

WCA General Meeting

July 19, 2011

7:00 P.M.

Westwood Town Hall

Attendance

Present: J. McNulty, B. Weber, M. Jenkins, J. Hildebrand, M. Gweyn, J. Minor, J. Sess, V. Baumann, M. Kuhl, J. Kimmet

Absent: M. Neeld, J. Henke, Sr. A. Rene McConn, K. Strasser. I. McNulty

Recording Secretary: Mary Jenkins

There were approximately 15 others present for the meeting. WCA President Jim McNulty called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Police Report

Officer Rich Minella offered remarks, starting with National Night Out, scheduled for August 2, 2011 from 5:00-8:30 p.m. at the Kroger lot on Ferguson. He distributed crime statistics. Officer Minella noted that central vice made arrests on July 12, 2011 at 2902 Four Towers #8 that included offenses related to trafficking and possession of heroin. Vice squad made arrests of two minors at 3415 Daytona for drug possession, trafficking, and paraphernalia. There has been recent door to door panhandling in West Price Hill and Westwood. B. Weber commented that follow up on chronic nuisance properties is important. J. Sess expressed thanks for Captain Neville's recent active role in the capture of a suspect resisting arrest. Officer Minella noted that the new chief will be sworn in on August 2nd.

Fire Report

Richard "Dick" Braun, new Cincinnati Fire Chief, and Mark Monahan, firefighter union president, offered remarks at this first civic association meeting that Chief Braun has attended. Chief Braun noted that until April 2011, all fire stations had a two-tiered emergency response system. Now, all stations have advanced life support units and every station has medics and gear. He noted that this improves efficiency and response time greatly, with an ideal 8-15 medic runs per day. Then Captain Braun commented on Station 35 in Westwood, noting that it has 27% of the EMS runs for the entire city. He remarked that revamping that station emerged as a priority quickly. Then he announced a new station on Harrison Avenue at McHenry where a Laundromat and mobile phone store are now. The station will be nearly identical to station 51 on Hamilton Avenue and station 9 on Reading Avenue. The layout of the property allows for equipment storage behind the station. Coordinating the site development with Transportation and Engineering allowed for modifications to access to the site and the curve of Harrison at McHenry. This will be a four bay station built for a 25% female force, improved living space, apparatus storage, parking around back, and training space at computer kiosks. Chief Braun expects the project to go out to bid in November or December and building in spring 2012 with possible completion late in 2012. M. Kuhl asked about station 21 and whether this revamped station 35 would be merged with 21. Chief Braun said that the EMS supervisor will be at 35 to train medics but that he anticipated that 21 will be rebuilt in Fairmount. V. Baumann asked what would become of the existing station 35 building. Chief Braun said that it would be sold via public auction. Several people mentioned the desirability of the station for the historical society. J. Sess offered thanks to the fire fighters for their willingness to move around in service to the public. J. McNulty acknowledged J. Sess' two years of working with the city to consider opportunities for that property.

Treasurer's Report

V. Baumann offered the Treasurer's report, noting \$1,207.28 in revenue, \$844.24 in expenses, \$8,558.02 in the checking account, and a \$5,000 certificate of deposit.

MOTION by J. Sess to accept the Treasurer's report.

SECONDED by J. Kimmet.

PASSED unanimously with no abstentions.

Station 35 Report

Lt. Mozer of Fire Station 35 reported that July runs total 235 so far this month, the majority of which have been EMS runs. Station 35 averages 350 calls per month. There have been no significant fires this month. Lt. Mozer also reported that the station distributed smoke detectors recently. When M. Kuhl asked Lt. Mozer if he is happy with the plan for the move of station 35, he replied that the firefighters are ecstatic about the new station. He remarked that the current building is an architectural prize.

Consumer Fraud

Next, Charlie Norman, director of Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine's southwest office, offered a presentation and handouts on consumer fraud and the AG's consumer protection unit. He said that the AG receives about 30,000 complaints each year and returned \$7.5M to consumers as the result of lawsuits. New this year are significant numbers of complaints about sweepstakes and lottery scams. He also notes that there are many complaints about credit repair, foreclosure rescue scams, home improvement scams, and fake check fraud. He noted that fraud often targets senior citizens who only make up 15% of the population in Ohio but are 50% of the fraud victims. Mr. Norman urged attendees to call the AG's office with any complaints. He said victims should try to resolve the issue but if that's unsatisfactory, start the complaint process. M. Gweyn asked if the notices on telephone poles such as "we buy junk cars" or ads for night clubs are illegal. Mr. Norman said that the AG has no original jurisdiction and therefore cannot prosecute those, but you can tear one down and call the AG's office to see if there are complaints against the company. M. Kuhl asked if the AG's office can address any complaints regarding the Gamble house. Mr. Norman replied that one could inquire as to any complaints or findings related to the owner or Section 106 complaints about lack of proper notification. S. Lewis asked if the Ohio Consumer Council is being eliminated. Mr. Norman did not know. She also asked if medical offices can require the provision of one's social security number. Mr. Norman said he would check. J. McNulty asked what the AG's opinion is on the recently legislated release of convicted criminals. Mr. Norman replied that the AG has to enforce rules passed by the legislature. M. Kuhl asked what the AG's position is on opting out of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Mr. Norman noted that Mr. DeWine joined a multistate lawsuit as his first official action. V. Baumann asked what the difference is between the AG's consumer protection unit and the BBB. Mr. Norman mentioned employment services like background checks and fingerprinting.

Giant Yard Sale

M. Trapp reported that the Giant Yard Sale was very successful for the recreation commission with more booths rented than last year. She also mentioned that repairing and painting the Town Hall's chimneys is on the list of imminent projects. She noted that plans are all set for the Art Show.

Lick Run Watershed

Dean Niemeyer, senior planner for the city, invited attendees to a community design workshop on August 11, 2011 related to the Lick Run project. He also invited citizens to participate in a tour of the area July 26 and 28 and August 2 and 4. He distributed information about the project and urged citizens to see more details at www.projectgroundwork.org/lickrun. J. Sess asked how the project is to be paid for. Mr. Niemeyer said it will be funded primarily via tax dollars. The city also had a HUD Sustainable

Communities Grant for the design process. J. Sess asked if HUD housing is a condition of the grant. Mr. Niemeyer replied that there are livable community principles to which the city is committed. J. McNulty cited news stories about affordable housing in the area and the fire chief's remarks about the fire station sited on a planned Lick Run pond. Mr. Niemeyer responded that all ideas are just proposals now. M. Kuhl remarked that MSD has already bought up 84 buildings in the area and she commented that MSD is just checking off a to do list and isn't interested in citizen input. Mr. Niemeyer urged attendees to participate in the design workshop and the tours to become more informed about the project's intent. J. Sess noted that the westside has a surplus of low income, multi-family housing. Mr. Neimeyer remarked that citizens will see the value in this project, that it will dramatically improve the sewer system and the value of housing. J. Sess remarked that addressing the combined sewer and rain water problem is good but that his concern is related to low income housing.

Tutoring

Kelsey Reed and Betty Hull, Xavier University students, distributed information about Be the Change, a tutoring program that needs volunteer tutors for public school students, including Midway School locally. J. Sess mentioned his own positive tutoring experience and urged others to sign up.

Westwood Historical Society School Bell Project

On behalf of WCA, J. Kimmet presented Liz Kissell with a check for \$1,000 out of WCA's NSP funds for the Westwood Historical Society's Westwood School bell restoration project. L. Kissell remarked that WHS has raised \$7,000 to date. Restoration plans are budget-dependent, ranging from a cleaning and repair of the bell to full functioning of the clockworks which would cost \$40,000. It will be displayed in the foyer of the renovated Westwood School.

Open Forum

Michelle Conda of Citizens on Patrol remarked that the WestCURC-renovated house at 2919 Mignon is looking great.

Betty Lee announced that Grace Lutheran Church is having a Vacation Bible School August 1-5 in the evening for ages 4 – 5th grade.

Westwood Community Gardens

J. Kimmet reported that he is now serving as site manager for the Gardens, assisted by S. Golder. M. Jenkins is now serving as Gardens coordinator. Finances are managed by V. Baumann since this is a WCA project. Twenty two raised beds have been built. Fence bids were received and reviewed with Mills Fence selected as the best bid. Publicizing and renting beds is imminent. J. Kimmet noted that funding for the Gardens to date comes from a Keep Cincinnati Beautiful grant, a merit grant from Invest in Neighborhoods, and funding through the Civic Garden Center. The fence is a reimbursable expense that will have to be paid for first in installments by WCA.

MOTION by J. Sess to authorize WCA to make payment to Mills Fence in the amount of \$8.950 in installments, to be reimbursed by Keep Cincinnati Beautiful.

SECONDED by M. Kuhl

PASSED unanimously without abstentions.

Art Show

J. Sess reported that there are more vendors this year for the Art Show than last year. WCA will sell bottled water.

Old Business

J. McNulty reported that Transportation is looking into the Epworth and Lischer intersection.

J. Kimmet will turn in receipts for reimbursement from the NSP grant for the bell donation and the newsletter expenses.

Meeting with State Legislators Regarding CMHA

M. Kuhl reported that the July 18, 2011 meeting with state legislators regarding CMHA went well, addressing the question of the role of the state in running CMHA. It was noted that the director of development ascertains the amount of subsidized housing for Hamilton County. J. McNulty noted that he wants the community to have input into the decision making.

MOTION by J. Sess to instruct J. McNulty to write a letter to appropriate government agencies to inquire about the process for determination of the number of units and to invite further discussion of the concerns.

SECONDED by J. Hildebrand

PASSED unanimously without abstentions.

Soap Box Derby

J. McNulty read a letter from Donny White seeking a donation from WCA to help defray his mother's expenses to attend the soap box derby in Akron. J. Sess noted that the driver's second place finish last year gained WCA \$1,000 and recognition. S. Lewis expressed concern about WCA expenses that don't result in a direct gain for the community.

MOTION by J. Sess to approve a \$100 donation to Donny White for the purpose of defraying travel expenses.

SECONDED by J. Kimmet.

FAILED: 2 votes in favor, all remaining votes against.

Bench Advertising

J. McNulty asked if the board wanted to approve WCA advertisements on temporary benches to be used at the National Night Out. There was little support. WCA will not purchase bench ads.

Website Payment

MOTION by J. Kimmet to authorize payment of up to \$100 for the renewal of the WCA website.

SECONDED by J. Sess.

PASSED unanimously without abstentions.

Minutes

There was a MOTION and a SECOND to approve the minutes of the July 12, 2011 WCA steering meeting as written.

PASSED unanimously with no abstentions.

Adjournment

There being no other business before the Board, J. McNulty adjourned the meeting at 8:55 p.m.