Ghent Neighborhood League Minutes
September 20, 2018

Next Meeting: October 18, 2018, 6:30 PM, The Hague School
Special Guest: Mayor Alexander

I. Call to order and introductions

President Mike Spencer called the meeting to order at 6:36 pm. After welcoming the membership, those in attendance introduced themselves.

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

Absent: Tyler Sherwin, Larry Brett

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

a. Report – Cars stolen but keys left in the car, unlocked. Larcenies around Norfolk General, which is in the boundary, but not entirely within the neighborhood. She and a detective are sorting through the larcenies, reviewing video, and hope to have more information soon.

b. Saturday is the Ghent 10K.

c. She will be at the synagogue distributing candy for Halloween. Please spread the word for anyone that would like a safe place to trick-or-treat.

d. Stockley Gardens dog park: standing order is if the dog park association closes the park for maintenance, for wetness for example, anyone in the park is NOT trespassing under the city ordinance. The city enforces the 7-7:30 time limits. There is gray area, but the problem is that the city doesn’t control the locking of the park. The city controls what is on the sign. The dog park association said that they are notifying RPOS (recreation and parks) when they close the park.

III. Guest Speakers

- Courtney Doyle, City Council
  1. Traffic

  o Hampton Blvd traffic is pervasive, and reaching a crescendo at this point. She will serve with the mayor on a task force to address traffic. The city hired a data scientist to look at hotspots. She is also meeting with John Rinehart at the city.
Trucks only make up 6% of the accidents.
To date, the city has done 4-5 things between Terminal Blvd and Redgate: (1) zero tolerance on speeding; (2) restriped Spotswood and Hampton and replaced the lights, so that the signals are brighter, and pedestrian signs; (3) will redo Azalea and Hampton intersection and will put up cameras.

2. Norfolk Southern
   o Potential for moving headquarters from Norfolk to Atlanta. The City wants them to stay; they are good corporate citizens and we want them to remain in downtown Norfolk.

3. Small Business
   o City is working to make permitting easier. She met with the city manager to help with those solutions.

  o October 13 – open house. How we talk to each other and how we present to each other matters. There are no rows or desks at this school, only conference tables around which students have discussion facilitated by a master instructor.

- Jeremy McGee, Four Eleven York
  o Former Freemason Inn, and Machismo burrito will be combined into one facility. Four high-end rooms for rent plus a restaurant. He encourages reservations. They have a patio with thirty seats outside and a pergola. Brunch service on Saturday and Sunday will start later in the month.

- Allan Sullivan, AWS Consulting Services, Monument Development Proposal:
  o Their request is to apply railroad historic overlay to the project. This puts the building into the purview of the architecture review board forever. About 6000 square feet will be converted into indoor parking. Construction will start in December, finish in summer. It’s 35,000 square feet. There will be 25 apartments that are urban-style, market rates.

- Emily Adams, Hague Activities:
  o “Placemaking” is something she thinks a lot about as a community development professional. It’s about our neighbors but also making amazing experiences that draw people to Ghent. She has a focus on volunteering and making it fun,
“volunteer festivities.” You get a PACE bikeshare credit in return.
Hagueweekends.com.

IV. President’s Report:

Goals of the Board:

- Flood mitigation, flooding. Can we get a pet-friendly shelter in our neighborhood in the event of an emergency?
- Promoting the general safety of residents.
- Facilitate communications (new website!)
- Focus on reforestation within the community

City painted the Hague bridge this summer and did a great job.

The building at 355 Freemason Street received an emergency demolition order from the City, which was stayed for 30 days by a judge on September 19, 2018. Additional briefs on the court’s jurisdiction are due in seven days.

There is a question about PACE signage and bicycles in a historic district. It will go on the agenda of the project review board on October 3.

This Saturday, September 22, is the Heart of Ghent 10K. Look at the website for closures.


V. Reports of Officers and Standing Committees


b. Community Involvement and Communications. Website will direct you to Dropbox, where we will archive the documents that we publish. New domain name is www.ghentneighborhoodleague.org. Board emails will be first name@ghentneighborhoodleague.org. We do have a Facebook page to see events and information relevant to the neighborhood.

c. Project Review – The Project Review Board has reviewed 28 projects this year. Some are small, such as residential fences, and some are large, such as the new EVMS building and Christ & St. Luke’s renovations. The meetings occur at the Williams School, 418 Colonial Ave., on Wednesdays prior to the fist ARB meeting, which is always on a Monday.
d. **Community Improvement** – The July 4th parade was a success. Suggestions for next year include a shorter route to accommodate younger kids and to bring water for distribution. Attendance was around 35.
The neighborhood is trying to find areas that need more trees. Paige Rose continues to follow houses where neglect is evident.

e. **Safety** – Businesses can link their surveillance cameras can hook into the city system. Is that available for residents?

f. **Ghent Dog Park** – On a quarterly basis will test the soil so that the grass stays healthy. They are fundraising to replace aspects that are wearing thin.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 pm