

# MINUTES

## Montavilla Neighborhood Association Board

@ Starbucks inside the Fred Meyers Stores at 6615 N.E. Glisan St., Portland. **DATE:** Monday, 5/22/2017.

### **MNA EMERGENCY MEETING:**

**Board Members Present:** Benjamin Kerensa (Chair), Jonnie Shaver, Ben Turtin, Eve Nilenders, Sergey Purchanskiy, Jennifer Tamayo (notes), & Michael Sonleitner (minutes).

**Absent with Regrets:** Elaine Hakala, Jane Lawson; (NOTE: with 6/10 Board positions filled at the start of the meeting – and 6 Board members present – **a quorum of 5 was easily satisfied**).

**Others present:** Srijon Chowdhury & colleague.

@ 6:35pm the MNA Business Meeting was called to order, Chair Benjamin Kerensa was not feeling well and asked Michael Sonleitner to preside before departing for Providence Hospital Emergency Room.

**“Utopian Vision” Art Fair:** This Emergency Board Meeting was called by MNA Chair Kerensa to consider a very time-sensitive request by Srijon Chowdhury who would like his planned Utopian Vision Art Fair to receive 501c3 Fiscal Sponsorship by the Montavilla Neighborhood Association (becoming a Project of the MNA as a IRS-recognized Non-profit). The Fair needs such a Fiscal Sponsor in order to apply for a METRO Place-making Grant of \$5,000 or more – with the application deadline being Friday, May 26<sup>th</sup>. The MNA Board members present asked many questions, all of which were covered by the information provided by Sri Chowdhury:

The 4-day Fair would take place at the former Beet’s Auto Body located between SE Stark & Washington Streets near 76<sup>th</sup> Ave. Eleven contemporary art projects are to be included in the Fair, involving artists/gallerists/curators/organizations like EJ Hill (who addresses his identity as a gay African-American) and Jennifer Moon (who makes work about love and transcendence through the lens of a Korean-American identity). A central goal of the Fair is to invite local Montavilla and East Portland communities to make high-quality art programming more accessible while bringing local, national, and international art under one roof – that is especially accessible to marginalized groups.

It is hoped that several thousand people will attend this event, establishing Pegasus Gallery as an ongoing presence in the neighborhood and helping Montavilla to become recognized as a place suitable for similar events in the future. If successful, the Fair could establish itself as a recurring annual event that will actively engage those attending with ideas about how to nurture the evolution of culture in progressive ways that value the dignity and worth of all people.

If sufficient funding from the Metro Placemaking Grant is not forthcoming, Sri Chowdhury plans to raise a minimum of \$3,000 from an art fundraising auction and other donations, hoping to expand into the outdoor area next to Beets if \$6,000 is raised – and intending to offer stipends to artists if \$10,000 can be found. Sri and his colleagues are asking for no direct donations from the Montavilla Neighborhood Association Board, but expect that becoming a Project of the MNA would allow tax-deductible contributions to be more easily solicited.

It was mentioned that MNA projects in the past have a tradition of direct involvement by at least one Board member serving as either an organizer of the project or a liaison participating in it. Ben Turpin eagerly volunteered to be that person.

While all Board members present were excited with the prospect of MNA becoming the Fiscal Sponsor for the Art Fair project, a serious concern was raised about whether we should authorize sponsorship in the absence of any formal process having been established to process a request such as this. Michael Sonnleitner suggested that an application form might suffice, which he could produce in short order, Sri Chowdhury could fill it out, and another MNA Emergency Meeting could be called for Wednesday night (2 days into the future) – at which formal approval might be given. In this context, Jonnie Shaver moved and Sergey Purchanskiy seconded the following motion:

**RESOLUTION 2017-5-22 Utopian Vision Art Fair:** “The MNA will consider serving as Fiscal Sponsor for the “Utopian Vision Art Fair” as soon as we have a process in place to receive it properly.” NOTE: a comment by Ben Turpin, which might be considered a friendly suggestion, interpreted this as being a “provisional approval to grant Fiscal Sponsorship, pending a process in place to make formal approval appropriate”. **APPROVED by a unanimous vote of 5-0.**

Meeting Adjourned at 7:40pm.

### **Follow-Up REPORT:**

Michael Sonnleitner did create a Fiscal Sponsorship Application Form, Sri Chowdhury filled it out, but the MNA Board Emergency Meeting called for Wednesday, May 24<sup>th</sup> was called off due to it not being properly announced via the MNA website or Facebook page 24 hours in advance. This error, however, was of little consequence as it became clear that a more complete process should be adopted to consider Fiscal Sponsorship requests and that a mere application form was not enough. Accordingly, Michael sent a letter to Sri Chowdhury on Thursday, May 25<sup>th</sup>, sadly informing him that MNA could not affirm Fiscal Sponsorship to his project in time to meet the May 26<sup>th</sup> application deadline for METRO Place-making grants. On May 26<sup>th</sup> morning, Sr. Chowdhury communicated to Michael by email to say that those at METRO would accept his grant application, understanding that the MNA Fiscal Sponsorship is only “provisional” and may or may not be affirmed by the end of July when consideration of awarding grants becomes earnest. Later on May 26<sup>th</sup>, Michael responded to Sri Chowdhury that this flexibility on the part of METRO was heartening and, **given time to the end of July, the MNA Board may be able to have a thoughtful and complete process in place to proceed.**