

Westwood Civic Association
MINUTES – February 17, 2015 – General Meeting

1. Call to Order by President 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. Pledge of Allegiance was led by Michelle Conda.
3. Roll Call of Board Members. 14 present, 1 excused. Present were: Jim McNulty, Mary Kuhl, Michelle Conda, Joel Kimmet, Irene McNulty, Stephen Schramm, Mary Jenkins, Karen Strasser, Joe Corso, Valerie Baumann, Ken Tarvin, Emily Miller-Reynolds, Shawntee Stallworth, and Trinette Zawadzki. Excused was: Melva Gweyn.
4. COPPS report by Ron Rothhaus. Westwood COPPS has been working with Police Dist. 3 Captain Dan Girard on many new initiatives around the neighborhood. They are continuing to work hard, and need more volunteers from the neighborhood to join them.
5. Westwood Town Hall Report by Ms. Sharon Montavon. Westwood Town Hall is looking for ideas for new programs. If you are interested in starting a new class or program at WTH, please see Sharon Montavon for information. Flyers were handed out for the Spring 2015 classes, programs and events.
6. John Sess presentation on “Convention of States”. John Sess is working with a new group in the Cincinnati area called, “Convention of States”. They would like to propose a future amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and/or start a Constitutional Convention. In this process, they would like to “rein-in” the powers of the federal government. They believe the federal government has over stepped their powers, and believe in more state’s rights. You can view their website at: www.conventionofstates.com. In order to pass an amendment to the Constitution, 32 states would have to approve the proposal, then 38 states would have to ratify the amendment. The group is looking for volunteers for help.
7. President McNulty described a Meeting that WCA had with Police Chief Jeffrey Blackwell yesterday, Monday, February 16, 2015, at Police District One Headquarters Building. Several WCA board members attended that meeting. The meeting centered on crime and crime related issues in Westwood. President McNulty went over the major issues that were discussed at the meeting, plans that were discussed to address the crime issue, and the general outcome from that meeting. (A one-page outline of the Meeting will be scanned, and attached to these Minutes, as an attachment).
8. Captain Girard Presentation. Police Dist. 3 Captain Dan Girard addressed the group as a follow-up to the WCA Meeting from 2/16/15 mentioned above. (7:30 pm – 8:30 pm)
Westwood has a great core group of concerned residents and leaders, including WCA. The Westwood crime rates are being “driven up” by thefts at the Wal-Mart (Ferguson Road Wal-Mart). There has been an increase in opportunistic thefts, car thefts, and burglaries. The latest drug-related murders are happening due to heroin sales and dealing. Break-ins due to the heroin problem. “Heroin is killing us..” Heroin users are now involved in the dramatic increase in break-ins, so they can fund their drug addiction. As a result, “break-ins” and property related crimes are up by 20% in Cincinnati. It is not just a Westwood or “West-side” problem. Most of all the drug dealing is taking place using “social media”.
Things You Can Do: Lock your cars, Don’t leave anything of value in cars, lock all doors and windows. Don’t warm up your cars in the morning, and leave the motor running, and the doors unlocked..... Burglars will break into a car if they see one quarter sitting on the seat.....

Social Media: Twitter is being used as communication tool by drug dealers and burglars. People can meet, usually by car, and be gone in 3 minutes. Twitter can be used to watch a house from the outside, while someone else is inside doing the burglary. As a result, most of the drug deals and break-ins are happening very fast, and very quick. "In and Out" in less than 5 minutes. Modern technology is changing and is now being used for drug dealing and break-ins.

Some relief is on the way: There is a new Police Recruit Class that is graduating in April. District 3 is getting 16 – 20 new police officers out of that class. In mid-June, District 3 will be moving to the new police station on Ferguson Avenue.

Geographically, Westwood is larger and has a greater population than any other neighborhood, so there is going to be greater crime issues.

Westwood has specific issues that can be addressed...In many other areas of crime, the stats for Westwood have actually gone down. "Serial Burglary" crimes have also "ramped up" the burglary stats for Westwood.

The Police Department has established a better partnership with the Hamilton County Juvenile Courts, and some of the juvenile crimes such as burglary are going to be handled differently that before.

President McNulty reviewed some of the issues that were discussed at the Chief Blackwell meeting on 02/16/2015, and allowed Captain Girard to go over these areas:

- a. Delayed customer Service issues – problems with the Call Center
- b. Discussion of "hot spots" in Westwood, including the Glenmore corridor
- c. Blighted buildings in Westwood
- d. Police and Fire responding to vacant/ blighted buildings... more reporting of problems
- e. More visibility, more cops on the streets, more manpower on the streets
- f. Call Center workers are rude, condescending, and non-responsive
- g. Something needs to change...

9. Fire Department Report by Capt. LeMaster.

Captain LeMaster introduced himself as the new Captain of Fire Station 35. Engine 35 is the busiest engine company in Cincinnati. They completed 5,100 runs in 2014. This is an average of one run per hour, for the entire year. Most of these are medical or medically related runs. Many are narcotics overdose related emergencies. The company is seeing 2 or 3 "Narcan" related medical runs per day. "Narcan" is the drug used to revive a heroin overdose patient. These Narcan runs are draining the resources of the Fire Department. They are taking up time and resources, when the Fire Department could be doing something else. The Fire Department has started working with health care centers and councilors to better serve these types of patients.

10. Continuation of Police Captain Girard Presentation.

Westwood Wal-Mart Discussion. It was mentioned by Captain Girard that the Westwood Wal-Mart (Ferguson Road Wal-Mart) has the highest amount of theft and shoplifting incidents of any other Wal-Mart in the entire USA! This is more than any other Wal-Mart in the entire USA. This is unacceptable! Wal-Mart executive have told Cincinnati Police that shoplifting happens so often at that store, that the management has decided not to prosecute any crimes that are less than \$500.00. It was discussed that WCA should try to do something about this.

MOTION by Joel Klmmet, SECOND by Ken Tarvin for WCA to write a letter to Wal-Mart Corporation, asking for representatives to come to a future WCA Meeting to discuss the Westwood Ferguson Road store, and the amount of burglaries and shoplifting crimes that are happening there. The letter will state that being the store with the highest amount of shoplifting in the entire USA is not acceptable. The

letter will ask Wal-Mart executives why this issue has gotten so bad in the first place?? The letter will then ask Wal-Mart executives to come up with solutions and plans on how they will fix this problem at the Westwood Ferguson Road store. Discussion.

MOTION PASSED – Unanimously.

11. Zoning Committee Report by Bill Spetz. (8:40 pm – 9:00 pm)

Mr. Bill Spetz discussed the current Cincinnati Zoning Code Project, and the Westwood Committee who has been working on this project and recommendations. There is a Cincinnati web-site that can be viewed, and a 300-page document which is the first revision of the proposed new zoning code.

As a starting point, Westwood was divided into three starting regions:

Werk Road East, Harrison Avenue East, and Werk Road West.

Working with the Westwood Strategic Plan, the Committee has started focusing on the above three regions, property by property, to review each designation, look for pros and cons to the current zoning, and make recommendation where needed or appropriate.

A Power-Point Presentation was used to display the three region maps, and show the group how each area was examined by the Committee, and how recommendations were made.

Differences between “CX” and “CG” were discussed.

The “grandfathering” issue was described and defined.

The Committee wished to avoid instances where Single Family (SF) areas border a “Medium Density Multi-Family” zone. SF areas should only border “Low-Density Multi-Family zones, for a better flow and transition.

Explanation of wanting more “CX” commercial zones, rather than “GC” commercial zones, because “CX” is more restrictive, and does not allow businesses like gas stations and car lots, for example.

The Committee is trying to establish “The Character” of each street, and so far has come up with about a hundred proposed changes to the Westwood maps. Most of these recommendations are going from “Low-Density Multi-Family” to “Single Family” zoning, and also going from “Medium Density” to “Low-Density” multi-family housing zones.

The Committee is continuing to work on this large project.

The next three focus areas will be:

South of Queen City Avenue, South of Werk Road, North of Werk Road.

If you are interested in following this Committee’s work, please go to the WCA website, and click on “INITIATIVES”, then click on “ZONING”. The maps and recommendations are all listed there, and you can even print them out and study each map.

A small discussion started regarding residential use that is included with the “CX” commercial zoning under the new plan. It appears that “CX” does allow multi-residential units along with commercial units. The discussion revolved around whether this needs to be separated out, or leave it as it stands.

Bill Spetz commented that the problem buildings in Westwood are a very small percentage of the whole, or the total, just like the crime stats... so maybe the current “CX” zones are just fine in this plan.

Bill Spetz asked the group if the group wants to go forward, and present some of the current recommendations to the City?

MOTION by Joe Corso, SECOND by Stephen Schramm, to approve the Zoning Committee Recommendations for changes to “WERK ROAD EAST”, and “HARRISON AVENUE EAST” , as amended by the WCA Committee, for the Second Revision, and submit those Recommendations to the City.

Discussion. **YES- 10 , NO- 4 MOTION PASSED.**

12. It was brought to the attention of the WCA Board that the sidewalks and walkways around the Westwood Town Hall are not being shoveled for snow, and most of them remain impassible. President McNulty will bring this issue up with the City.

13. Westwood Coalition announcement: (Mary Jenkins) The next Westwood Coalition meeting will take place on Wed. night, 2/18/2015, at the Westwood Town Hall at 7:00 pm.

14. Since 9:00 pm arrived, other Agenda items were tabled until the next meeting.

15. Meeting Adjourned by President McNulty at 9:05 pm.

Submitted by Joel Kimmet
WCA Secretary.