

2012, August 21st Westwood Civic Association General Meeting Minutes

Present:

Irene McNulty, Joel Kimmet, Mary Kuhl, Mary Jenkins, Karen Strasser, Valerie Baumann, Melva Gweyn, Jerry Hildebrand, John Sess

Excused:

Jill Minor and Tom Minor

Absent:

Joe Henke and Nick D'Angelo

President Joel Kimmet called the meeting to order. Introduction of guests: City Councilmen Chris Smitherman and PG Sittenfeld along with Chris Kearny of Chronic Nuisance.

Police Report:

Captain Neville gave the police report. At McHenry and Harrison, next to the gas station, there is a man who sells items from an orange tent. The property owner doesn't want him there. The property is in foreclosure with the county supposedly taking it over.

Captain Neville is continuing to look into the situation in Bracken Woods where a condemned building is operating as a retail store. Becky Weber inquired about 2860 and 2864 Orland, wondering if anyone has contacted the police about the juveniles causing problems there. Captain Neville wants to be advised of problem properties along with locations and dates of the Good Guy Loitering events so that he can inform the officers working during those events. Per Captain Neville, we have upticks in crime but we are still down in double digits overall across the board. We are the only district down in every category. With regard to robberies, we are up 26% over last year. Some strategy adjustments have helped drive the numbers back down. Captain Neville is trying predictive analysis to use his resources wisely. Per John Sess, Captain Neville brought some great people here to the CPD – we are blessed. It is a tough battle for the police running radio run to radio run to radio run. CPD is really trying. When Captain Neville was asked about strategies to reduce the drug dealing with cell phones, Captain Neville responded, "This is a very complex question. The CPD is bringing in 110 drug complaints per month plus he gets about twenty per day in his personal email." If Captain Neville knows there is a hot spot, he'll try to put an officer in uniform in that spot. Knowledge from the community is helpful. Neville tries to get ahead of the radio to be more proactive.

Paul Krekeler – Fire Report

School starts tomorrow. Be safe and watch for the kids.

Resources are limited. The Fire Department doesn't respond to assaults anymore. Fire service protocol is that until the police have cleared a scene, the Fire Department won't come in, but rather, they will just sit close and wait. At the new Fire House, Number 35

will likely never be on the brown out list. A medic unit may be moved into the new firehouse. Last month, there were 438 runs.

Chris Kearney presented regarding Chronic Nuisance:

Westwood and North Avondale are very active regarding Chronic Nuisance. Chronic Nuisance calls contribute to many of the CPD runs. The 2007 Chronic Nuisance law was not enforced. We changed the law to get it enforced. City Council passed a revised Chronic Nuisance law. The primary enforcement authority was the police, and then the City Solicitor hired Mark Manning. Manning now has a procedure that he would like the Public Safety Committee to affirm. There are shortcomings on this procedure. Becky Weber and Chris Kearney have concerns. The procedure needs to be looked at again. We have a new law and a procedure that mirrors the old law. We have been dealing with many of these Chronic Nuisance properties for years.

Per Becky Weber, we are looking at 50 properties. Westwood only has two properties on that list. There are other neighborhoods that don't have any properties listed. We would like the police dept to be classified as an enforcement authority. We would prefer a boarded up property versus a property where there is constant crime and vandalism.

Per Councilman Smitherman, the Chronic Nuisance law changed with an 8-1 vote. What is the Chair's position on this? The Chair sets the agenda. It is difficult to get things on the agenda if the Chair doesn't want it on the agenda.

Per John Sess, does a boarded up building bring more dollars to the City than a chronic nuisance building? Councilman Smitherman doesn't think so.

Councilman Smitherman's hope is that the law comes to City Council with the language that we want. How do we get with the lawyer to get the verbiage changed to the way we want it, before it goes before Council in the first place?

Per Mary Kuhl, Chief Craig came here for a meeting and at that time we told him that we wanted to be part of writing the Chronic Nuisance law. We felt that Chief Craig understood where we were coming from and that he was going to possibly be supportive. Next, we met with Manning and we told him that we wanted to have a voice in the writing of the Chronic Nuisance law. We took Manning around on a driving tour of Westwood pointing out various Chronic Nuisance properties. It would be great if we could get a majority of City Council to sign a position statement. We could have a public meeting with Chief Craig. Because of the way the law is written, the Solicitor's office enforces the law.

Both Councilmen were given copies of the Westwood Strategic Plan.

Per Jim McNulty, City Council passed the Westwood Strategic Plan. The City's Comprehensive Plan is about to come up for a vote. Will the neighborhood plans already

in existence, be incorporated as part of the plan? We don't want everything that we have worked for be negated because of the new City Comprehensive Plan.

Per John Sess, Bethany House was a loan for tax dollars and they were told to pay it back in a certain amount of time. Council voted to forgive that debt. There are other projects that come before City Council that are really grants defined as loans. There is a trade off here – by forgiving the loan, these properties could become market rate housing. With those loans pending, the property can't be sold. John Sess then reminded us that Council's vote allowing Bethany House to be forgiven of their debt was a vote against the Westwood Strategic Plan.

Per Councilman Sittenfeld, these loans were from the late 80's and early 90's. Whether you agree or not on the process, 25 years later for certain work to go forward, the loans needed to be forgiven. We couldn't just pull out on Bethany House.

Per M. Kuhl, up to 20% of CVDG money is used for blight removal. Zoning issues are a big deal to us. Hyde Park got it right for years. Tedious and boring zoning issues are what keep a neighborhood nice. Westwood has its limit of multi-family properties, and we want to promote single family ownership. We go to meetings, take off work, etc., but it isn't helping. We can't get anybody to understand how important zoning is. We should not be rezoning properties to multi-family—our strategic plan should be honored.

Per Councilman Sittenfeld, we can't pretend that this happened over night.

Per Bob Conda, we can start the change now. If we do what's right now, we will get the ball rolling the other way.

Per Irene McNulty, it is horrible down at Bethany house. They are living in filth. East Westwood is building multi family for the elderly.

Per Becky Weber, we are talking about zoning, not necessarily subsidized housing.

Per Councilman Sittenfeld, he would like to look at zoning changes in Westwood and then look at Hyde Park and lay out the facts as these votes come up.

Per Jim McNulty, we know what we want and need to do. We have been communicating that to City council. You all voted to change zoning recently to multi family. Our feelings are hurt. That vote killed us.

Per Councilman Sittenfeld, who is monitoring these things as they go thru planning and come before Council? We need to be kept informed.

Per Irene McNulty, the Bracken Woods Lane property has been condemned and is missing a weight-bearing wall. When will these people be forced to leave? Ed

Cunningham is doing what he can do. There is not enforcement. The Building Department has condemned the property. Who is it up to now?

Per Mary Kuhl, who gets squatters out of condemned buildings?

Per Jim McNulty, the Talbert House moved. That is City owned land now. What is going to happen there?

Per John Sess, I am very thankful that Westwood got involved and got Talbert House out of there. Green Township would like it to revert back to a park.

Per Councilman Smitherman, he will get back to tell us what Talbert House has planned for that property. There is a mayor's race in 2013 and a Council race. It is very important that all of us in Cincinnati hone in on that. There is a budget situation to deal with in 45 days – a 35 million dollar deficit. Code zeros and brown outs - he doesn't support cutting of any first responders. The Police Recruit class is going to happen. Don't wait for the budget to show itself. Begin now to make sure that Mark Manning doesn't lose his job.

Per Councilman Sittenfeld, with regard to vacant and foreclosed properties, if a house is vacant and foreclosed, we need to be part of a vacant and foreclosed registry, so that when banks, etc. are not doing what they are supposed to do to secure a building, there is a person to go to. We are now getting checks from Wells Fargo, Bank of America, etc. as part of the registry program. This will bring more responsible behavior from the lenders. He hopes we have visited the new Washington Park. We need to have a serious conversation with the City. Downtown and Over the Rhine are going to make it now but Downtown and Over the Rhine can't shine while the rest of the city around it goes down hill.

Per Mary Kuhl:

South Fairmont is being cannibalized. We need to pay attention to the big ditch theory.

Elliott Ellis, South Fairmont Community Council President, met with Christian Sigmund, the administrator for Hamilton County. South Fairmont doesn't want their community clear cut. They want the businesses to remain. This includes 560 jobs and 68 million in revenue. There is a 40 million dollar gap with what the City is offering for them to relocate. Our plan develops 2 business parks and brings in private enterprise. It is privately funded and takes the burden off the taxpayer. Christian Sigmund was appalled that South Fairmont has been trying to sit down with MSD for over a year. It is MSD's way or no way. On 8/28 South Fairmont's plan will be presented from 6-8 p.m. at 1798 Queen City Avenue. (Orion Academy).11/29/12

Open Forum –

Garbage was reported around the Kroger location on Ferguson, It is absolutely horrible if you travel behind there. Go to 5916000.com to report it. They will enforce it. Per Becky Weber, it will be the responsibility of the Property Management Co. to handle the problem once it is reported to the City. The weeds are chest high in the divider all along Westwood Northern Blvd. We suggested complaining at 5916000.com

Ron Mosby, State Representative Candidate:

Mr. Mosby comes to WCA because he wants to know about this area if he is going to represent us. Wants to know and understand our issues.

Per Becky Weber, there will be a Good Guy Loitering this Friday on Orland from 8-11p.m. Regarding the Target cart situation, take a card and call to complain about the carts. Their employees aren't allowed to go out and get the carts because it is an insurance issue.

MOTION BY MARY KUHL TO NOT DO THE COMMITTEE REPORTS TONIGHT.
SECONDED BY JOHN SESS.
ALL IN FAVOR

Joel Kimmet would like to invite the cops to Good Guy Loitering on Orland.

Drug sales on Hazelwood were discussed. Per Mary Jenkins, make sure that everyone knows to make the reports to the non-emergency police number.

MOTION PER MARY KUHL

Motion asking for money for pizza, beer and alcohol for margaritas up to \$400.00 for the Westwood Civic booth at the Westwood Art Show.

SECONDED BY JOHN SESS
ALL IN FAVOR

Per Becky Weber, we have a quote from Harlan for signs for the holiday yard of the week. For ten signs, it is \$164.40.

MOTION BY JOHN SESS,

SECONDED BY MARY JENKINS for \$164.40 for yard of the week signs during the holidays.

ALL IN FAVOR

MOTION BY JOHN SESS to write a letter opposing the liquor license request for 3344 Glenmore Ave.

SECONDED BY MICHELLE CONDA
ALL IN FAVOR

MOTION TO ADJOURN BY MARY KUHL

SECONDED BY JOHN SESS

ALL IN FAVOR