

Helderberg Neighborhood Association Membership Meeting

Meeting Minutes
September 21, 2016

Meeting Start

The membership meeting of the HNA was started at 7:09 p.m. by Eric Huntington. Eric, the Board, and the members all introduced themselves. Joe Ingenie of ACPAC also noted meeting dates, participation, and an email would be sent to the neighborhood soon.

A) HNA Board Business

- Updates from the Chair (Eric)
- **HNA Picnic**- very successful- 118 tickets as door prizes, doesn't count people who came in other entrances
 - We didn't plan on wanting to have it indoors, but it did end up raining so it worked out.
 - Thank you to all of the businesses and people who donate their time and goods to our picnic, we had programs and a tri-fold board acknowledging all who donated
 - It was a really good event, got to meet a lot of people

Movie Nights

- Last Friday was our last movie night- 250-300 people were there, we plan on doing it again next year, prices for movies have jumped dramatically, we are lucky that St. Peter's and Rob Field at State Farm are generous and we haven't had a problem finding sponsors; we now require insurance when we have events at Sage, they were supposed to be asking for it before, but they are now requiring it based on an incident that happened with another group,. We got an insurance rider with Christ's Church of Albany. This will need to be budgeted for in 2017.
- **Planting trees**- As announced in July, we were notified of matching funding to plant trees through the Touehy Foundation. Replanting would take place on New Scotland Ave from Forest up to South Main. Reached out to City Arborist, some trees need to be taken down first, Total project price was \$10,000; using Albany's 50/50 program that would have been \$5,000; However, the 50/50 program ran out, Eric was originally going to ask for \$2,500 from the HNA funds by having the membership vote on it. Now it would be \$5,000 with the 50/50, we can try again next spring when 50/50 is re-filled; we would need somebody to lead this project (hopefully get some helpers), go door to door and ask the homeowner's if we could put trees there and if they would water the tree for the first year, and maybe even perform fundraising
- **Re-zone Albany**- 300 pages, incredibly complex, hard to navigate, there is a map that came out that had districts; each zone has a specific criteria of what activities are allowed in them
 - people are concerned about zone boundaries; some areas in our neighborhood got re-zoned as mixed-use and we live in a residential neighborhood
 - Overlay that was supposed to maintain the character of the neighborhood was deleted out of this ordinance. Supposedly it's represented through the actual codes, rules, and regulations. It was brought back after some Common Council members noticed it was missing, but only for Multiple Family dwellings. It wasn't applying to residences in our neighborhood

- accessory dwelling unit- mother-in-law apartment; can be up to 800 sq. ft., can't really have a separate entrance, this was going to be automatically allowed, concern that speculators could buy single family homes and renovating them into 2 apartments
- **New Scotland Ave Business** (Eddie)- not present
- **Business Advertising Deadline is September 28th publish date is October 7th**
- **Treasurer Report and Membership Report** (Eric)
- Total revenue- \$900
- Total expenses- \$1,282.21
- Balance- \$4,784.90

B) Membership & Audience Announcements & Concerns

- See Albany Common Council Update regarding Re-zone Albany below

C) Albany Common Council Update / Q & A

- Hon. Catherine Fahey (Ward 7)
- Hon. Judy Doesschate (Ward 9)
- Comments are due to Judy by October 1st so she can compile them for her meeting
 - Paula Ford- Will there be a 2nd draft that will be able to be reviewed by the public? While this has been a 2 year process, it just came out and there is no time for the public to actually review it and make comments, it is hard to read, how/why are we supposed to rush through this?
 - Judy- 2 year grant from NYSEDA- part of what drives the 2 year time frame
 - Paula- Does the grant require the final product be an enacted ordinance?
 - Judy- The funding from the consultant being there runs out sometime in the end of December, we can take all the time to study and debate it but then there is a question of whether we want the consultants to continue doing work; I don't expect it to be adopted by the end of December, but hoping as soon as possible because it has been pending for such a long time; if we say we don't have to adopt it for another 6 months, it loses its urgency
 - Paula- Zoning means nothing until you see the maps, there is a giant disclaimer that says that the boundaries might not be accurate, so how can people react to it if you don't know what zone your home is being proposed to be in; it's a lot to make comments in 2 weeks
 - Eric- deadline of October 1st; would anybody be interested in attending another meeting about re-zone?
 - Judy- tomorrow I am meeting with people from Pine Hills neighborhood association, there is a 1-3 and a 3-5 time frame and if you want to e-mail Judy if you are interested in going to one of those, you can go to one of those, on Saturday, getting together with people at Pine Hills library 12-1:30? Judy will bring her map and there will be maps for the 13th and 10th wards as well, Judy is taking comments regarding what is on that map and that will be reflected on her comments; we don't want "creeping commercialism" pertains a lot to New Scotland Avenue, some of the zoning turning some areas into multiple family housing areas, Judy is a little uncomfortable with anything more than a 2-family, number of commercial or semi-commercial uses that are allowed that she doesn't think is appropriate

- Eric- the website still had the May version and then the August draft popped up last week
- Paula- there were draft documents but no maps up
- Judy- I can talk to them about extending the deadline but what is a reasonable date to extend it to?
 - Paula- it would depend if they could put out easier documents for people to understand, what are the zoning districts, what will be allowed, covers special uses, get maps people could use, maps that show where the zoning is being changed so you don't have to go back and forth between the current and the proposed, the City hasn't done a lot to encourage participation, this is not easy for people to read
 - Judy- that's my job, I will be available to help people to understand; in regard to understanding the uses, starting on page 87 there are 5-6 pages that explain
 - Paula- the City should put together a smaller document for people to read; the City isn't doing enough to encourage participation
 - Eric- would like to see 2 land conservation zones created , one at Sage and one at CVS at St. Peter's, "land conservation zone" either turned into parks or just protected and kept as green space. We do not want them becoming parking or dormitories.
- Actual adoption of code, January 1st
- We are heading into budget season, budget comes out October 3rd, have to pass it by January 1st
- 12 meetings in October for budget alone
- Neil works for the water department- large project, Woodlawn park is behind it; had a press conference, capacity to take 2 Olympic size swimming pools out of our system and keep it out of people's basement during storms; if you have questions about the project ask Neil; in response to flooding in the neighborhood 2 years ago; 4 feet of water in their basements and garages; should be completed by Thanksgiving; will hold up to 750,000 gallons of water and wetlands behind it; \$1.7 million from the water board; some state money
 - Eric- when will the South Main water main be fixed
 - a. 42 inch water main, on its last legs
 - b. 20-24 million gallons a day, been able to keep it under 15 million gallons, everyone has been doing great
 - Where does the water go?
 - a. Slowly back in the system and it is treated
 - b. Hopefully we'll get money for rain water harvesting, looking to go as green as possible
 - Will it impact the basketball court?
 - a. No, access will be maintained, and the baseball field will be playable by April
- Budget is coming out on October 3rd, we have 2 vacancies on the citizen's police review board, very important positions, when there are complaints made against police officers there is a citizens board that reviews them and makes recommendations about what should be done about the situation i.e. discipline, etc. it does require a significant time commitment, a little more than HNA, and people are required to go through police training academy so you know the protocols and procedures for what is appropriate for a police officer, if you know anyone interested, we need diversity, most of the people are coming from the 10th ward, doesn't matter if people live in the 9th ward

D) Albany County Legislator Update- Lynne Lekakis

- Not present

E) Albany Police Dept, Neighborhood Engagement Unit (NEU) Update - Officer Gordy McLean

- *handout*
- 26 incidents in the past 30 days
- 21 were car larcenies- things stolen from cars that were left open, none of them were actually broken into
- 1 burglary at 517 New Scotland Ave (upper New Scotland) on August 26th
- 1 robbery 321 New Scotland on September 16th
- 2 criminal mischief
- 1 other crime
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Drones

- Has anyone seen any drones in the neighborhood at night?
- There is a man who lives with his mother and claims that he doesn't have any drones, the police haven't seen any drones, they sat out there for a couple nights, and those nights no drones were flown
- Often 12:30 a.m. or later at night
- Nothing illegal; have to register with the FAA if you are flying a drone of a certain size
- Police are currently looking into it to see what can be done legally
- Eric- should I e-mail the membership and let everyone know to call the APD if they see a drone in the neighborhood or one looking into their window?
 - Yes

F) Meeting Wrap-up

- Eric will send out a drone alert e-mail
- E-mail us if you have a recommendations for our next speaker
- We have someone coming from the public access board
- Next Meeting: November 16th 2016 at 7:00 p.m.at Sage Campus Center rm 224

G) Parsons Child & Family Center- Services Overview and Tour of Grounds

- Bill Gettman, Chief Executive Officer and Darlene Olivieri
- *video of history / heritage of Parsons *
- What's on this campus?
- We provide training for our staff and staff around the state 20,000 people in a year
- 155 students 1st-12th grade- Neil Helman School, (starts at kindergarten, just don't have any students in kindergarten at this time)
- Educational services and intensive mental health component, 30% special education
- 88% of students who were eligible to graduate from high school did so in June
- This is a place where kids from 28 school districts get extra help

- Some homes are where children who have home issues are placed, they live here 24/7, they are supported with care, about 40 kids
- They recreate here on campus, we have a pool
- Kids from Albany, Schenectady, Troy, etc.
- 8-19, mental health problems, abuse and neglect problems, they are smart and eager to learn
- 1,300 staff, direct care staff to clinical and educational staff
- Last year served 13,000
- 38 kids were adopted
- 22,000 counseling sessions supported
- Want to be part of the community, you see our kids every day, they are the best behaved
- Provide good education, social modeling and opportunity to be kids, field trips, structure, feed them well
- Great staff
- You can get a tour if you would like
- There was a BBQ last Friday for 300 people
- Some of the kids attended the HNA picnic
- We have a vegetable garden our kids help grow and flowers, just come right in, all the way straight back, school is on the right, green house is on the left
- They do a lot of community service
- We do have volunteer opportunities, read to kids, sports, clubs, if you have an interest, e-mail us and we will put you into touch with our volunteer coordinator
- Group homes for 7 or 8 kids. One on New Scotland, other on Delaware. Less intensively staffed, they have to go to Albany public high school, they don't go to school here, usually 2 staff, doors unlocked, it's a group home, staffed 24 hours a day

Meeting End

The membership meeting of the HNA concluded at 8:46 p.m.

Tour of facilities