

Charles B. Aycock Neighborhood Association
Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting
Monday, September 23, 2013

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors was held on Monday, September 23, 2013 at Sternberger Artist Center. Meeting was called to order at 6:31 pm by President Linda Fusco. Secretary Sara Farnsworth was in attendance to record the minutes.

Present: Linda Fusco, Sara Farnsworth, Mindy Zachary, Shawn Wriede, Christina Cantrell, Betsey Horth, Joe Kilpatrick, John Mandrano, Esther Maltby, Bert VanderVeen, Matthew Thomas, Robert Coltun (alternate), Mebane Ham (alternate).

Absent: None.

Guests: Officer Douglas Campbell of GPD; Stefan-leih Geary of the City of Greensboro; Neighbors Alyzza May, T.K. Miller, Susan Elliott, Jay Robinson, Bruce Oakley, Shawn Patch, Jinni Hoggard, Michaela Hafley, Gordon Hafley, Stephen Murray, Veronica Ancrum, Marian Earls, David Hoggard.

- 1. Crime Report:** Officer Doug Campbell reported on crimes occurring in the neighborhood vicinity in the previous month. A child's bike was stolen from 688 Chestnut. (Description: Pink, with text Mongoose/Jewel printed on it.) Tools were stolen from an unlocked work truck at 705 Percy, and tools were also stolen from a worked van with partially open windows on Summit. Theft of items from porches has been an issue this month, with two incidents of larceny of metal chairs/tables reported on Percy and one on Park. Officer Campbell reported that the GPD maintains contact with local metal recyclers, and a list of stolen property will be sent to them. Larceny from motor vehicles has also been an ongoing problem, generally from cars left unlocked, with purses, phones, wallets, cash, etc. taken.

Board members reported problems with large amounts of trash and other refuse found during the recent neighborhood cleanup effort that seem to be connected with a small homeless encampment located near the entrance of the Leftwich tunnel, behind the fence of the Summit Avenue car business. Officer Campbell was asked to check on the situation and, if the encampment is on city property, pursue having the occupant[s] vacate.

ACTION ITEM for Christina Cantrell: Report street light outage on Heritage Place.

- 2. Secretary's Report:** July minutes were unanimously approved. August minutes were approved with the following corrections: President's report listing 2012-2013 projects corrected to "2013-2014" and "2014 and beyond". For the motion on the COA application, wording should be changed from "deny the application" to "not support the application". Sara Farnsworth will make the requested changes and submit the minutes to Shawn Wriede for posting on the website.
- 3. Treasurer's Report:** Christina Cantrell reported that fees were paid for Community Garden mowing (\$60.00) and street closure for the September 29th Sundays in Sternberger event organized by Lynne Leonard and Mebane Ham. Total balance is \$8,133.19, with \$4,339.42 in the General Fund and the rest in Escrow. Treasurer's Report was approved unanimously.
- 4. President's Report:** Linda Fusco reported on the status of **740 Chestnut Street**. At the directive of the Board at the last meeting, she approached the Myatt group and notified them of our desire to facilitate the transfer of the Chestnut Street property from CHS to them for a one-house build. The Myatt group determined that a one-house build was not financially feasible for them. No other interested developers were forthcoming.

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Linda also clarified that we were informed by the city that MSD funds could be used for demolition of the house on 740 Chestnut, but based on opinions expressed at previous board meetings, the board did not seem to want to use MSD funds for this purpose.

The board made no further motions regarding 740 Chestnut Street. Linda will notify Children's Home Society that the Neighborhood Association is not interested in receiving the house and property as a gift due to financial unfeasibility.

Linda reported on the **Leftwich Tunnel painting project**, which has been **put on hold** due to the Board's interest in having a mural painted on the tunnel. The City felt that it was premature to paint before the bid process for a mural painting estimate occurs. The project is tabled until the spring, unless the Board decides not to pursue the mural painting. The City will pay for the painting of the tunnel directly (not via MSD funds), but not for the protective coating or for the mural painting.

Linda reported on the Association's ongoing projects and their costs. In the previous fiscal year for the City (July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013), just over \$7,000 of our neighborhood's MSD funds were spent on projects including landscaping maintenance, 20 sign toppers, and the custom-painted Little Library at Sternberger Park. For the fiscal year from July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014, we have \$75,000 earmarked for projects. Details of upcoming/potential projects were repeated from the President's Report from the previous month's board meeting.

5. **Cultural Landscapes Report:** A motion was put forth to reconsider the vote to move forward with the Cultural Landscapes proposal, with 6 in favor, one opposed, the remainder abstaining. Discussion of the issue ensued.

City Preservation Planner Stefan-leih Geary offered background and a progress report on the Cultural Landscapes Report project. In January, the Association's Board identified this project as a priority when planning the year's budget for potential MSD expenditures. At that time, it was described as an alleyway research project. Geary did research into options and the potential form that an alleyway study might take. The State Historic Preservation Office sent Geary in the direction of a Cultural Landscapes Report, and Geary asked the Neighborhood Association to follow up on this idea. This led to Cultural Landscapes Architect Glenn Stach being invited to make a presentation to the Board at a special meeting on July 18. At the July 18 meeting, Stach presented a detailed proposal for a CLR for the entire neighborhood (beyond just the alleyways), including cost estimates.

Geary clarified that a formal Request for Proposals had not been proffered at the point of the July 18 meeting where Stach submitted a full-scale proposal, and stated that we "got the cart before the horse" at that point, as we really just needed general information about what a CLR would entail and should not have received a formal proposal before going through the competitive bid process to ensure that we spend funds in the most prudent way.

Geary addressed the idea of doing an expansive Cultural Landscapes Report encompassing the entire neighborhood, as proposed by Stach, as a definite possibility. She offered the perspective that much of the general historical information about the neighborhood could already be found in our National Register nomination documents and other reports.

Geary advised that what we lack from a historical research perspective is information specific to the

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alleys, and she recommended that we narrow the scope of the project to focus on the alleys specifically, including research on what the typical residential utility alley system is like, our neighborhood's alleys and their history, how their footprints have changed, and a physical analysis from an archaeological/engineering perspective. She emphasized that the final outcome of this effort could be more tangible than just a historical document, providing a guidebook for what we could do with our alleys in the future, including detailed recommendations, future uses, design suggestions, and suggested appropriate materials for potential alleyway restoration. It could lay out a process for officially closing an alley or a process for reopening an alley.

Mindy Zachary delved further into the origins of the project based on the drainage problems that began years ago in the alley that runs between the 600-even block of Summit Avenue and the 600-odd block of Park Avenue. She pinpointed the drainage problems as originating at a time when a stormwater drain at the end of the alleyway was apparently plugged up during the widening of Yanceyville Street, left disconnected from the city's stormwater runoff system. A large sinkhole developed at the end of the alley near Yanceyville Street, and the Women's Resource Center asked to have help repairing the alley/sinkhole. After the sinkhole was filled, all the houses along the alley uphill from that point began having issues with flooding. According to Mindy's research, it was determined that there was a drainage system that ran the entire length of the alleys which were built in 1904 that would have originally been a combined stormwater/sewer system that emptied into Muddy Creek.

Mindy pointed out that our neighborhood association's bylaws mention taking care of our alleyways and acting in the best interest of our neighborhood. She discussed the suggestion that we undertake a Cultural Landscapes Report study that takes into account all aspects of our neighborhood. In her view, it makes sense that we do so in order to provide a lens of historic preservation when we look at our neighborhood going forward.

Mindy and others discussed a different section of alley running on the opposite side of Summit Avenue that was purchased back by the city. In that case, city property was apparently being flooded (Sternberger Park), which may have led to the city's intervention to acquire that particular alley. In general, though, the city has taken an absolute hands-off approach with all alleys, including those downtown. Bert VanderVeen pointed out that alleyways will not be maintained by the city; the individual property owners would have to come together to do so.

Christina Cantrell pointed out that many in the neighborhood don't have a driveway, and that an alleyway might be a way to open up access. Neighbors in Fisher Park opened up an alleyway for that reason.

Geary clarified that from the city's perspective, the owners of the alleys are the heirs of the original developers of the neighborhood (the Cones), and that the city's legal department has made the determination that MSD funds can only be spent on a historical analysis of the alleys, and only if we study the alleyways of the entire neighborhood (and not one alley in particular). The City of Greensboro maintains that the drainage and sewer pipes in the primary problematic alley in question (600-block of Summit/Park) are not city/public infrastructure.

Mindy Zachary maintained that the city caused this drainage problem (during the widening of Yanceyville Street), and that if we do not have adequate storm drainage for our neighborhood, the city should provide that for us.

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Several neighbors in attendance voiced their concerns and opinions. Shawn Patch made the suggestion that the parties involved get a lawyer, as the city has made a determination, and the parties involved disagree with this determination. T.K. Miller expressed concerns that residents in the neighborhood at large are not informed about what the proposed project is, and recommended that the board prioritize communicating with and seeking input from the neighborhood at large on issues like this. She was concerned that the board member she saw as being the sole beneficiary of the proposed project had not recused herself. She asked what the actual benefit would be for the neighborhood, as she hasn't encountered residents "itching to rip up their alleys."

Geary clarified that what the Association's board voted on was to "move forward" with the CLR project, which then puts the city's procedures in motion. She discussed the current status of the project at the city level. Her idea at this point is to put out an RFP for an entire Cultural Landscapes Report for all aspects of the neighborhood, and another RFP for a more narrowly-focused alleyway research study. She assured attendees that they could feel secure that the MSD money is being spent wisely and judiciously. In order to qualify for MSD funding, the project would have to be done under the justification of historic preservation and historic research, for a historical analysis of the alley system. As far as physical improvements of the alleyways, MSD funds can only be used on the public right-of-ways.

John Mandrano expressed the concern that open alleyways could serve as additional access/escape routes for burglars/criminals.

Sara Farnsworth clarified that the board's intention in pursuing this project was never to threaten to open up all of the alleys in the neighborhood that have been closed off over the years, and that we were aware of the sensitivity of that issue and the desire of many neighbors to keep their alleys as they are ("absorbed" into the adjacent properties).

Mindy Zachary stated that twelve properties along the same alley were being affected by the alley flooding/drainage issues, not solely her own property, and that if these are our neighborhood's only storm drains that are not functioning, then we as a neighborhood need to address that. Other attendees expressed the need for a more accurate accounting of the problem and the homes affected.

Betsey asked whether some of the flooding/drainage issues would be addressed with the Summit Avenue Corridor improvement project slated to begin in 2016, and others answered that the project does involve installing stormwater systems on Summit Ave., which currently lacks them.

Mebane Ham suggested that the discussion be tabled and that we engage in further education and communication about the potential project. Linda Fusco stated that the proposed project would be put back into committee and that we would seek to find an expert to come and educate everyone about the issues involved. The discussion was tabled and no motion was put forth.

- 6. Pecan Festival:** Sara Farnsworth reported on plans and a proposed budget for the 4th annual Pecan Festival, to be held at Sternberger Park, October 26th from 4:00 to 6.30. The festival will follow the model established in previous years, with potluck dinner, live music, children's activities including pumpkin painting supervised this year by Brenda Brown, street closure of Fifth Avenue adjacent to the park, etc. The 5K race originally scheduled for that morning in the neighborhood by an outside group has been cancelled. Neighbors Susan Elliott and Jinni Hoggard expressed a desire to organize a pecan bake-off or other activities to emphasize a pecan theme. **Motion to provide for a budget of up to**

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\$500 for the 2013 Pecan Festival was approved unanimously.

- 7. Community Development:** Betsey Horth reported on the status of the brick neighborhood sign to be installed at the corner of Yanceyville and Bessemer adjacent to the schoolyard. She met with Stefan-leih Geary and Doug Akins of the contracted specialty brick firm DA's Masonry Works. All appears to be on track for the construction of the sign.

Betsey informed the board that the Bob Dunn car dealership on Bessemer Avenue was interested in putting in a median cut-through to their parking lot, along Bessemer Avenue between Cypress and Summit. Their location is outside the boundary of the historic district. Betsey and David Wharton will meet with them to express their concerns, and St. Leo's will also be involved.

- 8. Community Watch:** Joe Kilpatrick reported on the effort to get more Community Watch signs installed in the neighborhood. He is coordinating with the GPD and is working to determine whether MSD funds or general city funds would be used. There may be a limit of a total of two signs for the neighborhood, or perhaps two signs that can be installed at a time.

9. Historic Preservation (COA's):

Board members reviewed **COA application #1679, 602 5th Ave.**, for a proposed "phased window replacement plan". Property owner Jay Robinson brought samples of proposed replacement windows, which were wood simulated divided light (SDL) type. This property had some of its original windows replaced with vinyl windows last year without a COA. **Motion was put forth to support the repair of windows that still exist and replace windows that have already been replaced with custom-made windows to match the originals as much as possible. Motion was approved unanimously.**

Board members reviewed **COA application #1692, 806 Cypress St.**, for the removal of a Yoshino Cherry tree. The application stated that the property owner planted the tree herself several years ago, but that it is too large for the spot and is competing for space with some trees on the adjacent property which were planted around the same time period. **Motion was put forth to support the application for the removal of the tree. Motion was approved unanimously.**

- 10. Proposed Music Event in Neighborhood:** Aycock resident Stephen Murray of the band Holy Ghost Tent Revival reported on his plans to organize an event for Saturday, November 16 between 7pm and 11pm in Sternberger Park. His plans include live music, food trucks, alcohol permits, and street closure. The event would be donation-only. Board members thanked Stephen and wished him good luck in his planning.
- 11. Technology: ACTION ITEM for Shawn Wriede: Work to resolve issue with sending attachments via email.**
- 12. Aycock Middle School Liaison:** Esther Maltby reported that she has been talking with teachers about the school's needs and sees that we should focus on one specific issue or need and ask neighbors to contribute toward it, rather than providing a long list of needs. She presented the idea for us to contribute towards the school's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program, which is in need of small student incentives/rewards/prizes for good behavior. The suggestion was made that we collect money at the Pecan Festival to donate to this cause. Esther will coordinate the effort.

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13. Pending Action Items from previous meetings: Sara Farnsworth asked board members to report on previous action items from the past year that may have slipped through the cracks.

Completed Action Items:

- A. Street cleaning schedule - Mindy Zachary reported that the outcome of her asking the city about a street cleaning schedule was that there currently is no schedule, and unfortunately no means of notifying residents in advance of street cleaning.
- B. Old utility pole at corner of Bessemer & Yanceyville - Betsey Baun reported that the pole has been removed.

Action Items Still Pending:

- A. September 2012, **Bert VanderVeen: Try to figure out who has old “sandwich board” signs which we’ve lost track of, to advertise the Pecan Festival.**
- B. December 2012, **Mindy Zachary: Contact appropriate city official about granite curb replacement.**
- C. March 2013, **Betsey Baun: Send Linda address of the white house on 5th avenue for which we should pursue zoning enforcement that has been vacant for at least 5 years**
- D. August 2013, **Betsey Baun: Contact GPD officials (Lt. Kevin Moore and Captain Cranford) and Action Greensboro (Dabney Sanders) about potentially having the Leftwich Tunnel considered a part of the Greenway, and installing a security camera in the tunnel.**
- E. August 2013, **Betsey Baun: Facilitate a process for creating a mission statement for the neighborhood association.**

14. Chili Sale at Holiday Greenery Festival: Christina Cantrell reported that in years past, the Aycock Neighborhood Association has held a chili sale fundraiser at the Greensboro Beautiful Holiday Greenery Festival. However, the nature of the event has recently changed in some ways, with the addition of a requirement that food vendors be present all day beginning in the early morning hours. Given the amount of time and effort required, the event was not a very successful as a fundraiser last year (\$184.61 profit for a long day’s work). No one expressed interest in organizing/staffing the event for this year. Christina will notify Greensboro Beautiful that we will not be participating this year.

15. Potential Tunnel Mural: Neighborhood resident Alyzza May of the Greensboro Mural Project spoke about the importance of murals and their process for creating them, including an emphasis on community input in the design process. Board members discussed how a mural would fit into a timetable for tunnel-area improvement plans. The City plans to bring in a contractor to strip/blast/repaint the pedestrian tunnel near the intersection of Leftwich Place and Chestnut Street, and the city recommended that an anti-graffiti protective coating be applied afterwards using MSD funds. A mural would need to be applied after the city’s major stripping/painting and before the protective anti-graffiti coating is applied. According to Stefan-leih Geary, the city plans to hold off on the stripping/painting of the tunnel until we are ready to apply a mural to avoid leaving the fresh paint vulnerable to graffiti in the interim. The neighborhood association and the city also have plans to install new trash cans and landscaping near the

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tunnel entrance. It was decided that we should go ahead and install the trash cans now, but hold off on installing landscaping to avoid it being trampled/damaged during the tunnel painting work.

Motion was put forth to move forward with creating a mural for the Leftwich tunnel that reflects the character of the community. Motion was approved with one opposed.

- 16. Communication strategies/Project vetting:** Betsey Horth suggested that the Association develop criteria for vetting any decision involving spending over \$20,000 for neighborhood projects and studies. She envisioned that the vetting would consist of diverse communication strategies, at least two means for having neighbors comment, clearly visible proposals, and a defined number of board members present.

Meeting adjourned at 8:56 pm.