

Minutes of Executive Board Meeting of the West End Citizens Association

February 10, 2022

Attendance

- WECA Officers: Brian Shipley, President; Noreen Bryan, Vice President; Jen Timmick, Treasurer; Jane Pontius, Corresponding Secretary; Margaret Magner, Recording Secretary
- WECA Block Captains: Nadia Azumi, Thomas D'Albora, Maggie Hadley, Carol Starr, Rev. Jane Wood, Kevin Zaletsky
- Other Attendees: Lt. John Berry, Hjarman Cordero, Jack Kelly, Melanie Zaletsky

Call to Order

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

Announcements

There were two announcements related to last month's topics:

- Road Diets – Following Traffic and Transportation Chief Emad Elshafei's presentation to WECA at last month's meeting, President Shipley wrote a letter on behalf of WECA to the City as discussed, reflecting the points in WECA's January motion related to Road Diets. As of this month's meeting, the City has acknowledged the letter but has not responded yet. As a next step he will contact Chief Elshafei and request the current status of the Road Diets project.
- 22 West Jefferson Street – President Shipley wrote a letter on behalf of WECA to the developer, SGA Cos., reflecting the points in WECA's January motion related to 22 West Jefferson Street. He also had a follow up conversation with the developer and with Christ Episcopal Church. He also wrote a letter to the Church supporting a reduction in the number of Church parking spaces on the site. Parking spaces which had been added to the plan caused a reduction in the planned width of the green buffer along the S. Adams Street property lines from the original 8 feet to 4 feet. WECA requested the Church consider fewer parking spaces to allow the buffer to stay at an 8 foot width.

There were two questions from the Board about townhouse guest parking spaces. All the townhouse residents will have parking within their units, and even with a 30% space reduction there would still be 40 additional parking spaces. There was concern about towing cars from those spaces, but that should not be an issue. President Shipley will raise these comments with the developer and ask for an update.

Business Items

• **Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Jen Timmick gave the report. We started and ended last month with a balance of \$1,832.97. There was no income or expense.

- **Approval of Minutes from the January, 2022 meeting**

The draft minutes were distributed to the Executive Board in advance of this meeting. Reverend Wood made a motion to approve them and Jane Pontius seconded. They were approved by a vote of 9 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions.

- **Report from the City**

Hjarman Cordero gave the update.

- The City's Lantern Festival will be celebrated at F. Scott Fitzgerald theatre on Feb. 11.
- The County General Services Dept. will brief the Mayor and Council on Feb. 28 at 7 p.m. about the County's plan to put a School Bus Depot on Seven Locks Road near the Detention Center.
- The first public hearing on the proposed City FY23 Budget will be March 7. On March 21 at 7 p.m. there will be a public hearing and work session on the FY23 Budget. The last Budget public hearing will be on April 25. Residents can testify at the meetings or submit written testimony in advance.
- The Mayor and Council voted to increase development fees across the board by an average of 2.5% to address increased expenses from development-related services and the cost of new energy-efficient technologies. This affects development services including some building permits, some non-business licenses, fire safety and occupancy permits. To encourage the installation of solar panels and electric vehicle charging fixtures, the fees for these were reduced by about 50%.
- Please fill out the surveys about the City's budget survey (on the City's website under Budget) and the City's Pedestrian Master Plan. Students who participate in the surveys and follow the instructions on the City website Volunteer page can earn 1 hour of volunteer time.

- **Report from the Rockville Police Department**

Lt. Berry gave the update.

- Crime Report: There was one significant event on Bullard Circle – a home was entered through an unlocked door. This is still under investigation. Please follow the Rockville Police on social media sites and on Alert Rockville for updates.
- The Pike's Peak race is on April 24. There will be traffic slowdowns. You will not be able to cross 355 at certain places.
- It is budgeting season. Lt. Berry offered to provide the group an explanation of the Rockville Police budget at an upcoming meeting.
- He also has recently done a presentation on Police Training and would be glad to provide that here as well. These presentations can help give a better understanding of what the Rockville Police actually do in the community, which may not be clear from news reports or conversations.

Items of Interest in the Neighborhood

- **Rockville Villages Groups**

Jack Kelly gave the update.

- There are 5 Villages in various states of being built out in Rockville. The King Farm Village is probably the farthest along, followed by Twinbrook.

- Some of the activities he mentioned that are done by Rockville Villages include a Book Club, potluck dinners, birdwatching tour of Redgate Park, handing out welcome gift bags to new incoming neighbors, a cookie-baking group. The Board of Directors and Planning Committee of each Village group make the decisions about what and how the group will support neighbors.
- The very first group that tried to set up a Village in Rockville was in the West End, in the Feld/Evans area.
- The point was made that there is a lot of overlap between WECA's charter and the purpose and activities of a Village. WECA could think about supporting the Villages in a deliberate fashion. There is interconnection with WECA's interests, particularly around having neighborhood social and interaction events.
- Jack will provide President Shipley with Villages information which will be sent out on WECA's list serv. If you are interested you can also reach Jack directly at jwkelly43@gmail.com.

- **Affordable Housing**

President Shipley gave the update.

- Asmara Habte, Director of Housing and Community Development for Rockville, will be the speaker at next month's WECA Executive Board meeting. City Manager Rob DiSpirito will also attend.
- If anyone has specific topics or questions they would like to share with her in advance, for her to address with us, please email them to shipley.brian@gmail.com.

Open Forum

Noreen Bryan raised a point about 10 - 12 S. Adams Street:

- These are 2 of the 3 remaining historic houses on S. Adams between Jefferson and Bombay Bistro. They have been used commercially for a long time. The new owners are requesting, at the February Historic District Commission (HDC) meeting, permission to put a driveway in between the two houses.
- When these properties were discussed as part of the PA4 Neighborhood Plan, it was agreed and put forward in the Plan that they could remain commercial or could become residential. However, the Neighborhood Plan Committee was also concerned that these properties had lost all the trees and landscaping in the area around them. The committee had asked that the properties be improved with regard to plantings, etc.
- A question was raised about the reason for the request for a driveway and there was discussion about the parking access for those properties always having been from the rear, by turning off of Jefferson Street. There was a question about whether perhaps safety concerns or traffic pattern changes could be related to the request.
- A motion was made by Noreen Bryan and seconded by Nadia Azumi:
 "If review of the proposal to install a driveway between 10 and 12 S. Adams St. is in conflict with the Neighborhood Plan for Planning Area 4, then we support providing that information to the HDC and request that either the driveway not be constructed or that appropriate landscaping improvements be made to the property."

- A vote was taken and the motion was approved by a vote of 8 Yes, 1 No and 1 Abstention.

Nadia Azumi expressed some concerns about Villages. President Shipley emphasized that WECA would not require or recommend participation but can provide information to the neighborhood about Villages activities and opportunities.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be the March Executive Board Meeting on March 10.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.