

## **Westwood Civic Association**

### **General Meeting**

December 18, 2012

Present: J. Kimmet, V. Baumann, M. Jenkins, B. Weber, T. Minor, J. Minor, J. Sess, M. Conda

Excused: M. Kuhl, K. Strasser, J. McNulty, I. McNulty, M. Gweyn

J. Kimmet called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. D. Hicks led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance. J. Kimmet then asked attendees to observe a moment of silence in memory and in honor of Newtown, Connecticut students, families, teachers, and first responders.

### **Police Report, District 3**

Russ Neville, District 3 Captain, addressed the matter of a likely new district building. He said that it is not the case that a site has been selected; however, a new facility is on the agenda and funds have been allocated. He was cautious to say it, but strongly believes that a district headquarters should be centrally located in the district. Criteria for a new site include four to six acres without a current structure on it if possible. He also noted that a renovation is not possible. Captain Neville noted that it is very early in the planning process but to expect a public forum in early February, probably at the Elder Schaeper Center, involving Mr. Stiles, assistant city manager, representatives from infrastructure organizations, and community groups and residents. Captain Neville will notify WCA. It's on a fairly fast track. Captain Neville hopes to have Westwood engagement in the process. J. Sess commented that a new building is desirable, but leaves it to the powers that be regarding placement. Captain Neville responded that location is critically important for response time to main arteries and to primary service areas. V. Baumann asked about the size of the current lot. Captain Neville said it's far below the needed space and spreads across two buildings. D. Hicks asked about some vacant properties now near Ferguson and Glenway and whether residents can make recommendations. Captain Neville said yes. Officer Minella distributed crime statistics for November which now include a narrative statement. He commented on the STAR report, noting that most crime is down but street robberies, particularly at night, have increased dramatically. 2200 Harrison area is a problem area for robberies, per Officer Minella. J. Sess commented that the homicide count for the year to date is 52 which is about 19 down from last year.

### **Guests**

J. Kimmet asked first time attendees at a WCA meeting to self-identify. One attendee, named Julie, recently bought a house in Westwood. Other first time attendees included Tom and Patrice Hodges, also new residents.

### **Ruehlmann building**

J. Kimmet noted that he had invited Jack Conley, the new owner of the Ruehlmann building at Harrison and Montana, to discuss mutual interests in the property's success. J. Kimmet will invite him again for the January meeting.

### **Metro bus route 64**

J. Kimmet noted the agenda item, requested by J. McNulty who could not attend, regarding the 64 Metro bus route. J. Kimmet commented on a recent Invest in Neighborhoods meeting when it was discussed and he provided some of the history of the problems with the route, as identified by WCA members, including backed up traffic, few passengers, and other problems. Metro has proposed a new route that has the bus going through the Fay Apartments area. He wants to have the Public Safety Committee discuss this further. B. Weber asked if J. McNulty could be assigned to that committee, given his awareness of the issues.

MOTION by J. Sess to invite Metro representatives to the January general meeting to address strictly route 64 concerns and solutions.

SECONDED by M. Jenkins.

Discussion: M. Conda asked if the WCA position should be restated to Metro. The group's inclination was no.

PASSED unanimously.

### **Abandoned Parcel Trespassing**

J. Kimmet described Ohio Senate Bill 109 (introduced by Sen. Schiavoni of Youngstown). The Abandoned Parcel Trespassing bill was killed for this session after passing a vote in the Senate. J. Sess commented that there were threats

by the city several years ago to charge WCA representatives for trespassing at a site at which WCA board members performed some clean up. J. Sess and J. Kimmet urged contact with the Speaker and with Representative Schiavoni to support the bill in the next session.

MOTION by J. Sess to charge M. Jenkins with contacting local state representatives on behalf of WCA to urge support for this bill.

SECONDED by M. Conda.

PASSED unanimously.

### **Montana Avenue improvements**

V. Baumann asked if the Montana Avenue improvements are officially considered complete. While board members believe so, there are a number of outstanding issues. V. Baumann has photos of loose brick, ruts, and cracked concrete near Harrison and Montana. J. Kimmet added that some light poles have been hit.

MOTION by M. Conda to have V. Baumann to contact A. Henderson, Traffic and Engineering, on behalf of WCA.

SECONDED by J. Sess.

Passed unanimously.

### **NSP funds, 2012**

J. Kimmet reported on WCA's use of Neighborhood Support Program funds, which provides grants for the 52 neighborhoods in Cincinnati. We use it to help defray costs of newsletter, flags, and the gardens, typically. The funds are spent and then reimbursed. J. Kimmet asked for support for the replacement of American flags and brackets to be placed along Harrison Ave. He comments that we spend \$400 to get \$800 worth of flags, but we must do that by December 31. Most last two seasons. J. Kimmet reported that we have a number of destroyed ones. M. Conda says we need a longer term solution. D. Hicks, mentioned that the metal poles are harder on the brackets.

MOTION by M. Jenkins to approve spending the \$400 remaining NSP funds for flags and brackets, on the condition that WCA consider alternatives for longer-lasting flags.

SECONDED by M. Conda.

PASSED unanimously.

### **NSP funds, 2013**

J. Kimmet remarked on the new NSP contract for 2013, saying he heard that it will be \$5,000 again. A notification needs to go in the newsletter. There will be discussion and a vote at the January meeting. See the Invest in Neighborhoods website for instructions and ideas.

### **Fire Report**

Lt. T. Grauel, of Northside but on rotation at Westwood, noted that there were 365 total runs in November and 4,257 runs year to date. He commented that this is very high and a busy company. There were 238 fire inspections. M. Conda asked how many EMS runs result in transport to hospital. Lt. Grauel said probably 75-80% of the 300+ runs. Asked when the new fire station will open, he said he doesn't know, but it's coming along. C. Kearney asked if he could characterize the percentage of runs that are violence-related, in the fire department's experience. Lt. Grauel said it has been down, after peaking in 2001. Most calls are for seizures and chest pain and the like. He said that a crew will make a shooting or a stabbing every week, but not daily.

### **The Moral Voice**

B. Weber and C. Kearney offered remarks on the Moral Voice and a discussion they recently had with Avondale representatives from Community Policing and their community council. They started from the premise that we have a violence problem in Westwood, as demonstrated by statistics and recurring a gang connection between Avondale and Westwood. They wondered whether Westwood could benefit from the Moral Voice approach and asked for more information. C. Kearney commented that, in response to criminal activity, there are law enforcement, social services, and community approaches. The Moral Voice involves the community in crime deterrence and decreasing repeat offenses. The community's role is to step up, reinforcing societal norms and showing that they won't take it anymore. At last count in 2012, there were 153 individuals who offend or live in Westwood as repeat offenders. B. Weber hopes that this is a conversation WCA and the community can have with District 3. In Avondale, it's a strong collaboration and conversation between District 4 and the community that has had a profound impact. Avondale community leaders

experience regular discussion about specific individuals and police. C. Kearney reported that five neighborhoods are going to get city resources, but not Westwood. It's determined by shootings and Westwood is next in line. C. Kearney commented that Westwood is #1 in terms of people who say a gun was presented, if not shot off. In terms of violent crime, we are #2 in the city. He said there is an argument to be made for pursuing this.

MOTION by B. Weber for WCA to continue to pursue the Moral Voice and the problem-solving SARA framework, engaging the public safety committee in the effort, led by B. Weber and C. Kearney.

SECONDED by J. Sess.

Discussion included a question about tracking participants. B. Weber said there is tracking of the people they're helping in Avondale. Another attendee asked if the SARA model is the city's accepted model. C. Kearney and M. Jenkins noted that SARA is commonly used by the city across many departments. B. Weber said she would talk with Councilman Sittenfeld's office about this, to continue to advocate for Westwood engage in the Moral Voice, emphasizing community readiness for it and crime statistics that support it. J. Kimmet commented on the effectiveness of consistent WCA efforts, particularly by B. Weber and C. Kearney, around chronic nuisance issues.

PASSED unanimously.

### **Bracken Woods update**

J. Kimmet, a member of the WestCURC board, reported on his work on the Bracken Woods project. WestCURC has made offers on two more properties on Bracken Woods this month, with one accepted to date. J. Kimmet said that the 3100 block presents a long-term, ongoing problem for Westwood. There are 28 properties on a five acre parcel and the city with WestCURC's help is using TIFF funds to acquire the properties, demolish them, and then build single family houses on the sites. Assuming the current offer is accepted, six of the 28 properties will be acquired by year's end.

### **Westwood Square Committee proposal**

J. Kimmet apologized if he seemed too proactive on the Westwood Square issue last week in board communication. He reported that community organizations have been asked to sit at the table and be part of the project. WCA has missed some early critical meetings. He said that WCA needs an exploratory committee of 5 or 6 people to go to some of these meetings with WestCURC and city and other community representatives and get engaged and report back. He cannot think of a better way to get engaged in this and be fully represented now in these meetings. He noted that the committee would be bringing reports back and would not be voting on anything without WCA approval. B. Weber asked if this initiative will this move forward without WCA participation. She asked if someone from the city can meet with WCA. She is concerned about the impact on current businesses in the area. J. Kimmet noted that he spoke with G. Kissell, an architect involved in the effort. These are concept drawings. The city wants to find out what the neighborhood wants so the concepts can move to reality. J. Sess offered the favorable example of Montana Ave and WCA input. B. Weber noted that projects and decision-making doesn't always follow WCA recommendations. J. Kimmet remarked that J. Sess and J. McNulty would be strong WCA representatives to this collaboration. M. Jenkins said that the issue of form-based codes is far from settled. J. Kimmet said that WestCURC and the city are approaching this from multiple angles and are talking to people in a radius around the business district. M. Jenkins noted that WestCURC representatives are expected at the next meeting. M. Jenkins hopes that WCA can help to guide the discussion with residents. J. Minor remarked that her neighbors are excited and want to be part of the conversation. B. Weber expressed concern about how far along this is and what role of WCA would be. J. Kimmet said that it is moving forward and it's crucial that we have WCA representation at all the meetings. J. Sess said he assumes the committee would have no authority to speak on behalf of the WCA except for the strategic plan and would bring decision items back for a vote. T. Minor said that the conceptual drawings are out there and they're talking to businesses; WCA should be a part of the discussion. J. Kimmet commented on a discussion he had with M. Kuhl in which she suggested that WCA can set guidelines for the committee to follow, like adhering to the strategic plan. M. Conda and B. Weber commented that they'd like a city representative to come. J. Kimmet will invite a project architect and a city representative.

MOTION by J. Hildebrand to go forward with the committee as J. Kimmet proposed, and report back and represent the strategic plan.

SECONDED by J. Sess.

PASSED unanimously, with one abstention.

### **Mailbag**

J. Kimmet reported that WCA got a revocable street privilege for the Welcome to Westwood sign at border with Northside. J. Kimmet asked J. Sess to review the approval letter before picking the precise spot for placement.

WCA received a letter from the Parks Board letter, noting that its mobile performance stage is available for rental to community organizations.

WCA received notice of two zoning hearings on December 19. One is a request for a zoning variance for two signs at 5615 Glenway Avenue, currently an insurance office. The other is a request for variance for height and width of a sign at 3300 Parkcrest, the new funeral home.

MOTION by J. Sess to oppose both requests for variances, urging the city to stand by its current zoning rules.

SECONDED by V. Baumann.

PASSED unanimously.

J. Sess and M. Conda will represent WCA at the meeting on December 19 with letters from J. Kimmet.

### **Westwood Town Hall/Recreation Commission**

D. Hicks distributed the winter calendar of events. Zumba, watercolor, and duct tape classes are starting up. She noted that 2013 Rec Center memberships are now available with pool registrations good at all centers except for Dunham. D. Hicks noted that approximately 50 children come daily from Westwood School for after-school snacks and she'd like to attract them to Rec Center programming. D. Hicks will be managing all senior citizen programming. She commented on the maintenance now, including painting and carpeting.

### **Holiday yard of the week**

B. Weber reported that the holiday yard of the week program is going well, with lots of nominations and one week left. Addresses have been noted in the newsletter. M. Conda is posting them online.

### **3030 Montclair cell tower**

M. Jenkins commented on the decision regarding the cell tower at 3030 Montclair. The additional satellite and building were approved with the exception of no barbed wire fence allowed, over the stated objections of WCA and abutting property owners.

### **Adjournment**

MOTION to adjourn by J. Sess

SECONDED by T. Minor

PASSED unanimously.