

Better Waverly Community Organization Board Meeting: August 12, 2014

Announcements

Joe Stewart presented the following announcements:

1. The Waverly Main Street Garden Party will take place Saturday, August 30, at 6pm. It is a fundraiser for Waverly Main St at \$10 per person.
2. On Tuesday, Sept 23 at 5pm starting in front of Marian House, Mary Pat Clarke, the police commissioner, Anthony Batts, and the Northern District Commander, Kimberly Barrows, and community members will gather to commence a safety walk through the neighborhood.
3. The BWCO Annual meeting will be held Thursday, September 25 at 6pm at Eastern High School
4. Debra announced that there will be a Dumpster Day this Saturday at Independence & Homestead.
5. Debra also announced that the 901 Arts 5th Annual Fish Fry will take place on September 4. It is a fundraiser for 901 Arts and costs \$9.01 fish and 99 cents for drinks and dessert.

901 Gorsuch Street

Phil shared information about Katie Rose, the planner for North Baltimore. He reported that her email wasn't completely straightforward, but that she said the building was last confirmed as a beauty shop, which was a non-conforming use. It was then abandoned. According to Katie Rose, no commercial use may be established. The zoning code does not allow for any non-residential use for that property. Phil also noted that a Stop Work Order was issued recently, one on August 4 and one on July 18. The second was issued in response to the first because the work had not been stopped. Additionally, a citation for sanitation was issued a few weeks ago.

Joe reported that a municipal hearing was held August 7 to request a variance from the zoning to allow a commercial use.

Mr. Staton, the building owner, then spoke about the property and his history with the neighborhood. Mr. Staton is a dental lab technician and would like to use 901 Gorsuch as a dental lab. He shared the listing information for the property, which listed it as "Corner property, former salon" and "zoned R.7 residential." Mr. Staton shared that the building does not meet the requirements to be a residential property, as it does not have a bathroom or kitchen. He remarked that he has had difficulty obtaining permits because his intended use for the building does not match what is allowed by the zoning code. He also pointed out that the Tax Assessment Office lists the property as a non-primary residence while the city lists it as being residential.

He mentioned crime issues in the community and stated, "I'm not a person who's going to try to bring that into the community because I care about this community also." Additionally, Mr. Staton asked the community to "consider that I wouldn't bring anything negative into the property." If he's not approved, he stated that he will go away and try somewhere else.

Seibeen, who lives across the street, expressed support for Mr. Staton and stated that he never saw a problem with the property.

Joe thanked him for coming and expressed that he would be a great asset to the community

Phil voiced support as well and expressed that he wants to see valuable, productive uses in all of our buildings. He explained the essential problem: how do we allow this use, but prevent future potential abuses in the future?

Mary Pat then spoke and pointed out various conflicts between the proposed use of a dental lab and what is permitted by the zoning code.

Joe said we should work with this property owner to figure out the best thing to do with this property. Mary Pat and Debra shared some ideas for what to do with the property, including making it a handicap accessible apartment.

Phil shared information about the upcoming changes to the zoning code that will allow for neighborhood commercial uses, which will integrate commercial uses into neighborhoods, following Baltimore's tradition of corner stores.

Judy said she agreed with what Mary Pat said and shared her concern about making changes to what is allowed under the zoning code.

Parking Permits on 900 Block of Gorsuch

Sonja, Judy, and Mike reported on the situation with parking permits on the 900 block of Gorsuch. Some neighbors oppose the continuation of the permit requirement, though the majority approve (60%). Judy shared that Mary Pat expressed that if this block votes to undo what has been done in terms of requiring permits for the residential side of the street, it will never be allowed again. Sonja requested that a flyer go out to ask people to apply for the permit for this year. If we put the notice in the door before the weekend people will be aware of the option to purchase the \$20 per year permit. Sonja counseled that we should acknowledge the people who are opposed and explain that 60% of the block approves it. We will handle that in an honorable way and let them know that we discussed the issue and plan to revisit it next year. We plan to work with parking enforcement Officer S.McCoy to improve enforcement of the permit requirement.

801 Gorsuch

Dale shared concerns about LaTonya Jones of 801 Gorsuch, who is suffering from mental illness. She has allowed bags of garbage to accumulate in front of her house.

Joe said that bags of garbage being dropped off should trigger a letter from our co-chairs about our community standards. In this case, he recommended that the co-chairs should consider hand delivering that letter and examining the situation to see if they can get through to her.

Sonja asked Dale about the trash at the front of the property and inquired as to whether a neighbor has removed the trash to a proper receptacle. This has not been done, and Dale expressed concerns about getting overly involved. Eleanor also expressed concern about Ms. Jones' mental state. Sonja will reach out to the pastor to see if he can stop by as well as Tina Convington, who also does ministry.

Reimbursement for National Night Out

Joe motioned, seconded by Sharon, to reimburse Sonja for National Night Out. The cost was approximately \$30. Joe motions that the board approve this reimbursement. This spurred further discussion about the budget and ultimately Sonja declined the offer of reimbursement.

Budget

Eleanor shared that finally she went through the different pots of money in the Better Waverly Community Organization's budget. Money in the account has been raised for different purposes: \$690 from Homestead Harvest, \$1410.26 from the community Outreach grant that Karen Griffin raised in 2001; Bmore Fun Grant raised by Debra; 9413.64 raised by 901, and \$6,275.27 from ArtLink. When she added up all this money, she found that we are \$550.66 in the hole.

Debra and Eleanor suggest that we deduct these expenses from the community outreach money. They also propose reimbursing Sonja from the \$900 pot. The community association has no money that is not already allocated for specific purposes. Eleanor shared that we really need to do some fundraising. And recommended that since we have not decided the budget for next year, we should do so at the next meeting in September. Sonja proposed having a calendar to let us plan what events we want and to help us plan for a budget. Debra clarified that the \$550.66 deficit has all come from community outreach events, not youth or other expenses. Phil asked about the status of hiring the bookkeeper and was informed that this is still in progress.