

Meeting Notes
Southside Green Zones Council Meeting
August 15th, 2019 | 5:30 - 8:00pm
Phillips Community Center, 2323 11th Ave S | Second Floor

Board/Commission Members in attendance: Joseph Golish, Timothy Blighton, Karen Clark, Samara Adam, Amanda Saathoff, Jason Chavez, Megan Kuhl-Stennes (Quorum 9)

Guests in attendance: Jake Viriden, Kaleigh Swift, Shirley Heyer, Brad Pass, Rory Wakemup, Cassandra Meyer, Maryan Abdinur, Eliza (?)

Facilitators: Shalini Gupta, Alejandra (Tobar Alatriz)

Staff in attendance: Kelly Muellman, Kennedy Kruchoski

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 5:50 p.m. Facilitators Alejandra and Shalini Gupta led the group in a moment of grounding. Members and guests introduced themselves to the group.

Emergent topics: Southside Green Zone Council Members and community guests

Jake Viriden provided an overview of **Parks and Power**, a local campaign that works to build power with low wealth communities in the Minneapolis Parks. Jake announced that next Thursday, August 22, Parks and Power will be hosting a **community assembly on rent control** to prevent gentrification now that they have received park investments.

Karen Clark provided an update on the **Hiawatha Campus** (a.k.a. the Roof Depot site) expansion, for which the community is demanding an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The City has claimed that the project does not “qualify” for a mandatory EIS, and will not be moving forward with a mandatory EIS. Karen brought language to the meeting to encourage the City to pursue an EIS for this project, and to refer to the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) that had previously been completed in the Phillips neighborhood.

Brad Pass provided additional supporting comments to Karen Clark’s suggested language, and passed around a petition for individuals to sign.

Policy Odyssey: Working Group Discussions

Green Economy & Anti-Displacement

- *Scott, Ashley, Kowsar, Muhubo*

Health & Energy in Housing

- Joe, Matt, Rory, Viviana, Karen

Land Use: Air & Soil

- Cassie, Jason, Megan, Amanda, Tim, Cassandra

Healthy Food Access

- Jodi, Steve, Samara, Devika

Self-determination and accountability

- Will be discussed at next month's meeting

Shalini reviewed the provided packets which summarize previously identified environmental and health issues in the Southside Green Zone, along with related solutions and policies. These problems and solutions are split into the same topics as the working groups. Each of the working groups reviewed these materials, answering the following questions posed by facilitators:

- Where are the gaps?
- Which solutions are missing policy strategies?
- Where do we need more expert advice?
- What community engagement makes sense for these strategies?

Answers to these questions will contribute to potential recommendations for the City, and to holding elected officials accountable.

Working Group Reflections

Air, water and land

This group focused their discussion on traffic and pollution, and the importance of reducing traffic, especially on Cedar, 26th and 28th. The group would like to see more information about the HIA (Health Impact Assessment) that was performed for the Phillips neighborhood. In addition to traffic reduction, the group is also interested in the possibility of rezoning certain areas to dissuade industrial developments. The group also discussed using an alternative to asphalt made from soy that creates less pollution, and can potentially be grown and made locally.

Healthy food access

The group suggested that the City provide homeowners and renters with clean and healthy soils. Another suggestion was to provide information about chemicals in peoples homes, including which lots have been remediated and which lots have plans for remediation.

Heath in energy and housing

This group identified a need to strengthen building codes. They suggested sending out test kits for lead or other drinking water contaminants, along with information about resources available. On some of the topics included in the packet, this group expressed a need for expert or legal advice. Informational materials could be distributed at school events and community centers, and via mail. These could include utility shut-off information. One guest from the community mentioned that mailers don't typically work, and that door-knocking, radio and video would be more efficient.

Green economy and anti-displacement

This group focused on the gaps in the document. These included robust funding for housing, with broader models than traditional “affordable housing”, supporting landlords who live in the City, access to free healthcare, and supporting land trusts and cooperative ownership. Kaleigh Swift noted that no single policy will solve anti-displacement.

Funding discussion

Facilitators led a discussion about the \$75,000 available for the Southside Green Zone Council to use. This money must be spent by the end of this calendar year, and the City is particularly watchful of this process. Members were asked to consider what they would like to spend the money on, and to share their ideas with facilitators within the next few weeks so that it can be discussed at the September meeting. For proposals to be considered, facilitators suggest that members specify who would be doing the work of the proposal, the timeline for the work, how the work relates to the articulated priorities of the Southside Green Zone Council, and how much money is being requested.

Karen Clark mentioned that much of the work that needs to happen is the enforcement of existing laws, and asked whether these funds can be used to hire legal help to ensure that. Facilitators and staff will follow up about that question.

The group needs to decide who can bring forward proposals, and how to decide where the funds will be allocated. Concern was voiced about the limited time in which to spend the money, and the need to give all members an equal chance to make a proposal. Facilitators responded affirmatively to feeling of rushed timeline and asked for volunteers to help figure out the next possible step based on the conversation. Council Members asked questions about what an RFP (Request For Proposals) would look like? Could we do microgrants? (Something like the [AWESOME Foundation](#)).

Megan Kuhl-Stennes, Tim Blighton and Samara Adam volunteered to work with facilitators to create a proposal for decision making starting in September.

Community Power Building

Kelly Muellman and Rory Wakemup reported to the group the Creative City Making project. Creative City Making (CCM) brings artists and City of Minneapolis staff together to stimulate innovative thinking and form new practices to create a more responsive government. Rory’s objective is to work with Sustainability staff (Kelly) and the Southside Green Zone Council to develop strategies to engage underrepresented and underserved communities in the Southside Green Zone. Rory and Kelly met with Samara, Cassie and Scott to review a proposal for Rory’s work over the next 10 months. Rory’s message will be “Raise Your Voice”, and will encourage the community to show up in numbers to support Green Zones causes. The topics that this work will address are related to soil and air pollution:

- Soil and Indigenous food – soil testing and planting heirloom seeds
- Air pollution and electric school buses – air testing and advocacy for electric buses
- Neighborhood-specific projects: indoor urban farm (East Phillips), etc.

Working with youth at Andersen School and Anishinabe Academy, Rory will create a design to screen-print for events. The group could choose to use existing pollution data, or collect new data. This initial proposal will shift as the work continues.

Council members suggested broadening the reach of these projects since pollution doesn't follow neighborhood boundaries.

Samara added that some of the Southside Green Zone Council funding could be used to further this CCM work.

Self-determination & Accountability

1. SSGZ Council response letter to Volkswagen Settlement Phase 2 Resource

Shalini summarized the Volkswagen settlement, and clarified that (if voted on by the Southside Green Zone Council) this letter would be submitted to the MPCA during the comment period for the use of the second round of settlement funds. The group read this letter aloud. Since the City requires that any letters sent outside of the City Enterprise come from individuals as opposed to a City Advisory Board or Council, members will be voting on whether their name is included on this letter. Facilitators will send the letter on behalf of those who signed the letter. The following members voted to include their names on this letter: Karen Clark, Tim Blighton, Joe Golish, Cassie Holmes, Viviana Rodriguez and Kowsar Mohamed.

2. SSGZ Council letter to Climate Action and Racial Equity Fund

The group read this letter out loud. Kowsar and Ashley, who reviewed the applications for the Fund but were not in attendance at this meeting, previously reviewed and approved the letter. Karen Clark moved to approve the letter, and the motion was seconded by Tim Blighton. Using the thumb method, three voting members voted "up" and one voted "side". The motion will be voted on electronically due to not meeting quorum.

3. Hiawatha expansion – request for Environmental Impact Statement/Health Impact Assessment

Members read Karen Clark's proposed letter. If approved, this letter would be sent to Minneapolis City Council from the Southside Green Zone Council. Karen found out about the need to provide feedback on this project very recently, and proposed that the group vote on this letter now due to the urgency of the topic. The topic will be voted on via email. The four voting members in attendance approved of the letter.

8:00 Closing / Adjourn

Next Meeting: September 19, 2019 at 5:30 p.m.

Division of Indian Work, Dakotah Lodge

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