

NFB Board Meeting April 19, 2017

Board Members Present - Anthony Eschmann, Rhonda Findley, Mark Gonzalez, Stephen Haedicke, Tyler Harwood, Steven Jacob, Julie Jones, Brian Lockett, Rick Prince

Meeting started at 7:12PM with a discussion regarding confusion due to misleading wording in minutes from our last board meeting. There was a motion to clarify that the NFB is not supporting the development at the 2900 block of Burgundy by Iris Development, but that the board appreciates their efforts to engage with the community and their efforts to include affordable housing. The vote was unanimous in favor. Our March 16 letter to Iris Development reflected these positions. NFB has serious concerns about scale and numerous negative effects on near neighbors, but since the proposed plans are within current zoning guidelines there isn't much we can do, at least until we see what changes have or have not been implemented in the next version of their plans.

Additional discussion on the topic addressed a need to keep more accurate minutes and to review them more carefully. Brian suggested exploring ways to help more people know the things we discuss at all our meetings. Mark proposed a newsletter, be it on paper or digital, and utilizing existing social media for this purpose. This would help keep the public informed and also help to promote our meetings. Rhonda suggested getting posters made with all upcoming meeting dates and times listed for the next year and Tyler agreed to donate his printing services. Rhonda also suggested we consider applying for grant to fund the employment of an executive director to help us with minutes, draft the newsletter, update the website, promotion, etc... and several board members mentioned the possibility of an intern, perhaps from Tulane social work department. Steven Jacob will contact the school to see if it is a possibility.

Mark proposed a "living history event" put on by NFB where long time Bywater residents like Mr. Frady could speak about the history of our neighborhood and what makes it special. The event could potentially be a fundraiser, and Rhonda volunteered to make t-shirts.

Brian discussed a letter the Louisiana Landmarks Society is sending to the city council and CPC asking for more meetings in the individual council districts to allow citizen input and a better understanding of the implications of the proposed Master Plan Amendments. The board voted unanimously in support of NFB signing on to the letter.

Brian then explained some of the intricacies of the Riverfront Overlay and developments in relation to the successful lawsuit by FMIA. He said the lawsuit only addressed so-called "gateways" and the FMIA is now asking for specific changes in regard to requirements to be eligible for "bonuses" (such as an additional 25 ft height allowance). These proposals would have an effect of the lots on the river side of Chartres between the "rusty rainbow" and the Rice Lofts, as well as the entirety of N Peters St in the Marigny stretching from St. Ferdinand to Elysian Fields. NFB already voted to oppose these gateways, and Brian motioned we submit a letter clearly stating we are opposed to height bonuses in gateways. The board voted unanimously in favor. It was suggested that we encourage members to write letters as well.

Next the proposal by Austen Ward to create a private security patrol for the blocks surrounding the St. Claude Avenue corridor was discussed. Strong opposition was voiced by some board members and some were in favor of exploring the possibility further as the effectiveness of such

programs in other neighborhoods was discussed. It was mentioned that the BNA funded a private patrol “some years back”, mainly during “peak crime hours” (late night). Since the patrol was rarely seen by residents many stopped paying the annual dues and the program “fizzled out”. Steve Jacob motioned that Mr. Ward be invited to present his ideas at the next board meeting. 8 voted in favor, one abstained.

For the next general meeting (May 3) we will try (once again) to get someone from the Corps of Engineers to come speak regarding the proposed Industrial Canal Lock Expansion. It was noted that Bywater has not been included in these meetings yet. Gauging interest from Nadine Ramsey or Cedric Richmond to participate was suggested. Brian mentioned that the folks from the new Parleaux Beer Lab (Royal St @ Lesseps St) may be interested in introducing themselves to the group and Stephen Haedicke agreed to contact them. Rhonda will bring food, possibly from the Joint. It was suggested that all board members need to attend general meetings as attendance has been low, and name tags would be good as well. Scheduling “social time” before the meeting starts was also suggested. Steven Jacob volunteered to host the next board meeting (May 17).

Meeting adjourned at 8:42PM

Respectfully submitted,
Tyler Harwood
co-secretary