Ghent Neighborhood League Minutes
May 20, 2020

Next Meeting: June 17, 2020, 6:30 PM, Zoom

Special Guests: Ms. Cheryl White, Elizabeth River Trail, Executive Director
  Ms. Tiba Salim, Project Manager, City of Norfolk
  Ms. Courtney Doyle, Councilwoman
  Ms. Andria McClellan, Councilwoman

I. Call to order and introductions

President Emily Birknes called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

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

Absent: George Kello, Sarah Petroske

II. Councilwomen McClellan and Doyle

  a. The City wrote a letter recognizing President Emily Birknes’s service to the Ghent Neighborhood League.

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

  a. Due to reduced Policy Department capacity because of the coronavirus, Officer Fentress could not attend.

IV. Guest Speakers

  • Ms. Cheryl White, Elizabeth River Trail, Executive Director
    www.elizabethrivertrail.org (can sign up for the newsletter at website)
      o Additional signs have been ordered.
      o 12 new trail heads will be constructed.
      o Plum Point Park improvements are shown in the slides below.
• Ms. Tiba Salim, Project Manager, City of Norfolk

  o Work will start on the neighborhood sewer replacement project this summer. Neighbors will be informed soon about when construction will start on Pembroke Ave., Warren Crescent, and Mowbray Arch.

  o This project is Phase III; Phase I was the pump station and Phase II was another area in the neighborhood.

  o They will always leave one lane open on the streets.

  o Please contact her with questions: 757-664-6864, Tiba.Salim@norfolk.gov.

V. President’s Report:

• The meeting of Ghent Task Force meeting was May 8. There was a lot of concern over businesses in Ghent during the coronavirus. The next Ghent Task Force meeting will be in July.

• Electronic ballots were convenient and provided a higher return rate than mail, though the rate is still low (50 returned out of a mailing of 153; 33%).

Election Results:

• Jeremy McGee, President
• Nat McCormick, First VP
• JR Montalvo, Second VP
• Catherine Kilduff, Secretary
• Larry Brett, Treasurer
• Three board members elected for two-year terms:
  o Julie Findlay
  o Bob Kelly
  o Paige Rose
• Three board members with one-year left in their term:
  o George Kello
  o Karen Reynes
  o Jean Webster

VI. Architectural Review Board

a. Several smaller projects, like the replacement of a hidden gutter with a visible gutter, are coming up for review.

b. The Page House Inn changed ownership and got a new sign that meets zoning criteria, though it should have sought approval beforehand.

c. 401 Warren Cres., the Reynes Residence, is reconstructing the side porch and returning it to the appropriate historic appearance.

d. The former Social Services building, not in the historic district but across the street from the Chrysler, will come up for review in the near future as a Gadams apartment building.

e. Christ & St. Luke’s is about to start Phase II, which is exterior work around the church.

f. Jeremy Sharp at the City said that short-term rentals, which have been under discussion for about six months, would undergo a public process and communications soon. There have been some very specific complaints about a short-term rental on the 300 block of Fairfax, which has highlighted the conflict caused by illegal short-term rentals.

g. Jeremy McGee will be our representative on the ARB; Karen Reynes is passing the baton after six years.

VII. Miscellaneous

a. Councilwoman Doyle said that the city is fast-tracking modifications to streets to allow restaurants space for outdoor seating, specifically on Boush St. but also elsewhere, to allow careful re-opening.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 pm.