



## Helderberg Neighborhood Association Newsletter

March/April 2016

### Neighborhood Meeting March 16, 2016

**Featured Speaker,  
City Code Enforcement Director  
Robert Magee**

The City of Albany’s new director of code enforcement attended the meeting to discuss his department’s function. Robert Magee has been with the city for five months in his current role. He is a resident of the Helderberg Neighborhood.

The purpose of the department is to enforce the building code and Albany City code. There are three core functions of the department. Building inspectors issue permits and inspect to ensure that construction is done up to code. The department also responds to code violations that are reported. Finally, there are the people who work in the office to communicate with the community. Presently, the department is facing some challenges. They are working to catch up with a backlog of work as there was no director for 19 months. They are also faced with an out-of-date computer system that they are pushing to update. Currently, they are working with a software company that has worked with a number of other municipalities. The new



software will allow the field workers to input notes directly, rather than writing notes and entering them in the system. Adopting new software will increase efficiency and ensure that the best information is captured. It will also allow more transparency, as information will be posted on the internet for the public to access. The department is also working to become fully staffed. They have hired a number of positions, but are still actively recruiting to become fully staffed.

**Question and Answer**

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**Follow-Up**

Find out what has happened since the last meeting regarding the assault in our area.

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**2016 Events**

Find out about HNA events you can attend in the coming year!

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**Treasurer’s Report**

Turn for an in-depth look at the financial standing of the association.

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409 New Scotland Avenue  
482-2358

**Italian meats, cheeses,  
bread, homemade  
meatballs, sausages, and  
much more!**

Mon-Fri: 9am-7pm

Sat: 9am - 5pm

Sun: Closed



## Follow-up From January 20 Meeting

The last meeting dealt with the serious issue of a sexual assault that occurred in our neighborhood. Two items that were discussed at that meeting were a self-defense class and meetings with the organizations that house people with mental illness in our community.

A Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) class was offered and was very well attended. It concluded in early March. There is a willingness to offer the class again, and possibly to offer some more flexible options. The group is considering offering a senior citizen version of the course and a class with shorter sessions. There is a class scheduled for early May at the Bethlehem Public Library, anyone who is interested

should call the Bethlehem Public Library to sign up.

Another item that was discussed at length at the last meeting was the need to communicate with the social service agencies that house people with mental illness in our neighborhood. One such organization, Rehabilitation Support Services (RSS) was providing services to Jose Marlett, the alleged perpetrator of the sexual assault.

**Both RSS and CDPC will be presenting at the May 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, so show up to learn more about what these agencies do in our neighborhood.**

## Board Business

Eric noted the HNA was incorporated 20 years ago in 1996! The HNA has been meeting with the Neighborhood Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NNORC) and the New Scotland Woodlawn Neighborhood Association (NSWNA) to discuss amenities, beautification, safety, and ways to develop a closer relationship with mid-New Scotland area businesses. **The NSWNA and HNA will now be coordinating meeting presenters and encourage residents to attend each other's meetings.**

The Bethlehem Grange has volunteered to maintain all of the rain gardens in Albany

County, so the HNA is no longer seeking volunteers to monitor and maintain the rain garden.

The annual plant swap hosted by Cathy Ray at 51 Lawnridge Ave. is scheduled for April 30 this year. This is a great opportunity to get out, meet your neighbors, and trade some plants that need dividing for some plants you would like to add to your garden.

Planning for 2016 Movies Under the Stars is underway now! As with last year, this is a joint effort between HNA, Christ's Church Albany, and the Pine Hills NA. Movie nights

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**Common Council Update/Q & A  
Hon. Catherine Fahey (Ward 7)**

Cathy provided information about the ongoing discussions with RSS regarding their processes for placing people in the neighborhood. She found that there are a variety of housing options for people receiving the services of supportive agencies. There are some arrangements that are public information, such as community residences, but apartments licensed for treatment (such as those licensed by the Office of Mental Health) are covered by privacy laws. There are also unlicensed apartments that are untraceable. All of the agencies have been willing to meet with the Common Council members, and Cathy indicated that she will continue to pursue more information.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Ward is still looking for a representative for the Albany Community Police Advisory Committee.

**Hon. Judy Doesschate (Ward 9)**

Judy shared that she has requested that RSS and CDPC attend an HNA meeting to share their procedures and what services they provide. She feels it would be good opportunity for neighborhood residents to get some information about these agencies.

The 9<sup>th</sup> Ward appointee to the Community Police Advisory Committee is Terrance Ward. Re-Assessment notices are out and can be challenged. Hibernian Hall is one site to challenge your assessment.



**Rob Field**

389-2886

Rob@RobFieldinsurance.com

Be sure to thank Rob Field for being a good neighbor and sponsoring *Movies Under the Stars!*

**2016 Events**

<u>HNA Meetings</u>	<u>HNA Picnic</u>	<u>Annual Yard Sale</u>
Wed May 18 <sup>th</sup>	Sun Sep 18 <sup>th</sup>	Sat June 11 <sup>th</sup>
Wed July 20 <sup>th</sup>		
Wed Sep 21 <sup>st</sup>	<u>Movies Under the Stars</u>	<u>National Night Out</u>
Wed Nov 16 <sup>th</sup>	Fri July 15 <sup>th</sup>	August 2 <sup>nd</sup>
	Fri Sep 16 <sup>th</sup>	
		<u>Annual Plant Swap</u>
		Sat April 30 <sup>th</sup>



Now accepting applications for late fall occupancy

**241 South Allen Street  
Albany, NY 12208  
518-650-7580**  
**For Information or to Apply online, visit:  
www.eletheriaalbany.com**

Q: What are the top complaints you get?

A: Tenants complain about infestations and lack of heat and complaints about construction that is not permitted.

Q: Where do you find city and NYS codes?

A: They are available online.

Q: Do SeeClickFix notifications reach your office?

A: Yes, but there are a lot of critical pieces of information that are not captured by that system.

Q: Are houses inspected at certain times other than when there are complaints?

A: We can cite exterior violations – chipped paint, broken windows, etc. We cannot enter a dwelling unless there is a known flagrant code violation. Rental properties need to be inspected every 30 months. Much of the information the department has is out-of-date. There was a pilot program in December to map out violations in the 7<sup>th</sup> ward – that was effective. The goal is to fully staff the department and do a sweep of the city to identify code violations.

### **Albany Public Library Executive Director Scott Jarzombek**

Scott Jarzombek came to present information about the services the library provides and information about the upcoming library budget vote.

Albany Public Library has seven locations across the city serving upwards of 95,000 residents. Two-thirds of Albany residents are library cardholders. For those residents who are unable to get to the library, there is a delivery system and activities that the library provides.

The library has also been working with other agencies in the city such as the department of recreation.

#### **Question and Answer**

Q: The Washington Ave Branch women's room is a mess and there is never any soap or toilet paper. How is this being addressed?

A: The bathrooms are now checked every two hours.

Q: At the Bach Branch, what are the usage numbers for Sunday and does that increase the overall usage of the branch?

A: At the last board meeting, it was reported that all measures of usage were up. Circulation was up 10%, visits increased, more people took advantage of programs (although there are no programs on Sundays). Sundays continue to grow, but the library needs to save money elsewhere before they can expand hours on Sunday.

Q: Do you plan on keeping Sunday hours permanently?

A: The library plans to keep the same summer hours as in the past and are considering whether to keep Sunday hours in the summer.

#### **Neighborhood Engagement Unit Update**

##### **Officer Gordy McLean**

Officer McLean shared that the neighborhood has been very quiet since the robbery and sexual assault that occurred on January 9. Our beat officer's hours are 7:30-4:30 Monday through Friday, with no weekend hours.

An audience member shared their concern that people are parking their cars too closely to the corners making it difficult to see to pull out.



# St Peter's Hospital

## ST PETER'S HEALTH PARTNERS

are scheduled for the third Fridays in June, July, August, and September. The movies will begin at 8:30 with warm-up activities beginning at 7:30. **Rob Field of State Farm and St. Peter's Health Partners have agreed to sponsor the movie nights this year!** Make sure you thank them and tell your friends and neighbors about the generosity of our sponsors.

Movies in the Helderberg Neighborhood will be shown on the Sage College lawn on July 15<sup>th</sup> and September 16<sup>th</sup>. Flyers will be sent home with school children at the end of the school year.

Turnout has been good in the past, with over a hundred people in attendance. The warm-up activities include a bounce house, live music, ice cream, water, popcorn, and face painting. This event is a really great opportunity to get out this summer and get to know your neighbors. You don't want to miss it!

If you want to be a critical piece of these great events, HNA is seeking volunteers. **About 10 volunteers are needed for each movie night.** We are also looking for live bands and kid friendly activities for the 7:30-8:30 hour.

The HNA now has the ability to do mobile pay! If you need to pay your dues, all you have to do is bring your credit card.

We are in a great position financially and actually have extra to spend. We are looking to spend on things to benefit the neighborhood. For example, HNA is sponsoring a sign for the 2016 Albany Little League season. Feel free to submit your ideas!

## Call for HNA Committee Members and Volunteers!

The HNA Board of Directors is seeking volunteers who love our neighborhood as much as we do! We're currently looking to staff a committee tasked with reviewing and revising the bylaws. If you have an eagle eye and want to improve the governance of the HNA, then this might be for you!

The HNA is also looking for volunteers for our upcoming movie nights! If you are available to set up, tear down, or help in any way, please contact us at [hna@hnaalbany.com](mailto:hna@hnaalbany.com) or (662) 598-1462.

## HNA Treasury Report

### Income

Household Memberships	\$220
Donations	\$5
Business Memberships	\$95
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$320</b>

### Expenses

2016 CANA Dues	\$25
Go Daddy Domain Name Fee	\$30
PayPal Fees (21 @ \$.45)	\$9.45
PayPal Credit Card Fee (1 @ \$.14)	\$0.14
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$64.93</b>

**Total Bank Balance as of March 11, 2016**

**\$6,018.11**

## What is the Helderberg Neighborhood Association?

We are a group of homeowners, renters and businesses dedicated to making the Helderberg neighborhood safe and enjoyable. We provide a way for members to share information, discuss issues and improve the neighborhood through actions, projects and events. Become a paid member and get "plugged in" today!

### Why should you pay a membership fee?

- Movies Under the Stars at Sage College on New Scotland Ave
- Annual Neighborhood Yard Sale organization and promotion
- Annual Neighborhood Picnic promotion and food
- Digital communication product license fees for website and e-newsletter
- Printing costs for newsletters and flyers
- Voting Rights - Paid members can vote on HNA actions and elections.\*

*\* Must be within neighborhood boundaries to vote.*

### How much does membership cost?

A 12 month membership is only \$5 for a household and just \$10 for businesses (includes a FREE advertisement in the newsletter). Just complete and mail the form below or visit our website!

### Can I advertise my business in the HNA Newsletter?

Sure! Our mailing list lets you reach hundreds of people and is a great value. A business membership is \$10 for 12 months and includes a free advertisement. \$95 gets you 6 ads, and includes your 12-month business membership fee! Just complete and mail the form below or visit our website!

Yes! Please enroll me as a member of the Helderberg Neighborhood Association (HNA).

Enclosed is a ( ) check, made out to HNA, or ( ) cash (do not mail), in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
for a (choose one):

- ( ) \$5 Household membership
- ( ) \$10 Business membership & 1 FREE advertisement
- ( ) \$95 6 advertisements & business membership

Mail to:

HNA

P.O. Box 8841

Albany, NY 12208

Date mailed: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

( ) Place "X" here only if you do not have access to the Internet and need delivery of the newsletter.

Helderberg Neighborhood Association | [hna@hnaalbany.com](mailto:hna@hnaalbany.com) | <http://www.hnaalbany.com>

(662) 598-1462