

Minutes of Executive Board Meeting of West End Citizens Association

April 22, 2021

West End Citizens Association Officers

Brian Shipley, President

Noreen Bryan, Vice President

Donna Sprague, Vice President, Outreach

Jen Timmick, Treasurer

Jane Pontius, Corresponding Secretary

Margaret Magner, Recording Secretary

Meeting Attendees in addition to Officers

- WECA Executive Board members: Thomas D'Albora, Tracy diGioia, Maggie Hadley, Rose Slater, Reverend Jane Wood
- Rockville Police: Lt. Berry

Call to Order

President Brian Shipley called the Zoom meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Welcoming Remarks

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

Announcements

- **After a vote by Block Captains we are going to return to doing a paper newsletter again this Spring.** The vote was 7 for print, 4 for electronic. If you are not comfortable going door to door to distribute newsletters yet, please let Jen Timmick know when she contacts you. **Your stack of newsletters for distribution to your block area should arrive to you sometime in early May.**
- The Planning Area 4 Neighborhood Plan was put together by a sub-committee of WECA over 3 years of work and collaboration of neighbors and the City. It is now before the Mayor and Council for approval. WECA testified at the April 12 public hearings on the Plan, asking the Mayor and Council to:
 - Prioritize the zoning revisions indicated in the Plan
 - Support Design Guidelines in the West End
 - Oppose freestanding Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
 - Oppose increasing allowable building heights on the west side of N. Washington St., based on the strong feedback in an April WECA survey of the neighborhood.

The final public hearing on the Plan will be on June 4. Neighbors are encouraged to testify at the hearing or submit written testimony before then.

Business Items

- **Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Jen Timmick said WECA has \$2,770.47 in its business account. There was no activity in the account since our last report.

- **Approval of Minutes from March 22, 2021 meeting**

Jane Pontius moved to accept these minutes and Noreen Bryan seconded. Reverend Wood pointed out that, due to the special nature of the meeting last month, several people who are not residents attended the meeting. With a change made to indicate these were "Additional Participants", the minutes were approved by a vote of 10 in favor, 0 against, and 0 abstentions.

- **Nominating Committee**

Reverend Wood moved to accept the slate of WECA officers presented by the Nominating Committee for the 2021-22 year. Jane Pontius seconded. The slate was approved by a vote of 10 in favor, 0 against, and 0 abstentions and will be put to the community for general election. President Shipley thanked the Nominating Committee for their work and Block Captain Tracy diGioia for stepping forward as nominee for the role of Vice President, Outreach. She introduced herself to the meeting and thanked Donna Sprague, departing the role, for her support.

- **Block Captain Openings**

We have filled some opening recently but still need Captains for the following blocks:

- o 2C: Nelson St. between W. Montgomery and Beall
- o 6A: W. Montgomery between Laird and Nelson Sts.
- o 7A: Lockett and Carr Sts., east of Beall Elementary
- o 9C: Beall Ave. between N. Van Buren and S. Washington Sts. + N. Adams St. north of Beall Ave.
- o 14B: Autumn Wind Way, Summer Garden and Tall Grass Court

If you know anyone who may be interested, please contact margaretmagner@nyc.rr.com.

- **Report from the City**

Hjarman Cordero could not attend tonight. He provided information, highlights of which were read, and meeting minutes distribution will include the full list.

- **Report from the Rockville Police Department**

Lt Berry explained that calls for service from the West End are down and there are no major issues to report.

- o Loud noise from vehicles has been the main complaint. A Task Force of many police jurisdictions is working together to address this. Since many people are now working from home, they hear this daytime noise. If you hear or see particular vehicles or general noise, please contact the police non-emergency number.
- o Rockville Police staffed up to coincide with the end of the Derrick Chauvin trial but things have remained calm here in Rockville.
- o Drug Take-Back day is April 24 from 10 am – 2 pm at Rockville City Police Dept. parking lot.

- o Coffee with a Cop is April 29th at the Bean Bag restaurant at E. Gude and Taft.
- o The next Fair and Impartial Policing event, which deals with the science behind bias, is June 12th from 9 am- 1 pm at F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre. Due to Covid-19, seats are limited. Please contact Lt. Berry at jberry@rockvillemd.gov if you would like to attend.

Issues and Action: Block Captain Discussion

President Shipley reviewed the results and issues raised by Block Captains in the January, 2021 survey and the discussion of issues which occurred at the January and February 2021 WECA Executive Board meetings (see those meeting minutes for detail).

- o President Shipley explained that the new website will be helpful in engaging these groups and also that he'd like WECA to make progress over the summer on putting together a welcome package that Block Captains could share with neighbors when they move in.
- o There was discussion by Reverend Wood, VP Noreen Bryan and President Shipley about the desirability of having a West End community center, and of other potential options in the absence of one.
- o Thomas D'Albora reminded the group that we had a list of topics the group had identified as important in the survey, and focusing on a few of those could be productive
- o President Shipley explained many of the issues identified as priorities in the survey can be addressed by involvement in the Zoning change efforts of the Neighborhood Plan, and the Design Guidelines work anchored in the Neighborhood Plan and now part of the City's draft budget for FY22. He sought input and involvement from Block Captains in agreeing WECA's main priorities and volunteering to work on them.
- o Reverend Wood volunteered to work on the Vitality of Town Center.
- o Maggie Hadley pointed out that when the Neighborhood Plan gets approved, that is the indicator of acceptance by the City of what the neighborhood says it wants for its future. However, in order to turn that into law, there is a follow-on effort to change the actual Zoning so it aligns with the priorities in the approved Neighborhood Plan. She identified the negative impact of teardowns and the importance of historic preservation as priorities and volunteered to work on the Design Guidelines effort.
- o Tracy diGioia identified Housing Affordability as a great area of concern and volunteered to join forces on that topic.
- o President Shipley and Margaret Magner discussed the role of Design Guidelines as a grass-roots, neighborhood-driven tool to help minimize the teardown of smaller, more affordable homes and the ability of residents to have a greater say than outside developers in how new construction is done in our neighborhood.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be on May 27 by Zoom. This will be a General Meeting – all in the neighborhood are invited. Guest speaker will be Mayor Newton, who will talk about the plan and impact to the City of the State’s I-270 expansion project.