

Minutes - September Steering Meeting 9/11/12

Present: Mary Jenkins, John Sess, Melva Gweyn, Becky Weber, Joel Kimmet, Joe Henke

Excused: Jill Minor, Tom Minor, Irene McNulty, Mary Kuhl, Valerie Baumann

Absent: Nick D'Angelo,

Joel Kimmet called the meeting to order. Joel had copies of the top 20 worst buildings in Westwood if anyone needs the list.

Guest Presenter Chris Kearney

In the winter of 2012, representatives of Westwood met with Captain Russ Neville and discussed many topics, among them repeat offenders. Neville suggested that Westwood had a gang and that he could not share information because it was an ongoing investigation. Chris Kearney doesn't want gang activity to be a big problem that has to be removed. Gangs should not want to set up in Westwood in the first place. Chris looked at names of those who were arrested. Two of the people on the list had been arrested several times in the past year on drug related charges. Chris wonders how these people are allowed to continue drug involvement to the point where they need to be taken down by the FBI, DEA, etc. Per Joel Kimmet, many cases get dismissed. The Hamilton County prosecutor slaps offenders on the hand with many people not being given maximum sentences.

What is the community's role in identifying how these dealers are operating? If we can be more involved, we could stop mayhem by intervening earlier. These dealers victimized many people during the time the police were putting together this huge case. We are talking about more serious drugs than marijuana. Ideally, we'd like to catch the guy who is bringing drugs into our City. The police know that we have always had between 40-60 gangs. If we know there are gangs active in Westwood, why are we not part of the defense? The Moral Voice program in Avondale may be something to look at. Neighborhood and police in Avondale are

collaborating to deal with the drug dealers. If they know they are being watched, they should go somewhere else. What can we do as an organization to make a difference? We want to get CPD to meet with us so that we can say that the situation that we have now is unacceptable. We are only talking about approximately 100 really bad guys who have some followers. These 100 individuals are running circles around us. We need to tell them that they can't do this here anymore.

Mary Jenkins

We want to show no tolerance for this type of behavior.

Michelle Conda

We have Block Watches and COPP, etc. If it is just Chris Kearney, it is dangerous for Chris Kearney, but if they have to take on all of us, they will maybe be scared.

John Sess

We can cut demand by scaring off buyers.

Chris Kearney

We should focus on those 100 bad guys. This is a collaboration between the community and the CPD.

John Sess

We as citizens can only do so much.

Mary Jenkins

We should increase the number of Block Watchers.

Becky Weber

We need to continue to try stopping the little stuff so that the bigger stuff goes away.

Michelle Conda:

Let's invite Captain Neville to a meeting to discuss all of this.

Chris Kearney:

We should focus on those who are not complying with their parole. We don't know if what CPD is doing in Avondale is working. We have requested information regarding this.

Mary Jenkins:

We need to make an official WCA request to the CPD to get information on what is going on in Avondale, etc.

Chris Kearney:

If we are not in control of the neighborhood, then the bad guys are in control. We need to determine the best use of our resources.

Mary Jenkins:

Let's invite Captain Neville, COPPS and some members of Avondale to a meeting to learn from each other and determine the best use of citizens.

Joel Kimmet will email Captain Neville and Avondale Community Council members.

Meet the Candidates Night

Mary Kuhl is working on a Meet the Candidates Night on Oct.18th 7- 9p.m. The membership committee will handle this event.

MOTION by Mary Jenkins to approve \$45.00 for use of the auditorium and a \$35.00 fee for additional staff making the total cost \$80.00 for a Meet the Candidates Night on October 18th.

Seconded by John Sess.

All in favor.

Westwood Art Show –

Per John Sess, we have lots of additional parking for the event. We need help with the parking. Many lots owned by surrounding businesses are available for addition parking. Per Becky Weber, 8-10 boys from LaSalle are helping with loading and unloading. Volunteer are needed for setup, cleanup, etc. Chairs are being brought from the basement of Town Hall to setup for the musical entertainment area. The event goes from 11a.m. – 4p.m. The Park Board should cut the grass by Thursday; otherwise John Sess will cut the grass. Mary Kuhl needs \$400.00 up front to buy the supplies for the margaritas, etc. We have a one-day permit to serve liquor.

Motion by Michelle Conda to give Mary Kuhl a \$400.00 check up front for the purchase of liquor for the Westwood Art Show. The \$400.00 was already approved at the August general meeting.

Seconded by Mary Jenkins.
All in favor

We won't need to borrow the picnic tables from the YMCA this year for the Art Show.

Celebrate Westwood

Coming together nicely for 9/29.

Harvest Moon in the Community gardens –

9/29 A bonfire is planned for the gardeners, etc. This will be an evening celebration for a wonderful season at the Community Gardens.

Karen Strasser will bring her amplifier, microphone, etc.

Westwood Works will host Treasure Quest on 10/20. The event begins and ends at the Cheviot Field House. We have been invited to sell tickets to that event. The tickets are \$25.00 each and we can keep \$10.00 for every ticket that we sell. The teams are typically teams of four. There will be an after party at the Field House. The Field House is located at 3729 Robb. Registration will begin at 5:30 p.m., with a party afterwards. Other organizations are involved in the tickets sales too.

MOTION BY JOHN SESS that we promote and sell tickets for Treasure Quest

Seconded by Karen Strasser

In favor 4

Opposed 3

Motion passed

See Mary Jenkins if you are willing to sell tickets, etc.

Flags-

Some flags are looking bad again. We need to assess the flags. The flag team will go out in the next few Sundays to remove the flags that are distressed. The others will be moved soon after Veterans Day in November.

Community Gardens Report –

The retaining wall is completed except for the caps that go on top of the wall and finish it off. The cost was high for the wall. The garden team will review the budget. The dirt needs to settle before the fence goes up.

There are plans for the fence, arbor gates, tool shed and addition of twenty more beds, hopefully completed before spring.

We are applying to Keep Cincinnati Beautiful for another Safe and Clean grant. We will also request a grant from the Westwood Kiwanis. It has been a successful season at the Gardens.

501-c3 - Joel Kimmet

Things have changed since some members of WCA attended the Invest in Neighborhoods training. For the past 20 years or so, Invest in Neighborhoods has been in existence. They had an insurance company that gave a blanket \$1,000,000 liability insurance policy to Cincinnati community councils for all activities. This was a general liability policy. It covered everything that we do. In August 2012, when Rick Deringer from Invest in Neighborhoods went to renew, the company said that they did not want to renew. Many insurance companies are not taking the risk of insuring groups like ours. The policy expired on 8/30/12. We do not have insurance now. Rick is trying to get a policy that will be retroactive. Rick gets a grant from the City to cover the cost of this insurance policy. All of the companies that Rick has spoken to are telling Rick that they won't insure a neighborhood council any longer unless it is a 501-C3. Now, Rick is setting aside many things that he has previously said about having or not having 501-C3 status. Being a C-4 is not going to be enough because we are more and more involved in the community. Changing our status from c4 to c3 fits because it will be very beneficial to our group. The main problem is the work that it takes to put it together. If we show the types of activities that we are involved in, WCA fits the guidelines for the 501-C3. Per Mary Jenkins, it is possible for an organization like ours to get 501-3C status, but we might need to look at our priorities. Per Mary Jenkins, she thinks this is worth pursuing. WCA will need to make a decision and discuss what changes we may need to make before we pursue this change in our status. We should invite somebody from Mt. Washington's and Clifton's Neighborhood Councils because they have already made this change. Per Mary Jenkins, our WCA board needs a presentation on the pros and cons of becoming 503-c3 and a sub committee needs to be formed. Mary Kuhl, Joel Kimmet, Mary Jenkins and John Sess will be the committee. Rick Deringer wants a meeting in the next month regarding this matter.

MOTION BY JOHN SESS that we purchase an insurance policy spending up to \$1,000 for a \$1,000,000 liability policy for the Westwood Art Show.

Seconded by Becky Weber
All in favor

MOTION BY MICHELLE CONDA to adjourn the meeting.
Seconded by Melva Gweyn
Meeting adjourned