

# HNA Reporter

November-December 2015

## Meeting Overview

*November 18, 2015*



*A screenshot of the recorded version of the meeting*

The most recent meeting of the HNA was held on November 18. This was the first meeting that was broadcast live over the internet for people who could not attend. It will also be archived for future viewing. There were some concerns about the quality of the sound on the broadcast, which the board will work to address.

### *Featured Speaker, Lynn Lekakis*

Lynn is the neighborhood's recently elected representative for the Albany County Legislature, District 8. She will assume office in January. Since her election, she has attended budgetary sessions as an observer and has signed onto a reform agenda which focuses on ethics, communications, and a higher minimum wage. She attended the meeting in order to discover what concerns members of the public may have that she can address. To that end, she has begun collecting names and email addresses for communication of concerns with her constituents.

In a question and answer segment with Lynn, various members of the audience approached her with concerns and questions. One topic was around the theft and resale of personal property and ways the county could combat the issue. It was discussed at great length, and Lynn agreed to research the laws surrounding pawn shops to find out what more can be done.

A resident also brought up a concern about leash laws and restraining dogs, as she has had multiple run-ins with a particular dog which has caused her concern. She discussed the issue with animal control and the Albany Police. Some other audience members agreed that there have been issues with scofflaw dog owners in the neighborhood.

Another issue that was raised was whether Albany County can, on its own, raise the minimum wage to \$15 in advance of the state's planned increase. There was a discussion of what that would mean, and Lynn agreed to research if this was possible

Finally, an audience member expressed concern about the accessibility of County Legislature meetings, as they must be requested and are not posted online. Judy Doesschatte explained that explained that they can be requested, and that it is not a violation to not post the minutes online.

### *HNA Board Business*

The entire HNA board is up for election at the January 20th meeting. All current members are interested in serving another term. Or, any member in good standing who resides in the neighborhood boundaries can nominate himself / herself (or nominate another) by notifying a Board member prior to the January meeting. Board members will be elected by a majority of the membership at the meeting.

The Pinewood Ave. rain garden inspections are switching to storm events only – regular inspections are done for the year. The rain garden is monitored by “rain garden rangers” (or “bio-retention basin engineers, if you prefer), who are volunteers who check the garden once a month. It is located at Pinewood and Hackett. If you are interested in volunteering to check on the rain garden once a month in 2016, contact [hna@hnaalbany.com](mailto:hna@hnaalbany.com). Even if you are not interested in volunteering, you should go and visit our rain garden anyway.

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Historic Albany Foundation is hosting their annual Holiday House Tour (December 13, 12-4) and is including houses in the Helderberg Neighborhood. This is a great opportunity for us to show off our area, so make sure you decorate your home for whatever holiday you choose celebrate!

## *Audience Comments and Concerns*

Safety concerns were discussed at this meeting, this time by the Association Chair, Eric. Someone came to his door 11/17/15 at 7:30 pm, rang the bell, said they had the wrong house when he answered and then drove away. While this may have been a benign event, it is good to be vigilant and aware of what is going on in the neighborhood.

Many people in the neighborhood shared that they had been approached similarly or had been the victims of theft. Be vigilant and contact the Officer Tucker or the Albany Police if you see something suspicious.

An audience member raised a concern about her difficulty getting to her polling place, as it has changed frequently and she does not drive. Judy Doesschate shared that the polling places were changed most recently because of an election district change.

Another audience member raised a concern about the training of inspectors at the polling sites. They were not consistently informing voters that there was a proposition on the back of the ballot, so many people may not have voted on that item. It was also shared that historically, many people fill in the bubble for a write-in candidate but do not write a name, indicating some confusion about the ballots.

Eric Huntington, HNA Chair shared status updates on a few issues raised at the last meeting. First, there was a concern about a dog in the neighborhood, and the issue was reported as having been satisfactorily resolved.

The University Heights track and field was a topic of discussion at the last meeting. It was

not paid for by the city as was previously thought, but city residents have a right to use it when college events are not taking place. Cathy Fahey and Eric will work with University Heights to have a sign placed indicating that the facilities are available for use by the public.

## *Member Vote*

The issue brought to the membership was, "Should HNA publicly support Albany City's proposed \$12.5 million capital city fund request from New York State?"

Members voted in favor of supporting the city's request 23-2. 9 votes were cast by absentees.

## *Common Council Update*

**Hon. Judy Doesschate (Ward 9)** gave some information about the reserves of the City of Albany and the fact that some difficult decisions will be required in order to keep the city running as it is.

**Hon. Catherine Fahey (Ward 7)** shared that there is a projected \$12.5 million deficit in the city's budget. Many programs have been cut, but do not equal enough to offset the deficit.

She discussed the mayor's efforts to get tax-exempt organizations to pay a services share to the city. The mayor is also working to get the state to pay their share of city services. The state currently has a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) agreement in place with the city. The mayor is looking for other revenue streams.

In an effort to keep taxes flat, the mayor is looking at moving towards a fee-for-service trash collection. The 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> unit in a property would each be charged \$15 /month.

An audience member suggested a "pay as you throw" scheme, in which people would pay extra for the amount they throw away. It was also suggested that the city no longer pick up large items like appliances and furniture

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## *Meeting Wrap Up*

Code enforcement and representatives from Rezone Albany were suggested as future speakers.

There was a member request to save plastic lids for electronic mouse button switches that attach to computers and toys for the disabled children in the Capital District Area. It is an ongoing project where both NWA and the Mohawk Valley Turners annually produce approximately 150 wooden bases for these switches. The switches use the 16 oz. & 28 oz. plastic lids from peanut butter jars and the large plastic lids (8" dia.) from restaurant-size mayonnaise jars. If you have saved some lids to donate, you can drop them off at 44 Lawnridge Avenue or arrange for pick up by calling Susan at 518-438-1909.

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## **Life and Art in the Neighborhood**

As an organization, the HNA strives to make connections between the people and businesses in our area. We have been doing a featured business section to help to foster some of those connections. Now, we would like to start to focus on some of the individuals living in our neighborhood.

To start, the focus will be on the arts in the Helderberg Neighborhood. If you are an artist of any kind (we're not just talking about visual arts here), we want to hear from you. Do you have a neighborhood band? Are you a painter? A poet? A dancer? Do you create something with your hands? Let us know at [hna@hnaalbany.com](mailto:hna@hnaalbany.com) and we will work to write some feature sections on the responses that we get. Hopefully, this will help us learn a little bit more about the neighbors we see every day.

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**Rob Field**

389-2886

[Rob@RobFieldinsurance.com](mailto:Rob@RobFieldinsurance.com)

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## Featured Business

### *Landmark Consulting*



Historic Preservation & Architectural Services

Our featured business this issue is Landmark Consulting, a business that has been an active part of our neighborhood and the City of Albany as a whole since 2002. They are a small woman-owned historic preservation and architectural consulting firm that operates out of a home on Grove Avenue.

Kim and Jack Alvarez are the team behind Landmark Consulting and they have a combined total of 50 years of experience in historic preservation and architectural design. The couple has worked across the country in Boston, San Francisco, Washington DC, Newport, Charlottesville, Ithaca, Buffalo, Syracuse, and others. Needless to say, all of these locations have given them a diverse experience in their field.

They chose to bring their business to the Helderberg Neighborhood after seeing our great early 20<sup>th</sup> century housing stock, the walkable nature of the community, and the countless opportunities citywide for returning under-loved and neglected properties to their original glory. On Grove Avenue alone, the couple has rescued four long-neglected homes, doing much of the

work themselves. All of their rehabilitations highlight the original historic character and design intent of the properties by using traditional materials, conducting careful historic research, thoughtfully planning construction and design, maintaining historic features, and carefully selecting and evaluating repair methods.

In addition to accurate historic restorations, Kim and Jack also work with clients on sensitive bath and kitchen renovations, additions, and full historic building rehabs. Their work extends beyond historic preservation and architectural consulting, as they are also actively involved with Historic Albany Foundation, The Woman's Club of Albany, and Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless. Beyond that, they are also raising a family to believe in the importance of pride of place wherever they are.

Check out Landmark Consulting's website at [www.landmarkconsulting.net](http://www.landmarkconsulting.net). If you need any of the services that they offer, give them a call and support a neighborhood business. If you happen to run into Kim or Jack, please thank them for all that they do to make our neighborhood and city a better place.

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## Upcoming Events



**January 20 – HNA Meeting**

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## Treasurer's Report

Expenses:

Amount	Reason
\$172.80	Flyers for Picnic
\$309.12	Food and Supplies for Picnic
\$38.88	Copies of HNA Reporter
\$2.25	PayPal Fee
\$12.25	Purchase Checks
<b>\$535.30</b>	<b>Total</b>

Income:

Amount	From
\$475	Donation Movie and Membership
\$225	New memberships
\$210	Business Memberships
<b>\$910</b>	<b>Total</b>

Balance:

Amount	Where
\$5,198	Trustco Bank Account
\$61.13	PayPal Account
<b>\$5260.07</b>	<b>Total</b>

### *The Eleftheria*

For information and to apply on line visit our website:  
[www.eleftheriaofalbany.com](http://www.eleftheriaofalbany.com)

The Eleftheria  
241 South Allen Street  
Albany, New York 12208  
518-650-7580

Eleftheria Properties, LLC  
P.O.Box 8683  
Albany, New York 12208

### *The Eleftheria*

"Neighborhood Elegance"



[www.eleftheriaofalbany.com](http://www.eleftheriaofalbany.com)

Now accepting applications  
for late fall occupancy

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## Call for HNA Board Members!

The HNA Board of Directors is seeking volunteers who love our neighborhood as much as we do! We're currently looking to fill one vacant position.

**Communications Director** - Handy with emails and newsletters? Like to keep your Facebook account up-to-date? You're the one we're looking for!

If you or anyone you know is interested in joining the board, please email us at [hna@hnaalbany.com](mailto:hna@hnaalbany.com)!

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## 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 member and get "plugged in" today!

### What do I get out of being a member of the Association?

- Emails - About everything - from lost pets to local crimes to fun activities.
- HNA Newsletter - Full of information and important dates!
- Neighborhood events - Garage sale, Movie Nights, Annual Picnic and more!
- Meetings - The membership meets 6 times a year to exchange information!
- 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.

### 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.

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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>

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