

Better Waverly Community Organization  
January 13, 2015 Board Meeting

Josh called the meeting to order at 7pm. Joe motioned to approve the minutes. Phil seconded. The minutes were approved.

**Announcements**

Joe announced that he gave testimony in support of the Olmstead Parkways at the CHAP hearing on January 13. The CHAP commissioners approved the bill and it will now go to the planning committee for review and then to the city council.

Josh announced that Regina Boyce is inviting chairs/presidents of community organizations to a meeting with Jack Young and the City Council. Josh invited people to share specific concerns for him to pass on at the meeting.

**Red Clover Collective Zoning Issue**

Jodie from the Red Clover Collective, which owns properties at 601 and 603 East 30<sup>th</sup> Street, attended the meeting to speak about a zoning issue facing the group. Red Clover wants to combine their two properties into one in order to facilitate their goal of collective housing. This will require a zoning variance because, according to city law, more than four unrelated adults cannot live together in one property. Red Clover wants to make sure they do it the proper way under the zoning code and are getting help from the University of Baltimore Law Clinic and Mary Pat Clarke. Phil asked how the group plans to achieve their goal under the zoning code. He suggested having the property zoned as a rooming house and attaching a deed restriction or restrictive covenant that would allow the zoning variance to the property, but only extend to the Red Clover Collective, not transfer to another owner. Eleanor summarized that BWCO is in favor of having the Land Use Committee support Red Clover in figuring it out. Phil, as the head of the Land Use Committee, will write a letter to Mary Pat in support of Red Clover.

**Firemen from Engine 31**

Firemen from Engine 31 on Greenmount Ave attended the meeting as community members. Judy asked how to make a donation to the Fire Department. The firemen said they can accept cooked or already prepared meals.

**Annual Plan**

Debra asked about what committee would be responsible for scheduling our dumpsters. It was decided that that would fall under the Housing, Sanitation, and Code Enforcement Committee, but Debra volunteered to continue the coordination for the committee. Josh stated that he would like to have online documentation for the Finance committee. Abby suggested posting an annual report, in keeping with the current practice of non-profits. Andy suggested thinking about ways to become more transparent. Phil asked about hiring a bookkeeper, which has been previously explored in other meetings. Josh summarized that members desiring changes or

additions to the Annual Plan will send them to Abby, Phil, and Andy before our next board meeting in February.

### **General Meeting**

Sonja will contact Hopkins to arrange for the meeting space. Josh asked about the agenda for the meeting. We plan to present the annual plan and hopefully recruit committee members as well as allow short presentations from Mary Pat and the Police Department. Joe volunteered to make all contact with invitees, including Mary Pat Clarke, the state delegates, the state's attorney, Greater Homewood, Waverly Main Street, and the Police Department. Sonja summarized that we will invite all persons to attend the meeting to come to listen to all the exciting things happening in Better Waverly.

### **Police Department**

Joe stated that he is upset with the state of how things are being coordinated between the Northern District and our community and expressed concern about the negative effect this is having on safety in our community. He summarized the situation as follows. A series of three car jackings have recently occurred. On Avon Ave on December 19, at least one person with a gun car jacked a pizza delivery vehicle. Joe sent out an email blast to the neighborhood alerting the community to the crime and asking for information. Andy responded that he thought he had spotted the stolen vehicle in the neighborhood. An officer came out, but did not take the license tag of the vehicle and there was not detective follow up, though it had been promised. Another car jacking in the Giant parking lot occurred a few days later, presumably perpetrated by the same group. An additional car jacking took place in the YMCA parking lot. The perpetrators seem to be juveniles in the neighborhood and have been identified by photographs.

Joe stated that he wants to improve communication between the community and the Northern District. He expressed his firm belief that the Northern District be more proactive in communication, rather than share success stories after the fact. Andy shared a detailed account of his effort to help solve the crime and his anger over the ineptitude of the Police Department. Officer Gibson shared that the suspect has been arrested and is being charged as an adult for several of the car jackings. Officer Gibson shared that the Department has to operate under certain restrictions about releasing information to the community when dealing with juveniles, which is why the department did not release a suspect photo sooner. Additionally, he explained that pizza deliveries are categorized as commercial robberies and assigned to detectives as such, so the different car jacking were assigned to different units. Officer Gibson also mentioned that some of the units were short staffed. He suggested that dissatisfied residents submit a formal complaint to Internal Affairs, or come to the community council meeting and address the commanders directly.

Officer Gibson reported that commercial robberies and car jackings rates have increased. There have been repeated robberies at several commercial properties in Remington, some of which have been robbed repeatedly, between late December

and January 4. He also reported that a carjacking took place on Belgian Ave in Penn Lucy, perpetrated by the same group who did the other car jackings in our neighborhood. One criminal has been arrested in relation to the crimes, a juvenile who lives in the neighborhood on Frisby Street. Officer Gibson reported that a accomplices seem to be involved, as similar crimes continued after this suspect was arrested. Officer Doug shared that the police department is restructuring the way they operate and deploy in order to have better coverage and invited community members to attend the Community Council Meeting on Wednesday, January 21.

### **Land Use and Architectural Review**

Phil gave an update on this committee's work. He shared that he is representing Waverly Main Street along with Regina on the Greater Charles Village Land Use Council. He also gave updates on three properties in the historic district. The owner of 615 Homestead is working with an architect to reconstruct the back of the house, and conserve what is there. He is using historic tax credits, so the work should adhere to the historic district's guidelines. Eleanor asked that Phil communicate the need for them to shovel the sidewalk. The owner of 622 Homestead, the house that caught on fire, has filed for financial hardship with CHAP and was just granted it so he will be able to put vinyl siding and windows on the house. This won't be considered a precedent, so this won't affect preservation in the future. Nothing has progressed at 708 Homestead and Phil reported that he is having difficulty getting plans from Eddie at CHAP. Josh asked if the property could be considered a vacant property.

Board members shared concerns about several other neighborhood properties, including 910 Gorsuch, the back of which is caving in and seems to have broken pipes; 700 Homestead, which has been condemned and has 5 code violations; 900 and 902 Montpelier; 914 Montpelier, which is in the receivership process; and 3000 Frisby, which needs code enforcement.

### **Greening Committee**

Abby shared that the Baltimore Orchard Project is partnering with our neighborhood to design an orchard for Montpelier Street. Their apprentice class out in December to develop a plan for the space. BOP wants to do another meeting in February. They are working to determine a date.

Josh made a motion to adjourn. Cathleen seconded. The meeting was adjourned.