

West wood Civic Association Steering Committee October 8, 2013
submitted by Karen Strasser, Recording Secretary

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

Mary Jenkins – Community Gardens

Hilltop Concrete poured the floor for the storage shed today.
This coming weekend a garden bed cleanup will be held.
All are welcome to come and help

(Conda) When are the arbor gates going up?

(Jenkins) The arbor gates will be going in presumably, by the end of this year, once the right person is identified to take the lead on that project.

(Jenkins) The Harvest Party was held last weekend.

Website – Mary Jenkins

We have been having trouble with our website.
Brian Lee serves as our Webmaster.
The Outreach Committee talked about this last week.
Everyone involved is advocating migrating to another website provider.

Motion to request funding of up to \$500.00 for expenses related to migrating the website to move to another website service provider, seconded by Leslie Rich.

(Gweyn) Is the \$500.00 an annual amount or a one time charge?

(Jenkins) There are likely to be more expenses associated with migrating the account to another provider. Prices range all over the board.

(Conda) How much is the cost to migrate over and then annually? I have a friend who just set up a website on Go Daddy and he was able to do the design work himself.

(Jenkins) I wanted to bring it up tonight for action. I didn't want to wait until next month's steering. I'd like permission to move this forward so that we lose as little time as possible.

(Kuhl) Who is going to make the final decision?

(Weber) Whatever we come up with, we will need to bring this to approval for the Board.

(Jenkins) The outreach committee held their first meeting and had a short discussion regarding the problems with the website.

(Kuhl) I want to make sure that everyone who should and wants to be involved in this decision is involved.

(Kimmet) This is fine starting in committee, but it should be brought back to the entire board with some examples, etc.

(Weber) I would suggest that something be done in the meantime or we might lose our website altogether.

(Rich) I understood that we were not going to redesign the website.

(Jenkins) There is a chance that there might be a different design because this will be new provider.

(Weber) We are trying to find a way that many of us can do our own updates.

(Corso) I trust the committee.

Motion passed.

WCA Insurance – Joel Kimmet

Kimmet) Our officer's insurance expires this week. The general liability already came in the mail. The director's and officer's policy is \$832.00. The other is a general liability costing \$542.00 that covers the Art Show, etc.

Motion by Tom Hodges that we pay the insurance policies, seconded by Michelle Conda.

(Kuhl) How does this relate or effect us with regard to the 501 C4 status. We are in limbo. How does this effect our insurance?

(Baumann) I discussed this problem with our insurance agent and this is not a problem.

(Hodges) We are still a registered entity with the State of Ohio. We are just not a non profit.

Motion passed.

501c4 Status

(Kimmet) We need to form a committee to get our tax status reinstated.

(Kuhl) My recollection is that Tom Hodges was going to be working on this. What is the status on this?

(Hodges) We had a long conversation and we had not agreed to pursue this.

(Jenkins) What we did agree on is that we would move forward, starting with the status of the organization, the nature of our organization, etc. which would drive the status decision. We should assign this to the Finance Committee and come back at each of the upcoming Steering meetings to discuss this further.

(Kuhl) We were a 501c4, did we want to go back, etc. I remember that conversation or did we want to do a 501c3? Do we have to go back and rehash what we want to be or do we need to get some paperwork to the government?

(Kimmet) The City would like all 52 Community Councils to go 501c3. Down the road I would expect that all Community Councils might need to be of the 501c3 status. Invest in Neighborhoods is no longer funding us, The City has taken this over. It will cost money to reinstate ourselves.

(Baumann) I filed the proper paperwork for 2012, but the IRS did say that they don't recognize us.

Motion by Mary Jenkins that the Finance Committee work on the 501c4 reinstate filing and recommend a process for moving us forward on 501c3 status and report back to us in November, seconded by Jill Minor.

Discussion followed:

(Kuhl) We need to fix the 501c4 problem right now.

(Conda) Can we amend the motion to state that the Finance Committee look at the 501c4 versus 501c3 status?

(Weber) I would go back to the C4 to get our status back.

(McNulty) I think that this could fall back on our Treasurer because she writes the checks and files the returns.

(Kimmet) It is a lot of work to get reinstated. This huge packet gets filled out.

(Gweyn) Don't we already have a record of our original filing?

(Kimmet) In the past, if one has a tax exempt status, a form 990 has to be filed. We were filing every 3 years consistently. Then the filing switched to every year and we were never notified. This is why we were revoked.

(McNulty) We need to fix this right now.

Jenkins revised her motion to direct the Finance Committee to complete the paperwork necessary to reinstate the 501c4 status.

(Conda) This makes sense to me.

All in favor, motion passed.

(Kimmet) the Finance Committee may need some help on this project. I may send out a request for more volunteers.

Westwood Coalition Report – Mary Jenkins

Resolution presented by Mary Jenkins.

Resolution to endorse the recommendations of the Westwood Coalition for the Revitalization of the Business District.

Resolved, that the Westwood Civic Association board endorses the recommendations of the Westwood Coalition, as made on September 24, 2013.

Resolved, further, that this endorsement be communicated to the Westwood Coalition.

Specifically, the recommendations endorsed are as follows:

1. The Westwood Coalition recommends the adoption of the form-based code for the historic business district and the adjacent quarter mile walkshed.

a. Further, the Westwood Coalition recommends that it work with the City's Planning Department to further refine the application of the form based code to fit Westwood's particular character and interests, as designed by the Planning Department, and to share its emerging refinement with the community.

2. The Westwood Coalition recommends that it work with the community to develop more specific proposals for the revitalization of the historic business district, apart form, but in harmony with the form-based code.

3. The Westwood Coalition recommends that it lead a community dialogue focused on economic factors and retail development as related to the historic business district.

Motion by Mary Jenkins that this resolution be adopted, seconded by Tom Hodges.

(Conda) I would like to see every Board member have an opportunity to speak to this.

(Jenkins) We do follow Roberts Rules and every Board member has a chance to speak.

(Hodges) I have heard about form-based codes (FBC) for years. Our Business District needs something to revitalize it. FBC will be one tool of many that will revitalize the Business District. We are not starting from nothing. We have great assets already in place. I think that FBC will be great for that.

(Baumann) I attended the most recent meeting at the Westwood First Presbyterian Church and spoke with Cameron Ross. Ross stated that he could not guarantee that there would not be more apartment buildings built.

(Hodges) In response to the multi-family building issue, the point of FBC was never that it would promote or not promote multi family housing. Maybe in the more dense parts, it could make sense, but on the other hand, the point of FBC is not to deal with multi-family housing.

(Weber) I understood that the purpose of the Coalition was to talk about the Westwood Square, not FBC. We were told that the reason for the coalition was to discuss the possibility of Westwood Square, not FBC. I don't understand why we are talking about FBC when the whole Coalition was supposed to be talking about a Square.

(Jenkins) What would happen next would be a feasibility study by the City to determine what would be viable in that area. There will be ongoing community dialogue around more specific issues regarding the Business District.

(Conda) Our zoning already allows for adding apartments. We are zoned for apartments. I don't believe the Square is a part of the FBC. I know that my street was talking about building a double wide house. FBC would prevent this. However, it seems like FBC is outside in – showing only the facades, and it doesn't matter what is inside.

(Jenkins) The Coalition, as formed, as an approved representation from this body, was intended expressly for the purpose of discussion regarding the revitalization of the Historic Business District and work associated with that. To focus specifically on that, the coalition has proposed what the resolution states. I'm saying that there is no talk or intent for the Coalition to be in existence long term. We elected WCA representatives to the Coalition to be able to come back to WCA meetings for the Board to vote.

(Kimmet) Our two representatives represent us on the Coalition, come back, tell us what is going on and we can decide, vote talk and then send our reps back. All four organizations are equally represented.

(Kuhl) None of the issues that we know are important to Westwood are being addressed by the Coalition. In 1979 many apartments were quality apartments and now many of us want them torn down. Maybe the zoning does allow for apartments.

(Gweyn) There again, it is also who is overseeing as far as leadership in our City, as to what this is going to be. Bellevue, Kentucky has great leadership. When one puts out lots of money, what gets put up is not as great as the promises that are made. I worry about this because I was involved in it before. The insistence that this be high density is one rule. How anybody could go up and down the street and see some of these apartment buildings that we have and still want more apartments buildings, I don't understand. When bad things start to go on in the inside of a building, the tenants come outside.

(Weber) It is important that we talk about a Square because this is why we put people on the Coalition. When we put the two people on the Coalition, we were voting about a Square.

(J. McNulty) Last Monday night, shots were fired in the walkshed. I don't know how FBC is going to draw nicer people to the walkshed. Our street is in the walkshed and there is an awful lot of crime going on there. I don't want it to look like a cookie cutter Business District.

(guest) FBC is a tool that makes it more flexible for each community to decide how they want their neighborhood to look. We have an opportunity to make this look the way we want.

(guest) My understanding is that FBC will highlight the walkability of an area. The more people that are walking in an area, the less bad things will happen in that area.)

(Kuhl) I have heard that we need to do something. It is not like our Business District is going to go away if we don't do something tonight. Parking, public safety, traffic and speed, etc. has nothing to do with FBC.

(Kimmet) I attended almost all of the meetings. I missed the charettes. If we revitalize the Business District, it is probably not very economically feasible to add apartments above. We have too many apartments in Westwood and I don't really think that developers are going to want to place apartments on the upper floors.

(Lewis) I did not attend the charettes. I started attending these meeting after the chartettes. I appreciate the Coalition putting on the community meetings. Cameron Ross made it sound great, but when we gave our opinions against the FBC, he was mad at us. How can WCA vote tonight? How many are on the Coalition?

(Jenkins) I agree that we do need to understand whether the Square is a desirable element. We need to understand if it is even viable. The Coalition report is based on one moment in time. The Coalition functions with consensus. Everyone in the room gave consent to this document.

(Rich) My understanding is that it creates a mutually beneficial plan for the community and the developers. It makes it easier for developers, architects and engineers. They know exactly how the building needs to conform. The right types of businesses can come in more quickly. I agree that there is way more that needs to be figured out. We have good people in place to continue to be part of the discussion in Mary Jenkins, Jim McNulty and Melva Gweyn.

(Kuhl) We all believe that anyone who wants to build apartments in Westwood is crazy. I don't believe there is much diversity of thought on the Coalition. Dream big, fill the gaps, etc. We have already been told that we can't determine what goes in, just how it looks.

(J. McNulty) One man's ceiling is another man's floor. Zoning is a trade off. I'm sure that we are talking about Form Based Codes. We are far from being able to vote. I'm questioning each of the line items in the proposed Resolution and feel that we need to get serious regarding making a zoning change in our neighborhood. I didn't like the idea of the Coalition handling this. This is a zoning change and we need to treat it accordingly.

(Conda) Does this mean that we are turning this all over to the Coalition? They will never come to us again?

(Jenkins) We are supposed to be following Roberts Rules. At some point, if we are following Robert Rules, we need to bring the motion to a vote.

(Kuhl) People want to be for something. Wherever we come from in our community, we want to be for our community. Just because something feels good right now, doesn't mean we are going to do it. Everyone at the Coalition is for something. It is not about being against Westwood.

(guest) I disagree. FBC will not stop crime. People walking on the streets stop crime. FBC is a tool. It is not going to stop the cell phone store from going in at the corner. We can tell everyone else how we want our neighborhood to look with this tool. FBC gives us lots of flexibility.

(Lewis) I continuously bring up the Westwood 2010 Strategic Plan. (WSP) We worked very hard on this. Was the WSP a waste of years of our time? WestCURC worked on this too. Each board member needs to take the time to review this Strategic Plan. This Board is supposed to be following the Strategic Plan. The Westwood Strategic Plan does not align with Form Based Codes. This Resolution will drive us backwards according to what the Westwood Strategic Plan has to say.

(Gweyn) This is setting up a situation where developers can come in and build to certain specifications. We are turning control over. We have been going crazy in here for years regarding zoning. I hope that we can overcome the destruction that has been wrought upon us.

(J. McNulty) Do they even know what is wrong with the zoning that we have now? Is everyone aware that our zoning did change about ten years ago? We have the zoning right now that is what everyone said that they wanted. I have been to many of these presentations by the City and the City has a standard policy to keep conversation to a minimum. The conversation is kept from getting around the entire room. We need to talk about zoning in Westwood.

(Weber) How did it come around to the Coalition being about Form Based Codes when it was supposed to be about the Square? The whole reason that the Coalition was setup was to discuss the Square.

(Jenkins) There is a public website called revitalize Westwood.

Tom Hodges called the question:

(Conda) If we vote against the resolution, can it be revamped?

(Jenkins) The motion for the resolution can pass or fail.

(Guest) The recommendations of the Coalition, came from meetings of the neighborhood as well.

For the Resolution: J. Minor, T. Minor, Rich, Hodges, Jenkins, Kimmet, Strasser, Corso

Against the Resolution: Kuhl, Weber, Baumann, I. McNulty, J. McNulty, Conda, Gweyn

Resolution passed

T shirts–

(Jenkins) Are we wanting to order more I Love Westwood shirts. There is value in getting a few quotes. What do we do with the design? Do we repeat the

design? My interest is in making sure that we have shirts to sell the next time that we have the opportunity to sell.

(Lewis) There was a motion passed two years ago that the next time we printed the Westwood shirts, we would use the graphic from the tshirt. This motion was voted on.

(Rich) I'm proposing that we open this up to the larger community.

(Weber) We did that and the flag was designed.

(Jenkins) Can we ask Promotions to work on this and come back to us next month with more information?

Deck the Halls – Leslie Rich

December 1, there will be a holiday gathering on the grounds of Town Hall. From 4-6 several choirs will perform. At the end of their performance, there will be a lighting of a Xmas tree. I'd like to know if WCA would be willing to participate in the event in some way.

(Jenkins) We discussed this in Outreach committee. We agreed that this sounds like a positive community building event. We will be present at the event, lend a helping hand and step in if there are any problem.

(Rich) For this event, we have in place a publicity, event and grounds committee. Our next meeting is tomorrow night at Madcap on Glenmore. We would like to know if organizations would be willing to contribute \$\$\$.

(Kuhl) I want to make sure if the event is run out of the Promotions Committee, that I'm part of the planning.

(Jenkins) Outreach Committee recommends that WCA give a nod for engagement in this event.

(Weber) I'm going to do the Holiday Yard of the month again.

(Kimmet) Do you want to be in charge of Holiday Yard of the Month again?

(Weber) Yes.

Motion by Mary Jenkins that we table the remaining items on the agenda until the General meeting, seconded by Michelle Conda.

Motion passed.

President Joel Kimmet adjourned the meeting.