

May 15th General Meeting of WCA

Present:

Tom Minor, Jill Minor, Becky Weber, Valerie Baumann, Irene McNulty, Jerry Hildebrand, Mary Jenkins, Joel Kimmet, John Sess, Karen Strasser, Joe Henke, Melva Gweyn. Mary Kuhl and Michelle Conda excused. Nick D'Angelo absent.

Joel Kimmet called the meeting to order followed by welcoming our guests and thanking them for coming for the presentation of the Student of the Year awards.

Police report:

Rich Minella, District 3 neighborhood officer, was present to give the following report: Crime is down 14% from last year at this same time.

New dark blue uniforms are now being worn.

Tomorrow is D3 open house from 9a.m. -1p.m. Open house attendees will enjoy a D3 tour, exhibits, bikes, motorcycles, CSI van and horses.

Fire report:

Nobody was present to give a Fire Department Report

Student of the year awards

Councilman Chris Smitherman awarded the Wayne Brinkman Student of the Year awards. The awards were presented to the following students from area Westwood Schools:

St. Catharine of Siena – Abbey Hammann

Gamble Montessori – Ashley Cox

Our Lady of Lourdes School – Kathleen Anderson

Dater Montessori School – Tessa Grant

Westwood School – Malik Harris

Mother of Mercy – Emma Hauer

After the awards were presented, Councilman Smitherman took a few minutes to inspire the students and thank them for all that they do for their schools and community.

We then took a 10 minute intermission for photos of the award winners.

Per Mary Jenkins, a guest here tonight who lives on Junietta asked that we not turn around in her driveway. It was a revolving door prior to this meeting and she doesn't want anyone turning around in her driveway.

Speaker from Port Authority of Cincinnati – Deborah Robb, Director of Economic Inclusion

The Port Authority has been around since 2000, formed to do the Banks development. In 2005, the City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County took over the Banks project and the Port Authority started working in some other areas. One of those areas is bond financing for large development projects. For example, the Great American Building - the Port

Authority owns the building and leases it back . There can be various ways of financing. The Port Authority has four areas of business: bond financing, real estate development, land reutilization projects and transportation/logistics. The Port Authority is managing the land bank program for Hamilton County and has allocated 2.4 million dollars for this program. One of the ways that companies come into the land bank is because of tax foreclosure. Back taxes are then wiped clear. The Port Authority can get property three ways: accept forfeited land or deeds in lieu of foreclosure, donation or gift and land purchase. Land may also be acquired for nuisance control or neighborhood stabilization. The Port Authority also looks at strategic parcel assembly. Their goal is to return underutilized or vacant property back into productive use. They may have housing in the land bank that needs to be rehabbed. They are held accountable for the creation of jobs and want to be a developer in various areas. They also look for commercial property that can be put back into service to create jobs. The Port Authority is selective in regards to properties taken into the land bank and there are very strict rules in place regarding this.

With regard to demolition, the Ohio Attorney general gave 75 million for demotion and Hamilton County was given 5.4 million dollar for demolition of residential property. The caveat to using those funds is that there needs to be matching funds. The Port Authority is seeking organizations to raise funds for this matching fund program.

With regard to our TIF fund, Jim McNulty asked if our \$600,000 could be considered part of matching funds? Ms. Robb believes so, but will check into it and get back to us. Becky Weber asked, "Is it only residential and not multifamily?" There is more we need to find out about this program, but what we do know is that matched funds can't be federal dollars. Mary Jenkins inquired about the review process for determining and providing an opportunity to show that a house has historical value. Ms. Robb replied, "Yes, houses are looked at to see if they have historical value or can be put back into productive use." The focus is county wide. Land all over has been made ready for development. Jim McNulty observed that the Port Authority takes the politics out of everything. Ms. Robb informed us that the Port Authority reports to a Board of Directors monthly, can clear titles, is extremely supportive of development and likes to work at the speed of business versus the speed of government. Joel Kimmet commented on the problem in Westwood with blighted apartments. Ms. Robb informed us that if the owners of a building are in tax foreclosure or foreclosure with a bank, and the bank is willing to deed the property back to the land bank, the building can be demolished.

Joel Kimmet suggested that the problem properties committee could come up with a list and start working with the Port Authority immediately.

April general meeting minutes were approved as written

Motion by Mary Jenkins

Seconded by John Sess.

Passed by all

Westwood Yard Sale

The Westwood Yard Sale will be held here Saturday, July 21st on the grounds of Westwood Town Hall.

The cost for a booth will be \$15.00 for a 10' x 10' or \$25.00 for a 10' x 15'

Motion to spend the 25.00 for the 10 x 15 spot for WCA by John Sess

Seconded by Jerry Hildebrand

Discussion – per Valerie last year we bought two 10'x10' for \$30.00

Sess – amended the motion. Motion we spend up to \$30.00 to purchase booth space for yard sale

Seconded by Jerry Hildebrand

Passed by all

West Fest

Per Mary Jenkins, WCA will have a booth doing the world famous mug slide.

Volunteers are needed for both Saturday and Sunday, 6/23 and 6/24

Volunteers get a free I love Westwood t shirt.

Tom Bonhaus Auto is one of our sponsors. We are waiting on another sponsor for the booth otherwise the booth will be partially sponsored by Mary Jenkins.

Committees

Everyone from the Board is on the list of committees. Chair people have not been chosen. Let's do that at the steering meeting.

Announcements

The City of Cheviot is hosting public safety information night at the Cheviot Field House, 5/17 from 7p.m. -8:30p.m. WCA is invited.

Invest in Neighborhoods

Neighborhood Summit is 5/13 at SCPA. Sign up on their website. This is an annual event that has been going on for several years.

Open Form –Questions and Topics for the Board

Ron Moseby

Candidate for State Rep from 32nd district.

Mr. Moseby addressed the Board stating, “It’s always a nobler idea that brings about change.”

His platform is every student can achieve a great education, nobler ideas for small business, it should be easier for small business to start up and hire employees and small business and our economy can thrive once again.

www.ronmoseby.com

Introduction of Dina Hanks, new manager of Westwood Town Hall

Her goal is to do what is best for the community. She wants Town Hall to be booming and full of activities and life. She intends to put an article in our newsletter each month. She informed us that the new yard sale time is 9a.m.

- Summer camp and summer programs are coming up. .

- Program schedule for summer in about a week.
- Looking at running a stronger afterschool program for the students coming back to Westwood.
- Goal to have things set for fall by July1.
- Offer programs for seniors including zumba, clogging and other adult enrichment

2111 Harrison

Per Becky Weber, Ed Cunningham called and says no way we are going to get the building torn down.

Ed Cunningham says they are doing just enough to get it open again.

Proposed Westgate Development

Both letters need to be sent out to City Council and Westgate Developers so that they know that we don't want multi housing on Montana.

Jim McNulty – strongly suggests that the Board has a monthly accounting and update on the use of the TIF money. It is used for administration fees for WestCURC.

Bracken Woods

Per Joel Kimmet, it appears that the Port Authority can help us here. Many Bracken Woods homes are under foreclosure and are tied up legally and being tossed from bank to bank. We are trying to do research so that we can contact the owner and so that the city can make an offer. Out of 26 owners, only 2 have responded. We can't even find out who has the title on the other 24. Many banks are just passing everything on to a lawyer. It is very confusing and time consuming.

Mary Jenkins would like to see problem properties work with WestCURC and the Port Authority to acquire the problem properties.

Becky Weber would like us to find out how we can get the TIF funds matched up so we can get the matching funds from the Port Authority.

School Committee

Karen Strasser – education and school committee want to have an open house for Westwood School at the beginning of school in the fall and have a WCA event going on at the same time at Westwood Town Hall with tours of both buildings.

Community Gardens

Mary Jenkins gave us a report on the Gardens. 40 garden beds are rented and full. Keep Cinti Beautiful granted \$10,000 last year which was seed money to get started. The Gardens have had terrific support from the Civic Garden Center. WCA supported generously. Kiwanis also gave \$2500.00 to help build a retaining wall and fence. Westwood Works gave \$300.00 to build an arbor/entrance gate. A tool shed will go up soon. Volunteers are still waiting for the ground to dry up. Twenty more beds are going in and names are being taken for the wait list. Visit www.WestwoodCommunityGardens.com. The Garden is also on Facebook.

The winner of our art contest for the gardens was Hannah Donnelon of Mother of Mercy.

Membership

Per Joel Kimmet, we are trying to increase our membership. WCA flyers are at Town Hall for the taking. Guests should be encouraged to talk about WCA membership with their neighbors, etc.

7:30-10p.m. – Good Guy Loitering at Harrison and Boudinot on 5/24.
Newsletter deadline moved up earlier – Becky Weber will send an email reminding the Board of the deadline.

Melba Gwyn told the membership about our CPD led meeting at Westwood First Presbyterian Church on 5/7. Many businesses who attended the meeting were very happy and excited about this meeting.

John Sess reminded membership that www.5916000.com is and should be used if a yard looks bad, etc. It makes the neighborhood look bad when there are houses with the grass too tall, garbage, etc. We have many City owned lots where the grass is too tall. We requested City funding to insure that City owned lots would be cut. We are working to make sure that the City takes care of its properties.

WCA Membership dues are due on January 1. This date will be bolded, etc. on the front page of the WCA newsletter so that memberships don't expire. We want our members to be given notice.

Some Board members are interested in having an electronic newsletter as an option for our membership. This will be discussed at the next steering meeting.

Motion to adjourn by John Sess
Seconded by Jerry Hildebrand

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Strasser

