

Minutes of Executive Board Meeting of the West End Citizens Association
March 10, 2022

Attendance

- **WECA Officers:** Noreen Bryan, Vice President; Tracy DiGioia, Vice President, Outreach; Jen Timmick, Treasurer; Jane Pontius, Corresponding Secretary; Margaret Magner, Recording Secretary
- **WECA Block Captains:** Nadia Azumi, Justus Getty, Maggie Hadley, Rev. Jane Wood, Patricia Woodward, Kevin Zaletsky
- **Other Attendees:** Lt. John Berry, Hjarman Cordero, Rob DiSpirito, Asmara Habte, Melanie Zaletsky

Call to Order

Vice President Noreen Bryan called the Zoom meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Announcements

There were two announcements by Vice President Bryan:

- Road Diets – WECA sent a letter to the Mayor and Council and City Staff last month related to the Road Diets project slated for N. Washington Street and E. Middle Lane. WECA believes:
 - The proposed Road Diets strike the wrong balance amongst the motorist, pedestrian and cyclist users of the roadway. The amount of space devoted to bicyclists appears out of proportion to their presence on the road compared to pedestrians, motorists and buses.
 - WECA very much wants Town Center to thrive, and wants businesses there to have access to delivery trucks and to visitors to the area.
 - There also appear to be real problems in the plan regarding buses. Buses are essential to our community, yet, the Road Diet plan to shrink to one lane each way can create safety hazards. When buses stop to pick up riders, they cannot move out of the one travel lane. Frustrated car drivers may pull out into oncoming traffic to try to get around the stopped bus.

WECA encourages the City to do more work to get better data to achieve a solution that meets the needs of businesses, neighbors and visitors to Town Center.

- Community Get-together – WECA is hoping to have a community get together in person in May, which will be open to the whole community. Hoping to see everyone there! More discussion at the April meeting.

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 February, 2022 meeting**

The draft minutes were distributed to the Executive Board in advance of this meeting. Nadia Azumi made a motion to approve them and Jane Pontius seconded. They were approved by a vote of 10

Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions.

- **Report from the City**

Hjarman Cordero gave the update.

- City Hall will reopen on March 28.
- The next public hearing for the budget will be on Monday, March 21. This will also be a working session on the use of City budget and American Rescue Plan Act funds.
- The Historic District Commission will hold a public hearing to review the County Detention Center demolition plan at 7 p.m. on Thursday, March 17. It will address the demolition of no-longer-used areas of that facility.
- The Rockville City Academy will happen during month of May, in Spanish language. Another City Academy in English is planned for the Fall.
- You may want to check the Mayor and Council meeting agendas for programs and projects of interest to your group. You are invited to take the City's Budget Survey in Spanish or English, and also to take a survey related to the City's first Pedestrian Master Plan. Both surveys are available on the City website.
- Summer Program registration has begun.
- City Manager Rob DiSpirito was present and spoke briefly to reinforce in particular the importance of taking the surveys and of the budget public hearing.

- **Report from the Rockville Police Department**

Lt. Berry gave the update.

- Crime Report: 29 calls for service occurred in the West End over the past month. These were mostly traffic-related.
- An auto theft occurred on Adclare Road. This was a singular event.
- A shooting incident occurred in the 700 block of Monroe Street. Several shots were fired in the apartment complex area. No injuries were sustained. An investigation is underway.
- Coffee with a Cop happened yesterday at the Congressional Plaza Starbucks. The next one will happen in April and Lt. Berry will let us know details at the April WECA meeting.
- As the weather gets warmer, remember that more pedestrians and bike riders will be out. Especially in the West End, please be vigilant and pay attention for walkers and riders.
- The Rockville Police Dept. is hiring for several positions: Dispatcher, Lateral Police Officer and Entry-Level Police Officer. These positions are posted on the City website under Jobs. The Police force is eager to have people who live in our community apply to serve on the Rockville Police.

Items of Interest in the Neighborhood

- **Nominating Committee**

Vice President Bryan gave the update.

- Each year at this time a Nominating Committee is formed to seek candidates for the WECA officer positions.

- A motion was made by Nadia Azumi to create the Nominating Committee for this year with Jane Pontius and Tracy DiGioia as Committee members. The motion was seconded by Jen Timmick and passed by a vote of 10 yes, 0 no and 0 abstentions.
- Please invite neighbors to submit candidates for officer roles to Jane and/or Tracy.
- The slate of officers for 2022-2023 will be announced at the April WECA Executive Board meeting.

• **Affordable Housing**

Vice President Bryan introduced the session by reminding that the pandemic has brought home that many people who provide critical services to our community cannot afford to live here. We were pleased as a community that the City put forth consideration of an ordinance to increase the amount of PDUs in new developments and to extend their life to 99 years. Further, that ordinance proposal addresses creating affordable units for seniors. When this was circulated for feedback within WECA’s Executive Board, 80% of those responding supported this ordinance.

Asmara Habte, Director, Housing and Community Development gave a presentation organized around the following questions that WECA had circulated in advance of the session:

- What is the definition of affordable housing and what various types exist in the City?
- What is the City’s vision for affordable housing and what policy changes are being implemented to affect change?
- What is the status of the ordinance to increase MPDUs to 15% in new developments?
- What is the distribution methodology of affordable housing across the City? How was housing distributed at 50 Monroe Street?
- How does Rockville compare (percentage of units) to other/neighboring cities?

Her presentation clearly addresses each of these points and is being circulated with these notes as a record of the points made and topics discussed.

Open Forum

- Reverend Wood noted that she has been attending the Villages meetings and can keep us updated on that. She said the group is planning a Meet and Greet for May and more information will be forthcoming.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be the April Executive Board Meeting on April 7.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 p.m.