

Charles B. Aycock Neighborhood Association
Minutes of Board of Directors Meeting
May 21, 2012

Present: Betsey Baun, Christina Cantrell, Sara Farnsworth, Linda Fusco, Lillian Govus, Khalil Perilstein, Bert VanderVeen, Shawn Wriede

Absent: Fabio Camara, Dave Wharton

Guests: Officer Douglas E. Campbell, County Commissioner Candidate Ray Trapp, Residents Pam Grigsby, Mark Walter, John Mandrano

Meeting Called to Order: 6:32 pm

- 1.) **Special Speaker: Ray Trapp**, Candidate for Skip Alston's County Commissioner seat, is running unopposed but would like to meet with all neighborhoods in District 8. Mr. Trapp's focus is preserving the fabric of the neighborhoods. He has been involved with the Zoning Commission and is interested in continuing public service. He agreed with the board that District 8 is very diverse but there is room to partner across neighborhoods to benefit all.

- 2.) **Community Resource Officer Report:** Officer Doug Campbell reported the following **police incidents between Apr 23 and May 21, 2012:** Apr 24 - burglary at 704 Summit Ave. Owner left door open and returned home to find a tall, thin, black male leaving with electronics and clothing. This is an active case. Apr 24 - ladies beige road bicycle stolen from 747 Park Ave. No serial number available. Apr 27 - pedestrian in altercation at Yanceyville and Park Ave at approx 2 am. May 4 - license tag stolen from vehicle parked at 514 5th Ave. May 7 - attempted forcible entry at 811 Sullivan St, but unable to break down door. May 9 - resident robbed in front of his house at 610 Fifth Ave, but it appears to be in retaliation for unpaid drugs. May 19 - home invasion at 704 Chestnut St at approx 3 am. Victims did not call police immediately; a police check found that one victim had history of drug arrests. Chestnut St. residents report that the house appears vacant since the incident.

Officer Campbell was asked how residents can get **information about a current case** (e.g. the 704 Chestnut St. home invasion). The police on the scene would not provide information to Sara Farnsworth (the neighborhood Community Watch Captain.) Officer Campbell stated that he (or Susan Danielson) will provide any details that are available.

Officer Campbell was also asked about the charges that have been dropped in the "**Castle**" murder in 2008 of Ransom Hobbs and attempted murder of Deborah Moy. Officer Campbell had no additional information than what was available in the News and Record news article.

Charles B. Aycock Neighborhood Association

Minutes of Board of Directors Meeting

May 21, 2012

3.) Community Watch: Sara Farnsworth stated that the Leftwich Tunnel is becoming more unsavory as graffiti, broken lights, public urination, and sleeping people blocking the tunnel appear to be on the increase. It is becoming an unsafe thoroughfare. Officer Campbell urged her to call police every time an incident is noted. Ms. Farnsworth asked the board's opinion on flash cams, devices camouflaged in trees that flash a light and send a warning signal prior to taking a photo of possible illegal activity. Officer Campbell stated that Parks and Recreation already use some (around the Lee St. entrance to the Downtown Greenway), but have had limited success with taking photos at exactly the right spot. In addition, they only work at night. The opportunity of partnering with Parks and Recreation (since someone has to monitor the photos) was raised, with the possibility that MSD funds can be used to purchase a flash cam.

Action Item for Christina Cantrell: Inquire whether MSD funds can be used to purchase a flash cam to be installed at the Leftwich Tunnel.

Action Item for Bert VanderVeen: Investigate the possibility of partnering with Parks and Recreation on a deterrent such as flash cams at the Leftwich Tunnel.

Action Item for Bert VanderVeen: Contact Donna Gray to see whether the Leftwich Tunnel can be painted in the same manner at the railroad overpasses at the Downtown Greenway.

Action Item for Sara Farnsworth: Submit an incident report each time she experiences an unsafe or unsavory situation at the Leftwich Tunnel.

4.) Secretary-Treasurer report: Minutes from the April 2012 board meeting were reviewed and approved. There is no Treasury activity this month.

5.) President's Report: Bert VanderVeen reported that there appears to be **increased interest at the City level regarding War Memorial Stadium.** Mr. VanderVeen reported that David Wharton established talking points and the list of city contacts to call will be finalized shortly. The phone tree will be activated to help focus on the topic.

The Farmer's Market Strawberry Pancake event on Sunday, May 13 was very successful. Market management was grateful to piggyback on Aycock's non-profit status since they have not acquired their official non-profit designation yet.

Bert VanderVeen and Christina Cantrell are meeting with Chris Spencer (date TBD) on the **next phase of the Downtown Greenway.**

6.) Community Development: Betsey Baun had three updates on two subjects:

Charles B. Aycock Neighborhood Association

Minutes of Board of Directors Meeting

May 21, 2012

1. The **maximum number of street sign toppers** that can be installed in any one calendar year is 20. Aycock has 9 more street signs to top. Ms. Baun will request the remainder in November.
2. The **Neighborhood Small Projects grant** for a neighborhood sign at Bessemer St and Yanceyville St is on the agenda for June 20, 2012.
3. Ms. Baun stated that Russ Clegg believes that there are **leftover funds which are available to the neighborhood because the 2007 grant** (for which Laura Wall applied but was denied due to another, late-entry project) did not use the entire amount. The board discussed that some improvements to Sternberger Park (for example, sprucing up the pergola) are needed and we should pursue this.

Action Item for Christina Cantrell: Locate meeting minutes and grant application for 2007 Neighborhood Small Projects grant.

7.) **Historic Preservation (COA):** Linda Fusco reported that there are two after-the-fact COAs this month.

i. **#1512 - 674 Chestnut St.** - Privacy fence

ii. **#1520 - 311 Leftwich St.** - replacement of windows

The board is not in favor of approving any after-the-fact COA and discussed ideas to educate property owners. Since the fees for non-compliance are not high, there is limited motivation (especially for non-resident property owners) to observe the guidelines or the process. The board decided to **devote space in each newsletter about the COA process and HPC guidelines**. Ms. Fusco also asked whether 'staff approval' COAs (which are not communicated publicly) could be made available.

Action Item for Christina Cantrell: Request Mike Cowhig of HPC city staff to assist in publicizing staff-approved COAs.

8.) **Newsletter:** Linda Fusco is still owed for two newspaper ads for Breedlove Radiator and Great Atlantic Landscaping. She will follow-up again.

9.) **Technology:** Shawn Wriede reported no news.

10.) **Welcoming Committee:** Mark Walter purchased the house at 614 Percy St.

Action Item for Lillian Govus: Present welcome basket to Mark Walter at 614 Percy St.

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11.) Old Business:

1. **Permanent trashcan at Leftwich Tunnel:** David Wharton was not present, so this item is pending. In addition, John Mandrano requested trash cans at the Max Thompson Bridge also.

Action Item for David Wharton: Add location of Max Thompson to pending request.

2. **Breedlove planting project:** In response to last month's action item, Linda Fusco procured a bid from Great Atlantic Landscape to **install drainage**. The total amount is \$570.00. The board **voted unanimously to accept the bid** and direct Great Atlantic to proceed with the drainage work.
3. **Park Ave stone wall repair:** Linda Fusco stated that the city provided vendors and a bid proposal. The **neighborhood must request the bids** and must **obtain a consent form from each of the five property owners** affected. If all property owners do not consent, the project cannot continue. Since the stone walls stand predominantly on private property (not public), the city will not direct the project. MSD funds are slated to be used to repair the stone wall.
4. **Strategic Plan:** Lillian Govus and Betsey Baun presented the Strategic Plan action with a draft of a "Progress - what's been done" section and a "Next Steps" section for each action item. The document is long, so Ms. Govus suggested that each board member provide **updates to the document by June 8**. She will compile the suggestions into a final draft which will be voted on next month and posted to the website. The intent is to highlight the efforts and results for everyone in the Aycock neighborhood.

Action Item for all board members: Review two new sections of plan and provide updates (if any) to Ms. Govus by June 8.

12.) New Business:

Little Free Library: Linda Fusco presented a project to install a small, decorative box in Sternberger Park to hold newsletters and books for sharing. Her research shows that a completed model can be purchased for around \$600.00. The board was not sure if MSD funds can be used for this project.

Action Item for Christina Cantrell: Inquire whether MSD funds can be used to purchase a little library box for Sternberger Park.

13.) Meeting Adjourned: 8:03 pm.