

## **Housing Committee Meeting Notes March 20, 2019**

Present: Seth Moglen, Kim Carrell-Smith, Anne Evans, Connor Burbridge, Kevin Benner, Adrienne McNeil, Valerie DeWeerth, Ian Panyko, Allyson Lehr

Staff: Anna Smith, Chris Cassidy

Submitted by: Anna Smith

### **Southside Vision Proposals 2019-2020**

The committee reviewed draft proposals for Southside Vision's upcoming program year.

#### *Façade Improvements*

The first proposal requests \$30,000 for façade improvements. Committee members agreed that façade improvements are high-impact projects that have demonstrated proven results on Hayes Street. The committee agreed to support the request for \$30,000.

#### *Housing Organizer*

The committee discussed a proposal to hire a part-time housing organizer to support neighborhood-level organizing throughout the Southside, with a potential for expansion to the Northside 2027 neighborhood. Members agreed that this individual would be responsible for convening neighborhood meetings and asked that the term "block watch" be avoided. Committee members felt that safety and crime are not the biggest concerns of most residents at the moment, and it would be better to use language like "neighborhood associations" or something similar. The focus of these groups would be determined in each neighborhood, but would likely include meetings with City officials, social events, and opportunities to share concerns and develop solutions. Anne mentioned the importance of these associations for improving the quality of life of residents in neighborhoods. The committee agreed to support the proposal for \$20,000 in funding.

#### *Tool Library and Southside Garden Alliance*

Connor presented the joint proposal, which will be submitted with the Outdoors and Wellness committee as well. The committee discussed tool storage options, and Anne provided information on the experience of Washington DC's community gardens. The committee discussed holding multiple repair café/DIY home maintenance workshops on specific topics throughout the summer, rather than attempting a large home improvement fair. The committee discussed potentially working with Community Bike Works, as well as potential sources of donations from local nurseries. Finally, the committee emphasized the importance of having a paid coordinator for this initiative.

The committee agreed to support the three proposals put forward, and if asked to make any cuts, Allyson suggested that the committee cut funding for façade improvements given the availability of funds through the City of Bethlehem.

### **Student Housing Development on First Terrace**

Anna and Anne attended the Planning Commission meeting where Austin Sivoni, owner of multiple properties in the First Terrace neighborhood, presented his plans for a 10-unit structure that would house 50 students. Anna mentioned that the planned development would target graduate students, and would provide parking for two cars on the property, with some additional space available in the driveway (but that would not be legal parking spaces). The developers mentioned that they will be requesting a sidewalk waiver so that they do not have to build sidewalks at the properties. The Planning Commission provided many suggestions to the developers, including the recommendation to complete a traffic and parking study, and a request to reduce the density of the proposed development in order to minimize variance needs.

Anne mentioned that she and two residents of Hillside Avenue spoke to express their concerns regarding parking, safety, and quality of life in the neighborhood.

Allyson explained that the developers can revise their sketch plan and return to the Planning Commission or they could seek variances from the Zoning Hearing Board immediately. She will keep the committee informed regarding the next steps.

### **Upcoming Events**

Anna reminded that committee that there are several upcoming events that members may be interested in attending, including the Lehigh Valley Fair Housing Summit on April 12, Southside Clean Up on April 13, an Introduction to Gardening workshop on April 20, and CADCB's second Landlord-Tenant Law training in partnership with North Penn Legal Services on May 8

### **Next Meeting**

The next Housing Committee meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, April 24 at 3 pm** in the first floor conference room of the Forte building.