

WCA General Meeting

May 17, 2011

7:00 P.M.

Westwood Town Hall

Attendance

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

Excused: A. R. McConn, M. Kuhl

Absent: M. Neeld, J. Henke

A number of Westwood residents and students of local schools and their families were also in attendance.

Recording Secretary: Mary Jenkins

WCA President Jim McNulty called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Police Report

Next, Russ Neville, Cincinnati Police District 3 Commander addressed the group. Captain Neville spoke with pride of his years on the west side and of his commitment to partnering with the community. He asked attendees to contact him directly with any concerns about interactions with District 3 police. He noted that District 3 has the largest reduction (44.5%) in robberies in the city in the last year. Thefts from autos are down 16% while the rest of the city is up 16-20%. He spoke also of the pit bull ordinance. With 1,100 animal-related runs a year, 48% are related to pit bulls. Captain Neville is leading a local effort to enforce Cincinnati's pit bull law, with 48 arrests in the first five days of the initiative. Captain Neville ended his remarks by commenting on his commitment to service and offering words of encouragement to the students in attendance. He then took questions and comments from citizens. One attendee remarked on a former problem with drug transactions on McKinley Avenue, noting that the problem has not resurfaced after quick police intervention.

Student of the Year Award Ceremony

Jim McNulty introduced the Student of the Year Award ceremony by noting WCA's appreciation of the students in Westwood, remarking that WCA is in the business of neighborhood repair which requires great schools and great students. Karen Strasser then led the ceremony, introducing the seven award recipients who have shown exemplary leadership and service at their schools. Award recipients included Sydney Cummins (Gamble Montessori), Portia Gaines (Westwood School), Allie Hart (Mother of Mercy), Frank Metzmeier (Dater Montessori), Taylor Patton (Dater Montessori), Maddie Spetz (St. Catharine of Siena), and Claudia Vollman (Our Lady of Lourdes). Each recipient received a plaque recognizing her or his accomplishments and a Target gift card. WCA is proud of these students.

Westwood Community Gardens

Next, Joel Kimmet offered an overview of the Westwood Community Gardens (WCG) project at 2163 Harrison Avenue. He then remarked on the significant contribution of time and talent

given by volunteer Mike Rece who has spent many hours clearing and leveling the site over the past month. Joel offered formal recognition of Mike Rece by WCA, presenting him with a plaque, a dinner for two at Henke Winery, an "I Love Westwood" t-shirt, and White Castle gift cards. Joel announced that there are volunteer opportunities for site work every Saturday from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., weather permitting.

Minutes

MOTION by Joel Kimmet to approve the minutes of the May 10, 2011 WCA steering meeting as written.

SECONDED by Valerie Baumann.

PASSED unanimously with no abstentions.

Wayne Lippert, City Council

Mr. Lippert attended the meeting and was invited to make remarks. He started by urging a non-partisan approach to problem resolution, commenting on the budget shortfall and the necessary effort to resolve it. He encouraged attendees to remain open-minded about the streetcar initiative, but cited his own concerns related to planned casino revenue funding for the streetcar and the elimination of plans to connect downtown and uptown. He went on the talk of his support for the port authority and its perceived role in economic development. Mr. Lippert then took questions from attendees. One person expressed thanks for City Council's role in keeping the pools open this summer. Mr. Lippert remarked that it is a one year solution in need of refinement and private support. Jim McNulty commented on the introduction of low income housing into the Lick Run sewer project plans and asked Mr. Lippert to pay attention to those developments. Another attendee asked whether the city needs to work with the county regarding the Metropolitan Sewer District. An attendee expressed concerns about the sewer project's negative impact on utility bills and on potential business relocations to Cincinnati. Mr. Lippert agreed to study the issue. An attendee asked Mr. Lippert about his ideas on budget deficit responses. Mr. Lippert remarked that everything should be on the table including privatization of services, city-county partnerships, and operating efficiencies. An attendee commented on the loss in city population over the last decade, citing what he perceives to be a business-unfriendly environment and harm by city officials. Another commented that the voters are to blame. One person asked about the atmosphere at City Council meeting, asking if members see the impact of the budget issues. Mr. Lippert commented that it is an election year, but it requires principles and difficult decisions.

Citizens on Patrol

Citizens on Patrol members reminded attendees that COPP will be pleased to take new recruits at any time.

Open Forum

Kroger Site on Harrison

Joel Kimmet reported that he attended a Westwood Works meeting last month and remarked positively on Westwood Works' role in local events. However, he also noted a concern about one agenda item: a discussion with Representative Denise Driehaus about the future of the former Kroger site on Harrison Avenue. Joel suggested that WCA, as the city's officially

recognized community council, should be the primary and official entity engaged in such discussions. On a related note, an attendee asked if multi-family housing could be built on the lot next to that property. Jim McNulty commented that it is a matter of zoning. He also noted that any HUD-related proposal would be brought to WCA. John Sess remarked that a firehouse is still a possibility for the Kroger site.

City Council Candidate

P. G. Sittenfeld, a candidate for City Council, introduced himself.

Zoning Map

Jim McNulty announced that the WCA board is reviewing the zoning and boundaries map. He invites citizen input.

Blighted Buildings

Joel Kimmet announced a May 27, 2011 9:00 a.m. meeting of the Cincinnati Public Nuisance Board. He asked for permission to speak on behalf of WCA regarding 2280 Harrison Avenue, to urge its demolition. Jim McNulty said that no permission is needed since it is a previously identified problem property and fits within Westwood's strategic plan.

Old Business

Boundaries

Jim McNulty announced that the proposed by-laws change to add the official boundaries to the WCA by-laws requires a minimum of seven days' notice before a vote. It has been announced in the newsletter and a vote will be held at the June meeting.

WestFest

Becky Weber reported on the booth locations and prices for WestFest June 25 and 26, 2011. Mike Cavanaugh and Angelo's Automotive have offered to serve as sponsors for the WCA booth.

MOTION by John Sess to approve up to \$275 for booth fees.

SECONDED by Joel Kimmet.

PASSED unanimously with no abstentions.

National Night Out

Sharon Lewis announced that there will be a planning meeting regarding National Night Out on May 25, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. National Night Out will be held at the Kroger parking lot on Ferguson Avenue on August 2, 2011.

Committees

The board will review the membership of its committees at the next steering meeting.

501(c)(3) Status

Becky Weber suggested that she report on the recent Invest in Neighborhoods-sponsored meeting on 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status for community councils at the next WCA steering meeting.

Westwood Strategic Plan and Minutes

Jim McNulty noted that the Westwood Strategic Plan still needs to be posted to both the City of Cincinnati's website and to the WCA website. Mary Jenkins commented that several sets of minutes should be added to the WCA website.

3324 Hanna Avenue

Jerry Hildebrand asked if any additional pressure can be placed on 3324 Hanna Avenue owners. Several board members encouraged Jerry to ask area residents to be more proactive in calling the police about crimes or city inspectors about building violations.

Mayridge Apartments

Sharon Lewis expressed concern about multiple problems at the Mayridge Apartments on Hanna Avenue, including fighting, noise, and drug dealing. She said that neighbors are calling police but the problems are unresolved. Mayridge Apartments owners will be invited to an upcoming meeting to discuss their plans for reducing criminal behavior on site.

Problem Properties, Generally

In related discussion, it was noted that the bulk of the crime in the area is associated with multi-family housing. Irene McNulty suggested that the WCA board divide into teams to identify problem properties and to share that information with COPP and District 3 police. John Sess announced that he is meeting with Representative Steve Chabot on May 26, 2011 to discuss issues related to the distribution of HUD funding to problem property owners.

Yard Sale at Westwood Town Hall

MOTION by John Sess to fund up to \$30 for sites at the Westwood Town Hall yard sale in July.
SECONDED by Joel Kimmet.
PASSED unanimously with no abstentions.

Westwood Banners

Becky Weber announced that Westwood banners are available for \$20 each.

Adjournment

MOTION by Jerry Hildebrand to adjourn.
SECONDED by Joel Kimmet
PASSED unanimously with no abstentions.

ADJOURNED at 8:45 p.m.