

Hopes for Greenway

by Nik Linde

Northeast resident Dan Miller expects a new bike trail to be unveiled later this year on the BNSF bridge connecting NE 18th Avenue to 26th Avenue N on the other side of the river. It would bridge a gap that is much needed for bikers and pedestrians who want to travel between Northeast and North Minneapolis. That’s if BNSF would play along.

In the July 2-PAC (2nd Precinct Advisory Council) meeting via Zoom, Miller revealed updates on the Great Northern Greenway.

“The current bridges for bikes and pedestrians, the Lowry and the Broadway bridges, are over a mile apart, but a little-used BNSF railroad bridge lies between the two. With the Great Northern Greenway Overlook scheduled to open soon on the west side of the river, residents need access from both sides of the river so we can all enjoy this stunning overlook,” explained Miller.

The Great Northern Greenway Task Force has been pushing to finish the trail since 2017, continuing efforts started by

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Belle, a 12-year-old chocolate lab, catches tennis balls as a blue heron hangs out in the shade at Silver Lake Beach July 30. (Photo by Marla Khan-Schwartz)

Demanding homelessness action

by Alex Schlee

“Oh man, I think we’re going to have to buy more meat,” activist Sarah Katherine said to Monet Auguston as she toiled away over a grill. Behind her sat an impressive array of food still waiting to be prepared, but the crowd at the far corner of Logan Park was growing quickly.

Protesters were gearing up to march from the homeless camp that recently sprang up in Logan Park to Mayor Jacob Frey’s condo a couple miles away. A list of demands was scrawled in the pages of a raggedy notebook, and the crowd planned to shout them up to Frey’s window, calling him out for inaction on campaign promises he made to combat homelessness in Minneapolis.

“When you get to that kid’s house, scream this at him, because he needs to listen,” a volunteer said to the assembled crowd when it was time to move. “The old ways are clearly not working! We need to change the way we treat people.”

Volunteers organized the pre-march cookout with a very short turnaround. They heard that the march was taking place and wanted to contribute, so they decided to provide food for the encampment and the demonstrators. They raised \$2,800 for the supplies in three days, mostly via the Facebook group “We Love Northeast,” a group that splintered off from the similarly named “I Love Northeast.” Any supplies that weren’t used up by the cookout were donated to the Logan Park camp.

“I think this just shows how much people care,” said Auguston.

The people camped out at Logan have nowhere else to go. One volunteer, who asked only to go by Jim, said the city’s shelters are too overwhelmed, and there are too many to be accommodated by Elim Church’s shelter as well. They said the camp may be uncomfortable for the neighborhood, but it’s not there forever, they just need time to figure the situation out without being constantly pushed from park to park.

“We have to make them [the homeless] visible,” they said. “We have to bring them to the neighborhood, we have to show them what homelessness looks like.”

“People see it [the camp, or homelessness in general], and they get scared of it,” added Junail Freeman Anderson, president of homeless advocacy group Freedom From the Streets, and coordinator of the Logan Park encampment. “But it’s been this way for over 40 years.”

Anderson founded Freedom From the Streets to make sure that the homeless aren’t left behind or ignored. She said that many existing shelters are insufficient, overwhelmed, or unhelpful because they don’t listen to what their clients want.

“Nobody wants to go to the Salvation Army because they don’t listen, all they want to do is control you,” said Anderson, who has been homeless herself. If I had my own building, I can get staff that are comfortable with these people.”

Freedom From the Streets is saving to purchase a building to convert to their own shelter. The Logan Park camp has until September 15 to find other accom-

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Clarifying some city sidewalk questions

by Alex Schlee

Relief for homeowners whose pocket-books have been hit hard by sidewalk repairs throughout the Windom and Audubon Park neighborhoods could be possible, though the going will be slow.

Midway through June, notices from the city were disbursed informing residents that if their sidewalks were marked with white spray paint, they were due to have their pavement replaced to keep up with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Due to a city ordinance, the financial responsibility for the work falls to the homeowner rather than the city, and a contractor had to be hired within 15 days of receiving notice from Public Works.

This prompted a scathing rebuke from many homeowners, who took to NextDoor to organize a response to the city. Soon, Windom Park Citizens in Action held a meeting on Zoom with representatives from Public Works so that people could air their concerns and get their questions answered. Since then, WPCiA, the Audubon Neighborhood Association, and Council Member Kevin Reich have been trying to figure out a way to use neighborhood or city funds to help any

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Protesters gathered at Logan Park, and marched to Mayor Jacob Frey’s home nearby. Their main route took Monroe Street before turning onto Central Avenue, headed towards downtown. To learn more about the Logan Park encampment, see p.6. (Photo by Alex Schlee)

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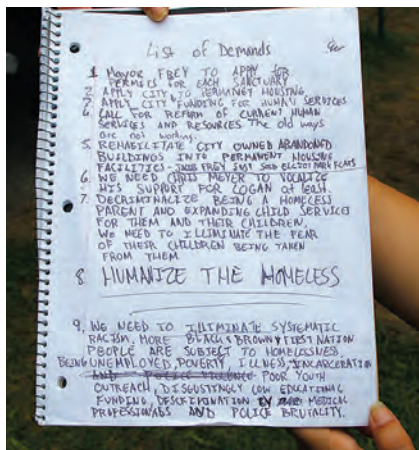
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Volunteers working for Junail Freeman Anderson wrote a hard copy of the protest's demands before the march began.



When the march arrived at Mayor Frey's home, Alexis Kramer spoke to the assembly about her experience with homelessness, and losing her children to Child Protective Services. (Photos by Alex Schlee)

"Where DO you want us?"

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modations or disperse. In the meantime, volunteers at the camp are collecting signatures from people who live around the park on a petition that says it's okay for them to stay until the September 15 deadline. There is a GoFundMe campaign to raise money for the building here: [gofundme.com/f/2316f8q460](https://www.gofundme.com/f/2316f8q460)

After a short march, Anderson and other protest leaders read their demands up to Frey's window, though he did not present himself to the gathered demonstrators.

The demands made by protesters boiled down to a few key things: Homelessness is a systematic symptom of racism and affects more Black, indigenous, and people of color than other demographics, the current systems to address homelessness are ineffective and focus more on punishment than aid, and the city needs to invest in turning abandoned infrastructure into affordable permanent housing.

When running for mayor, Frey campaigned on promises to address homelessness, and protesters said that he has not only not followed through on his promises, but had made the issue worse in the past two years by kowtowing to expensive

housing developments going up in poor neighborhoods, pushing out the people who could hardly afford to live there in the first place.

Alexis Kramer, Freedom From the Streets' advocate to Child Protective Services, spoke briefly at the end of the march on one of the protesters' demands: to decriminalize being a homeless parent. She herself is homeless; she lives in a hotel now, but when she lost her home, CPS took her children away from her. They've been separated for 16 months. She works with Freedom From the Streets to help other families fight to stay together.

"They take your children from you. They break the bond, and that is unacceptable. We need accountability!" she said.

Anderson closed out the march by asking the absent Frey a question: "You don't want us in your parks. You don't want us in your abandoned K-Marts. You don't want us there, you don't want us here, well where DO you want us?" she demanded. "I'm meeting with Frey on the 31st, and when I see him, I'm gonna ask him why he didn't come out because you know that I'm out here, you know where I am!"



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