoor park in Town Square; the row of rocking chairs in the Charleston, S.C. airport; the pocket parks in NYC; and the Alamo theater.

The committee discussed CRC's work generally. A committee member asked if CRC should have formal agreements or resolutions with organizations such as BOMA and the Downtown Alliance, as part of an overall strategy to become more influential. Another committee member said CRC seems to be most effective when residents are actively engaged. The Lowertown Cleanup Crew events, organized by Spire Credit Union, were mentioned as a good example of how residents are involved in the community. A committee member asked if it would be helpful for CRC to make sure that one board member or committee member attends each City Council meeting, and others to serve as liaisons to other organizations. Linda McBrayer said she would like to volunteer to serve as a liaison and attend City Council meetings. Some current board members are actively involved in BOMA and in the Downtown Alliance, and the group felt that CRC should continue to build on those good working relationships. The group also discussed two main ways that CRC operates – one is to react to the agendas of the City and other organizations, and the other is to create our own agenda.

**Motion by Crystal Meriwether, seconded by Tom Erickson, to recommend that CRC designate board member liaisons to regularly attend City meetings and to formalize communication with BOMA, the Downtown Alliance, and Council Member Noecker. Motion passed.**

The committee continued the discussion from the March meeting about issues that have been identified as the top priorities:

1. Parks, green space, green things (planters, other ways of adding plants instead of concrete) and public art
2. Public safety, issues related to security cameras, and other police / public safety issues
3. Large-scale projects such as the proposed River Balcony

A question was asked if there is a detailed map that shows all of the parks and recreation areas in District 17 (which includes downtown and the Capitol area), so that we could identify additional places where greenspace could be added. Jon Fure said he would follow up with City staff to find out what data is available.

The group also discussed the City's plan to resurface streets and replace sidewalks downtown. There are standards, called Pedestrian Right Of Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG), that are not required but that would result in more accessible pedestrian areas. An overview is available on the following web page:

<http://www.adainfo.org/sites/default/files/1.4-Public-Rights-of-Way-2-slides-per-page.pdf>

**Motion by Jonathan Reisetter, seconded by Crystal Meriwether, to request that the City adopt PROWAG standards for the downtown street and sidewalk improvements. Motion passed.**

The group also talked about agenda items for the next committee meeting. Suggested topics included the feasibility of adding a pickleball court downtown, snow removal (what works well, what changes are needed,

etc.), public safety issues at transit stops and on buses and trains, and other ideas for adding green space downtown.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

- end -

### **May 2, 2019 CRC Staff Update**

The CapitolRiver Council discussed both Public Realm Committee motions at its regular meeting on April 17.

The motion to designate board member liaisons was tabled for additional discussion. The board's discussion on the motion included the following comments / concerns:

- If the board establishes a policy that we will have someone at every board meeting, we should follow through with it, but it might be difficult to make sure that someone attends each City Council meeting, and / or other meetings where we designate one or more liaisons.
- The liaison would not need to be a CRC board member – some committee members or representatives of other organizations could be willing to attend meetings and report back to CRC, and convey information on behalf of CRC to other organizations.
- A suggestion was made to simplify the motion by making it apply only to the City Council, but there was not a vote on that.
- This could involve changing the CRC bylaws and / or policies and procedures. For example, a barrier to establishing formal partnerships with key organizations is that the CRC bylaws contain a 2-year term limit for organizational appointments.
- The CRC mission is to represent ALL District 17 stakeholders – residents, property owners, business owners / operators, visitors, and workers (throughout District 17, which includes the Capitol complex, Regions Hospital, the History Center, and all of downtown). Therefore, having these formal partnerships with key organizations that represent each of those stakeholder groups helps CRC achieve its mission.
- Any partnership or agreement requires buy-in from both organizations. Therefore, the organizations that have been mentioned should be contacted to find out whether they want someone to serve as liaisons to CRC, to help facilitate shared communication and to try to develop consensus recommendations on issues that are important to each group.

CRC staff recommends that CRC change its bylaws to exempt the following organizations from the term limits for appointed members: Capitol Area Architecture and Planning Board, Saint Paul Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA), and Visit Saint Paul.

Changing the bylaws would require a majority vote by eligible members at the Annual Meeting.