

Westwood Civic Association
-Steering Meeting Minutes, July 14, 2009

Meeting Called To Order by President Sess at 7:00 pm.

Attendance: 12 Board Members present, and 3 excused, 0 absent. A quorum was present.

Present: Sess, Lee, Baumann, Kimmet, Lewis, Kuhl, Gweyn, Boyd, Finn, McConn, Weber, Hollan. Excused: McNulty, Bach, Hammann. Acting Secretary: Kimmet.

Guest: Richard “Skip” Jackson, 3240 Koenig Ave., was introduced, and had a question regarding the Westwood School addition. Discussion. Mr. Jackson favors the Epworth Street side for the addition, but was told that no final decisions have been made, and WCA is still negotiating with CPS and the city on the two proposed addition sites. No action taken at this time.

Committee Reports:

1. Safety-

Report by Sess that the GGG Store wants a liquor license that was objected to by WCA.

Report by Weber that work continues on the Chronic Nuisance Ordinance project.

Report by Lewis (Dist 3 Resource) volunteers are needed for the NNO booth on Aug 4th. The NNO runs from 5:30-8:30 pm. Sess stated he would volunteer, others are welcome.

2. Infrastructure-

Report by Gweyn that flower pots on McHenry and Mt. Clair are a work in progress.

3. Buildings & Properties-

Report by Kimmet that he and McNulty met to discuss and create the “Westwood Top-Ten Worst Buildings” list, which are the 10 worst buildings in need of demolition and removal. They are as follows: 1) 2570 Harrison; 2) 2153 Harrison; 3) 2614 Harrison; 4) 2280 Harrison; 5) 2206 Harrison; 6) 2145 Harrison; 7) 2186 Harrison; 8) 3025 WNB; 9) & 10) 7 properties on Bracken Woods all lumped together to include 3015, 3077, 3142, 3160, 3157, 3154, and 3148. This Top-Ten list will periodically change as buildings are acquired and demolished by the city, through Federal NSP funding, and TIF funding.

Discussion about putting the Top-Ten Buildings on our WCA Website, showing the state of disrepair of each building, and listing the owner’s name and address next to each problem property. This is public information, and Lee stated it could be easily done.

Discussion on the grass cutting efforts, or lack thereof, on several Westwood vacant lots.

4. School Enhancement-

Report by Hollan that Liz Kissel stated that she would like to remain the WCA rep for Westwood Elem School. Discussion. Weber has volunteered to take on this position. It was the consensus of WCA that Weber should replace Kissel for this position.

5. Membership and Promotions-

Report by Weber that WCA is having a “Grill-Out” sometime in August, date to be set later, and will be held at a WCA board member’s home. There will also be a “Grill-Out” at the WTH on September 15 at 5:00 pm, out at the outdoor patio, expect 50-100 people.

5. Membership and Promotions continued-

Weber reported that WCA is planning a “Canoe Trip” in September, no date set yet. Weber reported that Westwood residents Bob Prokop, Brian Pall and Tim Scheff, as well as Mary Kuhl are working on “Welcome Baskets” in conjunction with Westwood Concern, to welcome new residents into the neighborhood. A report on this new project will be coming at a future meeting. No action taken at this time.

Report by Weber that the Giant Yard Sale is this Saturday, 7/18/09 at WTH. WCA will be at booths # 11 and 12.

A \$300.00 check was turned in by Weber for the Arbor Doctor annual advertising fee.

Report by Boyd that “West-Fest” generated \$535.00 for WCA, and \$90.00 in T-shirt sales. Discussion about fixing the Mug-Slide to make the game harder.

Report by Boyd that WCA should consider starting a “Twitter” on Westwood, as this could be used for promoting meetings, special events, and fund-raising events. The “Westwood” name moniker is currently available.

Report by Boyd about having a WCA “Bike-Ride” either before or after Halloween, ½ of the 20-mile ride would be in Westwood, and the other ½ in Cheviot, with both neighborhoods supporting the event. Discussion.

(Stop Committee Reports for a short introduction of a new guest)

Guest: Mr. Scott Ryan, Building Inspector, City of Cincinnati, was introduced as the new Building Inspector for our area (Westwood). Mr. Ryan wants to attend a WCA meeting each month, and keep us up-to-date on building violations and hearings. Mr. Ryan gave a short presentation on his role as an Inspector, and a brief outline of how the complaint and violations process works. Reports of Westwood building violations were handed out. Discussion. The Building and Properties Committee will work closely with Mr. Ryan.

(Committee Reports Continued)

6. Outreach-

Lee stated that there was no report at this time.

7. Finance-

Report by Baumann that all cash money received by WCA needs to be turned in to the Treasurer immediately. Checks can come in without urgency.

Report by Weber that a 501(c) 4 filing for WCA was done instead of a 501(c) 3 filing with the IRS. The 501(c) 4 filing is the correct filing for Civic Organizations.

8. Preservation

Kimmet reported that Bach has sent email invitations to all the Preservation Committee persons, and a meeting will be taking place within the month for this committee.

(End of Committee Reports)

Agenda Items:

A. Discussion on having an Opening Prayer at Meetings:

Discussion. Statement by Sess that the Founding Fathers always had an opening prayer before important meetings. Report by McConn that most organizations today start with a moment of silence instead of a prayer. MOTION by Kuhl, SECOND by Hollan, to stop having an Opening Prayer at WCA Business Meetings. Discussion. **Motion Passes.**

MOTION by Gweyn, SECOND by McConn, to have a moment of silence at the beginning of WCA Business Meetings. Discussion. **Motion Passes.**

B. Making Meeting Agendas available at the Meetings:

A general discussion led by Kuhl that our Meeting Agendas should be available at the Meetings so people can follow along, know what is next, and follow a timeline.

Discussion. A general consensus was reached, no vote necessary.

John Raines volunteered to make 25 copies of the Agenda at the start of each meeting.

C. Voting or Taking a Position on Local Ballot Issues at WCA Meetings:

A general discussion led by Kuhl that WCA should not be voting or taking a position on Cincinnati or State of Ohio Ballot Issues for an upcoming election. Discussion.

MOTION by Kuhl, SECOND by Lee, for WCA not take a position or an official vote on an upcoming Ballot Issue. Discussion. **Motion Fails** (vote was 3 for/ 8 against)

D. Talking about National Issues at WCA Meetings:

A general discussion led by Kuhl that WCA should not be allowing time for discussions or debates on National Issues at WCA Meetings. Discussion. MOTION by McConn, SECOND by Boyd, for WCA not to allow discussions or debates on National Issues occur at WCA Meetings. Discussion. **Motion Passes.**

MOTION by Lee, SECOND by McConn, to allow issues that are broader than Westwood have the floor in WCA Meetings for 2 minutes, at the very end of the meeting agenda.

Discussion. **Motion Passes.**

E. The Limiting of Discussion(s) at WCA Steering and General Meetings:

A general discussion led by Kuhl that we should limit discussions of any topic at the WCA meetings so we are not pressed for time at the very end of the meeting with a full list of agenda items still on the agenda. Discussion about having a clock to limit talking. Discussion. President Sess asked each WCA members to please limit their discussions to the very minimum on each topic, so the agenda can go forward with time for each subject.

F. Reading of the Minutes at WCA Meetings:

A general discussion led by Kuhl that it takes too much time to read the past meeting Minutes at the start of the WCA meetings. Discussion. A general consensus that all WCA members receive the Minutes by email, and they are posted on the WCA Web-site, so there is not need to take time to read the Minutes at WCA meetings.

G. Westwood & Price Hill Candidate’s Night Discussion:

The upcoming Candidate’s Night was discussed. WCA was asked by Price Hill about the possibility to join together to form one Candidate’s Night for the Westside. Discussion. MOTION by Sess, SECOND by Finn, that WCA explore the idea and the feasibility of sharing Candidate’s Night with Price Hill Community Council, and alternating the sites each year between Mother Of Mercy School and the Covedale Theater. Discussion. Motion Passes.

H. Head-Start Program at Midway School: Pres Sess declared this issue was a mute issue, and we would skip this item on the agenda.

I. Rookwood Pottery Request: Pres Sess reported that the owner of Rookwood Pottery Company requested to speak at an upcoming meeting about their new and expanded company. This will be placed on the September meeting agenda.

J. Westwood Community Coalition Meeting: nothing to report on this issue, the meeting is upcoming in July and August, and Pres Sess has been attending. Anyone is welcome to also attend these meetings.

K. Westwood Mural Discussion: There was a Discussion of the pros and cons of designing a mural for Westwood in conjunction with Art Works Cincinnati company. Discussion. Kimmet reported that efforts and research could go into the design that would be both historical and pleasing to the eye like the Canal Boats mural on Central Parkway, and the Police mural on the Cincinnati Police Museum. Kuhl reported that no murals are acceptable to her. Discussion. MOTION by Kuhl, SECOND by Lewis, that WCA not accept the Mural idea in Westwood. Discussion. Motion Fails. (vote was 4 for/ 8 against)

L. Demolition Update:

Sr. McConn reported that the Fischer Place demo was a great success, and everyone is looking forward to the designing of two new homes for the site.

M. Safe and Clean Grant Application:

Sr. McConn reported on a WestCurc idea for an “old fashioned” street lighting project for the business district, which would involve applying for a City Safe and Clean Grant. There are also plans for an effort to place garbage cans in areas that need them. The deadline for this Grant Application is August 7th. WCA and WestCurc could work together on this Grant Application. Discussion. MOTION by Lee, SECOND by Finn, to table this discussion until the next meeting, in order to have more Discussion on this topic. Discussion. Motion Passes.

N. Public Hearing Announcement:

Pres Sess reported that there is a Public Hearing scheduled for July 17th at Building and Inspections HQ, 3300 Central Parkway, to discuss Blighted Buildings. This was referred to the Problem Properties/ Buildings Committee to attend.

Agenda Continued:

O. Dave Cook's Fence:

Discussion about Dave Cook's problem fence on Harrison Avenue. Discussion centered on the fact that the fence did not match the original drawings submitted by Cook when he came to WCA for approval. MOTION by Sess, SECOND by Kuhl, to send a letter to Dave Cook from WCA asking him to fix the fence accordingly to match up with his original drawings. Discussion. **Motion Passes.**

With no further business, Meeting was Adjourned at 9:30 pm by President Sess.

Next Meeting: July General Meeting: 07/21/09 @ 7:00 pm at WTH.