



**Lowry Hill East Neighborhood Association**

**02/18**

**6:30pm - 8:30pm**

**Hybrid (In-Person @ Scout Workshop + Zoom)**

**Board Members:**

Elise Moore - President  
Pete Boisclair - Vice President  
Anna Berglund - Treasurer  
Valerie Blomberg - Secretary  
~~Gate Besserman~~  
Martha Burkett  
Jackson Hampton  
Alexander Johnson  
Eva Ortiz  
Michael Byrd  
~~Joshua Christenson~~

**Staff:**

Jack O'Shaughnessy

**Officer:**

Jordan Peacock

**Guests:**

Joel Ackerman (RedLadder - rladder.org)  
Casey

**Meeting Minutes:**

- Review Board Packet
- Call to Order & Welcome - *President*
  - Welcoming statements
  - Ice breaker
- Approval of Agenda and Rules of Order - *President*
- Approval of January 2025 [Meeting minutes](#)
- Treasurer's Report

- **Motion:** [Treasurer's report for January 2025](#)
  - Our accounting fees continue to go up and up and up. Layers of communication seem to be adding to the time Dennis takes, so going forward please run tasks by Anna first before reaching out to Dennis directly.
  - Dennis is doing our taxes now so we each need to fill out a form saying how many hours per week we are working on board activities.
  - Alexander has a contact for a different accountant should we decide not to re-up Dennis's contract next year. Anna noted that there are significant startup costs to switching accountants.
- Agate: A Walk in the Life- March 8th (*Jody Tracy/ Elise Moore*)
  - March 8th
  - Being unhoused and unsheltered is dangerous all year round but winter presents its own set of life-threatening challenges.
  - Elise notes that we could promote in our newsletter.
- RedLadder: A new avenue for fundraising where people can donate valuable items instead of time or money. *Valerie Blomberg / Joel Ackerman*
  - Platform was 2 years in development, but the concept is 20 years old.
  - Currently in the process of raising funds for 73 organizations through 315 trade ladders started by their supporters. The first one monetized benefited CaringBridge. 7-8 months was the time.
  - A lot of organizations don't know that we are raising money for them.
  - Jackson - What is the lift on our end? Joel - Little to none.
  - Jackson - At what point in the ladder do you decide to monetize the trade? Joel - We've developed some software (AI driven), that informs a human appraiser when a ladder appears to be ready to trade.
  - Elise - Would we need to have storage capacity? Joel - For an event we can do a RedLadder Day event where we bring a table and take the items donated into our own storage facility.
- CEE Presentation: [Slides](#) (*Alexander Kurt Johnson*)
  - During NRP every neighborhood association was given the opportunity to start a loan program, most did, and most were conducted through CEE.
  - We now have the opportunity to renew the contract so we've taken this as an opportunity to evaluate the program as a whole so that equipped with information we can make a decision about how it fits in our future priorities and plan.
  - We are maintaining the most amount of loans of any neighborhood, but we are not even listed on the CEE website. Only 12 still participate. Most have decided it's something they want to pause.

- Valerie noted that CEE did table at our last Annual Meeting in 2024.
- Since 2013 there have been 118 loans.
- Reminder on demographics: 83.9% of units are renter occupied. 47.2% of the neighborhood identify as BIPOC.
- LHENA is 69.7% white, 16.8% black, 7.6% asian
- Loan demographics are 91.9% white and 6.1% are asian.
- Multifamily and Emergency loans have been utilized the least.
- Residential loan program is a good moneymaker for LHENA
  - Recommendation to suspend Historic Preservation loan.
  - Recommendation to suspend Exterior Deferred
  - Recommendation to Keep + Update the Multifamily loan. Suggestions to allow in unit changes and incorporate aspects of Green Matching (weatherization and green updates)
  - Recommendation to Keep + Update the Commercial loan. Suggestions to further refine wording and collaborate with neighboring orgs and their programs. Suggests sitting down with Whittier Alliance to discuss an exchange: we include them in our Commercial loan program and they include us in their Facade grant. We do get Commercial loan funds back, so it's an income generator for LHENA. Recommendation to clarify the language to make sure the loan is used for public-facing space, not back room office space.
  - Recommendation to Keep + Update the Emergency Deferred loan. Suggestions to make funds accessible to those below 80% AMI and change language so that funds do not need to be a last resort. Valerie noted that people in a last resort situation do not have time on their hands to wait for a loan to close.
  - Recommendation to Keep the Residential loan program. It generates consistent income for LHENA. It's our most-used program and we get that money back.
- Alexander offered to take up the changes and updates to the Multifamily loan. Happy to continue to help with the Commercial loan.
- In terms of the difficulty to reach landlords: Other organizations have been successful with an ambassador program. The underutilization of the loan programs is likely due to a lack of awareness so outreach will be a key part of our efforts.
- Pete - could the term "emergency" be contributing to the inaccessibility of the Emergency Deferred loan? Alexander - it sounds like "emergency" is meant to refer to needed repairs that are posing a threat to the habitability of the residence. Anna - suggested we could call it the Emergency Repair Loan.
- Elise - would like to get next steps approved sooner rather than later.
- Jackson - Not actually huge moneymakers (these are low interest loans).

- Valerie - Would the Green Matching overlap with work that other organizations such as Unidos are doing?
  - Martha - We should implement a review process every year to continue to evaluate the programs we offer and how they are advertised and administered.
  - Alexander - Conversation with Based owner Jessica who was having challenges with the property owner not wanting to allow changes to the building. If LHENA could be a mediator and show the landlords that there's an easy way to cover these repairs, it might have offered a bargaining chip. The Commercial loan could have been used in this situation to help Jessica stay in the building, which ultimately she was not able to do. The
  - **Motion:** Adopt the recommendations regarding Keep and Suspend - Passed
- Partnership Engagement Fund (PEF) applications- *Elise*
  - Start your application by Feb. 19.
- Annual Meeting dates- *Elise*
  - Saturday May 3
  - Anna - Space rental at Springhouse Ministries. (Very affordable)
  - Alexander - Queermunity may also be a location option for the Annual Meeting.
  - Working group formation for this year: Valerie, Pete, Anna (Martha & Jackson will stay in the loop about happenings and be available to fill in as needed)
    - Update from Equitable hiring initiative
- The Wedge Adventure Book (LHENA)
  - LHENA, volunteering, events, coupons/offers
  - Timeline: next board meeting draft
  - \$5/book --> retail for \$15-\$20 per book
  - Jack - Is it a coupon book? Elise - Yes, it is.
  - Are there people interested in working on this? Recruiting small businesses is the main thing.
  - Alexander - is there a prepared script? Elise - Yes, we can work on that!
  - Elise - Timeline: Draft by next board meeting and printing by mid April.
  - Valerie - Make sure we don't have overlap with Annual Meeting working group solicitation of businesses.
  - Pete - look at Uptown Quarterly and identify businesses already advertising and/or in our community.
  - Jack - Would be comfortable doing a mail merge out to an email list.
  - Jack - It would be so cool if it was a passport book.
  - Next step: Elise will update Derek and add to the Discord a spreadsheet so board members can sign up.
- Board bios- *Elise*

- Valerie to write first drafts of board bios and share in Discord for review
  - Jackson notes that the website should display board members in first name alphabetical order
- Committees, Projects, Work Groups and Programs
- Elise - General request to review the Current LHENA Board Projects 2024-25 spreadsheet and take ownership. Confirmed that LHENA funding does not currently allow for the staff member to assist with project management.
- Elise - I will be taking on the project of understanding which money we have access to: Plans for the funds or an opportunity for the community to tell us what they would like to do with the funds. (Will be ready by the Annual Meeting.)
  - Community Development - *Alexander Kurt Johnson*
  - LynLake v2 -
  - Wedge Point Park - *Cate Bosserman*
    - Next steps for Friends of Wedge Point Park list - *Valerie Blomberg*
  - LHENA Volunteer Network
    - No updates as of rn
  - Uptown Farmers Market - *Alexander Johnson / Cate Bosserman*
    - Alexander - they want a letter for neighborhoods to sign to help them secure some grant funding
    - They have some mockups of what the market will look like, including a space for neighborhoods to set up their own booths
    - There is already an early interest form for anyone interested in tabling. Alexander will share in Discord.
    - **Next step:** Will pose the vote to Discord
  - Environmental Committee - *Noah Cameron*
    - Martha - people from two competing solar farm groups were invited to and attended the last Environmental Committee meeting
    - Talked with Minneapolis Climate Action, and org which is rallying community orgs to buy into community solar farms. You put in a lot of money but you'd get it back over time.)
    - Ask that neighborhood associations promote community solar.
    - If we have an expiration date on some NRP funds, we can look into this as an option. First, we should resolve our questions and updates of our CEE loans.
  - Welfare & Safety Committee -
    - Elise had a conversation with Jody Tracy.
    - Considering regularly scheduled sessions on using narcan
    - Brochures and fentanyl test strips to give out at summer events.

- Technology Committee - *Pete Boisclair, Derek Nelson*
  - Pete - Ongoing conversations with Jack about the email newsletter.
  - We want to cast the largest net possible for feedback on what they would want from the LHENA website (thewedge.org). No timeline yet, and there isn't an immediate urgency from the board to rebuild the website. We're looking at a few months of very intentional broad feedback. No survey yet.
  - Valerie - Could we have a ticketing system tied to a submission form that the community at large could use to submit news & updates to LHENA to publish in the email newsletter or on the website?
- Administrative - *Jack O'Shaughnessy*
  - Updates - Newsletter changes, moving to monthly/committee weekly emails
  - Only budgeted for 8 hours a week. The email newsletter is not a good use of time.
    - Working with the technology department to streamline
    - Monthly email: Here's what LHENA did last month, here's what we have planned coming up
    - Short weekly events update email.
    - Individual committees will send out committee emails
- New Business & Announcements
  - Proposal: Re-evaluate Scout membership, introduce Queermunity - *Jack O'Shaughnessy*
  - Alexander - Does take issue with it not being in the Wedge. Have we looked into space in the Wedge?
  - Valerie - Don't underestimate the administrative burden of changing a nonprofit business address!
  - Pete - Suggests negotiating with Scout, letting them know we are trying to be responsible with our dollars, and asking for alternative contract terms.

Adjourn

**Post Board Meeting - TBD**