



NORTH PARK PLANNING COMMITTEE

northparkplanning.org

MEETING MINUTES: May 25th, 2021, 6:00 p.m.

Ad Hoc Bylaws Subcommittee

I. Parliamentary Items

- a) Call to Order and board introduction (6:02 p.m.): Matt Stucky, Beau Benko, Ginger Partyka, Kate Callen, Victor Torres
- b) Modifications & Adoption of the Agenda: None
- c) Announcements: Matt gave a brief introduction of subcommittee and purpose to consider potential bylaws to address concerns with past election and to respond to citywide CPG reform if passed.

II. Non Agenda Public Comment (2 minutes each): None

III. Action and Informational Items –

A. Existing Bylaws Overview (Information Item) -

Matt Stucky presented on the NPPC existing bylaws and their context within the broader city policies governing community planning groups and potential planning group reform by city council.

Public Comment:

A. Questions:

1. Pat Sexton: Will the presentation be available online? Question about redistricting changing boundaries of planning committee. Referenced COW training from city
2. Randy Walsh: asked about the difference between NPPC board and the committee. Questioned whether we are approaching this subcommittee with the bias that bylaws need to change.
3. Kate Callen: Responded to Randy by suggesting that one of motivations for the subcommittee is to bridge a divide in the community. If NPPC can come up with ideas to help bring people together and bridge the divide, it would have value to all communities. Wanted to clarify that no one self-identifies as “NIMBY,” which is a pejorative term that is used to dismiss voices.
4. Daniel Gebreselassie: questioned whether new members could join subcommittee. Expressed that any bylaws amendments must wait for citywide CPG reforms
5. Yvette Marcum: question about process for this subcommittee. Suggested having reserved seats on board for different interests. Expressed a need for more structure in NPPC.

B. Community Forum on Potential Bylaw Amendments and NPPC Reform -

Open forum opportunity for community and board members to share their thoughts on the scope of this subcommittee and issues they believe should be addressed in any bylaw amendments.

Public Comment:

- Pat Sexton: wants clarification in the bylaws on whether slates are permitted at elections. Fully supports having different seats for different categories: perhaps business representatives for segments of 30th Street, four property owner seats for non-residents, five

property owner seats for residents, three seats for renters. Thinks that those that have invested money in buying property in North Park should have a seat at the table. Believes a lot of people are not being represented on NPPC board. Questioned whether chat function could be turned on during NPPC Zoom meetings. Does not want to have another electronic voting election, does not support.

- Daniel Gebreselassie: As former NPPC board member, familiar with NPPC 2017 bylaws update. Thinks minor improvements are fine, but current bylaws are in a “good range.” Thinks we have a participation problem and broader community is not aware of NPPC and is not participating. We would have more diversity if NPPC was promoted more in the community.
- Jennifer Sarff: Asked about current board makeup of renters vs. owners. At a minimum, bylaws should mandate that board have a certain number of business owners/apartment owners, residents, and renters. This would dispel notion that certain portions of community do not feel represented.
- Randy Walsh: Not sure that North Park can be adequately represented with the current size of NPPC board, but thinks community engagement has to happen at a larger scale and we need more people to participate. Collaborate with other organizations on outreach and finding leadership in community. Requirement to only attend one meeting to run for board is inadequate to be prepared to be on board. Would like to see language in bylaws about better outline for transition between board members after election, particularly involving treasurer and records from election. Believes 18 year olds and unsheltered population should be recruited and should be engaged in NPPC.
- Yvette Marcum: Noted that business representatives have their own organization and would discourage having business owners with reserved seats on the board. Maybe having an appointed reserved seat for NPMS president.
- Brer Marsh: Get into “murky” territory when bylaw modifications start to be “creative” and any changes should be done in a minimal way to only respond to specific problems, to outline a process, or give further clarification. Believes that group could get into trouble when bylaws do too much programming because it opens opportunities to not follow and violate bylaws. Needs to be some “gray area” to give leeway to run board. Believes representation happens in the audience and the board is there to listen and perform its voting function. Trying to program board seats to create a picture of representation is undemocratic and problematic. Who seats are reserved for is arbitrary and subjective. Board members should strive to be representative. Reminded that the jurisdiction of a CPG board is not to be a community group/forum, but rather is tasked with advising on planning and land use decisions. It is not a town council.
- Jennifer Sarff: noted that NPMS handles different issues than NPPC and business owners have valuable input and huge interest in what happens in North Park, they should be allowed on board. If slates are allowed, board has a lot of like-minded people on board without an array of opinions. Has heard belief in community that board does not really listen to public comments. Community should feel that board represents more than a single narrow viewpoint.
- Yvette Marcum: Business owners have an interest, but NPPC is mostly residential and businesses can have representation. Thinks planning groups are to stop people going to city

council and instead hash things out locally. CPGs are not the final answer on the decisions the city is making.

- Daniel G.: Agrees with Brer that NPPC is organically set up to represent all parts of community. Community should know NPPC is advisory only and city will make its own decision and can ignore NPPC. Believes function of the board is to provide a meeting close to home and express their views, which are documented and sent to the city. Those who feel strongly should go to city council. Agrees that participation is in the audience.
- Randy: After community plan update, many decisions have been made and NPPC has less of an impact and there aren't many places for NPPC to have significant influence.
- Pat: Bylaws discuss land use issues, but no land use issues come before NPPC other than map waivers. Other CPGs see more land use decisions for all new construction. Bylaws are "out of sync" in that regard, NPPC doesn't know about new construction, which is discouraging.

Board Comment:

- Matt Stucky clarifications: prior lawsuit in another community led to settlement allowing slates to run in CPG elections. CP 600-24 requires CPGs to allow business owners to vote and run for a board seat.
- Victor Torres: Wants to listen to community. Has learned that potential changes are very narrow and we shouldn't waste people's time or expectations on possible changes. We shouldn't change traditional safeguards in current bylaws. Didn't think last election worked exactly how we would want it to work, but that doesn't require rewriting bylaws to account for rare circumstances.
- Kate Callen: Agrees with Brer that a balkanized ballot would not be preferable and opens up a "can of worms." We need to have a bigger tent and central issue is diversity, with most critical diversity issue being race and ethnicity. NPPC board hasn't been racially diverse in the past and while bylaws can't directly change that, we need to think of ways to have better outreach.
- Ginger Partyka: Agree that it gets complicated to have rules for specific seats, but representation is important. We can try to accomplish that without strict seat categories by having a board that allows community to have a voice. This means we need to be as democratic as possible to have as many people as possible be able to vote. Expressed concerns with the current very short voting window precluding some from voting. Voting shouldn't be closed off to certain tranches of the community. Voters need to be verified, but current requirements make it difficult for some renters to prove eligibility. Need to consider ways for members of community to have a voice by making voting easier. Many people care deeply about North Park but are very busy people that can't attend meetings, so they ensure they are represented by voting.
- Beau Benko: doesn't think sectioning off the seats would work well. Need to increase accessibility and participation to fix diversity. Agreed it is hard for renters to verify eligibility. Thinks we need to compare our bylaws to other CPG bylaws. Thinks removing meeting attendance requirement for voting would make it easier to vote. Expanding participation: allow written comments. Hard for a volunteer board to do broad outreach. Also curious about in-person vs. electronic meetings.

- Victor Torres: thinks narrow window to verify eligibility at March election should be fixed. Allow people to verify eligibility every month to spread it out.
- Matt Stucky: Thanks participants for open and civil meeting. Noted that NPPC does not see many items that come before other CPGs. Other communities have town councils that have more discussions and open forum that some want to see at NPPC. North Park as a community might want to consider whether it's time to have a town council. Agrees it would be difficult for board to have reserved seats. Current voting totals are a tiny percentage of total North Park community. We should strive to have the greatest number of voters possible. It is a difficult task to achieve, but we should work on it. Noted comments were very focused on election. While last election was not perfect, we did see increased turnout and we should identify the best parts of a new form of an election, but work to make it better.
- Randy Walsh: questioned whether this subcommittee is limited to elections issues. Minutes creating subcommittee was limited to election.
- Pat Sexton: suggested that electronic voting can be used, but need to account for community members that can't use computers and should have printed ballots mailed or delivered alongside electronic voting. Need large push to advertise our meeting. We can all do our part to let neighbors know to broaden number of voters.
- Matt Stucky: when considering election procedures, we should review other CPGs to not reinvent the wheel and find best methods for voting, such as allowing ballot boxes at libraries. Noted that CP 600-24 requires in-person voting and we should provide for multiple ways to vote.

IV. Adjournment (7:36 p.m.)