

Westwood Civic Association

Steering Meeting

March 12, 2013

Present: M. Kuhl, S. Lewis, I. McNulty, M. Gweyn, J. Hildebrand, V. Baumann, J. Kimmet, M. Jenkins, J. McNulty, B. Weber, M. Conda, T. Bonhaus, Mrs. Bonhaus, D. Bond, S. Lewis
Absent: T. Minor, J. Minor
Excused: K. Strasser, J. Sess

Grace Lutheran Church Zoning Variance Request

Bruce Knaabe and Terry McCabe spoke on behalf of Grace Lutheran Church, regarding its recent request for a zoning variance from SF-6 to Office Limited. M. Jenkins reported that the Planning department intends to recommend in favor of the variance to the Planning Commission. They commented that the church wasn't aware of the process involving community councils' input on zoning variances. M. Jenkins commented that it would be useful if the request process included a reference to the community councils so that requestors could become aware. Mr. Knaabe noted that the classroom building was built early to mid-1980s, but the school closed some years ago. Hamilton County MRDD was using it partially for some time, bringing in some income for the church. The house at the corner of Boudinot and Feltz was made habitable some years ago, with a congregation member living there briefly. However, the house needs rewiring, HVAC, and a roof, but the church doesn't have the estimated \$30,000 to restore it. The church does have a need for additional parking, though, and plans to raze the house, retain the property, and eventually add parking. WCA board members voiced concern about any potential change away from single family use, hoping to retain single family homes in Westwood. The guests from Grace Lutheran emphasized the need for parking and for more flexible use. They plan no exterior change to school building, no retail, and no housing; they just want office space and parking, with 12-15 parking spaces to be realized. J. McNulty asked if the church enjoys a property tax exemption. Mr. Knaabe responded that it does, as long as they continue to use the property for ministry-related functions. WCA members expressed empathy for the church's needs but concerns about unintended consequences and potential future uses of a rezoned property. No concerns were raised about the church's plans for the property. Mr. McCabe commented that it is his hope that WCA perceived Grace Lutheran Church as a good neighbor, since the church is as interested in Westwood being as vibrant a community as WCA does. J. McNulty responded that the board wants to work with the church while protecting the future of the neighborhood.

MOTION by J. McNulty to ask the city to consider a modification, like a variance or planned development, working with WCA and Grace Lutheran Church to accomplish the church's goals without changing the zoning.

SECONDED by M. Jenkins.

APPROVED unanimously.

Westwood Home Tour Sponsorship

V. Baumann suggested that WCA share in ad space in the Westwood Historical Society's Home Tour brochure with Westwood Citizens on Patrol.

MOTION by V. Baumann for WCA to expend up to \$100 for a quarter page ad in the WHS Home Tour brochure.

SECONDED by J. Hildebrand.

APPROVED unanimously.

WCA Elections: Report by the Nominating Committees

M. Jenkins and J. McNulty spoke on behalf of the two nominating committees, noting that, in addition to the four current board members who have expressed interest in running for reelection, two additional candidates have been nominated, thus making a slate of six qualified candidates now put forward for the membership's consideration. They are Valerie Baumann, Thomas Hodges, Melva Gweyn, John Sess, Irene McNulty, and Leslie Rich. Since there are six candidates for five positions, election supervisor M. Jenkins will proceed with ballots to be sent by mail. The membership list will be members in good standing as of today. S. Lewis suggested that candidate biographies be sent with the ballot in addition to posting on the website. We will send the announcement and reservation information for the April 16 dinner along with the ballot.

MOTION by M. Conda to send the ballots with announced candidates' bios, as well as the dinner information, to the current membership.

SECONDED by M. Gweyn.

APPROVED unanimously.

Attendance

S. Lewis expressed concern about irregular attendance by several board members. M. Jenkins said that minutes reflect that the several absent board members have not missed three consecutive general meetings. M. Kuhl asks the President to talk with several board members about their commitment.

New Resident

A new attendee, Dara Bond, introduced herself as a relatively recent newcomer to Westwood. She noted concerns about crime and other problems in Westwood and expressed in issues and pushing back against crime. Several board members gave her information about various initiatives and membership.

NSP 2013 Proposal

J. Kimmet announced his recommendations for allocation of NSP funds, to be voted on by the membership at the March general meeting. His proposal for the \$5,000 called for \$3,000 (the maximum allowed) for the WCA newsletter, \$1,000 for the community gardens, and \$1,000 for neighborhood improvement. After discussion, it was agreed to keep \$2,000 for improvements, the specific purposes to be decided later. M. Conda asked if funds could be designated for legal counsel in preparation of 50(c)(3) status. It was determined that this would not be possible but J. Kimmet believes Invest in Neighborhoods will assist community councils somehow tax status issues.

Westwood Building Demolition Hearings Report

J. Kimmet handed out lists of properties on Bracken Woods, Harrison, and Dautel, announcing that all ten buildings will be demolished. J. McNulty commented that 3037 Bracken Woods appears to under repair despite its listing on WCA's top 20 buildings and 3065 Bracken Woods also seems to be under repair; despite a VBML being required.

Bracken Woods TIF Project Update

J. Kimmet announced that 3111 and 3143 Bracken Woods have been acquired by WestCURC and will be razed. J. McNulty asked what is left in the Westwood TIF fund. J. Kimmet clarified that the Demolition Fund pays for some of this demolition rather than TIF.

MOTION by J. McNulty to ask Community Development for an exact accounting of the TIF account.

SECONDED by I. McNulty.

Approved unanimously.

Westwood Coalition

J. Kimmet announced that he has been approached by other coalition members about co-sponsoring a charrette at Town Hall in a collaborative approach with community participation. B. Weber said that she would prefer that WCA to host it and invite others to participate. T. Bonhaus asked for an update. M. Gweyn reported that she went to the Planning Commission meeting last week at which several Westwood Works and WestCURC members spoke in favor of form-based codes. In response to a question about what groups make up the coalition, M. Jenkins commented that it is to include residents, business owners, and several community organizations. M. Jenkins spoke in favor of the partnership and full representation so that Westwood is well-represented. J. Kimmet remarked that the process is somewhat halted, encouraging WCA involvement. M. Kuhl commented that other coalition members are pushing ahead, but we need broad representation from the business district.

MOTION by M. Jenkins to contact other Westwood community organizations, standing that WCA embraces the notion of a community-wide meeting but insists first on an organizing meeting of the leadership of several community organizations, including WCA, WestCURC, to establish the process and the approach going forward.

SECONDED by M. Kuhl.

APPROVED 10-1.

Report on CHMA on the Green Township Housing Issue

M. Kuhl reported on recent meetings and actions related to the CMHA and Green Township plan for subsidized housing at the edge of Cheviot and Westwood. There will be an organizational, strategy meeting at the Cheviot Fieldhouse on March 17. S. Lewis reported that the BOCC spoke about the land that the county owns. All three commissioners asked counsel for proposals for legal actions to overturn the decision, citing it as a three community issue.

MOTION by B. Weber to state the WCA position as opposed to the Green Township/CMHA proposal for a housing development on Westwood Northern Boulevard between Boudinot and North Bend.

SECONDED by J. McNulty.

APPROVED unanimously.

KCB Wish List

M. Jenkins handed out a draft wish list of WCA initiatives that would make Westwood more safe, clean and beautiful, in response to a request from Keep Cincinnati Beautiful for efforts that the city and communities might partner on. She based it on WCA priorities and discussions in the past two years and invited input. Several people named other ideas. M. Jenkins will submit a revised draft list and report back to the board with more context for this request for ideas.

President's Intentions

J. Kimmet announced that he will run for re-election as president for the coming year, noting that he wants to continue his leadership initiatives and wanted to share his intentions with the board.

Committee Reports

M. Jenkins gave a brief report on the Westwood Community Gardens, noting that funding is needed, there are a few plots available for rental, and the next major project is finishing the fence. She also noted that WCA needs to make a decision soon about participation in WestFest. Board members reported mixed feelings. It was assigned to the Membership Committee for a recommendation. On behalf of K. Strasser, M. Jenkins reported that the Business District Committee met recently with John Lewandowski, artistic director of Madcap Puppets, who outlined Madcap's history and plans for its new

site and future. J. Kimmet announced that he asked Mr. Lewandowski to present at the April general meeting.

Joint Candidates Night with Price Hill

There will be a report at the next meeting.

Other Business

M. Gweyn suggested that we invite John to address the WCA about zoning, given his expertise, at an upcoming meeting. She will contact him.

S. Lewis inquired whether WCA will be doing the Westwood student awards this year. That is the intent and the issue will be raised with the Schools Committee.

There was brief discussion of the matter of the city manager's proposal regarding parking meters and its potential impact on Westwood.

MOTION by B. Weber to state the WCA position as opposed to the long-term lease and management of the city's parking meters.

SECONDED by V. Baumann.

APPROVED unanimously.

Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn by J. Hildebrand.

SECONDED by M. Conda.

APPROVED unanimously.