Third Ward Neighborhood Association

September Membership Meeting Tue. 9.15.2026

The mtg. was called to order by Susan Miller at 6:04 pm in Centennial Hall Rm 1804

Steering Present: Susan Miller, Peter Hable, Marian Ritland, Eileen Immerman, Bob Schwartz Absent: James Coy (ex), Jackie Tollefson (ex), Roger Gravrok, Sharon Hildebrand, Patrick Stafford

Members Present: Aaron Brewster, City Council, Ann McCoy, Assist. To Chancellor/UW-EC, Christine Warlowski, Alan Keniston, Rachel Keniston, Sue Peck, Laurie Norstedt, Laura Ellingboe (first time attendee and new TW resident)

Susan briefly re-capped summer successes, asked members to think about how they can use their skills to assist those doing the lion's share of the work. She discussed concerns about a bridge in Putnam Park that was allocated funds for repairs through a newsletter, but some adjacent neighbors were upset about the promotion of general usage without specifying the location. Marian confirmed that the neighbor who raised concerns had spoken with the park contact and they were acceptable with the situation. The discussion revealed that the bridge serves as a shortcut for local youth between TW and Memorial, though its location is not well-known to many residents. Despite this, they have decided to send us back our donation. Susan will attend fall's Friends of the Bridge meeting.

Ann McCoy, Assistant to Chancellor UWEC representative:

Ann provided updates on campus construction including the science building renovation and plans for a new science building next year. She was made aware of resident concerns about safety (focused on parking place location vs. watching out for pedestrians, and one incident of perfect parallel parking: across a driveway!) She will discuss with Dean of Students how to best communicate this information. She also responded to a question regarding the potential relocation of football games from Carson Park to Simpson Field, though she noted that significant grading and philanthropic efforts would be required to support this change, including upgrades to bleachers and facilities.

ECPD: unable to attend

Treasurer's Report:

Marian Ritland reported on recent activities including a successful neighborhood picnic that attracted approximately 70 people (probably 40 kids!) which came in under budget by $250, as well as a newsletter distribution that was also under budget by over $200. The group discussed potentially moving the thrift sale to align with moving season, though there were concerns about the timing with student move-in restrictions. No decision was reached. The organization has accumulated approximately $15,000 in funds, in addition to $8,300 in an interest bearing CD, which will support future activities. She challenged residents to "think of ways to improve the neighborhood" and share them at meetings.

Pedestrian Safety Crossing Concerns

We discussed safety concerns around pedestrian crossings, particularly at Gilbert Crossing and Graham at Washington, noting issues with drivers not yielding to pedestrians and the dangers posed by multi-lane intersections. Marian mentioned that enforcement appears to be lacking compared to other states like Washington and Oregon, and highlighted concerns about homeless individuals frequenting certain areas.

Third Ward Paid Parking Proposal

We discussed the potential for implementing paid parking in the Third Ward, suggesting a system similar to Seattle's where residents could register for free parking while other non-residents would need to pay. She proposed adding this topic to the next Neighborhood Association meeting agenda and suggested inviting the city's parking administrator and university representatives to discuss the proposal. It also was mentioned the possibility of extending paid parking to other areas like Randall Park and around the county building, which Aaron Brewster thought was worth discussing.

Aaron's City Council Report:

Downtown Parking System Implementation

Aaron Brewster responded to concerns and ongoing issues with the downtown parking system, including concerns about ticketing, pricing structure, and app service fees. He explained that no tickets have been issued since August 1st while the system is being implemented, and suggested potential solutions like adjusting pricing increments, adding more metered spots around the library, and improving kiosk visibility. Susan noted that the new system has generated significant discussion among community groups. Aaron reported early revenue data aligns with parking consultant projections, with normal operations expected to resume by October. (Initial dip, and then people adjust). He also expressed frustration that last spring he scheduled 4 listening sessions on weekends open to anyone, and the mtgs. were very poorly attended.

Parking Revenue and System Updates

Aaron explained that parking revenue goes back into the parking system as an enterprise fund, with the current focus on covering ongoing maintenance rather than building new ramps. He clarified that while the system previously required $300,000 in general fund subsidies, the new revenue model will eliminate this need. A TWNA member also questions if there were plans to reduce Farwell to two lanes with turning lanes and greenery, though this project is delayed pending completion of the transit center apartment development above. The conversation concluded with a brief explanation of the RDA (Redevelopment Authority) zone, which aims to address outdated housing code compliance issues in older neighborhoods.

Third Ward Economic Development Update

He discussed economic development in the Third Ward and East Side Hill Park, noting that some properties require code enforcement due to poor maintenance. He mentioned that the budget process for the operating budget and CIP would begin soon. Most of the Third Ward is not affected by this.

Discontinuing Zoom Meetings Decision

Eileen discussed the challenges of recording and hosting meetings via Zoom, expressing frustration with the time and effort required, particularly when technical issues arise. She proposed stopping the practice of Zoom meetings and recording, noting VERY low attendance (1-2 ppl/engagement, (zero people online at this moment). Marian suggested that in-person meetings might be more effective for community building. The group agreed to discontinue Zoom meetings for now, they decided to note this change in the meeting minutes. No one present disagreed.

Pollinator Garden at Demmler

Susan Miller reported on the progress of the pollinator garden, which is thriving thanks to dedicated volunteers and effective mulching techniques that protect against rabbits and deer. She mentioned they have about $500 remaining in the budget and plans to pre-order plants for next spring at a cost-effective rate of $3.50 per 2-inch plant.

Neighborhood Initiatives and Comprehensive Plan Update

Hannah Hidaka will Spearhead the soccer nets project for Demmler Park, including purchasing, installing/removing, and storing the nets. Her proposal was approved unanimously by Steering in late August.

Susan discussed several neighborhood initiatives including a university-led weed elimination research project (in Demmler across the field from ours) and the upcoming comprehensive plan update. Our Vice Chair Peter Hable gave a brief report and encouraged residents to attend. He announced upcoming meetings about the comprehensive plan, including a Comp Plan steering committee meeting on the 21st and a public kickoff event on September 22nd at the public library. All dates and info are in the link in your newsletter. (paper copy)

Susan re-emphasized the need for more volunteers to help with neighborhood activities, noting that most volunteer commitments are relatively short-term and manageable, and she expressed appreciation for new volunteers including Rachel who helped Marian with the thrift sale and will help next year.

The mtg. was adjourned at 7:21pm.

Respectfully submitted, Acting Secretary 