

Westwood Civic Association May 14 Steering Committee Meeting
Submitted by Karen Strasser, Recording Secretary

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

Absent: Jerry Hildebrand

President Joel Kimmet called the meeting to order.

Joel Kimmet recently attended the newly formed Werkcastle/Eugenie Block Watch meeting. This Block Watch meeting was well organized and all in attendance were very enthusiastic. Several people from the Block Watch were in attendance at this Steering Meeting.

Guests - Ameriservice Group, LLC

Ms. Beth Anne Herrin, Director of Public Relations and Mr. Less Kovel represented the Ameriservice Group. The Ameriservice Group is planning to invest in Westwood, and were inquiring which multifamily housing units should stay in Westwood and which multifamily units we would like to see torn down.

Ameriservice is a group of investors with a history of buying short sell properties, then renovating and selling or renovating and renting. They traditionally have purchased multifamily housing. They are looking at neighborhoods that are aligned with Cincinnati's goals. Westwood is considered a "Focus 52" neighborhood, identified as "at risk."

(I. McNulty) We are trying to get rid of multifamily housing. If a multifamily property is going downhill, we don't want it to be rehabbed.

(J. McNulty) We are only interested in rehabbing multifamily housing with historical relevance.

(Herrin) This is not HUDD money, but rather low interest loans. For the investors to accomplish a return on their investment, they don't want to keep repairing properties. They want sustainable housing for sustainable residences. One of the properties that we looked at is 2280 Harrison.

(M. Kuhl) We are against buying bad properties and bringing them up to code. Years ago, beautiful mansions were torn down for nice and beautiful sustainable multifamily housing to be built. Everyone was for this idea. Forty years later we have low income housing. This will be a hard sell. Is this going to be market rate?

(Herrin) It's market rate. The City has identified that we have a shortage of apartments. There are compliance and ordinance issues every step of the way.

(J. McNulty) In Westwood, we have 60% multifamily housing and 40% single family housing. Our goal is to reverse that trend with the end result being 40% multifamily housing and 60% single family homes. We are not interested in rehabbing anything. There are a few places where we would consider rehabbing to make a property upscale. We believe we can support some upscale multi-family housing. Are you interested?

(Herrin) Yes, my company is interested in rehabbing to create some upscale housing.

(Kimmet) We have a Property committee that meets monthly. They can begin looking at this in depth. Jim McNulty is the Chairperson of this committee. Would you be interested in doing some single family properties in Westwood? You may attend a committee meeting and see if some of the properties that we show you could work.

(J. McNulty) Who are you talking to in the City? Was it the Planning department?

(Herrin) The City referred me to you before they will talk to me. Our strategy is to align with your Westwood Strategic Plan.

Action: Ameriservice will work with Jim McNulty, who will show them good multi-family building with historical significance, as well as some single family stock that might be a good investment.

Glenmore Avenue/Midway School Traffic Issues

Guests regarding this issue included Debi Trauth of 3219 Glenmore, John Childreth and Tim Jameson of Traffic and Engineering, Lieutenant John Cordova, CPD and several neighbors.

(B. Weber) A child was hit on Glenmore. Problems on Glenmore include speeding, lights blinking yellow at midnight causing people to speed even more and no dedicated lane space for turning. Midway School has also brought up the problems with parking on Glenmore.

(D. Trauth – resident) The block is very long, I've seen several schools that have crosswalks in front of their schools. A crosswalk in front of the school would solve this problem.

(J. Childress) We will talk to the Principal Lutz of Midway school about this. We will also look at the bus stop there and the dedicated turn lane option going North bound. We may need to get rid of a little parking to get this done.

(S. Lewis – resident) At the corner of Glenmore and Werk, we need four left turn signals all of the time and the timing of the lights needs to be studied. The backups in that intersection are terrible before and after school.

(Lt. John Cordova) We defer the decisions regarding traffic to Transportation and Engineering. We are going to monitor Glenmore Avenue and put the speed wagon on the street as well.

(B. Weber) Many of the parents don't abide by the rules when picking up their children from the school. People are parking all over and having their own kids run across the street. The time frame from 2:15 to 2:25 is a huge problem. The principal has sent letters to try to get the parents to comply.

(D. Trauth) How many lanes is Glenmore Ave? Two lanes? Drivers are treating Glenmore as four lanes.

(J. McNulty) Several Board members walked this area during the hours in question. We observed everything that is being discussed here tonight. Can we look at the entire stretch of road from Montana to Werk, get a group together and walk it and do a real study?

(T. Jameson) Most of what we do is set by the parameters of Ohio Revised code. We have done a speed study. We will talk to the school as well.

(D. Trauth) In front of 3215 Glenmore, the street is too narrow by 9" for three cars to pass.

(Kimmert) We will discuss this in committee. Becky Weber will take the lead on this. We may need a petition to take parking away on Glenmore if that is what we want to do.

Action Plan: Becky Weber will take lead on this. A walk will be scheduled with interested neighbors, board members, and traffic engineers.

Eugenie / Werkcastle Block Watch

Tom Hodges

Recently, there was a homicide on Eugenie, unrelated to anyone living on that street. They have also had documented drug deals. They would like WCA's help in making Eugenie a dead end street. They have talked to 95% of the people on the streets involved. Hodges also spoke with Michael Moore from Transportation and Engineering. This Block Watch is looking for the support of WCA.

(J. McNulty) When the application is processed we we can look at who this might affect.

(Hodges) If they have the number of supporters that the City would require, they would be asking for our support.

(Resident) There is also an illegally run daycare on the street.

(Jenkins) I will point you in the correct direction to help you with that situation.

(Kuhl) This has been talked about for many years.

Action: Jenkins will help with illegal daycare. We will await their petition for closing the streets and then review the situation.

Westwood Business District Discussion –

(J. McNulty) I want to put some guidelines together for the coalition.

(M. Kuhl) \$10,000 was appropriated for a feasibility study for the Westwood Square Project.

(M. Jenkins) I agree with some of the things that you wrote as suggested coalition guidelines. I believe that it is inaccurate to say the Coalition is an outreach of WCA. That is factually not true.

(J. Kimmet) I have looked and studied other organizations that have Coalitions. If something comes up at a Coalition meeting, all boards represented should be able to take the issue back to their Boards prior to the vote. If we insist that the Coalition operate this way, it might solve some of the problems.

(I. McNulty) (About the artist rendition of the proposed Westwood Square) By looking at the picture, it seems we are targeting several buildings.

(L. Rich) It is my understanding that the drawings from Building and Planning are just examples. The Business District would reflect the wishes and needs of the community.

(B. Weber) (Referring to the opposition to the 5/28 open forum sponsored by WCA about the business district) The planning meeting for the public meeting set for 5/28 was held last week and John Lewandowski was present. Everything we do is open to the public.

(L. Rich) (referring to the city's wish that they only send out representatives to Coalition-sponsored events) It was the intent of the City to work with the Coalition on issues regarding Westwood Square.

(M. Jenkins) The Coalition wants to begin planning a large public meeting. I'm worried that at this point we are seen as being against the Westwood Square

project. I'd like to keep plowing forward and have an open and transparent process going forward.

(M. Kuhl) The Westwood Strategic Plan clearly spells out, "This plan will be the guiding document for Westwood's future." This document was approved by nine members of City Council. We planned a public meeting for 5/28. We had flyers printed and we are in the process of distributing them now. We have now heard that the Coalition will not participate in the meeting on 5/28. Nobody is excluded from the meeting on 5/28. We have also met with the Coalition moderator.

Comment [Michelle 1]: I would take out this sentence, as it won't make sense in the future

(J. Minor) Has the Coalition been invited to the 5/28 meeting?

(M. Jenkins) A member of the coalition was invited to join in the planning of the 5/28 meeting. There has not been a formal invite to all organizations.

(M. Kuhl) We need to officially invite all members of the Coalition and their organizations to attend the 5/28 public meeting.

(M. Conda) Are we going to try to get an arbitrator to come in and work with all of us?

(M. Jenkins) Many of us were at the four Board meeting last Friday. Cameron Ross did most of the talking at that meeting. His department is very thin. I believe that this is really an opportunity for us and I want us to keep grabbing hold of it and pushing what we feel strongly about. We as a Coalition have talked long and hard that the plan going forward represent the residents.

Comment [Michelle 2]: Huh? Do you mean the Coalition Board meeting?

(M. Kuhl) We should be trying to replicate the successful process that we used to make the changes to Montana Avenue.

(M. Jenkins) We have the gift in this moment in time to be able to do something really wonderful with the Business District. There is no way that I am going to vote to bring all of the bulleted items to the Coalition. If we can focus on doing this right, we can do the right thing for Westwood.

It is fairly likely that I will become the facilitator of the Coalition.

(T. Bonhaus) If we lose this opportunity everyone loses.

(M. Kuhl) We are trying to right the ship so that we can move forward. Working through the kinks is not easy.

(McNulty) Is the Coalition going to be respectful to individual property rights of the people who own property in Westwood?

(Jenkins) The business owners present on the Coalition have been treated very respectfully. The Coalition needs to do lots of outreach to the Business Community and this has not been done yet.

(J. Minor) T. Bonhaus' business was gone in the conceptual drawings and yet he is here tonight and he wants to see this moving forward.

(M. Conda) Are we handing out the flyers for 5/28?

(M. Kuhl) I'm for doing the right thing moving forward. I would like to invite the Coalition members to be here for the 5/28 meeting.

(Gweyn) I went to the Charette meetings for a long time. They emphasized the building of high density buildings. I don't think that we want high density buildings in our Business District.

Action: Hand out flyers. Invite Coalition members to 5/28 meeting. Follow through with the city coming to the meeting. Allow money left over from printing flyers to be used for signs to advertise the meeting.

Yard Sale

Motion by M. Kuhl that we pay up to \$50.00 to buy two spots at the Westwood Yard Sale on 7/20, seconded by M. Jenkins.

Discussion: We generally make \$300.00 and more than cover our costs. All in favor

Westfest

Mary Kuhl - The Westfest organizers don't want us to sell any alcohol.

Another organization is doing smoothies and coffee.

Now we are looking at the idea of selling food. Walking tacos are a suggestion.

Food booths rental is normally \$550.00. Westfest will cut us a deal for \$450.00 plus a \$24.00 health inspection paid to Hamilton County.

After a discussion about the pros and cons of participating in Westfest.

Motion by J. Hildebrand that we do not participate in Westfest this year, seconded by M. Conda

All in favor

Action: we will not participate in Westfest this year, but will look for another event to make the money we are losing with this event.

Community Gardens

We received a \$500.00 donation by Sandra Matlow, a gardner who lives on Talbot Avenue, for the purpose of building a tool shed.

Action: Mary Jenkins will send a thank you on behalf of Westwood Civic Association. When we see Ms. Matlow at the Gardens, we will extend our personal thanks.

General Announcements

Ron Rothass renewed his advertisement in the WCA newsletter for \$300.00. We also have a \$300.00 sponsorship for the tables at the Art Show by Gary's Westsider and Becky Weber.

Next week will be the Wayne Brinkman Student Civic Leadership Award at our General Meeting.

Motion to adjourn by M. Conda, seconded by M. Kuhl.
Meeting adjourned