

**Minutes of Executive Board Meeting of West End Citizens Association**  
February 25, 2021

**West End Citizens Association Officers**

Brian Shipley, President  
Noreen Bryan, Vice President  
Donna Sprague, Vice President, Communications  
Jen Timmick, Treasurer  
Jane Pontius, Corresponding Secretary  
Margaret Magner, Recording Secretary

**Meeting Attendees in addition to Officers:**

- WECA Executive Board members: Nadia Azumi, Liz Baldacci, Bill Burchette, Tom D’Albora, Maggie Hadley, Seldon Higgins, Kate Ostell, Rich Panzer, Rose Slater, Carol Starr, Bob Treseler, Reverend Jane Wood
- Residents: Emily Bailey, Patrice Davis, Connie Newsome
- City of Rockville: Hjarman Cordero

**Call to Order:**

President Brian Shipley called the Zoom meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

**Welcoming Remarks:**

President Shipley welcomed everyone to the meeting and summarized the agenda.

**Business Items:**

- **New Position Approvals**
  - o Jane Pontius moved to approve Reverend Jane Wood as the new Block Captain for Block 8A. Noreen Bryan seconded. The motion was approved by a vote of 14 Yeas, 0 Nays, and 0 Abstentions. Reverend Wood introduced herself and her history as a 4<sup>th</sup> generation Rockvillian!
  - o Jane Pontius moved to approve Jen Timmick as the Treasurer. Noreen Bryan seconded. The motion was approved by a vote of 14 Yeas, 0 Nays, and 0 Abstentions. Jen spoke briefly to the group.
- **Treasurer’s Report**

President Shipley said WECA has \$3,150.47 in our business account. This is about \$500 more than in January because it reflects the donations in honor of Dennis Cain to the Mansfield Kaseman clinic. These flowed through the account in January and have been donated to the clinic. That transaction will show in next month’s balance.
- **Approval of Minutes from January 28, 2021 meeting**

Jane Pontius moved to accept these minutes and Reverend Wood seconded. The minutes were approved by a vote of 10 in favor, 0 against, and 0 abstentions.
- **Nominating Committee**

WECA will form a nominating committee to manage creation of the slate for officer elections

in May 2021. President Shipley asked anyone interested in being on nominating committee to contact him.

- **FY22 Capital Improvement Project – Safety Measures on Maryland Avenue**

WECA's recommendation for improvements on Maryland Avenue has been accepted into the City's draft FY22 Budget. Emily Bailey explained that the proposal addresses the speeding and heavy two-lane traffic eastbound on Maryland Ave., which is dangerous to pedestrians and bike riders, including students at Julius West and Richard Montgomery. The proposal is to repave Maryland Ave. from S. Washington St. to Great Falls Road and add striping or bike lanes on both sides. This is now proposed in the Transportation/Asphalt Repair and Replacement section of the FY22 Budget.

Noreen Bryan commented that we really need West End neighbors to testify or email in favor of this at the Budget Hearings on March 22 and April 12. It is a great opportunity to thank the Mayor and Council for putting this in the budget.

- **Report from the City**

Hjarman Cordero gave the update from the City:

- All citizens have equal opportunity to make their voice heard on any issue by testifying at Community Forum or writing to the Mayor and Council or City Clerk.
- The FY22 Budget will be adopted on May 3, 2021.
- The Planning Commission approved the Comprehensive Neighborhood Plan for Rockville. Next step is the Mayor and Council review which starts on March 15 and will conclude within 150 days of their receiving of the draft plan.
- The reconstruction of the bridge from Town Center over 355 to the Metro Station has begun and will last about 7 months.
- Several openings are available on City Boards and Commissions. If you would like to serve, please contact [cityclerk@rockvillemd.gov](mailto:cityclerk@rockvillemd.gov).
- The Mayor and Council sent their testimony to the County Council on the Shady Grove Sector Plan Amendment. They noted the impact on traffic, schools, environment and other facilities in Rockville and requested revision of some plans and components.
- Baltimore Road improvement project will begin on March 8 and last about one year.
- The State Departments of Health and Aging have stood up a help line to help seniors over 65 to register for COVID-19 vaccine appointments. Seniors can call the State helpline on 1-855-634-6829 or the Rockville Senior Center on 240-314-8800.
- You can donate food items to the Rockville Senior Center to help families affected by food insecurity.

- **Police Report**

Lt. Berry was not able to attend this evening. He provided a report in writing which was circulated 3 days after the meeting.

### **Block Captain Discussion:**

We returned to the discussion of Block Captain feedback, which began at the January 28 meeting.

- Margaret Magner reviewed the locations of the 8 current Block Captain openings. Bill Burchette recommended a neighbor family living on Carr Avenue. Patrice Davis

recommended contacting the PTA of Beall Elementary School to make contact with young parents, since many of the current Block Captain openings are in blocks near the school.

- Donna Sprague reviewed the feedback and metrics from the Block Captain survey conducted in January 28, 2021, which were reported out in detail at that meeting and in its minutes.
- The remaining topics of survey feedback which were not covered at the January meeting are Communications and Improving Engagement. The attached meeting slides contain information about the feedback from Block Captains in the survey on these topics.
- Here are some highlights of Block Captain suggestions/discussion made at this meeting for improving engagement:
  - o Carol Starr suggested posting WECA meeting information and referring to WECA on NextDoor can help increase participation.
  - o Patrice Davis said that people are more likely to join when they are interested in a specific issue or see an issue that WECA helped with. She thought the information about WECA suggesting changes to the road [Maryland Ave.] is something that could be announced at the Julius West and Beall Elementary PTA meetings. Tell people there about WECA and get more email recipients signed up. Then in the near future ask about block captains. Many people have volunteer fatigue and are worried about being overcommitted. Suggest distributing the map of vacant blocks to other Block Captains.
  - o Rich Panzer suggested we use smaller breakout groups at meetings to encourage discussion and idea sharing. Zoom has a breakout room feature we could use.
  - o Rich also suggested getting a small group together to push through and finish the webside work by dividing and conquering. He will suggest this to Larry Giammo as a weekend meeting activity.
  - o Liz Baldacci suggested doing break out groups by block location.
  - o Jim Timmick suggested that the City print information or an article in Rockville Reports with the name and contact information of each Civic Association in the City, so citizens know how to get involved.
  - o Patrice Davis suggested having small social group gatherings such as New Moms. This might work better now, or for people who may be too shy to go to a large gathering e.g. in church parking lot.

### **Next Meetings:**

- At our March meeting on Thursday, March 25 at 7 p.m., longtime West End resident Seldon Higgins, who recently wrote his life story, will be the guest of honor and share stories, reminiscing, and answering questions.
- Our April meeting will be an “issues” meeting, when we’ll hear from Block Captains about what is going on in their Blocks.

### **Adjournment:**

A motion was made, and was seconded by Reverend Wood, to adjourn the meeting at 8:06 p.m.