

1083

CAMPUS COMMUNICATION
Drake University

To: To all concerned

Date: August 20, 1979

From: W. L. Cuning

Subject: Minutes of Organizational Meeting - Drake Neighborhood Association

About 50 persons met in the Medbury lounge Sunday afternoon, August 19th, at the invitation of Drake to consider mutual assistance in a neighborhood organization including home owners and tenants, and to include the revived former businessmen's associations of the neighborhood. We had previously worked several weeks ago with Gladys Burkhead, 1107-27th Street, and she was chiefly responsible for the notices to the neighborhood churches and other well-known neighbors, resulting in a sizeable and representative turn out.

Jim Wilkins, campus planner, also attended for Drake. A staff member of the Des Moines Housing Council, Anna Smith, also attended.

The general discussion at the beginning of the meeting identified these areas as "problems": (1) A feeling of "anomie", i.e. the loss of acquaintanceship or feeling of mutual personal identity through the neighborhood; (2) crime, (3) changing character of the neighborhood.

With regard to the crime issue, discussion was very balanced and general appreciation and awareness of the work of the Des Moines Police department was noted. Most residents felt that although the Drake neighborhood is listed as a "high crime area" most felt that the Drake area crime level was not that much higher for most careful citizens than elsewhere in the city. Of the entire group, only six persons knew at first hand of persons who have had their property burgled, and one woman, a volunteer at the Drake Reading Center, reported having her purse stolen and being knocked down (at night at the University Christian Church). She offered her concerns on behalf of students who feel unsafe on the campus and would like to have a security escort service. (The recent volunteer efforts by the fraternities to provide same, and the absolute lack of requests leading to abandonment of the plan, was related.)

Regarding changing character of the neighborhood, general consensus was that areas along Cottage Grove and 34th, Kingman Blvd., and north on 30th and east to Harding Road had declined considerably in the last few years but that in the last two to three years improvement in property maintenance and general appearance has been noted.

During this discussion a motion was made by Gladys Burkhead that Willis L. Cuning be nominated as a Chairman of this organizational meeting, at which point there was a second and a further motion that the nominations be closed. Mr. Cuning then presided for the rest of the meeting.

The following concerns were then discussed and more clearly identified: first, that recent funding for neighborhood improvements through city and federal agencies has been directed chiefly at building code qualification of houses, which provides internal improvement but nothing for exteriors; that many landlords make only improvements to the interior of the properties in the hopes of attracting new tenants and neglect the exterior yards, lawns, trash removal, etc.; that the Social Services Department for Polk County has been moving agencies into the neighborhood which changes the character; that realtors advising home seekers that they should not locate in the neighborhood is a real disservice; and finally, that there needed to be a stronger community sense which would identify the neighborhood. As to the latter, there was some discussion as to what boundaries the neighborhood actually consisted of, and it was decided to refer this to a steering committee or board for a later decision.

It was then moved by John Neubauer that future structure of the neighborhood group be achieved in a democratic fashion such as this meeting, proposing a present steering committee of five to be selected who would notify all those "directly involved in the neighborhood, to send someone to the next meeting they would like to see serving on a board, these persons to be present at a next general meeting for a possible election to the board."

An amendment was proposed: that the "said directors should include representatives of the various power or influence blocs, as well as having specific knowledge of particular aspects of the neighborhood functions". This amendment was seconded and after discussion, carried. The group then approved the motion for a steering committee of five and notification of the major agencies and groups in the neighborhood.

There was also suggested that the steering committee should compose a mission statement and comments were drawn from the group as follows: to maintain "the kind of neighborhood people would like to live in", to establish neighborhood identity, and to have the neighborhood composed of good citizens, that is good home owners, good tenants, good landlords.

Mr. Cunning, the president pro tem, will call a meeting of the following persons within the next week for purposes of further organization: John Neubauer, manager of The Blind Munchies, Cottage Grove; Mr. Wayne Shoemaker, Gladys Burkhead, 1107-27th; Nelda Barrow Wells (lawyer in City Attorney's office, City of Des Moines). Mr. Cunning recommended to the group and received acquiescence that Mr. Jim Wilkins, architect and planner, also be retained for this steering committee in an ex officio capacity (related to his University retainer).

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:45.

W.L.C.

W. L. Cunning
Director of the Physical Plant

cc: Steering committee
J. Wilkins
D. Clifton
C. Kasten
Pres. Miller

MISSION STATEMENT: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the Drake Neighborhood Association shall be the improvement of the quality of living, public image, physical appearance, and physical and personal safety of the environs and its inhabitants.

The Association will through its elected officers and individual members hold meetings, conduct projects and educational efforts related to the above, direct cleanup campaigns and assist homeowners, tenants, and landlords in technical and practical ways to accomplish these good ends for their individual benefit and the benefit of the community at large.

The Association, through its elected officers and its special committees or task groups, will collect information on various civic betterment activities available with or without funding which may be made available to businessmen and inhabitants of the neighborhood, for the improvement of physical or non-physical conditions or the advancement of neighborhood unity and esprit. The Association will act as a clearing-house and disseminator of related, reliable information.

The Association will not interfere with the conduct of legitimate business or individual activities, but will when directed by its constituency act as a spokesman for the neighborhood, and present legitimate concerns to city officials, financial institutions, school board members and other public service departments. It will do these missions for the group at large, but not for specific individuals' complaints or problems, insofar as attempts to handle these may detour the Association from its major goals of overall service to the greater neighborhood. However, ready referrals to appropriate civic or social agencies, or to responsible businesses, will be given to individuals whenever they may thus aid themselves by having the appropriate information on which to act.

Until further qualified by experience, board action, or enabling legislation, the Association will not act as the dispenser of any funds other than its own, although in appropriate situations it may act as the gatherer and evaluator of project applications, should its officers and Board so elect that this is a function suitable to the above purposes, goals, and objectives.

Draft Statement - 8/22/79

WLC/s

(As a practical addition to the above, but not necessary to the Mission Statement, the Association should incorporate under Iowa charter as a Regulation 503 non-profit voluntary association. -- WLC)

Make comments or write your own version.

We will meet soon.

WLC.

November 8, 1979



From the Desk of
WILLIS L. CUNNING
Director of the Physical Plant

To Neighborhood Association Board Members:

Reminder--Board meeting third Thursday of the month,
Room 204 Meredith Hall, 3:00 PM, Nov. 15

A mixed agenda (herewith follows some low-level
philosophy from Cunning on organizational tactics):

Boards of Directors should set policies and goals. Thus part of their meetings should allow for general discussion, sharing of philosophies or motivations, and evaluating or analyzing the current scene they want to deal with. They are not going to develop concrete recommendations or courses of action on everything they discuss, so motions, seconding, and votes really can't apply to everything. (Still need minutes of the discussions, however, especially if we reach some general concensus on something.)

Boards need inputs from their committées and delegated work-groups or task-forces. So reports are vital. If you have been given a responsibility, be ready to share where you are on it. (Example: John Neubauer, you were ~~going-to-find-out-~~ rather, you were to be the investigative liaison with the people who thought they could get us the VISTA volunteers.)

Committees and task-force people make recommendations regarding their fields of interest. The Board requests more information, suggests new directions or change of emphasis. Finally, the Board commits -- funds, time the action is to occur, effort of others needed, political or media contact or support, and results expected.

Boards establish priorities of goals.

Get the idea? See you Thursday, 11/15.

WLC