

Helderberg Neighborhood Association Membership Meeting

Meeting Minutes
January 20, 2016

Meeting Start

The membership meeting of the HNA was started at 7:08 p.m. by Eric Huntington. Eric introduced himself and welcomed the members of the Delaware Neighborhood Association. The Board introduced themselves.

A) Presentation: Chief Brendan Cox, January 9th Arrest

- Albany police officers introduced themselves
- Sexual assault occurred; stranger attacked
- Been here 22 years, can count on both hands the amount of time this type of incident has happened
- Suspect apprehended, 100% sure he committed the crime
- Around 5 p.m. on the 9th, a woman was approached by Mr. Marlett, with a knife asking for money, she did not have money, gave him her ATM card, the victim didn't report it, after the robbery occurred he came across the second victim, she was unloading groceries from her car, he abducted her with a knife, brought her to his apartment, she escapes, goes to a restaurant and calls for help, at this time they were taking a report from the robbery victim, they get a description of the suspect, they see him and stop him, he is identified, APD located 3-4 different crime scenes; they know it's him because of physical evidence and he confessed which is on camera
- He was not a registered sex offender, he did not have a conviction for any type of sex crime in the past
- It is unusual for him to not have a past, he might have committed a sexual assault in the past that did not get reported—sexual assaults are largely underreported
- We know he has some mental health issues since he was associated with Residential Support Services (RSS)
- Make sure people know these are rare things that happen, there are community members with mental health issues and most of them do not commit crimes like this
- Make sure we don't harm people who didn't do anything (innocent people with mental health issues)
- Mr. Marlett's list of known offenses:
 - i. May of 1997 in Poughkeepsie he was arrested and convicted of menacing
 - ii. August 1998 he was convicted upon a plea of failure to pay a fine in Ulster County
 - iii. August of 2000 in Saugerties he was convicted of a burglary in the 3rd degree and unlawfully dealing with a child, he received 5 years of probation which he then violated and received 1-3 years of state prison

- iv. February 2001 (out of prison before a full year) Kingston, robbed a bank, convicted, sentenced to 8 years, paroled in 2007 in Albany and maxed out in February 2014, no longer under any supervision
 - v. 2009 call for him menacing someone with a knife in Albany, plead guilty, went away for 9 months, misdemeanor
 - vi. January 5th, call for domestic argument, incident report taken, January 7th call regarding an issue, later that day another call regarding a female who would not leave a resident, police could not find out what was going on, later that day, pickup order for him, signed by a doctor that he was a danger to himself or others and needed to be picked up for evaluation (2:40 p.m.), 335 New Scotland Avenue, brought to CDPC, Mental Health Law §945- authority to pick someone up like this
- Had conversations with landlord and RSS, they have an agreement that RSS places residents at that address
 - Last year- 234 robberies city-wide; sexual assaults- 27 (majority were perpetrated by someone the victim knew)
 - Would never ask people to be decoys; talk about arming oneself, when you decide to arm yourself (mace, gun, etc.) you have to remember that if you do not train with that weapon that somebody else could take it and use it on you
 - Talking to people at SUNY, there is a self-defense course we can bring to the community
 - Audience member- Are they going to do anything about the house and the people living there?
 - i. Police are looking into it and trying to determine who else is in that house, they don't want to take action against innocent people
 - ii. When you are on RSS you have a mental illness, you could have other conditions but you definitely have a mental illness
 - Did you watch the interrogation, after he confessed he had to have a reason for committing the crime?
 - i. A lot of times we don't get to ask that question, sometimes when asked there is no answer, the more people that watch it, it has to all be entered into evidence
 - ii. Each interviewing officer has to build a report with the person, they might need other information and asking why may shut the interview down
 - How many houses are in this neighborhood and what criteria do they use to bring people in? Are they under any supervision?
 - There is a difference between people with mental illnesses and people with violent pasts. We need a better knowledge base about who is in our community
 - Several years ago we mapped out where the group homes are in the city, maybe we can do something like that again, also some education about the types of services these organizations (RSS- rehabilitation support services) provide
 - Did the police know this guy was here, given his criminal history?
 - i. No
 - Problem with the criminal justice system, cities aren't connected to other cities and Albany was unaware of his history

- County government has different departments that work with groups such as RSS, has consideration been given to doing a cross government coordination? The county does maintain records of where these people are and they could possibly provide a list much quicker
 - i. We work closely with the county mental health but they are bound by a lot of restrictions, we can talk to them though
- Did he enter a plea and what type of time is he facing?
 - i. Entered a plea of not guilty, facing 25 to life

B) Presentation: Albany High School February 9th Referendum

- Bond referendum to rebuild and expand Albany High School
- Three takeaways from this presentation:
 - i. Take away #1- The school as it stands is too small for the number of students that are in the district and are progressing to the high school (this is accounting for students that leave for another high school)
 - ii. Take away #2- Very careful about being financially responsible
 - iii. Take away #3- This project is not only about the building, it's about education and program- bringing career and technical into the main building, making sure teachers have more contact with students, sunlight in classrooms, soundproof walls
- Failed by 92 votes in November
- Presented at 40 meetings since November- were able to hear feedback, figured out a way to address concerns; people understood the issue but there were concerns- overall cost of the project, city's tax situation, and understanding of the student's needs
- Life span of the school, it went very quickly
 - i. Multiple architects- "design as you build," poorly built building, should not be shot this early on
 - 1. What is the estimated lifespan of this project?
 - a. Didn't answer the question
- Shouldn't re-do the pool
 - i. Too late, voters already approved it in May
- Where are these extra students coming from? How do you know the school will be too small in 7 years?
 - i. We paid a company to do the estimation, 25% increase in elementary and middle schools, 2 charter middle schools closing, already accounted for students going to other high schools
- What will happen to Abrookin Career & Technical Center?
 - i. We don't know, it's in phase 4
- Number you can call to find out your polling place- 475-6510
- Why have another vote on February 9th in the middle of winter?
 - i. We need the roof done in the summer and this is the latest vote that could take place and still have work done in the summer

C) HNA Board Business

- This is the annual membership meeting- so we need to elect board members
 - i. The current board was re-elected by majority vote
- Communications Director- Alyssa Lotmore- Assistant Director for undergraduate programs at SUNY Albany, does a lot with media work, teaches a class- media for advocacy, has a toddler, wants to be more involved with the community
 - i. Alyssa was elected by majority vote
- Eddie- business advertising- next issue of reporter out on February 5th, changing ad deadline January 27th, prices for ads
- Sarah- seeking out members to serve on the Bylaws Committee
- Patti- Treasurer Report- revenue- \$2,932; expenses- \$2,680.90; Balance- \$5,688.04

D) Membership & Audience

- Olga Tenny- hasn't gotten tax bill yet, called the Mayor, will be charged if she doesn't pay
 - i. Marryann Voss?- Do you have a computer? You can print it out from online, go to the treasurer's office
- Mark Ronich? (Hackett)- public access channel (Channel Albany), this is available to Albany residents, located in the basement of the Albany Public Library (main branch) on Washington
- Craig Waltz- 9th ward Albany Community Policing Advisory Council, we have a forum coming up February 23rd from 6:00-8:00 p.m. at the Albany Public Library (main branch), this forum will be focused on the use of body camera for the Albany Police Department; Danielle is the Vice Chair of the board (Facebook: ACPAC518); we rotate the forums throughout the city throughout the year; we have some at large seats open on the committee if you would like to join
- Brian Gugiana- president of Pinewood Ave- National Little League of Albany will launch soon
 - i. Judy Doschette- National Little League is a great way for kids to get involved in the community
- Glen Humphries- The first issue might need another meeting past tonight
 - i. RSS- the makeup of the community has changed, forest is a group home run by equinox, not overseen by RSS, separate non-profit organization; could have been Clearview, there was a merger
 - ii. Kathy- Need to know where a lot of these group homes are in our neighborhood, we need to have another meeting to have a conversation about some of the organizations in our neighborhood and find out more about them, keep communication lines open
- New neighborhood engagement officer Gordon McClain
 - i. Hours 7:30/8-4, left cards on table

E) Meeting Wrap-up

- Action items
 - i. Self-defense courses
 - ii. Follow up to RSS
- Speaker for next meeting- Robert Magee might need to be rescheduled so we can have a meeting on RSS
- Next meeting: March 16th, 2016