

**August 13, 2013 WCA Steering Committee
Submitted by Karen Strasser, Recording Secretary**

Present: Jill Minor, Tom Minor, Joel Kimmet, Michelle Conda, Valerie Baumann, Tom Hodges, Leslie Rich, Jim McNulty, Irene McNulty, Becky Weber, Mary Jenkins, Melva Gweyn, Karen Strasser, Jim McNulty

The meeting was called to order by President Joel Kimmet.

The meeting began with nominations for our open Board position. Jim McNulty nominated Stephanie Smith, seconded by Becky Weber.

Tom Hodges nominated Joe Corso, seconded by Leslie Rich.

Motion by Tom Hodges, seconded by Melva Gweyn to close the nominations.

Each nominee introduced themselves as follows:

Stephanie Smith: Westwood Civic is how I can best interact with government about how our taxes should be spent. There is strength in numbers. I have lived here my whole life and seen Westwood go down hill. I want to help restore Westwood. As the civilian coordinator for COPS, I have seen the good with the work that we do with the CPD. I grew up on Boudinot Avenue, attended St. Catharines and Mother of Mercy and am presently a member of St. Catharines.

Joe Corso: I did not grow up in Westwood, but rather married a resident of Westwood. I live on Lischer and have been here 20 years. I want to see Westwood Civic improve our reputation within the community. We need to embrace our diversity. I'd like to bring people together and at the same time fight back against the negative. I work for an urban Developer. There is money out there to be had if one attracts the right attention. Our reputation with the City needs to be good so that the City will spend their time talent and energy in Westwood.

(Weber) Have you been involved in other organizations in Westwood?

Corso: I am active on the Board Of Westwood Works and at my parish, St. Catharines.

(Baumann): How long has Stephanie been a member of COPPS.

Stephanie Smith: 4 years, almost 5.

(Kimmet) Only one person will become a new Board member tonight, but I encourage each of you to get involved. There are committees for you to be involved on and we need all of the help that we can get.

The vote was taken next and Joe Corso was elected.
Jerry Hildebrand's term will go until April 2014. Joe Corso will fill that term.

Westwood demolition report –

(Kimmet) I forwarded many emails to all of you this past week listing a continuation of our top 20 worst of the worst list. This has now been converted into a list of demolitions. Some of our properties had been combined on a list with Price Hill. Those properties have now been separated from the Price Hill list.

2569 Orland – owner demolishing on their own.

3847 Montana – owner demolishing on their own.

2545 Harrison – owner demolishing on their own.

We can't stop an owner from demolishing their own property. This takes care of the fines, etc. In lieu of paying those fines, the owner agrees to demo. A demo lien goes onto the property. The cost to demolish must be paid by the property owner. If they never pay, the City can theoretically collect against them, but they never do. Per Ed Cunningham, he would like us to write a letter to Buildings and Inspections saying that we really don't want to have any single family homes torn down, unless the property is a danger.

(Hodges) Safety hazard homes are the ones in question.

(Kuhl) That could be exploited. A line in the sand for Westwood is that we don't tear down single-family homes.

(Kimmet) A burned out home on Shaffer, sat for two years and the residents came to us to ask for help getting it torn down.

(J. Minor) At some point, the residents who live by these houses, should have some say if they want a single family down. On Montana, for example, there is a home in horrible shape.

(Kuhl) Houses everywhere don't get in horrible disrepair overnight. It is like pulling teeth because the City is not proactive. It is a problem on my street if I want to sell my house.

(Kimmet) We have been very proactive with our top 20 list. It is well known now that we have this top twenty list of bad properties.

(J. Minor) If we have exceptions to our single family demo policy, we will look at exceptions.

(Corso) Is the City handling this or the Port Authority?

(Kimmet) The City. The Port Authority is mostly involved in commercial right now.

(Conda) If we say in the letter that we only want multi family torn down, then we are being bad neighbors to the people who want the really bad single family torn down next to them.

(J. McNulty) There is a little momentum going now which is why we want to mail a letter now.

(Gweyn) A really bad property will come down anyway.

(Kimmet) We attend the DBL hearings.

(Weber) They do want to take down the single-family houses.

(Jenkins) This letter will be a reiteration of a stand that we already have.

(Condo) Tell the City to keep focusing on the multifamily demos as much as possible.

(Kimmet) Please email me tonight with any points that you want to make sure are put into this letter.

(J. McNulty) The goal would be to get the City on auto pilot with this thing.

(Kimmet) We are also going to need candidates to put on the top 20 list. Please let J. Mcnulty or myself know which properties are of concern to you.

Westwood Art Show –

(Kuhl) We will have a booth there selling pizza and alcoholic beverages. We have some tables that we have rented. The table are being delivered on Friday, September 13th. We will paint the booth areas the night before. This is a call for volunteers. .

(Kimmet) Maybe a signup list for Art Show volunteers can be created for the general meeting next week.

(Rich) Joel, Tom and I were at the Western Hills High School Principal's luncheon. The Key Club is looking for volunteer opportunities.

(Jessica is looking for high school students to run kid's activities. This could be where the Key Club can volunteer. Leslie will talk to the Key Club President)

(Kimmet) The insurance and liquor permit for the Art Show are in place so we are covered for the Art Show. All we had to do this year was purchase a one day

liquor rider. The insurance rider cost is rolled into the \$40.00 per booth cost of the event.

(Weber) Jessica has been working hard for the event.

Public Safety

(Weber) Money has been put aside to fund the Chronic Nuisance attorney. We have had responses from some of our City council members and/or representatives from their offices.

The evicted tenants at the property 2859 Orland are being slow and threatening as they move. The landlord is having a hard time moving this along. The eviction keeps getting postponed. The landlord's attorney is trying to find out why. All the same cars are still in the driveway. There are problems there. A Council person helping on the other end can probably move this along. Tom Hodges will also call the landlord's attorney.

(Weber) Joel should probably follow up as the President of WCA with the City Council members with regard this matter.

District 3 Police Station –

There is a committee called the Westside Police Station Community Advisory Team. There is no Art committee. We have representatives that have been attending those meetings.

(Kimmet) D3 is trying to get all 13 neighborhoods involved in this project. CPD wanted one rep from each of the 13 community councils. It can be more than one person. Anybody can go.

(Jenkins) CPD specifically asked for private volunteers and community council volunteers. In the end, if they want a good size committee with lots of representation.

(Weber) Stephanie Smith would be interested in being on this committee.

(Corso) What do they want the Committee to do?
Is there a design build competition? Do they need help selecting a design team?

(Jenkins) No. The committee will hear suggestions from the design build team that is chosen. I propose Stephanie Smith and Michelle Conda as members of this committee.

(Conda) They are really listening and making choices built on criteria.
I will continue on as a WCA member. Board members will have to let me know what you want me to say.

(Conda will call Stephaine Smith regarding serving on this committee.)

501c3/501c4 situation

It is our recommendation that at this time we proceed with the 501c3 process. Tom Hodges has volunteered to be our lawyer. It would be really cool to be a 501c3. Conda, Baumann, Kimmet and Strasser met at Conda's house after hanging flags and the discussion supported our doing the work now to become a 501c3.

(Kimmet) We need to file the IRS form 990 for 2012 now.

(Baumann) I filed the 990 EZ.

(Kimmet) We are considered a small organization.

(Jenkins) Thinking back to the meeting at Invest in Neighborhoods, our recommendation was at that moment we stay with the 501c4 only because of the amount of work involved in changing our status to a C4. We were cautioned that it could mean a shift in our mission and purpose.

(Weber) There are some differences with how the accounting is handled.

(Weber) Our mission will change.

(Jenkins) I think that it is worth going down that path.

Motion by Jenkins that we pursue

(Hodges) We can't vote on the changes to the bylaws until we know that we want to be a 501c3.

(Kimmet) We need to look at this now because we are revoked.

(Hodges) It would be nice if we could apply and then decide, but we need to have everything in place and be eligible.

(Weber) You have not drafted these – it will be a generic set of bylaws.

(Hodges) We get the application together. We send it in. We will sit for 9-12 months and wait for approval. Assuming we get approved, we will be retroactive from the date we get the application submitted. An examiner will call and ask us to address any issues.

(Kimmet) It is advantageous for us to have an attorney on our Board to help us and advise us through this process. We are lucky that we have a Board member who is a lawyer.

(Lewis) Read aloud many of the things listed in our Constitution that are not correct.

(Jenkins) I appreciate two of Sharon's points – There are things in the Constitution that are old and are not working anymore. There is a value in addressing some things that are problematic in the Constitution at this time. There are things that we are not adhering to. What do we want Board members to have in front of them as working tools?

(Weber) We can clean up the Constitution when we have the 501 C3 template.

(J. McNulty) We should all go to the other Community Councils websites to look at their 501c3 Constitutions.

(Kuhl) Are we making the decision to become a 501c3? It sounds like we are not going to be a 501c4 again.

(Kimmet) It could take almost as long to get the 501c4 back. Invest in Neighborhoods has advised all community councils to get their 501c3.

(Kuhl) It sounds like we are going down the path of the 501c3.

(Lilly) I spoke with an attorney who specializes in 501c3. He stated that based on the current bylaws that we have, we had applied many years ago for a 501c3 based on the wording. It was obviously not approved. He also said that being a 501c3 would open us up to many grants and donations for which we are not presently eligible.

(McNulty) Do we have to change the mission statement?

(Weber) We need to get the information from Tom Hodges and then decide if we want to go 501c3.

(Jenkins) We would go through this process in exploratory mode.

(Hodges) As an organization, we need to adopt a new code of regulations.

(Weber) We would be able to see the information.

(Kuhl) It is great that there is grant money available,

(Jenkins) We agree to explore this subject with more information at our next Steering Meeting. We need to do the 990 and we need to make a decision about what direction we are taking.

(Baumann) I have the form.

(Kimmel) I will meet with Valerie and we will get it done.

(J. McNulty) Let's get the 2012 form filed NOW.

(Weber) File 2011 and 2012 so that the IRS can't say that we didn't file.

Westwood Coalition Report

(Jenkins) Thanks to everyone who attended the July 27th meeting. There will be another community meeting on 8/22 from 7-9p.m. at Westwood First Presbyterian Church. There was survey data collected and there will be a report. The purpose of this meeting will be a deep dive into the Form Based Codes. Thanks to Melva for filling in for J. McNulty when he has been unable to attend meetings.

I spent \$348.90 on one of the mailings. The representatives for all of the organizations are going back to their organizations and asking if they will reimburse $\frac{1}{4}$ of the cost of which is \$87.22. This money is to pay for the promotional items for everyone within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of the Business District. There are 801 households. This piece was used to promote the upcoming 8/22 meeting. The July meeting was fully publicized and paid for by the City.

(Weber) I think that I don't understand the purpose of the postcard. If you sent to 801 households, why not send to all of the residents of Westwood?

Motion by Kuhl that we reimburse the \$87.22 to Mary Jenkins for the cost of printing flyers for the Coalition meeting, seconded by Joe Corso.

(Kuhl) If you are sending these postcards to the same people, you are going to touch the same people. In the future I won't vote to cover Coalition costs.

McNulty) I think that everyone should be included. It is either everyone or nobody.

(Kuhl) I'm just as important down off of Harrison.

All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

(Kimmel) Letter from Mason, Ohio from an organization with 100 volunteers who would like to come down here to work on a project in Westwood. I will forward the email.

(Weber) Greg Johnson wanted to come and talk about the Good Neighbor Program. He is supposedly coming to our Steering next month.

(Jenkins) There is value in us pulling questions together. We could consolidate our questions.

(Weber) We could have him come and we could all just look at the Good Neighbor agreement.

(Baumann) Do we have any flags to sell at the Art Show?

**J. McNulty moves that we spend up to \$600.00 on new flags, seconded by V. Baumann so that we might have flags for the art show.
Motion passed, all in favor.**

Meeting adjourned by Joel Kimmel.