

Minutes of Executive Board Meeting of West End Citizens Association
November 11, 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
- WECA Block Captains: Thomas D’Albora, Liz Baldacci, Justus Getty, Maggie Hadley, Alice Liu, Carol Starr, Bob Treseler, Lynn Wagman
- Other Attendees: Lt. John Berry, Hjarman Cordero, Jack Kelly, Aileen Klein

Call to Order

President Brian Shipley called the Zoom meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Welcoming Remarks

President Shipley welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked veterans for their service.

Announcements

- The crosswalk requested by WECA as an FY23 Capital Improvement at Forest Ave. and Harrison Street has been installed.
- The WECA FY22 Capital Improvement request for pedestrian safety improvements on Maryland Ave. is underway now.
- Several Executive Board members have inquired about the possibility of going back to in-person meetings. We are able to meet at the Church as we used to previously. We would also add a Zoom broadcast of the in-person meeting for those concerned about attending in person. Multiple people present said they would be happy about meeting in person again, but highlighted the need for safety. This could mean sitting farther apart, wearing masks, requiring that attendees are vaccinated, having the speaker stand separated apart. Wine and cheese before the meeting was discussed but some safety concerns were expressed about that. President Shipley will check on the protocols of the Church. We will check the Montgomery County transmission level dashboard the week before the meeting, as our guide to whether we meet in person.
- It was decided to forego a December meeting this year.

Business Items

• **Treasurer’s Report**

Treasurer Jen Timmick gave the report. We started and ended last month with a balance of \$1,832.90. There was no income and no expenses.

- **Approval of Minutes from the October, 2021 meeting**

The draft minutes were distributed to the Executive Board in advance of this meeting. Jane Pontius moved to approve them and Noreen Bryan seconded. They were approved by a vote of 12 yays.

- **Report from the City**

Hjarman Cordero gave the update. Residents are encouraged to participate in the 2023 Budget and Priority Survey to make your views heard. It is available in English and Spanish:

<https://www.rockvillemd.gov/951/Budget-Financials>

- Mount Calvary Baptist Church will have a vaccination clinic on Nov. 14 from 12 – 4 pm. Adults and children of vaccination age (5 or older) are welcome.
- A committee met on July 14, 2021 to create a preliminary concept design for the post-reno Rockville Metro station. There are workshops and opportunity for community input coming up. For more information contact Clark Larson at clarson@rockvillemd.gov or 240-314-8225.
<https://www.rockvillemd.gov/2356/Rockville-Metro-Station-Study>
- There will be a presentation of the draft Climate Action Plan at the Mayor and Council meeting on Monday, Feb. 15.
- At that meeting the adoption of an ordinance to establish water and sewage charges for the period of second half of FY2022 through FY2024 will also take place.
- Also at that meeting there will be a discussion and instructions on the Historic District Commission's application to change the designation of a property at 460 Hungerford Drive from Mixed Use Corridor District to a Historic District.
- Recently the Montgomery County Council approved a bill providing protection for renters. Tenants will not have to pay late fees through May 15, 2022 and landlords will not have to return any fees collected during the pandemic.
- The City's annual Holiday Drive seeks support from residents to help needy households in Rockville at the holidays. You can send a tax-deductible check made out to City of Rockville (put Rockville Holiday Drive in the memo line) to Community Services Division, City Hall, 111 Maryland Ave., Rockville, MD 20850. You can also go to the City's Rockville Holiday Drive website and make a contribution online.
- There are collection boxes at Community Centers in the City to collect gently used books for donation to families.
- There are vacancies on several City Boards and Commissions including the Community Policing Advisory Board, Compensation Commission, Cultural Arts Commission, Ethics Commission, Historic District Commission, Human Rights Commission, Recreation and Parks Advisory Board, Rockville Housing Enterprise. If interested please contact Hjarman at hcordero@rockvillemd.gov 240-314-8344, or see the City's website Boards and Commissions page.
- **Report from the Rockville Police Department**
Lt. Berry gave the update. He encouraged residents to apply to serve on the Community Policing Advisory Board.
- Crime Report

- There were 68 calls for service in the past 2 months in West End. Theft from Autos rates are declining. The two-officer detail working in the West End on theft from auto is ongoing. There was an arrest last month for theft from auto in the West End.
- On October 30 there was a stolen vehicle call for the 900 block of Hungerford Drive. Officers responded, located and stopped the vehicle. The suspect fled but was arrested and had a handgun.
- Daylight Savings Time means more darkness in the evening. Please pay extra attention when you are driving to the pedestrians out walking. Pedestrians should wear reflective clothing and carry a flashlight.
- Please lock your doors to your vehicles and your homes. Close garage doors. Turn on exterior lights overnight.
- The Rockville City Police non-emergency number is 240-314-8900. Please call if you have any questions or concerns. You can email Lt. Berry at jberry@rockvillemd.gov or 240-314-8954.

- **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
- 14C: Autumn Wind and Misty Knoll
- 15A: Chestnut Lodge / Bullard Circle

If you know anyone who may be interested, also in being an “At Large” Block Captain, please contact margaretmagner@nyc.rr.com.

Items of Interest in the Neighborhood

- **Villages**

President Shipley and Jack Kelly gave the update.

- Villages involve the coordination of critical services for a specific neighborhood area. They can be organized to provide any services the group wants to do.
- Local neighborhoods want to establish a Village and are forming a Steering Committee to gauge interest and define the structure.
- West End resident Jack Kelly has offered to be our liaison to the Steering Committee.

- WECA will send an email to our list serv with details if you are interested in serving on the Steering Committee.

- **Vitality of Town Center**

President Shipley gave the update.

David Levy from the City Planning and Development Services presented updates and initiative news at the October General Membership Meeting. We are pursuing answers to these follow-ups with the City:

- Request contact information for Federal Realty
- Should the City advertise new restaurants/stores in Town Center? (e.g. listing, coupons could be put in the WECA newsletter; continue inviting Town Center businesses to WECA in person meetings)
- What is the development status of the last block of Maryland Ave.?
- Will the City clearly designate parking spots for restaurant pick-up on Middle Lane and for the area in front of Quickway?

We will also contact new Town Center businesses to advertise in our next newsletter. Please email Shipley.Brian@gmail.com if you have other suggestions.

- **Neighborhood Plan / Zoning Changes**

Noreen Bryan gave the update.

- The Comprehensive Neighborhood Plan, include the plan for our Planning Area 4, was approved by the Mayor and Council in August. In that plan, certain zoning changes were called out as necessary. The group is now working with the City to make these happen.

Examples:

- Prohibit retail in the historic homes and certain other houses that are at the border with Town Center.
- Specify the number, size and density of institutions that are allowed in the neighborhood, including schools, day care centers, major home-based businesses, museums, etc.

- **Design Guidelines**

Margaret Magner gave the update.

The WECA Committee has been formed and will meet for the first time next week. We have provided feedback on the City's RFP to engage an architect consultant to support this initiative. Because many of City Staff who are assigned to this project are new to Rockville, we will give a walking tour to City leaders to focus on areas in the West End which drive the call for Design Guidelines.

- **Road Diets**

Noreen Bryan gave the update.

Planned for North Washington Street and East Middle Lane. Goal is to make the area more pedestrian and bike-friendly. Reduce to only one travel lane in each direction. Space gained from removal of travel lanes would be used for bike paths, wider sidewalks, parking. City consultant developed preliminary design. City to share design and seek community input in coming weeks.

- **Affordable Housing**

Noreen Bryan gave the update.

The pandemic has made residents aware that there are people who earn relatively low wages, such as grocery store clerks, nursing home aides, many of whom cannot afford to live near where they work. The Mayor and Council have become increasingly concerned about this and there are now proposed revisions to City code to increase moderately priced dwelling units (MPDUs):

- Establish a 99-year control period for certain rental MPDUs
- Uniformly apply 15% MPDU set-aside requirements for developments of 50 or more units
- Apply the in-lieu fee formula currently only applicable to life care facilities for contributions to the MPDU fund in lieu of providing MPDUs to senior or special needs housing with services uses

Goal is to expand the number of MPDUs in Rockville in both regular apartment buildings and senior housing facilities.

The question was asked whether WECA should specifically support this, and/or testify at the upcoming hearing. A decision was made to do an email vote this week to the Executive Board with a draft motion for approval.

Open Forum

Suggestions for January meeting topics:

- Trish Evans, Rockville’s Villages Coordinator, could come to speak for 15-20 minutes
- Have a member of City Staff come speak to us about affordable housing

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be the January Executive Board Meeting on January 13. An announcement will be made shortly before the meeting (as described in the Announcements section) about whether this will be an in-person or Zoom meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.