

Minutes of Executive Board Meeting of West End Citizens Association
September 9, 2021

Attendance

- WECA Officers: Brian Shipley, President; Noreen Bryan, Vice President; Tracy DiGioia, Vice President, Outreach; Jane Pontius, Corresponding Secretary; Margaret Magner, Recording Secretary; Jen Timmick, Treasurer (arrived following City meeting on Town Center)
- WECA Block Captains: Liz Dunphy Baldacci, Maggie Hadley, Lynn Wagman
- Other Attendees:

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.

- He mentioned that, although we had hoped to be back to meeting in person again by now, we are continuing with Zoom meetings due to the resurgence of the virus, and to follow the City's lead as their public meetings continue to be virtual for now.
- He also pointed out our meeting time tonight conflicts with a number of other City meetings and we are lacking a quorum.

Announcements

- The Fall WECA Newsletters should arrive to Block Captain homes sometime around September 27, for distribution to your Block area within that following week or so.
- The WECA website (<https://www.westendrockvillemd.or/>) has been revamped and additional features will continue to be rolled out on the site. This will include a Projects area where residents can see documents and progress summaries related to projects underway.
- President Shipley will meet with the leaders of other Rockville neighborhood associations next week to develop relationships and share information across organizations.
- The next WECA meeting will be the Fall General Membership meeting on October 14, 2021. Guest speaker will be David Levy, Assistant Director, Rockville Department of Planning and Development Services, who will speak about the "Vitality of Town Center", which was identified as a key concern for West End residents in the January 2021 Block Captain survey.

Business Items

• **Treasurer's Report**

President Shipley gave the report. He said WECA has \$2,539.97 in its business account. There was no activity in the account since last May. We can expect that the charges of approximately \$700 for Fall newsletter printing will be taken out shortly.

• **Approval of Minutes from May, 2021 meeting**

The draft minutes were distributed to the Executive Board in advance of this meeting. Due to lack of quorum, the approval vote was deferred until the next time we have a meeting quorum.

- **Report from the City**

Hjarman Cordero could not attend tonight. He provided information, highlights of which were read. His full written update will be distributed with these minutes.

- **Report from the Rockville Police Department**

Lt. Berry could not attend tonight. He provided a report, highlights of which were read. His full written update will be distributed with these minutes.

- **Block Captain Openings**

Margaret Magner gave the update.

We need Block Captains for the following areas:

- 2C: Nelson St. between W. Montgomery and Beall
- 3C: Brent Road in Roxboro
- 4B: Carr Avenue between Mannakee and Lynch
- 5A: Beall Avenue between Mannakee and Lynch
- 6A: W. Montgomery between Laird and Nelson
- 7A: Beall, Lockett and Carr, east of Beall Elementary
- 9C: Beall Ave. between N. Van Buren and S. Washington Sts. + N. Adams St. north of Beall
- 14B: Autumn Wind Way, Summer Garden and Tall Grass Court

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

There was discussion about the possibility of having “roving Block Captains” cover unfilled areas, and also how we may engage and involve residents as Block Captains based on feedback from the January 2021 Block Captains survey.

Items of Interest in the Neighborhood

- **2040 Comprehensive Plan**

Noreen Bryan gave the update.

- The 2040 Comprehensive Plan was approved by the Mayor and Council on August 2, 2021. Our PA4 Neighborhood Plan, on which we worked for years!, was also approved in that package.
- Noreen thanked Don Hadley for his engagement on the Planning Commission.
- With the exception of a couple of areas, the hard work WECA put into the Plan paid off and the Plan went forward basically according to what residents had said were their priorities for the West End.
- An area of our Plan that was effectively weakened in the final approved version involved Institutions (e.g. businesses being located in the neighborhood). The language governing this was deferred to be worked out during the coming process of changing City Zoning to fit with the Plan. This Zoning change work should happen sometime in the next year or two, depending on the City’s schedule. WECA’s goal is to strike a balance between preserving the Institutions we already have and care about in the neighborhood, and supporting people who

want to do business at home, while not allowing the volume of visitors and traffic into the neighborhood to overwhelm it and change its character.

- **Design Guidelines**

Margaret Wagner gave the update.

Design Guidelines are a project cited in the newly approved PA4 Neighborhood Plan. The Mayor and Council approved funding for West End Design Guidelines in the FY22 budget. The City's Planning and Development Services have assigned Staff members, and a third party consultant is being hired. WECA is forming a committee to be the voice of residents in this process. Due to lack of quorum, the committee approval vote will be done by email to WECA Executive Board members next week.

- **Capital Improvement Projects**

President Shipley gave the update.

- **FY22: Improving Pedestrian Safety on Maryland Avenue**

In FY22, WECA supported a project to put bike lanes in both directions on Maryland Avenue between S. Washington Street and Great Falls Road, reduce the westbound speed limit on Maryland Avenue from 35 to 30 mph, and put up truck restriction signs. The City had been planning changes here, but for several years out. WECA's proposal was to move this up as an FY22 Capital Improvement Project. Construction is now scheduled to begin in October.

- **FY23: Request for Projects**

A call for project suggestions was sent out to neighborhood residents recently by WECA list serv email. Multiple suggestions came back:

- Improve the public alley parallel to W. Montgomery Avenue
- Build alternate access to I-270 at Gude Drive
- Put Pickle ball courts at the old skateboard park at swim center
- Build a Dog park
- Renovate the burned out gas station property on Hungerford Drive
- Add a pedestrian crosswalk at Forest Avenue and Harrison Street

A list containing those suggestions that meet the City's Capital Improvement Project Plan requirements will be circulated this month to Executive Board members to vote on which items WECA officially backs and submits to the City.

- **Development of 22 West Jefferson Street**

President Shipley gave the update.

This property is currently owned by Christ Episcopal Church. It is being sold to developer SGS, who is seeking to develop residential condos in the large red brick building used as Christ Episcopal School and to add townhouses to the property. The developer recently did a presentation to the community laying out ideas and designs for the site which were well-received. There was positive feedback that residential development was planned, not offices or a tall parking garage.

Affordable housing units are not included in the site design because the number of units in the project is too small to require it. Important steps:

- Early schematic elevations have been submitted to the Historic District Commission for courtesy review.
- SGS civil engineering team is currently working on the stormwater management concept and other applications.

- Once the stormwater management package is submitted, SGS will be ready to submit the Pre-Application meeting package to the City.
- There will be a Pre-Application meeting with the community. SGS will advise the date.

- **Remembrance Weekend: Sept. 25/26**

Margaret Magner gave the update.

The Montgomery County Lynching Memorial Project (MoCoLMP) and Montgomery History are holding a Remembrance Weekend on these dates with events to memorialize two Black men who were lynched in Rockville. Mr. John Diggs-Dorsey was lynched in 1880 and Mr. Sidney Randolph was lynched in 1896.

- A virtual symposium about the history of these lynchings will be held on Sept. 25.
- A pilgrimage walk through Town Center and the West End, following the route the two men were taken by the lynching mobs, will be held from 12 to 3 pm on Sept. 26.
- A soil collection ceremony will be held at Welsh Park at 4 pm on Sept. 26.

The events are free and open to the public, and there are also opportunities to serve as event volunteers. For more information: <https://montgomeryhistory.org/event/remembrance-weekend/>

Open Forum

No discussion.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be the Fall General Membership Meeting on October 14 by Zoom. See **Announcements** notes above.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.