



Overland Park Neighborhood Association (OPNA) – March 24 2016

Meeting called to order at 6:32me pm by President Mara Owen

Business

Minutes from February meeting approved

Treasurer Report

(reminder: annual dues are now due for 2016. \$10 per household, \$25 business. Paid members are voting members)

Beginning Balance		\$ 3,896.55
Membership Deposit		\$ -
Grants Received		\$ -
Paid Grants		\$ -
Ending Balance Per Bank		\$ 3,896.55
	OPNA Funds	\$ 897.00
	Grant Funds	\$ 2,999.55
Outstanding	Check materials M Owen	\$(1,733.46)
	Outstanding invoices	\$(525.00)
	Unapplied Grant	\$ 721.09

Jeff Walker – RTD Denver.

Jeff Walker from RTD gave us an update on the three questions we raised in a prior meeting.

- 1 – Elevator on Evans Bridge would require about 1 million dollars and there is no easy place to put it as the current sidewalks are too narrow. So there is not plan now or in the near future to consider this feature.
- 2 – Shuttle service between RTD status and Ruby Hill area. There is no answer yet and he plans to talk to Jolon to further discuss this. Jeff will continue to look into this and will provide an update in a later meeting.
- 3 – Art maintenance budget. Jeff is still determining what needs to be done at the station and will come back with information.

Jeff also announced the Airport line which opens on April 22. Free train rides will be offered on the opening day. It will take 37 min from Union Station to DIA, 9 dollars full fare. Operating hours will be between 4:30 am – 2:30 am. It will run every 15 min during peak hours of the day, in the evening, every 30 min. New trains running on this line will have more room for luggage.

Police Report – no one present for police report.

Helene Orr about Bee-safe Neighborhoods

Helene is looking for ways to start becoming a Bee-safe neighborhood, where we canvas the neighborhood asking neighbors to pledge not to use neonicotinoids and systemic pesticides which are very bad for honey and bumble bees. By educating more people, we can help to create a safe space for the bees. Without the bees, needed for pollination, we don't get fruits and veggies. Ruby Hill and West Wash Park neighborhoods are also promoting to their neighbors to join the pledge. The goal is to get at least 75 households, preferably adjacent, so there is a complete space for the bees.

She also spoke about the importance of planting plants which attract bees, such as the rocky mountain bee plant http://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/plant-of-the-week/cleome_serrulata.shtml native to the west. Helene has collected seeds from the San Louis Valley and brought them here and planted in her own yard. Easy to grow and – bees love these plants. She offered free seeds in our seed exchange to spread the word.

If you are interested in being involved, please contact Helene or Mara.

Rob – asked about the Golf course? If we can get Ruby Hill and Overland going – then may be able to put pressure on the golf course.

Sharona – made the comment that there are many more dandelions on Ruby Hill which could be an indicator that Parks and Rec are using less herbicides which is a good thing.

Bill Benerman mentioned Dr. Bonner's soap as one alternative.

Bill Benerman with the Mayors Office about changes to the city's Odor Ordinance

Bill Benerman came to talk about proposing an upgrade to the city's Odor Ordinance which was last updated in 2008. Odor ordinance is a quality of life more than a health concern. Since one person's odor is different to another person, it can be difficult to find solutions.

Since 2004 – 1,300 odor complaints were filed where 80% of the respondents felt it affected their quality of life. Physical affects could include headaches and nausea. Under the current ordinance – the only way to work toward a solution, first need 5 complaints filed from 5 different households over a 12 hour period. They are proposing to lower this requirement to complaints from 5 households and/or businesses in a 30 day period. This would be more consistent with other communities nationally. They are also working proactively to go after businesses which produce smells by Industry type including asphalt producers, waste water facilities and pot growing facilities.

Call 311 to file a complaint. Make sure to provide as much information as possible including time of day, location, weather conditions (windy or calm). This will help them to build a better case which could lead to issuing a citation to the offender.

Sharona Thompson from the Ruby Hill Community Garden

Don Brizendine from Ruby Hill neighborhood is the new guard leader at Ruby Hill Community Garden located next to the children's' playground at the top of Ruby Hill. Created in 2011 and the 100th garden created with the help of DUG – Denver Urban Garden with the intention to train people to be master gardeners. Sharona presented a beautiful slide show of the evolution of the garden and how bountiful it has become over the years. They are working on a grant for creating an herb garden in the middle. They have included many Bee friendly plants along with fruits and veggies.

Individual plots sell for \$35 per season. This includes compost, water, tools and plant donations. Community workdays are set at one Sat per month with an additional 2 hours commitment to work in the community spaces. There are educational programs coming soon including Basic gardening 101, Soil building, Edible weeds, Insect control, and more. Contact information: rubyhillgarden@gmail.com 303-292-9900. Sharona encourages us to learn from their experience with running this successful and beautiful community garden.

Ray – how to pay for water? parks and rec paid the first few years. Now they are charging 15\$ per plot. Sharona also mentioned Denver Days and what a success it was last year and proposing to do it again. She will be looking for people to be on the planning committee.

Martin Friedman with Division of Youth Corrections about painting murals in our neighborhood

Martin has worked on many art mural projects with youth that have been through the corrections system and are becoming part of a community again. There are several examples of their work throughout Denver including 31st and Downing, 13th and the Light Rail station, Swansea Rec Center. Here is an example of the work completed <https://sites.google.com/a/state.co.us/cdhs-dyc/home/youth-graduate-from-aspen-hollow-young-ranchers-program>

He has looked at the area around the Evans station and found several places to apply paint including the pillars and walls around the bridge. He works with people in each area along with graffiti artists where they come up with a theme for the area and then sketch and paint. Would like to find a way to work with us and will continue the discussion.

Broadway Station Area Plan neighborhood letter (Project Website: denvergov.org/i25broadway)

Now that the plan is ready to be presented to city council, the i25Broadway group is asking us to support it. Mara made a motion to approve, Paul second – all in favor with one abstain.

Mark Kelley, a masters student at UCDenver about his capstone project on ADU's (accessory dwelling units)

Mark is working to finish his master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning at CU Denver. His thesis is on the topic of accessory dwelling units (ADUs), a supplemental living area inside, attached, or detached from the main house. One of his goals is to provide the Office of Sustainability with the perspectives of local residents. He is looking for our support in completing a short survey. His contact information: Kelle872@umn.edu or 414-241-8394

Jessica Johnnes with CoPIRG, on campaign contributions, spending and the oversight of candidate campaigns for elections in Denver

Jessica with CoPIRG (Colorado Public Interest Research Group www.copirg.org) provided a short presentation of the "Democracy for the People Campaign" where they are looking to create a system to empower people to vote. They are looking for solutions at a local level where they are looking to promote 'Small Donor Empowerment Programs' which incentivizes voters to give a small contribution to a candidate they believe in and incentivizes candidates to spend more time with their constituents, and turn away from big checks by weighting small donations with limited public funds. They also want to push to modernize Denver's election system which has not be updated since before Citizens United to allow for more transparency in election spending. They want to find a way to get this passed in Denver this year. Looking for support from neighborhood associations.

Mara – asked for a motion to support the ideals put forth by this group. All were in favor.

Here's a fun fact – our own **Helene Orr** started CoPIRG in Denver.

Jolon Clark's Office (Council District 7)

Maggie Thompson from Jolon's office reminded us of the construction which is now is happening on Mississippi. They are changing a water line which will be ongoing thru end of April. Also doing clean up and improvements for bike and pedestrian. Then, this fall, construction will start on Broadway. There will be a schedule of lane closures. The I-25 Broadway plan presented by the developers (Broadway Station Partners) will be brought to council on the night of the 4th.

Jolon has been working with Parks and Rec regarding dog parks. Currently there is a dog park in the plans for I-25 at Vanderbilt Park where the city may work to get that completed separately from the I-25 Broadway schedule. Also, there is a location on Jason Street which used to be a dog park and there is no reason why they can't reopen it. They may need volunteers for clean up and fence mending.

Judy – asked about the empty school lot in Rosedale? Maggie responded that you can only allow dog parks on city owned property. They would have to work with DPS in order for this to be considered. She also mentioned the feral cat problem west of Federal where Denver animal protection is do outreach to offer free spade and neutering and vaccinations to help reduce the over population.

Community announcements (open to anyone)

- David brought to our attention the upcoming “Cabinet in the Community” with Mayor Hancock. Saturday, April 2, 9am-11am at the Thomas Jefferson High School, 3950 S. Holly St. Denver.
- Dan Horvat dan@horvatarch.com and Steve Jusseaume stevejusseaume@hotmail.com are looking for input on a proposed multi-use rezoning project in the Delaware block where Doctor Fix-It is currently located. Please contact them to attend a workshop meeting the week of April 4.

Compassionate things in our neighborhood (open to anyone)

- Paul likes the new Logo that Jack has been evolving.
- Jack recognized the efforts of Ronnie and Casey for getting the water level up at Overland Pond
- Equinox party – great party. Thanks to Ronnie’s Starbucks coffee, Eloise’s hot apple cider and Casey who came with lots of Easter bonnets for us to wear. We also entertained the group lead by Michael Buchard who took everyone on a tour of the new Pasquinels Landing park improvements.
- Jack gave a shout out to Helene – for her efforts with Bee-safe and for all her activism over the years.

Seed Swap was a success with many seeds distributed among neighbors.

Meeting adjourned 8:15 pm.

Next neighborhood meeting will be on **Thursday, April 28**, 2016, at **6:30 pm** at **The Studios at Overland Crossing** 2205 South Delaware St. Come join us and find out what is happening in our neighborhood. Also, check us out on our Website.

<http://www.opnadenver.org>