

Westwood Civic Association
MINUTES – March 10, 2015 – Steering Meeting

1. Call to Order by President Jim McNulty at 7:00 pm. The Meeting was held in the Conference Room, at the Westwood Town Hall, 3017 Harrison Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45211. (Joel Kimmet, Secretary).

2. Roll Call of Board Members: 14 present, 1 Excused. Present were: Jim McNulty, Michelle Conda, Joel Kimmet, Irene McNulty, Stephen Schramm, Mary Jenkins, Karen Strasser, Joe Corso, Melva Gweyn, Valerie Baumann, Ken Tarvin, Emily Miller-Reynolds, Shawntee Stallworth, and Trinetta Zawadzki. Excused was Mary Kuhl.

3. President McNulty announced that a few sets of previous WCA Meeting Minutes needed to be approved by the Board. A review of August 19, 2014, January 13, 2015, January 20, 2015, February 10, 2015, and February 17, 2015 was conducted. No corrections or edits were necessary.

MOTION by Joel Kimmet, SECOND by Ken Tarvin, that the following sets of WCA Meeting Minutes are approved: August 19, 2014, January 13, 2015, January 20, 2015, February 10, 2015, and February 17, 2015. Discussion. **MOTION PASSED – Unanimously.**
(Mary Jenkins volunteered to post the above listed Meeting Minutes to the WCA web-site).

4. President McNulty began a discussion regarding the WCA Sgt. Eric Sierra Memorial for the Westwood Town Hall grounds. Valerie Baumann reported that she has been conducting research with landscaping companies in reference to the memorial rock, with engraving, and a memorial pine or blue-spruce tree. Valerie is working with Ron Rothhaus on the memorial tree, and with Allison Landscaping on the stone and etching. The Stone Kraft Company on Spring Grove Avenue also provided an estimate. Discussion for some time on the wording that should be placed on the stone. It was agreed by the group that dates should be on the stone, and the fact that Sgt. Sierra was the neighborhood officer for Westwood. Valerie will report back to the group as this project proceeds forward. No action taken at this time.

5. President McNulty began a discussion regarding the Westwood TIF Fund. Jim gave a brief historical description of the two Westwood TIF areas: 1) The area around Bracken Woods Lane, and 2) 300 acres of land south of Harrison Avenue. President McNulty explained how the TIF process was originally set up, back in 2005. WestCURC has done a great job with the Bracken Woods Lane project. WestCURC is focusing on 28 properties at the end of Bracken Woods Lane. They are negotiating with the owners, and purchasing properties one at a time. Currently, 8 properties have been purchased, with 20 more to go. Originally, \$750,000.00 was set up for the Westwood TIF areas. Recently, the City took a bond sale, from the Westwood TIF, to fund other projects. These funds are supposed to be placed back into the Westwood TIF on a later date. Joel Kimmet explained that WestCURC gets reimbursed from the TIF for their expenses in purchasing properties in the Bracken Woods Lane project. WestCURC has been very conservative with the funding, and the 8 properties purchased to date have averaged around \$13,400 each. WestCURC obtains an appraisal for each property before negotiations begins. WestCURC cannot make a purchase for higher than what the appraisal amount is. Joel Kimmet explained that the goal of the TIF is, in the future, when new houses are built on the site, and sold, those proceeds go back into the TIF. The TIF is supposed to be “self-supporting”. Discussion. It was suggested that WCA should request an Annual Audit of the Westwood TIF funding from the City, and then publish the Audit. WCA should be monitoring this TIF fund, to make sure the fund is being used wisely and correctly.

6. "Top-20" Worst Buildings List. President McNulty began a discussion on the WCA Worst Buildings List. This List needs to be updated, since there were some buildings that were demolished by the City during 2014. Jim remarked that 3057 Bracken Woods Lane has been through a DBL Hearing, and is approved for demolition. Two other bad buildings are 3053 Bracken Woods, and 3167 Goble Lane. The properties that WestCURC are working to demolish should be taken off the WCA "Top-20" List, and put onto a separate list of their own. It was decided that there will be a meeting of the WCA "Buildings and Properties Committee" on Tuesday, March 24, 2015, at 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM, in the basement meeting room of the Westwood Town Hall. All are invited.

7. Follow-Up with Cincinnati Police Chief. President McNulty reported that we need to conduct a "Follow-Up" meeting with the Cincinnati Police Chief, in reference to Westwood priorities. WCA should pick a few items to focus on, and maybe set up a smaller meeting with Chief Blackwell to focus on these few items. President McNulty would like to make an Action Plan for solving certain items.

8. Annual WCA Dinner Plans. There was a short discussion on the upcoming WCA Annual Dinner, which has been set for Tuesday, March 17, 2015, at Henke Winery, in Westwood, in place of our March General Meeting. The Happy Hour will begin at 6:30 pm, followed by Dinner at 7:00 pm. Joel Kimmet reported the plans are finalized, and everything is set up for the event. We have reservations for 40 people. At this time, 20 persons have RSVP'ed for the event, but Joel Kimmet is expecting more to attend. President McNulty stated that this event will be a "social event", with very little business occurring. The Meeting will be called to order, attendance taken, the Police and Fire Reports, followed by the Dinner which will start at 7:10 pm. No large business items will be discussed at the Dinner.

9. Trinette Zawadzki reported on the Westwood Graffiti problem. Many tags have been seen around Westwood and South Fairmount with "BANDO" written in the tags. This has occurred at many locations along Harrison Avenue. Sharon Lewis provided a previous contact (Linda Halterhoff) at Keep Cincinnati Beautiful (KCB) that has dealt with graffiti issues in the past. Trinette will contact KCB and handle this issue. Discussion.

10. Great American Clean-Up Planning. Shawntee Stallworth and Catherine Ross led the discussion on the upcoming Great American Clean-Up, which is set for June 8th – June 12th in Westwood. Shawntee and Catherine recently attended the "kick-off" meeting, sponsored by Keep Cincinnati Beautiful (KCB), and they shared what occurred at that meeting. The City is also proposing changes to the current trash pick-up schedule. The trash collection schedule will be restructured to 4-days per week, with the 5th day, Fridays, called, "Blitz Day Fridays", that will concentrate on specific neighborhood clean-ups, illegal dump sites, sign repair, and graffiti removal. A Westwood Neighborhood Clean-Up Day has been set for April 25, 2015, from 9:00 Am to 1:00 pm. Catherine Ross spoke for some time on changes the City wants to make to the trash pick-up schedules, and "Blitz Day" clean-ups. Shawntee spoke about the April 25th Westwood Clean-up day, and the upcoming larger Great American Clean-Up set for June 8th – 12th. The City will put a dumpster on whatever street we ask them to, so if neighbors on a specific street want to get together to clean up a certain area. Discussion. In Westwood, maybe this needs to occur 4 times per year, and not just annually. See Catherine Ross or Shawntee Stallworth for further information about both upcoming Clean-Up Events.

11. Lot Abatement Program. Catherine Ross discussed the City's Lot Abatement Program for tall grass and weeds. It is being revamped by the City. There will be higher fines, tall grass violations reduced from 10 inches high to 6 inches high, increased penalties for violations, and property liens placed on repeat violators for unpaid fines, which may lead to more court judgments, against the violators. Discussion.

12. Ohio Senate Law 16. This Law has passed, which allows a good citizen to enter a property that is blighted and overgrown with tall grass and weeds, to mow or clean up that property, and not held liable for trespassing or any other violations imposed by the absent owner.

13. Coalition Report. Michelle Conda reported on the Westwood Coalition. The Old Westwood Firehouse has been purchased by WestCURC, who is currently preparing an RFP (Request For Proposals) which new businesses can apply for, to get to start a new business in the building. A new brewery is coming into Westwood, and is looking at a building on Harrison Avenue, just across from Town Hall. The Coalition is working on a plan to conduct a marketing study of the Westwood Business District, to see what the District can sustain, as we move closer to revitalization. This is one of many ideas that came from the Community Meetings that were held explaining the Revitalization Process.

14. American Flags. Michelle Conda reported that a date in April will be set to conduct an Inventory of WCA American Flags and flag mounting parts. We need to see what we have in inventory, and what new items need to be ordered. Discussion. A date in May can then be set to put up the American Flags.

15. Westwood Asset Survey. Mary Jenkins reported on the Westwood Asset Survey. Called the "Asset Map", all the Westwood organizations were recently asked to complete this survey, which lists our assets, and strengths. WCA will get to list what we do in the neighborhood, what expertise we have, and what projects we are working on, as compared to the other Westwood organizations. The survey will be tabulated to show what strengths and initiatives each organization has.

16. A brief discussion took place concerning Heat-Beat Motors, located at 2911 Harrison Avenue. (Corner of Harrison and Ratterman) A new owner has taken over that site, but there appears to be zoning issues and many other building code violations. The owner has stated that he wishes to open a used tire and used car business there. WCA is working with the City to see what zoning issues and code violation issues exist at this site. Discussion. It appears that one year (365 days) has passed with this building being vacant, and that causes the new Form-Based Codes to take effect at this site. Discussion. WCA needs to investigate this. A report will follow at a future meeting .

17. The Zoning Variance requested at 2458 Harrison Avenue, for a used Car Lot has been denied and rejected by the City. The City stated that the owner has not paid property taxes at this location for many years, is currently delinquent, and that was a major reason the Zoning Request was denied and rejected.

18. With no further business occurring, the Meeting was Adjourned by President McNulty at 8:50 pm.

Submitted by Joel Kimmet
WCA Secretary