Ghent Neighborhood League Minutes
April 15, 2020

Next Meeting: May 20, 2020, 6:30 PM, Zoom

Special Guests: Erik Neil, Chrysler Museum
Dr. Colin Findlay, Sentara

I. Call to order and introductions

President Emily Birknes called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm. After welcoming the membership, she gave instructions on how to participate in the Zoom meeting (Alt + y will raise your hand to comment).

Board members present: Karen Reynes, Catherine Kilduff, Nat McCormick, George Kello, Paige Rose, Larry Brett, Jeremy McGee, Bob Kelly, Sarah Petroske, Jean Webster

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

a. The police force gets temperature checks every day.

b. She has been at home. Next week she works 12-hour shifts on the street. She’ll primarily be in Wards Corner, DePaul hospital on a temporary basis. She will be relieving the “reserve” shift of about 70 police.

c. They are responding in-person to fewer events. Other events have to be reported online or by phone. The number 844-801-2190 is the toll-free citizen’s reporting tool for larceny, vandalism, etc.

d. Norfolk beaches are closed and open only for fishing and exercising. Beach patrol will be there enforcing this. Parks remain closed. Elizabeth River Trail remains open for exercise.

e. Scams are likely related to COVID-19 and the stimulus check. Do not answer questions via calls or emails asking for your bank account or other personal information.

f. At the end of March she has gotten complaints about illegal operation of AirBnb and traffic problems. If in violation of code, please be aware that there is enforcement occurring.
III. Guest Speakers

- Erik Neil and Seth Femen, Chrysler Museum, and Tommy Fox, Artist
  
  o Proposed public sculpture marking the edge of the Neon District, at Yarmouth St. and Brambleton Ave.

  o They are in the middle of design. Tommy Fox, artist based in Richmond, will design it.

  o It will be in a tree-shape, with brightly colored abstract pieces at the top. It will be made of aluminum and likely painted with automotive paint. There will be a sign for the Chrysler Museum, as well as bollards for lighting. Walkways and landscaping will make it more like a park rather than a freestanding structure.

  o A question was raised about whether this would direct traffic down Yarmouth St. The monument is intended to indicate a museum nearby, to indicate this is an art space, rather than directing traffic.

  
  o A question was raised about why the change was made from the earlier concept. The earlier design had questions about whether it could be fabricated the way it was designed, or production issues.

- Dr. Colin Findlay, Chief of Hospital Medicine, Sentara Medical Group
  
  o Physical distancing is very important in fighting COVID. Dr. Findlay thanked the members for staying home.

  o The curve is flattening. The cases are increasing steadily but increasing linearly (not exponentially).
o The pressure to release the restrictions will build and as that happens, we will see increases.

o Testing is becoming faster. They can run 800 tests a day now.

o They are still dramatically constrained by lack of personal protective equipment. The supply drain has dried up. They have been innovating to reuse equipment.

o Sentara is a 12-hospital system, including hospitals in Albemarle, Charlottesville, Northern Virginia, and Hampton Roads.

o To help, please maintain physical distancing. Masking in public helps keep you from spreading the virus. Some people that have it do not seem very sick at all, but can still spread the virus.

o There are about 20 confirmed COVID patients at Norfolk General. They try to avoid moving patients with COVID if at all possible, so those likely came into the ER here. There are some cases in each hospital, and Northern Virginia is a hotspot.

o A question was about whether home-made mask making is helpful for the hospital. Yes, donations are appreciated and useful. Also face shields are helpful. If anyone has a 3-D printer, Dr. Findlay can provide a template.

IV. President’s Report:

- Elections are upcoming and will take place via email. Jeremy McGee demonstrated on the call what a ballot will look like.

- Results of the voting will be announced in May.

- Mike Spencer will continue to be immediate past president; his name will not be on the ballot. Karen Reynes’ and Jean Webster’s terms expire in 2021; they also will not be on the ballot.

- A nomination has recently been made, so the nominating committee will reconvene.

Candidates Thus Far:

- Jeremy McGee, President
- Nat McCormick, First VP
- JR Montalvo, Second VP
• Catherine Kilduff, Secretary
• Larry Brett, Treasurer
• We have five candidates for four general board member spots:
  o Julie Findlay
  o George Kello
  o Bob Kelly
  o Larry Remaklus
  o Paige Rose
• In light of COVID, existing Ghent Neighborhood League memberships will be extended by one year.

V. General Announcement

  a. Later this month the General Assembly will vote whether elections should be moved from May 5 till November.
  b. April 28 is the last date to apply for an absentee ballot.
  c. If you have an absentee ballot, please use it on the assumption that the election goes forward. If the election is moved till November, those ballots will be destroyed, and you will be able to vote again.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:41 pm.