

January 8, 2013 Westwood Civic Association Steering Meeting

Present: Joel Kimmet, Mary Kuhl, Mary Jenkins, Karen Strasser, Valerie Baumann, Becky Weber, Melva Gweyn, Jerry Hildebrand, Irene McNulty, Michelle Conda, Jim McNulty

Excused: John Sess

Absent: Jill Minor, Tom Minor

President Kimmet called the meeting to order. Please support the COPPS fundraiser at City Barbecue on January 17th. Additionally, January 26th there will be a Vacant, Foreclosed Property Ordinance community forum from 10a.m. – 1p.m. at 1814 Dreman Ave. Special guests will be Ed Cunningham, PG Sittenfeld and Cecil Thomas. Newcomer Funeral Home dropped off information this evening and Joel asked them to come to our General Meeting with specifics regarding the new signage that they would like to put up.

Motion by Jim McNulty, seconded by Mary Kuhl that we write a letter to City Council asking that WCA be included in the neighborhood discussions and design plans regarding the location of the new D3 annex.

All in favor

The owner of 3344 Glenmore Ave has applied for a liquor permit. Officer Rich Minella contacted Joel Kimmet. Michelle Conda said that if we protest the C2 now, without any problems having had occurred there, we will not look good.

Motion by Jim McNulty, seconded by Mary Kuhl that WCA write a letter to oppose the C2 application for 3344 Glenmore Ave.

Discussion:

(Conda) B. Weber, J. Sess and M. Conda met with Keith Foreman. Mr. Foreman suggested that we track the property between now and March and then oppose it when it comes up for renewal. A C1 is beer and a C2 is wine and wine coolers. We are better to get rid of all of the liquor licenses in March.

(Weber) Our position has always been to oppose these little stores who would like liquor licenses because we don't need any more little stores that sell liquor.

(Kimmet) When we oppose a liquor license permit, there is supposed to be a meeting with the Police Department.

Guest Speaker – Gregory D. Johnson, Director of CMHA

We want to be fair to all clients and residents, but they need to all follow the rules. CMHA will effectively deal with that situation and not allow subsidies if the rules are not being followed.

Mr. Johnson has created the “Talk to Us Concern” Hotline. The number for this hotline is 721-CMHA or www.cintimha.com.

Mr. Johnson has been meeting with many community groups. This is his 102nd community group meeting.

Mr. Johnson is also working on a redesign to help with effective communication. Community liaisons will attend community meetings so that information can be transferred to CMHA. We will no longer have to be guessing about who we should be talking to at CMHA. The 52 neighborhoods have been divided into 4 quadrants. CMHA has been doing lots of things to be an asset to our community.

(Kimmert) When there is a CMHA problem property in our neighborhood, we would like there to be a way that we can have an open dialogue with CMHA. We need somebody to go to so that we can come to a resolution.

(Johnson) A live person now answers the phone when one calls CMHA. The information is then sent to the proper department. A caller can request an update. I am more than happy to be emailed on various matters. Personal information can't be discussed, but problem issues will be dealt with.

(Gweyn) We have not been able to learn where CMHA properties are located, etc. Why can't we get that information?

(Johnson) HUD took it offline, but CMHA will provide the information if it is requested. A listing of every CMHA property by zip code is available if we request. HUD felt perhaps that CMHA residents were being targeted and listing their names online was an invasion of privacy. We need help and proof that CMHA residents are violating rules – this is where the Good Neighbor Agreement will be very useful. Even if we take a person off of the vouchers, it doesn't mean that the person will leave the neighborhood. Hopefully by working together, we can get those individuals off of the program who are violating the rules.

(Weber) Chronic Nuisance properties are not made to acknowledge the CN penalties.

(Johnson) Fifteen years ago there were “clean sweeps” or rather surprise inspections. We are not allowed to do clean sweeps any more. I want to make sure that CMHA is doing everything that they can do to be a part of and supportive to the community. I have studied the Chronic Nuisance laws and want to do whatever needs to be done to make

sure that all CMHA properties are abiding by the rules. I am also more than happy to share the HQS standards that are being developed. (HQS – Housing Quality Standards).

(Kuhl) What is the status of 2329 Harrison Ave. This is a CMHA property.

(Johnson) This property has been rehabbed and will be ready for occupancy in late March or early April.

(Johnson) Over the past 10 years, it has been determined that 90,000 people are at or below poverty level. There is a greater need in Hamilton County than CMHA can even handle.

(J. McNulty) The state of Ohio is supposed to do a yearly housing needs assessment.

(Johnson) I have never seen this study.

(J. McNulty) When CMHA does a study, we know what the results will be. There is supposed to be a study done by the state with all information communicated to CMHA.

(Johnson) The CMHA has given a presentation to the County commissioners which was an overview of what CMHA has been doing to sharpen up their organization.

(Gweyn) Has your policy changed about elderly buildings residents being mixed with drug dealers and mentally challenged, and/or disabled residents within the same building?

(Johnson) These are HUD rules. HUD won't allow apartments to sit vacant just because we want to separate the populations. Second question: Our neighborhoods are being destroyed by the fact that there is no supervision of people with serious problems coming into our neighborhoods.

WESTCure Presentation -

Sister Anne Rene McCona began the presentation.

From Madcap Puppets to Boudinot and Harrison is the soul of Westwood.

Heavy and fast traffic on streets destroys Business Districts.

The intersection of Harrison, Epworth and Urweiller would be very attractive and safe for pedestrians. Caroline Duffy, a transportation engineer, drew up various options. This would be Westwood Square. This avoids tearing businesses down. Heartbeat Motors would need to come down. The City has money to do this for us as part of infrastructure improvement. If we can get the approval of people who love the neighborhood, we can get this done within a year or so. Form based codes makes the neighborhood a place that is nice for everyone.

(Jenkins) Where are you in this process?

(McCona) The very beginning.

(Gweyn) We are creating a very wide space here, but we've had a problem with unlicensed street vendors.

(McCona) Vendors won't be allowed to be there. This expands green space in Westwood. Community activities would happen at Westwood Square. It is intended to be a community asset and a place where the community has control. Oakley, Hyde Park, etc. all have a town square. We don't know what width of sidewalks that we will want to promote. We want to activate the pedestrian aspects of Westwood in a very positive way.

Greg Kissel - Explanation of Form Based Codes

(Kissel) We need to work with Martha Kelly who is the person in charge of traffic engineering for the City. The people may want to see the speed limits in Westwood significantly reduced and slowed down. Form based codes are intended to be a voluntary method for the community to decide how everything will look. There are incentives for developers who want to comply with the FBC. The purpose is so that we don't get buildings that look like they don't belong. It is a set of rules for future people coming it which gives everyone a level playing field. All of the rules are in writing and make it easier for the developer. The community has direct involvement in the making of the Business District.

(Jenkins) What is your sense of FBC being enforceable?
What role does the City or Community council have in making sure that FBC are followed?

(Kissel) More areas can be added to the Harrison Business District. For example, one would not be able to get a building permit without going through the FBC process. A developer can move through the development process more quickly with FBC in place. Longer term, as businesses are attracted to the area, there will be an economic incentive to come there. This will not force a business out, but it does make those properties more attractive as other businesses come into the area. Those businesses might be renovated or remodeled, etc. The role of FBC is not to be the economic driver.

(Weber) We don't need any more condos or apartments.

(Kissel) Market forces will drive what comes in. Around the country, we are seeing the second floors becoming living spaces. There are generations looking for places to live where they work and play.

Market forces drive in opportunities.

(Weber) Four Towers was awesome fifty years ago too. What about in fifty years? What about the repercussions of these decisions that we are making now?

(Kissel) The best way to get control of your neighborhood is to make it so economically viable, that the people will come. By identifying and greening Westwood, many things could happen. We need lots of people to support a business district. Right now

Westwood does not have enough people to support a Business District. We need to give them an amenity to discover. This plan gives a nice jump start to this process.

(Kuhl) Oakley, Clifton and Over the Rhine are thriving and haven't had FBC.

(Kissel) Those communities have had FBC-like influences. It just was never called FBC. Businesses have left and if we are going to bring them back, we need a large scale plan. By putting in FBC and by the community engaging itself, we will attract businesses to the Business District. FBC give us a template which is customizable. We are in phase 1. The next phase will be customizing the FBC template to Westwood.

(Kimmel) At our last meeting we voted to form a committee to move forward working with WestCURC on this project. Westwood is the first neighborhood approached to utilize fund 52 money.

(Weber) What is the City trying to do with the fund 52 money?

(Kimmel) Together, both of our groups can be very aggressive. If the City says something that we don't like, we can control what is happening.

(Gweyn) how do we make sure that we have nice businesses and appropriate businesses moving into the Westwood Business District?

(Kuhl) HUD money may be involved in the Cincinnati Fund 52. As we move forward, we are all in agreement that we don't have HUD money involved.

(McNulty) These buildings are gorgeous, but we need to make sure that we stay focused and don't compromise what we believe is the best for Westwood.

2280 Harrison Ave.

This address is close to Orland

Last weekend, J. McNulty, J. Sess and J. Kimmel walked the property. The City keeps boarding it up. The COPPS have made several reports. We have an opportunity to work with the Port Authority to obtain that property to use if we identify a use. We can get into land banking and own the property for \$100.00 with zero property taxes. We would need to develop it into some kind of community space.

Motion by Irene McNulty, seconded by Mary Jenkins that we take ownership of 2280 Harrison Ave. for \$100.00 via the Port Authority.

All in favor

Jerry Hildebrand suggest that we call this space the Garden District.

Motion to approve December General meeting minutes by Michelle Conda, seconded by Jerry Hildebrand.

All in favor.

(Weber) Fifty yards were recognized with the Holiday yard of the month signs.

(Kimmet) The attorney for Green Acres Foundation wants to file a motion that requires all of the interveners to sign a document that says we are going to dismiss this lawsuit. Green Acres can file a dismissal on their own.

Motion by Becky Weber that we tell Tim Mara not to sign a letter removing WCA from the case, seconded by Becky Weber.

All in favor.

Motion to adjourn by Michelle Conda, seconded by Jerry Hildebrand.

All in favor.