Ghent Neighborhood League Minutes
March 21, 2019

Next Meeting: May 16, 2019, 6:30 PM, The Hague School

I. Call to order and introductions

President Michael Spencer called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m. Catherine Kilduff recorded minutes. After the President welcomed the membership, those in attendance introduced themselves.

Board members present: Karen Reynes, Catherine Kilduff, Emily Birknes, Larry Brett, Sarah Petroske, Paige Rose, JR Montalvo, Nat McCormick

Board members absent: George Kello

II. Safety Report – Community Resources Officer (CRO) Samantha Perez

Officer Perez reviewed the crime statistics for the past month.

She introduced a partnership between homes with Ring doorbells and the police department. For every certain number of downloads of an app that works with Ring doorbells and the police department, the company gives the police department free ring doorbells to distribute to residences. Officer Perez expects that this app will be easier to use than Nextdoor. More information will be provided. [Text 555888 for the link to download the app so that Norfolk gets the credit to acquire doorbells.]

April 27 is designated a national “take back” day to dispose of prescription drugs. Always at 811 E City Hall there is a box to dispose of prescription drugs.

April 27 is also the NATO parade.

If you see missing stop signs or pedestrian signs, please send those comments to her.

Officer Perez’s cell phone: 757-409-0028, Samantha.Perez@norfolk.gov

III. Guest Speakers

Delegate Jay Jones (District 89)

- Ghent is now entirely in District 89, for the first time.

- Budget highlights:
  - School funding: (1) 5% teacher pay raise. Localities must match it. (2) $25 million for the at-risk add-on. Norfolk is a locality that benefits from this. (3) $12 million in additional school counselors.
- Rural broadband.

- Housing: (1) Established a housing trust fund: $7 million to help with Virginia’s housing crisis. (2) St. Petersburg and Hampton are pilot communities.

- Higher education: Addressed student loans in order to keep higher education tuition relatively flat.

- Tax bill passed this month so that some of the surplus money will go to taxpayers.

- Redistricting: Still in litigation.

- Age limit to purchase to cigarettes was increased to 21.

- He profiled issues under discussion and upcoming bills related to gambling, tolls (45-50% of his constituent calls are related to tolls), student safety, and more.

- Questions were asked related to flood mitigation and tolls.

Norfolk Preservation Collective – Kayla Halberg

- Norfolk Preservation Collective is a new group to help support the positive impact that historic preservation has in our community. See their Facebook page for more information.

- The first step is to recognize what we have as a city; then help each other preserve that; and have fun.

- The next community event is in about a week, March 28, 6 p.m., at the Hague School, where they gather ideas and goals from attendees.

- On May 15 they will be having a bike tour. On May 30 they will have awards for historic preservation.

EVMS Property – Nat McCormick

- Smith Rogers Hall was built in 1960. It is historic tax credit eligible because it is over 50 years old.

- Each site is about 1.5 acres, for a total of 3 acres. The zoning is basic preservation zoning, the same as the rest of the neighborhood (for example, the height limitation is typical residential scale of 25-30 feet).
Dog Park Update

- New signage for the park says closed when locked to deter trespassers. Ideally the lock would be electronic to avoid having the public be responsible for locking the park.
- It will be closed in April to reseed and replace fibar in the central pit.
- The dog park is looking for a storage container to put in the park for rakes and other tools. A storage bench could suffice in the park.

IV. Reports of Officers and Standing Committees

No reports from officers.

V. President’s Report

The Amodios suffered a fire on the 500 block of Pembroke Ave. and are hoping to stay in the neighborhood while the house is repaired, possibly for two years. Their garage has a room above it. The Amodios are asking the city for permission to expand the apartment above one garage over both garages. We are hoping that the Ghent Neighborhood League supports that application.

The May meeting will include announcement of new officers for the following year.

The meeting concluded at 7:57 p.m.