

**SECIA Board & Community Meeting – Minutes: Tuesday, September 14th, 2021, 6:30 – 8:30pm**

Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/93923944154>

*(Agenda finalized by the Exec Committee 9/9/21)*

Board Members: Jessica Focht-Perlberg (Executive Director), Ben Brummel, Holly Day, Thomas Weist, Karl Smith, Steve Peterson, Jim Nyberg, Kathy Knudson, Greg Thompsen, Quinn Oteman, Phil Roban Absent --

Other Participants: Lila Smith, DeWayne Townsend, Kari Dziedzic, Drew Schwartz, Salat Tuke, Laura Schlotterback

**Motions:**

**Review and approve [August 10, 2021 board meeting minutes](#)**

**Steve moved to approve**

**Ben seconded**

**Motion passed unanimously**

**Motion to appoint Laura Schlotterback, UMN graduate student and tenant resident, to fill current board vacancy for 1-year term**

**Ben moved to appoint her to board**

**Kathy seconded**

**Motion passes unanimously**

**Motion to appoint Drew Swartz to COGS-appointed graduate student board vacancy for 1-year term, pending COGS appointment letter**

**Karl moved to approve**

**Steve seconded**

**Motion passed unanimously**

**Review & Motion to approve Annual Charitable Organization Attorney General Annual Report for filing (due Oct 15, 2021)**

**Karl moved to approve**

**Ben seconded**

**Motion passed unanimously**

**Motion to Review & Motion to Support Actions in Furtherance of Talmage Triangle proposal**

**Steve moved to approve**

**Ben seconded**

**Motion passed with one recusal/abstention (Karl)**

**Motion: Review and Approve [Draft Letter to Planning Commission Requesting denial of Corridor 4 Variance Request at 1112 16th Ave SE,](#)**

**Steve moved to approve**

**Kathy seconded**  
**Motion passed unanimously**

**Motion to approve proceeding with Como cookout as planned subject to pending COVID conditions and defer to the steering committee to decide in the absence of a board meeting.**

**Karl moved to approve**  
**Ben seconded the motion**  
**Motion passed with one dissent**

**Motion to not exceed \$3k for SECIA's contribution to Como Cookout**

**Ben moved to approve**  
**Karl seconded**  
**Motion passed with 2 abstaining**

**Review and motion to approve: *SECIA First Draft Equitable Engagement Plan*, in advance of submission to NCR**

**Ben moved to approve the first draft**  
**Tom seconded**  
**Motion passed unanimous**

Meeting Called to order at: 6:32 pm

1. Introductions (5 min)

1. Review (2 min)

Community Updates & Guest Presentations (up to 20 min; 3-5 minutes each for routine updates/Q&A, depending on number present)

a. Senator Kari Dziejczak: We put aside \$50 million for essential workers. We don't have an agreement yet, but we'll hopefully come to one soon. If the Republicans continue to remove some commissioners, that's also up in the air. We're working things through in case we have a Special Session. We have forest fires and droughts across the state and cities outside the metro area who are also looking for help. We're looking to do some Town Halls to talk about how the population across the state has changed according to the census data. The whole TCE issue may be possibly on the National Priorities list, so we're hoping to have an environmental Town Hall and explain what the EPA wants to hear from us. In the span of a week, we have a new Senate Majority Leader and a new Senate Minority leader, which might end up changing the tone. Maybe with the new personalities involved, hopefully we can get back to a more cordial relationship.

b. City Council Members – Kevin Reich, Ward 1; Cam Gordon, [Ward 2 Report](#)

4. Announcements (up to 10 min)
- a. Meeting/Event Reports:
- i. Diverter Rain Garden Dedication, Wednesday, August 11th, 9:30 am  
Lila—August 11<sup>th</sup> We had a nice group of people there and representatives from City Public Works and the Mississippi Watershed and a ribbon cutting. Lots of people took parts of the ribbon back with them, and we had lots of bees there, too. 15<sup>th</sup> and Talmage—working really good, all year round, despite the drought. The refreshments came from the U of M Department of Off Campus living.
- ii. Como Kids in collaboration with Arvonne Fraser Library + Kids Arts Program, Weds. Aug 18th, 6:00pm, Van Cleve Park  
Holly--Como Kids featured a sewing teacher and the Library brought lots of science kits and free books.
- iii. 2nd Harvest Season Produce Distribution & Yoga event, Tues, Aug 31st (rescheduled from Aug 26th rain out), 5:00-7:00pm, Van Cleve Park (SECIA-ESNS-Up Yoga collaborative)
- b. Upcoming Meetings/Events:
1. **Fall SE Como Housing Forum Series #1: Tenant's Rights & Resources with Bill Dane**, Thurs. Sept. 16th, 7:00-8:00pm, [Zoom meeting registration](#)
  2. **Como Kids! Meetup: Arvonne Fraser Bookmobile visit & Arts Program: "Superhero for a Day" Self Portraits with Wasima Farah**, Van Cleve Park, Sat. Sept. 18th, 2:00-3:30pm
  3. **Como Corner Community Garden Care**, Tues. Sep. 21st, 2021, 6:30-8:30 pm, 1000 22nd Ave SE
  4. **SECIA Community Project/Joint Committee Meeting Night** – Next meeting -- Tuesday, September 21st, 6:30 – 8:30 pm, [Zoom meeting registration](#)
  5. **Combined Final Produce Distribution & Drop-in Day for Unsheltered Neighbors event**, Wednesday, September 22nd, 4:00-6:00pm, Van Cleve Park (SECIA-ESNS-Marcy-Holmes Accompanying Unsheltered Neighbors collaborative)
  6. **Diverter Rain Garden Care**, Wednesday, Sept. 22nd, 6:00-7:30pm, 15th Ave. SE & Talmage Ave. SE
  7. **Talmage Crossing Prairie Garden Care**, Saturday, Sept. 25, 2021, 10:00am-12:00 pm, 2094 Talmage Ave SE
  8. **SECIA Environment Committee**, Weds., Sept. 29th, 6:00-7:30pm, FairShare Farms (22nd & Fairmount) (inclement weather, via [Zoom meeting link](#))
  9. **Reimagining SECIA & Racial Equity Work Group**, Tuesday, October 5th, 6:30-8:00pm, [Zoom meeting registration](#)

10. **SAVE THE DATE: Como Cookout**, Saturday, October 2nd,  
11:00am-3:00pm, Van Cleve Park
11. **SAVE THE DATE: Ward 2 City Council Virtual Forum**, Thursday,  
October 7th, 7:00-8:30pm, live streamed on the League of Women Voters  
Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/lwvmppls/> & broadcast on  
Cable Channel 6, email advance forum questions: [vote@lwvmppls.org](mailto:vote@lwvmppls.org)
12. **SAVE THE DATE: Fall SE Como Housing Forum Series #2: Rent  
Stabilization & the 3 Charter Amendment Nov. Ballot Initiatives,  
Casey Joe Carl, City Clerk's Office**, Weds. Oct. 20th, 7:00pm, [Zoom  
meeting registration](#)

1. Board Business (up to 70 min)
  - a. Review and approve: [August 10, 2021 board meeting minutes](#) (Holly) (2  
min) Steve moved to approve  
Ben seconded  
Motion passed unanimously
  - b. Staff updates: (2 min)  
Resignations of interns Laura Schlotterback, Luis Mendoza: Farewell and thank  
you
  - c. Board updates: (6 min)
    - i. Resignation of Quinn Oteman: Farewell and thank you  
[Resignation letter of Quinn Oteman](#)
    - ii. Motion to appoint Laura Schlotterback, UMN graduate student and tenant  
resident, to fill current board vacancy for 1-year term  
Ben motion to appoint her to board  
Kathy seconded  
Motion passed unanimously
    - iii. Motion to appoint Drew Swartz to COGS-appointed graduate student  
board vacancy for 1-year term, pending COGS appointment letter  
Karl—moved  
Steve—seconded  
Motion passed unanimously
  - d. Financial reports: (4 min)
    - i. Review periodic accounting reports: [SECIA July 2021 YTD financial  
report](#); #38 CPP Draw budget (Jessica) (3 min)
    - ii. Review [July 2021 CEE Housing Program report](#); [Aug 2021 CEE Housing  
Report](#) (Jessica) (1 min)  
Review & Motion to approve Annual Charitable Organization Attorney  
General Annual Report for filing (due Oct 15, 2021) (2 min)
    - iii. [SECIA Annual Charitable Organization Attorney General Annual Report](#)

Review & Motion to approve Annual Charitable Organization Attorney General Annual Report for filing (due Oct 15, 2021) (2 min)

Karl—moved

Ben seconded

Motion passes unanimously

- e. Discuss: Annual Meeting & Board Elections, Tuesday, November 9, 2021 - Meeting Format and Planning; Call for Nominations/Annual Meeting Committee Co-chair volunteers (5 min)

Ben—The big point is to hold the meeting in person or not. I'm personally in favor of the hybrid form election, mail or online form. In that format, we also postpone the active election after the meeting and give people some time to finish voting. The candidates can write up something to put online, but we need candidates to have an election. The basic requirements are being an adult and living in the neighborhood or being a business owner in the neighborhood.

Karl—I just want to shout out my appreciation to Jessica, Laura, Alex, and everyone else who worked on the Welcome Packet and distributed them through the neighborhood.

Jessica—I'd like to add to that. Luis and Wasima did a lot of work on this project. We have possibly 15 blocks left to distribute packets to.

Steve—Quinn, do you think you could recruit some Board candidates out of CFCC?

Quinn—Maybe if we had a flyer I could post, I think that would be a possibility.

Laura—I'm talking with Austin as well—I think we have permission to include SECIA news in the CFCC newsletter.

- f. Review & Motion to Support Actions in Furtherance of Talmage Triangle proposal (Karl and Lila Smith) (10 min)

Ben—We have a generous gift from Karl and Lila on acquiring this land.

Lila—the street was vacated by the builder of the Vos Rental Property. The asphalt is still there, it's a closed street, and most of it's owned by the city but one little section (1000 square feet) was deeded to the adjacent landlord for \$100 in 1977. There have been a few public works proposals from the city to remove the asphalt and turn the area into a rain garden that used the runoff from the train tracks.

In 2019, public works put in a proposal and were ready to buy it from Mr. Vos. But then the pandemic hit and the city froze everything. The city won't remove the asphalt. Karl and I have been wanting to get behind this and are making a donation that would cover buying the Triangle and then we would be able to work with the city and maybe Mississippi Watershed to put in the raingarden and have that eyesore gone. There are trees and weeds that have grown up through the asphalt there currently. If SECIA makes the purchase a nonprofit, the city would be able to take out the asphalt and approve the design from Metro Blooms. We basically just need your approval of the proposal.

Karl—Folks, the Environmental Committee and the Livability Committee both submitted letters of approval.

Kathy—It's a worthwhile project, we've been hearing from Lila about this for years and years, and the city's on our side—it's just a matter of getting the land from Mr. Vos.

Karl—Part of my motivation for providing part of our retirement fund for this is long-term sustainability of the pollinator garden. Most of the people involved in the pollinator gardens are in their 60s and 70s now, and I would like to help purchase this land to show our support for gardens in SE Como.

Lila—the existing garden is on railroad land, and we have a lease for that. This new piece would connect with that.

[Draft Proposal: Talmage Triangle Rain Garden, Garden Sustainability](#)

[Draft Gift Agreement, 8/10/21](#)

[Draft Vos Letter](#)

[Letter of Support from Environment Committee](#)

Katie Fournier's letter of support as Livability Chair:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qF6BEuhwvboArJcowOxgZH5dWH2jIM3e/view?usp=sharing>.

Ben—are we subject to taxes on the property?

Karl—the donation to SECIA would buy the property.

Lila—We shouldn't have to pay taxes on it, but if it is, our donation should cover any taxes for a long time.

Jessica—just to clarify, we're just approving board support to further the actions stated in the letters of support

**Motion: Review & Motion to Support Actions in Furtherance of Talmage Triangle proposal**

**Steve moved to approve**

**Ben seconded**

**Unanimous approved with one recusal/abstention (Karl)**

- g. Review and Motion to Approve [Draft Letter to Planning Commission Requesting denial of Corridor 4 Variance Request at 1112 16th Ave SE](#), Drafted by Land Use & Development Committee (DeWayne T.) (up to 10 min)

DeWayne—this was a proposal brought to us 2 months ago—the properties on the Hennepin and 16<sup>th</sup>. Right now there's a house there, and a garage, and they are proposing to tear down the house and the garage and put four units, 4 bedrooms each on there with no parking lots. In our opinion it would be a visually disruptive project. After going to the city, they have the same sized unit but 3 parking spaces. Anyway, we put together this letter that state our thoughts that we're ok with this variance being request but it also serves as a template, in that we are given 21 days to respond to these things, which usually means that the letters are due before we have a scheduled board meeting. So they'll have to be emailed to members to review. Mostly, we want to make sure any new projects stick to the 2040 plan.

**Steve motion to approve**

**Kathy seconded**

**Motion passed unanimous**

- h. Discuss: Review COVID-safety concerns for October 2nd Como Cookout: in light of most recent COVID case trends, local vaccination rates, is it safe enough to proceed with October 2nd Como Cookout with current COVID safety event plans in place? (up to 10 min)

Jessica—there is some increased concern with Exec members that vaccination rates were low in our neighborhood, but the actual numbers have increased with 98% of the student body vaccinated. But we're also thinking about case numbers, which are elevating. Kendra at our office of off-campus living, and shared that there were 16 positive cases reported to the U of M. But it's hard to tell what the impact of returning to school will have on cases. The big question is asking if what we can do is safe enough to have an event like this? September 17 is going to be our lock-in date insofar as booking dates and vendors etc. go, and unlike other years, there's no way to move in the event indoors in case it rains. But we've got music booked, and agreements with vendors on hold.

Ben—if we have a similar rate of infection as the state fair, I think we're risking 1 person getting COVID. I don't think it's worth canceling any plans.

DeWayne—Covid really doesn't like being outdoors. I think staff and folks who are going to be talking a lot at booths should wear masks.

Ben—and that's our current policy right now.

Jessica—Registration would help with contact tracing.

Jessica—First question—are we good on proceeding?

**Karl--I move to approve proceeding with Como cookout as planned subject to pending COVID conditions and defer to the steering committee to decide in the absence of a board meeting. We won't have another board meeting before the cookout.,**

**Ben—second the motion**

**Motion passed with one dissent (Tom)**

**Motion to not exceed \$3k for SECIA's contribution to Como Cookout**

**Ben moved to approve**

**Karl seconded**

**Motion passed with 2 abstaining**

- g. Presentation; review and motion to approve: *SECIA First Draft Equitable Engagement Plan*, in advance of submission to NCR (Jessica & staff/board members of Reimagining SECIA & Racial Equity Work Group) (up to 20 min)
- i. SECIA Draft Equitable Engagement Plan for 2022: [Draft Spreadsheet](#) and [Draft Narrative](#)
  - ii. [Powerpoint: SECIA Proposed 1st Draft Equitable Engagement Plan](#)

**Review and motion to approve: *SECIA First Draft Equitable Engagement Plan*, in advance of submission to NCR**

**Ben—motion to approve the first draft**

**Tom—seconded**

**Motion passed unanimous**

1. Committee Updates (20 min) – Up to three (3) minutes per update
  - a. Reimagining SECIA & Racial Equity Work Group (Jessica, Work Group members)
    - i. Equitable Engagement & Racial Equity work group update
    - ii. Welcome Packet distribution/outreach in collaboration with UMN-Off-Campus Living - call for volunteers!
    - iii. Revisit: CURA Board/Staff/Volunteer Racial Equity & Neighborhood Organizing Training
      1. *Training goals & objectives 1-pager; proposed training date (TBD)*
  - b. Governance & Finance work group update
    - i. Brief review of Bylaws, policy template review process updates; timeline to complete by Oct 12th board meeting
  - c. Como Cares Work Group (Jessica)
    - i. Update: Call for volunteers & garden veggie donations - 3rd Produce Distribution/Drop-in Day Resource Event, Weds. Sep 22, 4-6pm, Van Cleve Park
  - d. Land Use & Development (DeWayne T. Pat E.)
  - e. Environment & Gardens: (Kathy K. / Peggy B.)
    - i. Update: EPA proposal addition of Southeast Hennepin area groundwater and vapor site to National Priorities List; public comment period through Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>
    - ii. Environment; Land Use & Development Committees to collaborate on Draft SECIA Letter of Support for board review in October
    - iii. Update: Gardens (Lila, Kathy; garden interns, if present)
  - f. Tuttle Ad Hoc Committee (Ben B., Kathy K., Katie F.)
  - g. University District Alliance (UDA) (Jessica, Katie F.)
  - h. Projects - Gardens, Utility Box Wraps, etc. (up to 2 min. Per project update; up to 10 min)

1. New Business (up to 10 min)

Tom—a woman on 18<sup>th</sup> was followed into her house by 3 men who took her keys and debit cards—police stopped the stolen car and arrested one of the people.

1. Adjourn : 8:49 pm

SECIA Minutes September 14th, 2021:

Note taker Holly Day \_\_\_\_\_; Exec 10/06/21 ; Board approved: \_\_\_\_\_