

**Westside Neighborhood Association  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Minutes – May 16, 2013**

**In Attendance**

Joshua Boehme, Dan Boutell, Cathy Bacile Cunningham, Keith Kris, Jen Long, Sara McCormick, Cassandra Nelson, Jackie Payne, Paul Pratt, Michael Schury, John Stratton

**Excused**

Danielle Casavant, Ellie Wong

**Absent**

Suzanne Knight

**Guests**

Cleveland Boyd and Stephany Wills Boyd, Crime and Safety Committee

**Call to Order**

President Mike Schury called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM. He requested that the following items be added to the agenda:

- Racer Trust under Communications
- Compost Bins under Grants
- Westside Commercial Association under Business Promotion
- Request from Parks Board member under New Business
- Neighborhood sign under Crime and Safety.

Agenda items approved as requested.

**Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the April meeting were approved as presented.

**Crime and Safety**

Crime and Safety was discussed first as a courtesy to the guests, Cleveland and Stephany Boyd. The problem house at 1325 Lenawee has been foreclosed for unpaid taxes will be torn down; this house has been uninhabitable for years and was a blight on the street. The Land Bank will handle demolition of the house and sale of the lot.

Payne distributed promotional flyers from the Land Bank featuring houses for sale. The board discussed ways to distribute information on Land Bank properties for sale. Suggestions included asking the Land Bank to submit an article and photographs of the houses in the Westside Neighborhood for inclusion in the next WNA newsletter and putting flyers in popular business locations on the Westside including Fork in the Road.

Chance Boyd raised the question of having a neighborhood sign erected on Lenawee Street. Schury noted that permission from was required by the city as owner of the property and suggested that Boyd send a letter to Jessica Yorko asking her to facilitate this.

Payne circulated a copy of the data base of landlords on Lenawee, Kalamazoo and Hillsdale streets. These streets are a special focus of the Crime and Safety Committee for improvement through code compliance and law enforcement. The C&S committee will invite landlords to a meeting to discuss neighborhood issues and to invite their input on how to maintain and improve the neighborhood. Payne also circulated copies of the draft letter to landlords.

McCormick noted she expressed concerns about recent vandalism and disruptive behavior by Sexton students as school let out to Chief Yankowski and to Sexton administration. The following day the principal and vice principal were walking the area around Sexton accompanied by uniformed officers. This seems to have impressed the students as problems have abated for the time being.

### **Old Business**

Nelson and Schury will meet with Advent House to discuss ways to partner. Schury has requested the meeting but has not heard back.

Schury has requested copyright permission from Advent House to make a digital archive of the Home Tour brochures from past years as an historic record. Advent house will retain the copyright to the booklets. Advent House responded that they need to run it by their lawyers.

Casavant has 4 keys to the storage space at St. Joe Park to which WNA has been granted access by Parks and Rec. She will notify Parks and Rec when keys change hands as officers are elected or resign. Items stored by various WNA members will be moved to the space. WNA members with items are asked to forward a list of those items to Payne. Payne will maintain an inventory record of WNA items stored in the space. No personal items may be stored in the St. Joe storage space.

### **New Business**

Parks Board member Paul Holland requested support from the WNA board to get trees planted in the Westside area. Holland would like the WNA to advocate for trees in our area. Moved, seconded and passed that Schury will draft a letter to Holland offering support in the form of resources, including possibly personnel and money if needed, to get the trees planted in areas where trees have been removed by the city but not replaced.

### **Treasurer**

Moved, seconded and passed that excess funds earned by the Fiesta last year and this year, above expenses and scholarship grants, will be moved to the General Fund from the Scholarship Fund. Board discussed adding additional scholarships if finances allow. The Fiesta earned more this year than last year despite increased costs. Boehme will provide a list of unsold items to the board. Casavant will call a meeting of Fiesta planners to discuss and recap what went well and what needs improvement.

**Yard Sale**

Kris is in charge of the June 14-16 yard sale. About 15 families have signed up to participate. Deadline for signing up is Friday, June 7. Moved, seconded and approved \$100 for expenses associated with the yard sale including maps and advertising. Old Oakland will host a yard sale on the same days and at the same time. WNA will include them in our maps. Amy from Old Oakland will coordinate with Kris.

**Voter Education**

Cunningham discussed hosting a candidate's night prior to the June 22 receipt of absentee ballots by voters requesting them. Tentative date set for June 19: Cunningham will check for major conflicts and will request the Community Room at Letts for the meeting. The ten candidates for 4<sup>th</sup> ward and at-large city council seats will be invited to speak. Mayoral candidates will not be included as that would overload the agenda. Each candidate will be allotted 5 to 7 minutes to speak. Letters of invitation will go out to candidates on May 17. Moved, seconded and passed to allocate \$100 for expenses for the event. Boutell will get information on the event into the upcoming WNA newsletter. Long will design a flyer/poster for the event. Kris will get it printed. Cunningham will also contact other neighborhood associations in the 4<sup>th</sup> Ward to invite them to participate.

**Westside History Project**

Matthew Miller is working on this project in his spare time. He has interviewed Ann Kron who started the WNA in 1965.

**Communications**

Channel 6 interviewed Kris about his letter to the City suggesting that residence in the City of Lansing be encouraged in appointing a new police chief. This letter was written before Mike Yankowski was appointed interim Chief. Kris will send Yankowski, who does not live in the city, a letter of explanation.

**WNA Newsletter**

May 31 is the deadline for articles for the WNA newsletter. RACER Trust wants to put an article in the newsletter promoting a meeting on the former Verlinden GM site. Racer has asked for the WNA database of addresses to use in mailing a letter about the meeting. Moved, seconded and approved, with a dissenting vote from Stratton, that we share our list on a one-time only use basis. RACER Trust can obtain additional lists from the City Clerk, Chris Swope.

**Sign Toppers – WNA logo sign on street signs**

Kris proposed that the WNA make sign toppers out of old road signs. Rod Lambert has the tools and Kris has designed the sign topper. WNA would pay for the materials and the city will install them once approval from the city is granted. Kris will move forward with gathering costs and bring that back to the board at a later date.

**Summer Event**

McCormick proposed July 20 as the date for the Summer Event to be held either at the Letts Center or St. Joe Park. St. Joe Park may be opened without charge. McCormick suggested a musical event featuring guitar playing. St. Joe Park has little shade: the board discussed renting a canopy for the event but no decision was made on that.

**Grants Commiteee**

Nelson reminded the board that the mayoral grant applications are due in the fall, October or November, and asked the board to be considering grant proposals.

**Gardens and Compost Bins**

The board discussed the presence and absence of various black compost bins. The WNA bought 7 bins and gave them to Letts Community Garden's coordinator, John Bolan, to be placed in the garden to replace dilapidated bins which neighbors have complained about to the WNA. The bins are not where they should be and the wooden pallet bins are still there. Schury will contact John Bolan to enquire on the status of the 7 new bins and the timeline for the pallet bins to be removed.

All spots are taken in the MLK garden. Carol Rall asked to be reimbursed for repairs done to a wheel barrow and picnic table. Although prior approval for repairs was not requested, it was moved, seconded and approved to make reimbursement. Board requested information on where the \$10 fee for a garden plot goes. The money goes to the Land Bank and helps pay for the seeds, mulch and such that the Land Bank provides. Nelson will ask Rall to get the WNA link on the Land Bank garden website.

**Houses of Worship** –No report. The list is due August 31 for inclusion in the WNA newsletter.

**Riddle Elementary**

Long reported that the \$650 grant for playground equipment for Riddle has not been spent. She has not made contact with the Riddle School principal to determine placement of the swing set.

Riddle is having a Carnival on Friday, May 17. This is a fundraiser for the school.

**Scholarships**

Pratt was not able to present scholarships to awardees as Sexton gave him short notice of the presentation ceremony. Both scholarship recipients attended the WNA Fiesta. Pratt plans to get the scholarship committee together to review and plan for the future.

**RACER Trust**

Schury asked Pratt to contact Racer Trust and ask for short bullet points on what has already happened and what near-term plans are for the Verlinden site so the information can be included in the WNA newsletter.

### **Sexton**

The Teacher Appreciation Breakfast will be held May 30 at 7:15 am at Sexton. The purpose of the breakfast is to meet the teachers and to build relationships with them. Teachers will arrive at 7:30 and will be there until 8:45. McCormick has a \$75 budget for this event.

### **Business Promotion**

The Westside Commercial Association covers a larger territory than does the WNA but it covers most of the commercial areas of the Westside neighborhood. There is a fee of \$25 to \$35 to join the WCA. The benefit of joining would be that the WNA would be listed as a member on their website and in their literature. Moved, seconded and passed that the WNA join the WCA. Danielle Casavant, Elle Wong and Mike Schury will build a list of Westside businesses and those owned by Westsiders. This list will be part of the Summer newsletter and will be part of a welcome packet possibly sent to Realtors along with the list of places of worship once that list is created.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM