**GPSMNA Annual Meeting**

April 17, 2023

Board members present: President L. Arevian, V.P. D. Nave, Treasurer C. Cline, Secretary L.A. Schwietz, immediate past president S. Escovitz; area representatives B. E. Shaw, T. Dunnuck, S. Foster, and C. Lentz. Meeting called to order 7:05 by President Arevian.

I. Consent Agenda

a. President Arevian welcomed the board and neighbors, several of whom are new to the neighborhood.

b. C. Cline summarized Treasury activity. Current total assets are $83,264.89. This balance reflects a loss of $14,040.27 compared to 2022. During the years 2020, 2021, and 2022, the annual Tour of Homes, GPSMNA’s biggest fund raiser, was not held due to COVID 19 concerns. GPSMNA has remained financially sound due to careful use of financial resources and due to the generosity of anonymous donors. President Arevian reminded those in attendance that there are no paid board positions leaving 100% of donations for neighborhood use.

**Motion to approve the Treasurer’s report made by S. Escovitz, seconded by D. Nave. Approved.**

II. The President’s Year in Review

a. President Arevian reported the primary functions of the GPSMNA and reviewed improvements in the past year.

i. GPSMNA is recognized by the city as having the authority to provide representation of neighborhood issues.

ii. GPSMNA participates in the Coalition of Asheville Neighborhoods (CAN) and other neighborhood groups.

iii. The association manages funds for maintenance and improvements in our 3 city parks and 22 traffic islands that enhance the quality of life for neighbors.

iv. In the past year, President Arevian spearheaded a major improvement in the appearance and accessibility of the website ([www.gp-smna.org](http://www.gp-smna.org)). Web and database statistics are newly available. Nearly 400 unique visitors have accessed the website since its update.

v. Neighborhood dues will remain at $25 annually. Dues are not a donation. Dues allow inclusion for neighborhood updates from the GPSMNA president and board via email. Dues can be paid on the website.

vi. Our association has tax exempt 501c3 status, so tax deductible donations of any amount are welcome. Donations can be made on the website.

b. Before this meeting, some of those present were unaware the Grove Park Sunset Mountain neighborhood had an active association. The President and the board agreed communication with the neighborhood will be a priority, with the goal to improve neighborhood involvement.

III. Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District (NCOD)

a. Treasurer C. Cline explained laws in various cities (Raleigh, NC; Austin, Houston, and many others) aimed at conserving the character of neighborhoods. Typically these laws do not regulate specific building features but instead focus on significant character defining features, such as lot size, building height, setbacks, streetscapes, and tree canopy. Laws are designed to keep the scale and character of new construction in line with the existing neighborhood. Treasurer Cline explained the goal is to enact a Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) that would eliminate spot or conditional zoning. A several step process, likely to take months to a year or more, would be required. The first step is to gather a committee of interested neighbors that meet with the city council. Any interested members can contact Treasurer Cline.

b. Several neighbors expressed frustration about past dealings with the city council. There was discussion that frequent determined, vocal, and group attendance at city council meetings may result in favorable outcomes.

c. (Secretary’s note: if you google “NCOD”, you may reach websites for the National Catholic Organization for the Deaf, or information about National Coming Out Day.)

d. Treasurer Cline mentioned a virtual watchdog resource formed by a group of journalists and editors dedicated to partisan-free information. The Asheville Watchdog ([www.avlwatchdog.org](http://www.avlwatchdog.org)) seeks to inform and engage the citizens of Asheville by providing fair and reliable news stories about local government, institutions, issues, and people.

IV. Update from the Coalition of Asheville Neighborhoods (CAN) representative

a. A. Escovitz has been the neighborhood’s CAN representative for several years. He has been unable to attend CAN meetings. A review of recent CAN information is presented below.

i. Active city issues reported by CAN include Asheville’s Homeless Strategy and efforts to rebuild the Jones Park Playground (near the Grove Park Sunset Mountain neighborhood).

ii. CAN also reports on new city initiatives. One new initiative focuses on single use plastic. Yard waste bagged in plastic will not be accepted after August 1, 2023. Other single use plastic guidelines are likely to follow.

iii. Other CAN issues can be reviewed at [www.asheville-can.org](http://www.asheville-can.org).

V. GPSMNA Funding Raising Ideas

a. In past years the annual Tour of Homes has been the biggest fundraiser. New fund-raising ideas are:

i. Continue the Annual Yard Sale in July. This is not a major fund raiser, but it does foster community.

ii. Work with the Grove Park Inn on a partnership. The long Macon Ave drive up to the Grove Park Inn is maintained by GPSMNA. The Grove Park Inn could be persuaded to fund Macon Ave’s maintenance.

iii. Work with Brunk Auction House on an Antiques Roadshow concept.

iv. Have a September, day-long park social in place of the Tour of Homes. The event could include chalk drawing competitions, dog contests (most beautiful dog, ugliest dog, biggest dog, smallest dog, oldest dog), live music, food trucks, etc. Such an event would foster more neighborhood involvement. The second weekend in September has been the traditional weekend for the Tour of Homes; it is a time that doesn’t conflict with other major events.

v. Work on advertising opportunities with banner ads, skyscraper ads, or virtual billboard space for the website. Realtors, financial planners, and neighborhood businesses would be logical businesses to target for ads.

vi. Inspire neighbors to contribute small weekly donations ($2/week or $100/year). If half of the GPSM households donated this amount, ongoing funding for our parks and islands would be assured.

vii. Have a silent auction. This could be in person or online.

viii. Offer higher levels of membership with incentives (t-shirts, mugs). Or sell neighborhood-themed items.

ix. More frequent events, such as monthly or quarterly speaker series/food trucks/music/art in the park would have the effect of keeping GPSMNA front and center in the minds of residents. President Arevian pointed out we don’t lack ideas. What GPSMNA lacks are enough involved neighbors to help carry out these ideas.

VI. Slate of Board Members

a. Several members are exiting the board: President Arevian, Vice President Nave, and region 2 representative B.E. Shaw. Jake Quinn, representative for area 4, is undecided. For the remainder of 2023, proposed board members are President S. Escovitz, Treasurer C. Cline, Secretary L.A. Schwietz, and region representatives T. Dunnuck, C. Lentz, S. Foster, D. Atkinson. Vacancies remain for a neighborhood area 2 representative and for Vice President.

**Motion to approve proposed board members made by President Arevian; seconded by C. Cline. Approved**.

VII. New Business

a. Neighbor Cathy Walsh informed those present of the Coalition for a Bird-Friendly Asheville (www.birdsafeavl.org). This organization encourages the public to turn off unnecessary indoor and outdoor lighting and to close blinds or curtains at night to prevent light leakage during bird migration seasons (March-May and September-November). Use of warm temperature LEDs is also encouraged. These efforts will reduce fatal collisions as birds migrate at night.

**Move to adjourn made 8:05 pm by President Arevian. Seconded by Todd Dunnuck.**

Next meeting will be in May. Date, time and whether live or virtual TBD.

Minutes submitted by Leigh Anne Schwietz MD