

Westwood Civic Association
MINUTES – General Meeting – December 16, 2014

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

2. Pledge of Allegiance was led by Ms. Sharon Lewis.

3. Roll Call of Board Members: 13 Present, 1 Excused. Present were: Jim McNulty, Mary Kuhl, Joel Kimmet, Irene McNulty, Mary Jenkins, Karen Strasser, Joe Corso, Melva Gweyn, Valerie Baumann, Ken Tarvin, Emily Miller Reynolds, Shawntee Stallworth, Trinetta Zawadzki. Excused was Michelle Conda.

It should be noted that a letter dated December 7, 2014 was received from Board Member Becky Weber stating that effective 12/7/2014, Becky Weber resigned from the WCA Board of Directors. A copy of the letter is being attached to the hard copy of these Minutes.

4. Police Department Report: Officer Rich Minella presented the Dist. 3 Police Report, and discussed the Westwood Crime stats. He discussed the recent residential break-ins, and described what to do if you are home, and someone knocks on your door. He said to call the police if you see someone walking down the street carrying a large TV during the winter, or any abnormal behaviors seen.

5. COPPS Report by Valerie Baumann. Westwood COPPS are looking for more volunteers. After training, you are required to attend 1 meeting and 1 patrol per month. The patrols include walking, car and bike patrols. See Valerie Baumann if interested in joining COPPS.

6. Guests from West High School, Ms. Angela Harris (councilor) and Ms. Jenny Applegate (Asst. Principal) spoke to the group about West High. Addressed were excused absences –vs- unexcused absences, and what the school is doing to address various types of student absences. “Power School” program emails a parent if a student is absent. “Robo Call” is a call made to the parent if the student is absent. “Visiting Teacher” is a teacher who patrols the neighborhood, looking for students who are absent. Recent accomplishments at the school include Community Learning Center, Toast-Master Chapter, and “Grad-Cincinnati” program lead by Ms. Angela Harris. There are 42 volunteer partners who assist West High as needed. The school needs additional mentors and tutors, who would work 1 hour per week with just one student. President McNulty stated that WCA will advertise for mentors and tutors in the WCA Newsletter and on the WCA website.

Ms. Harris described that beginning on January 8th, the “Pathways Program” is starting at the school, which focuses on 3 “career pathways”, Civic Services, Health Initiatives, and Finance.

Ms. Harris described that the school really needs tutors for Reading. A recent test of all 400 7th and 8th grade students at West High found that the average student reads at the 3rd and 4th grade levels. This is 1/3 of the total students at West High reading far below the required levels.

Mary Jenkins suggested that WCA needs to reactivate the LSDMC position at West High.

7. On Tuesday, Nov. 25th, WCA was invited to an assembly at Gamble Montessori School to receive an award. Board Member Irene McNulty attended the assembly on behalf of the Board. The assembly was put on by the students, and WCA received an award for their continued and excellent community involvement. Good Job WCA !!

8. Henry Frondorf reported on the Cincinnati Neighborhood Games. This is a 2-year neighborhood event that is beginning in 2015. What is the Cincinnati Neighborhood Games? Neighborhoods will compete in various activities: Tug of War, Water Balloon Toss, 3-Legged Race, 5-K race, Big-Wheel Race. Neighborhoods use all of 2015 to prepare and get ready. In early 2016, neighborhoods will hold their “qualifying events”, and in November, 2016 the Championship Games will be held. Metals and T-shirts will be awarded to winners. The City will be divided into N, S, E, and W regions. There are 14 neighborhoods in the “West” Region, including Westwood. Volunteers are needed. A Facebook Page has been started, and the official website for the event will launch on March 7th, 2015. A presentation on the Cincinnati Neighborhood Games will be made at the upcoming Neighborhood Summit in March, 2015.

9. Westwood Town Hall Report: Sharon Montavon from WTH reported that the “Deck-The-Hall” Event, held on November 30, 2014 was a huge success. Approximately 1,000 spectators attended to hear 9 choirs singing, 31 craft booths, and many children’s activities. Mayor John Cranley lit the Christmas Tree. This event is getting better and better each year!

WTH needs to sell more memberships. The City keeps track of memberships to see which Recreation Centers around the City get the most use by residents. A membership card is good at all the Rec. Centers all around the City. \$25 for adults, and \$10 for seniors (50+) is the annual membership fees.

10. Coalition Report by Mary Jenkins: WCA needs to appoint a new representative to the Coalition since Ms. Becky Weber resigned from the WCA Board. The Coalition is moving forward with the Business District Plan, which has been approved by all the Westwood groups. Recently, an “Assets Survey” is being distributed to all Westwood organizations to record “organization assets”, and strengths of each organization. A form is being presented to each organization for this purpose. The results, needed by January 9th, will be tabulated into a report to describe the assets of each organization in the Coalition. The Coalition is now discussing parking issues within the Westwood Business District.

11. President McNulty reported on the parking meters along Harrison Avenue, in Westwood, and the recent removal of some parking meters in the Business District. HE stated the meter situation is a mess, and that WCA should be working with the City to determine why some of the meters were removed.

12. Entertainment District. Mary Jenkins reported that WestCURC is proposing an “Arts and Entertainment District” in the Westwood Business District. A flyer was passed around with information. There is an application process that WestCURC is currently pursuing. Basically, if approved, having an Entertainment District in Westwood would do the following for the Business District:

- a. Attract retail businesses
 - b. Attract new restaurants to the Business District
 - c. Create a walkable destination within the Business District
 - d. Increase safety day and night by increased foot traffic in the area
 - e. Create complimentary options to the existing restaurants and businesses
 - f. Create new jobs in Westwood
 - g. Provide additional Liquor Licenses to attract new worthwhile businesses in the District
- Nearby neighborhoods of Northside, Clifton, Price Hill, and Green Township already have Entertainment District in place that are highly successful. Over-The-Rhine’s Entertainment District is so successful that they are applying for their second Entertainment District.

The Liquor Licenses provided for in an Entertainment District are D5-J licenses which must be accompanied by a valid food service license, so this attracts restaurants, not bars or carry-outs.

The establishment of an Entertainment District does not change zoning, the area remains commercial.

After Discussion by the group, sufficient time was allowed for viewpoints both pros and cons.

MOTION by Karen Strasser, and **SECOND** by Emily Miller Reynolds that WCA approve and support the WestCURC Proposal to apply for and establish an Entertainment District in the Westwood Business District. More Discussion followed. **MOTION PASSED 9-YES, 3-NO.**

The WestCURC Flyer explaining the Entertainment District application and process will be scanned and made an official part of these Minutes.

13. Westwood Community Gardens report by Mary Jenkins, reported that many plots are still available in the Westwood Community Gardens for Spring 2015. Plots rent for \$25 for the entire season. We are looking forward to Spring in the Gardens, as well as looking for additional grants and donations for continuing projects.

14. Westwood Rezoning Committee Report by Bill Spetz, reported that the WCA Zoning Committee continues to meet regularly, and is now focusing on many streets and neighborhoods in Westwood. Maps were displayed on the walls of the Conference Room that were used to highlight the Committee's progress. The work of the Committee on Werk Road is almost finished. The Committee picked Werk Road to start on, because it was easier to learn the process on a street with little to no controversy. The definition of "SF-6" was discussed, and what a resident can and can't do in a "SF-6" zone. Discussion followed. Bill Spetz defined "Low-Density" apartments (1 - 4 units per building) –vs- "Medium-Density" (bigger than 5 units per building), and how that affects surrounding properties. There exists a "grand-fathering" issue. A person could not build a "May-Ridge" type of apartments building in Westwood today. Also, the issue of demolitions was discussed. If an apartment building is torn down, and the vacant lot sits for 1 year + 1 day, the zoning can be changed for that lot. The current laws are generous to property owners, so the vacant lot needs to sit for that amount of time, before a change can occur. One proposal of the Committee is the west side of Ferguson Road, across from the new police station, where demolitions are going to occur. The proposal will be to change the zoning from low-density apartments to SF-4 or SF-6. Some similar proposed changes are also in store for Harrison Avenue. A lot of consideration is currently on the old Mercy Hospital location on Boudinot, and what should be done with that property. The Committee will work with WestCURC on the redevelopment of Bracken Woods Lane project. More reports will follow, at future meetings, as the Committee continues its work.

15. President McNulty stated that with the upcoming WCA Board Election process that WCA needs to define the "Westwood and vicinity" issue that is stated in the current WCA Constitution. According to City Ordinance 220-1989, if the Constitution allows "Vicinity", it can be discussed and voted on annually whether to change voting privileges, or keep them the same. Discussion for some time on this issue.

MOTION by Mary Jenkins, and **SECOND** by Melva Gweyn, to define "Westwood and vicinity" as Westwood and all adjoining neighborhoods. Discussion for several minutes about whether that means City of Cincinnati neighborhoods only, or includes Green Township, City of Cheviot, etc., etc. After much discussion, the **MOTION** was **WITHDRAWN**.

MOTION by Karen Strasser, and **SECOND** by Shawntee Stallworth, to define "Westwood and vicinity" as only Westwood residents. After much discussion on this Motion, the **MOTION** was **WITHDRAWN**.

No further Motions were made. Therefore, by consensus, it was decided to leave the definition "As it is" and make no changes to the definition at this time.

16. Sgt. Eric Sierra Discussion. Valerie Baumann stated that WCA should plant a memorial tree, dedicated to the memory of Sgt. Eric Sierra. Short discussion followed.

MOTION by Valerie Baumann, **SECOND** by Irene McNulty, that WCA will plant a memorial tree dedicated to Sgt. Eric Sierra. Short discussion. Due to the time of the meeting running short (9:00 pm was quickly approaching) a detailed discussion about this issue could not occur with the remaining time, so the **MOTION** was **WITHDRAWN**, and the issue tabled by the President until the next WCA Meeting.

17. Office Supplies for the Treasurer. It was mentioned that the Treasurer needs \$40.00 for office supplies. **MOTION** by Valerie Baumann, **SECOND** by Joe Corso, that \$40.00 be provided to the Treasurer for WCA Office Supplies. **MOTION PASSED unanimously.**

18. Westwood Welcome Wagon Program. Emily Miller Reynolds explained that she is expanding the Westwood Welcome Wagon program, in collaboration with Westwood Works, which recognizes new residents who move into Westwood. Emily would like to offer up to 25 free WCA memberships as part of the Welcome Wagon program, to encourage attendance at meetings and events.

MOTION by Irene McNulty, **SECOND** by Joe Corso, to offer up to 25 free memberships to new residents as part of the Westwood Welcome Wagon. **MOTION PASSED unanimously.**

19. Open Board Position. Karen Strasser stated that she would like to open a discussion on the open WCA Board position. Karen Strasser went on to nominate Mr. Stephen Shramm for the position. President McNulty recognized Stephen Shramm who was in attendance at the meeting, and thanked him for volunteering. President McNulty also stated that WCA will put an advertisement in the next WCA Newsletter, which would explain that a position exists on the Board, and would ask if there are any other volunteers out there. All nominations will be due by the January General Meeting. The Board will vote at that time (01/20/15) to determine who will get the open Board position.

Also, the two Nominating Committees will be making reports at the same meeting (01/20/15) to nominate candidates for the 2015 Election, as well as nominations from the floor, according to President McNulty.

20. Newsletter. President McNulty stated that he will take over temporarily as the Newsletter Editor until April, 2015. Trinette Zawadzki volunteered to assist with the Newsletter and to assume the position in April. Trinette explained that she has experience with newsletters at her place of employment. President McNulty stated that he would be fine with the position until April. President McNulty will also make sure that the Constant Contact list is kept up-to-date, until April, 2015.

21. Trinette Zawadzki mentioned that a benefit music concert will take place for Sgt. Eric Sierra on January 29th, 2015 at Jim and Jack's, from 6pm – 10pm. There will be live music, games, and split-he-pot drawings. Hope everyone can attend.

Meeting **Adjourned** at 9:10 pm, by President McNulty.

Submitted by Joel Kimmet, Secretary