

**Westwood Civic Association
Steering Meeting
June 12, 2012**

Present: J. Kimmet, M. Kuhl, M. Jenkins, J. Minor, V. Baumann, B. Weber, M. Gweyn,
J. Henke, J. Hildebrand, I. McNulty, T. Minor, M. Conda, N. D'Angelo

Excused: J. Sess, K. Strasser

J. Kimmet called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

The first order of business was the approval of committee membership as written based on board member interest. Next, chairs for all the committees were selected as follows:

Problem Properties: J. McNulty, chair
Infrastructure: M. Gweyn and V. Baumann, co-chairs
Business District: J. Henke and K. Strasser, co-chairs
Public Safety: B. Weber
Promotion and Membership: M. Kuhl
Outreach: M. Jenkins and J. McNulty, co-chairs
Preservation: T. Minor
School Enhancement: J. Minor and K. Strasser, co-chairs
Finance: V. Baumann

WestCURC

Sr. Ann Rene McConn reported on WestCURC developments. Organizations can apply for funds from the city for improvement projects for business districts. A minor application can be up to \$30,000. WestCURC wants to renovate the public parking lot at 3081 Harrison Ave to continue its use as a public parking lot, largely to serve Madcap Puppets' anticipated parking needs. Rainwater at the lot goes to the rain garden. Excessive rain goes into the sewer. Asked if there is any trouble with people trying to sell cars or do misdeeds at that lot, Sr. Ann Rene said no. A major project is to improve the business district. WestCURC plans to collaborate with Mr. Benkert who owns a number of properties along Harrison to repair the white buildings on the opposite side from Honda and Madcap with the hope of attracting a restaurant and to develop a walkable business area, thus creating a toehold along Harrison Ave. Sr. Ann Rene reported some resistance to improving a business owner's property but she cites mutual benefit.

Several questions were raised. M. Gweyn asked about the bus stop and loitering by Harrison and Boudinot. She is concerned about people hanging out and transients in the area. Sr. Ann Rene is going to apply some of the police-recommended approaches for that area, like nicer businesses and surveillance cameras. B. Weber asked if we can start working on Glenmore soon. Sr. Ann Rene noted the option for an urban design plan for both business districts. Sr. Ann Rene asked if WCA will offer a letter of support. There was general agreement that it would. S. Lewis voiced concern about Madcap's current property, citing the presence of shopping carts in the lot. Sr. Ann Rene reported that the acquisition of the Bell building has been delayed.

Bracken Woods update

Sr. Ann Rene reported that the city asked WestCURC to manage the project which involves 22 properties. The task is to find the owner, get an appraisal, purchase it, tear it down, and deed it to the city. Ten percent of the demolition costs will go to WestCURC for managing the project with the funds to go to neighborhood projects. The city is moving ahead with criminal prosecution of some of the property owners. J. Kimmet asked the new Problem Properties Committee to work with the Port Authority on the eight properties with delinquent taxes. M. Gweyn inquired about the school on Bracken Woods. Sr. Ann Rene reported that a Muslim organization owns it and appears to be neglecting the property.

Westwood School

J. Minor reported that a meeting is to be held on June 20 meeting between WCA and Westwood School representatives. J. Kimmet suggested a school-focused joint project between the Membership and Schools Committees.

City Meetings

J. Kimmet asked for WCA representation at an upcoming city planning and buildings committee meeting to solicit input from community councils and stakeholders. V. Baumann, M. Gweyn, and M. Kuhl will attend.

WCA Letterhead

It was decided that the current stock of letterhead and envelopes is sufficient.

American Flags and Brackets

J. Kimmet asked if anyone has spare WCA flags or brackets. He noted that K. Strasser repaired a number of flags. After some discussion of flag and banner placement and vendors, it was agreed that J. Kimmet would get pricing for American flags, Westwood banners, and garden-style banners.

MOTION by J. Kimmet to spend not more than \$800 of NSP funds on up to 24 additional flags and brackets

SECONDED by J. Hildebrand

Approved unanimously

Westwood Strategic Plan

A discussion of printing additional copies of the strategic plan was tabled.

Top 10 Worst Properties

J. Kimmet assigned the task of identifying criteria for worst properties and a subsequent list to the Problem Properties Committee. Further, J. Kimmet asked the committee to work with the city and the Port Authority on these properties. It was also agreed that the Good Neighbor letters, proposed by B. Weber last year, will be used.

WestFest

M. Jenkins reported on plans for WestFest and the mugslide and pointed to the need for several more volunteers to work the booth.

Westwood Community Gardens

M. Jenkins reported on upcoming priorities at the Gardens, including the retaining wall and the fence. She noted that the grant from Keep Cincinnati Beautiful ends in the coming week. M. Kuhl asked that all Gardens communication come either from the garden coordinator or site manager. M. Jenkins reported that a wood chipper has been donated to the Gardens by Steve and Cinda Gorman.

Constant Contact

J. Kimmet requested that secretary K. Strasser be given access to the Constant Contact account. B. Weber reiterated her request that only one person have access to the account to limit and monitor mailings. M. Kuhl will assist board members who need mailings to go out.

Westwood Clean Up Day

J. Kimmet reported that K. Strasser proposed a Westwood clean up day. He referred the proposal to the Infrastructure Committee and suggested that K. Strasser talk with COPP.

Mailbag

J. Kimmet passed around a number of items of general interest that came in the mail but require no action.

Newsletter

B. Weber noted that Westwords will go out early next month, so the submission deadline will be moved up.

Good Guy Loitering

B. Weber commented that only five people attended Good Guy Loitering at Harrison and Boudinot recently. She asked that we try for more participation.

Boudinot and Harrison

M. Gweyn reported that she has recently spoken with the owners of the daycare and the chair repair shop who would like to have the bus stop by their properties moved. Several attendees expressed more attention to property maintenance at the former Beppos lot, in particular.

Former Kroger at Harrison and McHenry

M. Kuhl reported that the former Kroger will become a Save A Lot grocery store with a smaller footprint.

Single Family Housing

M. Kuhl requested a discussion of the demolition of single family homes in Westwood, asking that WCA commit to a firm policy against the practice. Approximately six board members commented that situations vary and demolition may be valid in some cases. M. Kuhl argued that a demolished house will be a permanent loss for Westwood. B. Weber asked that we prioritize problem properties and work to get the city's focus on the buildings that WCA considers demolition-appropriate.

Adjournment

There being no other business before the board, J. Kimmet adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m.