

Minutes for Kansas City Neighborhood Advisory Council on 1/13/2004

KCNAC members in attendance: Lynda Callon, Steve Eklund, Jay Stock, Rodney Sampson, Forestine Beasley (late) and Cynthia Canady (late), and Greg Hugeback (late). Dennis Carroll, and Bruce Pennington were not present.

City staff in attendance: Renea Nash, David Reynolds, Councilwoman Deb Hermann, Les Washington.

Meeting called to order at 3:50pm.

First order of business **was the notice regarding the change in the Bulky Item pickup for 2004, which was sent out on Christmas Eve, much too late for effective communication.** Jay Stock brought up the agreement for RecycleFIRST, which said the change to Bulky Item pickup would be part of the RecycleFIRST rollout, starting at the earliest in March with Phase 1. Deb Hermann said that the KCNAC should be the first people to have this discussion with Environmental Management, and that didn't happen. EM made their decisions regarding tiers unilaterally, and did not give enough notice to the neighborhoods.

Lynda brought up that when she thinks waste management or recycling, she sees it as all of the aspects of Environmental Management; recycling, leaves-and-brush, bulky item pickup, trash collection, etc. Jay pointed out that John Stufflebean included the bulky item changes in RecycleFIRST from the get-go. **People feel that EM reneged on their promises and are upset about this.**

David ran off copies of the accepted proposals from EM that came out of the October 2003 meeting between EM and the neighborhoods. Forestine, Cynthia, and Greg showed up in the interim and were brought up to date.

Deb Hermann is going to try to get a meeting together between John Stufflebean (or someone from EM), and members of KCNAC, especially Jay Stock as chair of the Waste Management subcommittee. This will be the first of many decisions between EM and WM.

It is believed that the bulky zones are broken out into urban core and outlying areas for whether they stayed monthly or went to an every-other-month schedule; David went to run off some maps to check this.

Steve brought up that this City's Councilpeople have made a lot of unreasonable promises, such as "we're going to do this thing for you and it will never cost you another cent." He would rather hear the ugly truth than a pretty lie. Jay brought up the fact that the earnings tax was sold largely on the basis of the trash collection, but EM's portion of the earnings tax (as a percentage of the total, not in actual dollars) has consistently gone down. Jay said he doesn't think it's unreasonable to expect the City to have a decent trash program, but the City has to make it a priority.

Lynda asked Deb Hermann about a rumor that all of the CDCs may be brought up under the EDC. **Deb said it was a rumor she had heard but does not know its validity, but encouraged people to keep watching and attending committee meetings.** She expects 6 or 7 CDCs to survive the budget process this year. Jay spoke up about how tired people are getting of these issues, and how it is going to negatively affect tax issues brought before the City in the future if it does not get resolved. Deb said that she understands, but she is only 1 of 13 people who need to hear that message.

Jay brought up that the way the ATA tax was handled could make it liable to be rescinded under the State's Hancock amendment, because some of the money went to the EDC when that wasn't mentioned in the ballot issue. The EDC is "in no way a transportation concern".

Lynda asked about the actual bond issue that is coming up; the numbers keep changing. **Deb Hermann said she believes it will be asking for \$200M for infrastructure, \$20M for Liberty Memorial, and \$30M for the Zoo in three separate ballot issues.** Jay brought up the concern that the money will be diverted again, like with the ATA issue; Deb Hermann said it would have to be specified in the ballot issue. Steve asked if they could at least specify the process by which those projects would be identified. Finance Committee handles that sort of detail.

Forestine asked about the budget; Deb said she knows nothing more about it than we do. The City Manager's budget goes to the Mayor's Office tomorrow. She has about 10 days to comment before it goes to the Council. Deb Hermann does not know of any prioritization meetings being scheduled yet, or of any discussions going on about it yet. Steve asked about getting access to those draft budgets under the Sunshine Law or the Freedom of Information Act. Deb said that it will be best to get it as early as possible, but couldn't identify exactly what date that would be. **She did suggest that they contact the particular Department Director that ran the program they were interested in, so that they can get specifics.** Renea is working on cleaning up Les' budget breakdown, adding in real-world numbers for 2003-2004. This goes for the entire City's budget, not just NCSD. Deb suggested bringing in someone from Budget to speak about the proposed budget. She had to leave at this point to return to City Hall.

David brought back maps showing Bulky Item pickup; most of the center core and some of the south stayed monthly. Some people did not get the press release on December 24th.

They are going to try to invite Troy Schulte to their next meeting, probably in three weeks. Steve asked about the window of opportunity to comment; Lynda said there are two public hearings, one in the afternoon and one in the evening. **Jay said we have to stop accepting that it's going to "be that way" when budgets get cut;** Lynda had the example of saving the \$50 dumpster program by going down and raising hell.

Lynda brought up the proposal to take \$300,000 from the Municipal Court Fund and fund existing inspectors in Neighborhood Preservation. This would cut the number of houses MCF can help from 120 to 40. This would be expecting the poorest of the poor to carry the weight of the City. Jay brought up that we would also be forcing Les to start taking money from PIAC funds to pay for inspectors. Lynda reminded people that PIAC runs out in 6-7 years, and the bonds will take 20 years to pay back. There are a lot of concerns in regards to this issue.

They will try to get Troy Schulte here in three weeks or so (Jan. 27th or Feb. 3rd) to answer questions about the upcoming budget, in comparison to the prior budgets. Lynda brought up the difficulty in tracking programs from year to year when they get moved around; she brought up the Livable Neighborhoods program, which kept getting moved from department to department when people would complain about it. That is the program she complained about when they were going to get rid of the \$50 dumpsters.

Les arrived at this point. **He said that the Budget office got back to him about the MCF/NP issue. They are going to look at using CDBG money instead;** they bought his argument.

Jay brought up the issue of starting the Bulky Item changes on New Year's Day, separating this out from the RecycleFIRST concessions as had been previously agreed to. They got 7 days (4 of which were holidays) instead of the 30 days they expected. Les agreed that he had not heard about this plan. There was a very small article posted in the KC Star. **There was also discussion of the over-reliance of the City to post things electronically** (using the City's website, email, etc) instead of through traditional channels lately. There was also mention made of colored information on the website being unhelpful when you go to print off a black-and-white copy for distribution.

If people don't feel like they can trust the City or the Council, then they will rebel against the next proposal put forward. **KCNAC is going to draft a letter to send to the City Manager about the agreement forged on 10/31 with EM**, which seems to be disregarded now. They will draft it and approve the draft by email this week to speed things up. Lynda will call Cynthia to get her input, since she doesn't have email. While Jay's position is that the Bulky Item pickup should be delayed until March 1st with the rest of RecycleFIRST, Steve pointed out that it might be too far down the road to get that goal achieved. The deeper issue is whether or not the process will be followed; will EM work with WM and KCNAC? They cannot afford to go back and fight EM on every issue. **There is a sense that the KCNAC is being ignored.**

The draft bylaws and the recommendations from Legal were passed out; however the changes made by Legal were predicated on assumptions that KCNAC was an appointed body; it is not. Some of the changes thus will not be applicable.

In Article 6, the sections on Committees, there was some concern about whether or not the language was strenuous enough for make the City work with the KCNAC. The language has been changed from "joint" to "advising", changing the relationship to one where the KCNAC opinions can be disregarded at will. Steve brought up that the City cannot be compelled by the KCNAC bylaws to provide them equal footing. They cannot be both a stand-alone committee (not appointed) and have oversight authority over the City governments. Jay's point was that the "jointly working with" language will stress to them the importance of doing so. They still won't be required to follow KCNAC recommendations, but they should be accountable to the neighborhood leaders. Renea reminded them that the credibility of KCNAC will be established by how they function and interact, not what their bylaws state. **Language approved: "Article 6, Section 3: ... This role shall include, but not be limited to: drafting and commenting on ordinances; researching and working jointly with City offices dealing with property maintenance; and suggesting improvements for property maintenance issues in Kansas City."** Steve made the point with regards to the next section that they should not specifically mention RecycleFIRST in their bylaws, because it will limit them later. **Section 4 was replaced as follows: "Article 6, Section 4: The Waste Management Committee shall be responsible for advising the Board of Directors on waste management issues. This role shall include, but not be limited to: working jointly with the Department of Environmental Management on waste management policies that affect neighborhoods."**

There was discussion about changing the name of the subcommittee to "Environmental Management" instead of "Waste Management". Jay said that would make their mandate too broad and encompassing; they should focus on Waste Management issues for neighborhoods.

The next meeting in two weeks (/1/27/04) will either address budget issues (if Troy will be available) or bylaws revisions.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30pm.