



AHCA Community Meeting
January 3, 2017 - 7:30 PM
AcademyHeightsMD.org

Called to Order at 7:36pm with President Joe Shinault presiding.

Board members in attendance (12): Linda Barnes, George Brookhart, Chris Burk, Mike Granito, Nikki Green, Matt McKnight, John & Beth McSweeney, John O'Ferrall, Joe Shinault, Troy Smith, Becky Stoll, Chris Waterman

Members absent: Amanda Clark, Patrick Young

Minutes from December 6, 2016 were approved.

New members: Henry and Samantha Bodenshine of 311 Greenlow were welcomed.

Community Outreach – Officer Boone has joined us as our community outreach officer, but was not able to attend.

Treasurer's Report – Chris Waterman reported that as of the most recent statement (end of October), the balances were as follows: \$6595.80 (checking) and \$19439.30 (T.Rowe Price). 18% of households paid dues in 2016.

George Brookhart recommended that, in order to achieve the recent historical average of 25-30% of households having paid dues, the association have solicitation tables at all community events.

Chris Waterman continues to research alternatives to the T.Rowe Price money market account, i.e. CDs. He will prepare a presentation for the next meeting.

Committees

Architectural – John O'Ferrall reported on the most recent meeting of the architectural committee. 322 Lambeth deck plans were approved. The committee recommends denial of an application for a front-yard motorcycle pad, pending board ratification.

Members of the committee would like to formalize a procedure by which they make recommendations and the board ratifies and communicates decisions. The committee is also working to revise the architectural guidelines with a view toward more effective enforcement. The committee recommends that all applications be submitted a week prior to the next community meeting.

The front-yard motorcycle pad application was discussed. Mike Granito explained that to allow a motorcycle pad would negatively impact architectural integrity, as well as potentially encouraging the illegal operation of motorcycles on the sidewalk. Beth McSweeney suggested that we cite the relevant county code and public safety issues. Joe Shinault moved approval of the board's recommendation to deny this application. Motion passed unanimously.

Joe Shinault asked for an update on outstanding issues. John O’Ferrall reported that there was a discussion of attorney fees at the last committee meeting, particularly as pertaining to glass block window violations. The committee concluded that the board needs to convene in order to determine funding priorities, as well as any revisions to the bylaws; they will provide recommendations to the board in terms of flagrant offenders to pursue.

The dumpster on Edmondson Avenue was discussed. Beth McSweeney indicated that county regulations limit the duration that dumpsters can remain in place.

Joe Shinault reported that multiple cars have been recently towed out of the neighborhood, mainly for expired tags.

Website – is up and running. Joe Shinault asked which sponsors are current with their dues.

George Brookhart indicated that he had not solicited additional payments from any of them.

Block party sponsorship is separate from website sponsorship, though both can be purchased as a bundle. Chris Waterman asked about amounts; George Brookhart indicated that \$200 was the reasonable rate charged previously to sponsor/support maintenance of the website.

Welcome Committee – Meghan Young was not in attendance, but George Brookhart had sent her an update. One home settled in December. 29 sold in 2016. There are a total of three for sale currently (one month of inventory, indicative of a strong seller’s market). George Brookhart shared that 6% turnover per year is low, representing a stable housing market.

Dues – need to be paid.

Newsletter – Joe Shinault reported that the next newsletter is scheduled to go out at the end of January, but will be disseminated in early February following the February meeting.

Linda Barnes asked that the Halloween party be included.

George Brookhart offered to write copy regarding the Block Party for inclusion, as well.

Beth McSweeney asked that the Easter Egg Hunt be advertised.

Bylaws – Mike Granito reviewed the requirements to amend the bylaws. Joe Shinault suggested that information regarding potential revisions to the bylaws be included in the newsletter. Mike Granito addressed the respect for process and community involvement that a separate communication would demonstrate.

Old Business

Christmas Décor Contest – Beth McSweeney has not heard back about ornaments for the four winners, which were announced. A large group of Mount de Sales students served as judges. Joe Shinault posted signage and will pick the signs up soon.

Dog Receptacles – Nikki Green reviewed her research. She had solicited input at the block party and found support among dog owners for receptacles providing bags (without attached trash cans). The board needs to decide on a number to install and in which common areas, i.e. ends of alleys, to do so.

Two board members expressed concerns about dog excrement left on the Christian Temple grounds; receptacles’ being placed nearby could help alleviate this issue. Mike Granito suggested that when community input is solicited for potential revisions to the bylaws, additional input be asked as to where to locate these, as well.

Sewer Line – The county’s official response to our letter was dated December 12, 2016. Our local government liaison explained the easement mentioned in that response.

Chris Waterman suggested that the board compile data to refute the assertion in the letter that sewer back-up issues were a product of the recent 1000-year flood. Nikki Green shared that insurance will drop those insured who make three claims due to sewage back-up; Chris Burk confirmed.

Chris Burk disputed several assertions in the letter, including that backflow preventers had ever been offered and that issues had not been communicated to the county. George Brookhart asked if a log of communication has been compiled. Chris Burk has reviewed the relevant reports (required by a State of Maryland consent decree), found discrepancies, and communicated those. He filed a request for additional documentation pursuant to the Public Information Act and was referred to counsel.

Nikki Green reported her experiences attempting to solicit assistance from the county with this ongoing problem. Chris Burk and George Brookhart addressed the impacts on home values and insurability.

Joe Shinault questioned the efficacy of disputing the letter as opposed to convening a sit-down meeting. Troy Smith asked if more information is required or a solution. Our liaison offered to set up a meeting with our councilman; Nikki Green will email her regarding an opportunity on the 24th. Mike Granito questioned whether the councilman would be able to move the process forward. George Brookhart suggested that those affected compile documentation and requests. There has been a larger meeting at Christian Temple prior.

There is an upcoming community meeting (January 30 from 6:30-8:30pm at the Arbutus library) on solid waste management.

Little Library – Matt McKnight reported that repairs continue and its return to functionality is forthcoming.

New Business

Election of Officers/Board – All nominees were elected without dissent.

2017 Meeting Times/Location – Joe Shinault continues to try to work with Mount de Sales to secure space.

Dumpster Day – is currently scheduled for June 3. John O’Ferrall volunteered to coordinate.

Open Discussion

Promoting meetings – John O’Ferrall asked about previous signage that had advertised community meetings. This will be revisited once 2017 meeting times/locations have been finalized.

Adjourned at 8:41pm. Recorded by Jeannette Bonomo-Thomas.