

Charles B. Aycock Neighborhood Association
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
For April 27, 2009

Present: Fabio Camara, Christina Cantrell, Charlie Conner, Maliq Culbreath, Linda Fusco, Justin Smith, Bert VanderVeen, Laura Wall, Shawn Wriede

Absent: Jennifer Lanza, Shawn Patch

Guests: Officer Jim Cayton

Business meeting called to order at 6:39 PM

Agenda Items:

1.) Community Resource: Officer Jim Cayton was double-booked on this evening, so he was only able to answer a few questions. Bert VanderVeen asked Officer Cayton to investigate two incidents – 1.) On the night of 4/24/2009, **3 black SUVs which appeared to be police vehicles were parked at Aycock Middle School**, and 2.) A resident stated no police followup occurred after the **theft of stolen laptop from 801 Fifth Ave.**

Laura Wall requested a **status on the homicide investigations at Red Mike's and Summit Ave.** Officer Cayton stated that the burn victim of the Summit Ave fire has little recollection of the event and is not able to assist the investigation. There are persons of interest, but due to the ongoing police investigation, no details are available. The police department is awaiting DNA results related to the Red Mike homicide. Some board members heard a rumor that Fisher's Grill may purchase the Red Mike property for expansion purposes.

2.) Vice-President's report: Laura Wall presented a blueprint of the **modified sign that is slated for the corner of E. Bessemer Ave and Cypress St.** The new sign, which designates one of the entrances to the Aycock Historic District, is 9 feet long (instead of the original 16 feet) and is entirely brick (the original plan called for a brick and stone structure). Clay Gardner and Ricky Loman created the modified design; the design is a requirement for requesting construction bids. Ms. Wall reminded the board that a Neighborhood Small Projects grant of \$1,000 is available for the sign project. A motion was made to accept the modified design; the vote was unanimous in favor of the sign.

Ms. Wall solicited ideas to prevent and repair **damage to the new fence surrounding Aycock Middle School.** Even though the fence is commercial grade aluminum, the decorative rings in the fence are attached by a single screw; evidently, soccer balls hitting the fence and/or people climbing over the fence have sufficient force to knock the rings loose. Some time ago, Ms. Wall requested that the soccer goal be placed farther from the fence and the school agreed. However, the weekend soccer teams apparently moved the goal back closer to the fence. The board's suggestions include: 1.) Install a gate to prevent people from climbing the fence. However, there may be restrictions that the school imposes against exterior gates. 2.) Install nylon netting around the goals to prevent soccer balls from hitting the fence. 3.) Install a secondary fence (chain link, steel, Plexiglas) that can withstand the velocity of soccer balls. 4.) Replace sections of the aluminum fence with steel. 5.) Support a plan to build a track around the soccer fields. Funds to build a track are allocated, but not available to spend in the current budget year.

The contract to hire **Robert Bowman to maintain the landscaping** in the Yanceyville St medians and the Max Bridge is effective on May 1, 2009. (See **credit** in the President's report for discussion on recognizing the professionals who contribute to the website or the community.)

Ms. Wall is planning to send an email to Aycock residents for nominations for the **Yard of the Month Award**. The top three nominations with photos will be placed on the Aycock website for residents to cast a vote. Fabio Camera and Bert VanderVeen agreed to take photos. (See **credit** in the President's report for discussion on recognizing the professionals who contribute to the website or the community.)

Ms. Wall is soliciting nominations for the **Property Improvement Award**, which honors a homeowner who has made significant improvements.

ACTION ITEM for all board members - Send a nomination to Ms. Wall for property improvement.

3.) COA: Shawn Patch was not present, but 3 COAs were discussed.

426 Brandon St. – request to screen in front porch. The board voted unanimously to disapprove this COA because a screened-in front porch is not historically accurate. There is a back deck on the structure and the board suggests that it may be better suited to screen.

516 Fifth Ave – request to remove a magnolia tree between the house on the property and the house at 518 Fifth Ave. The board voted unanimously to disapprove this COA unless a certified arborist determines that the tree cannot be pruned sufficiently to prevent crowding the structures.

688 Chestnut St – request to replace doors, windows, and shutters on a 5-unit apartment building as part of Greensboro's lead abatement program. The building was built in 1965 and is a non-contributing structure. The board approved this COA on the condition that the property owner selects replacement items with a nod toward historic and aesthetic architecture, such as 6-over-1 windows (to replace the existing 2-over-2). The replacement of the louvered external doors with the same is not a requirement for COA approval.

ACTION ITEM for Christina Cantrell – send a link to the Dunleith design plans to Victor Ganim, property owner of 688 Chestnut St.

4.) Community Garden: Bert VanderVeen reported that a \$1,000.00 grant from Building Stronger Neighborhoods was approved for the **community garden at Aycock Middle School**. Since the garden is located on school property, there is a strong component for education in contrast to some community gardens that benefit food banks, etc. Mr. Culbreath met with Valerie Akins, principal of Aycock Middle School, who informed him that she provides written approval to move forward with the project after consultation with the district. The proposed location for approximately twelve 4 x 10 raised beds is at the corner of Cypress St and Yanceyville St. The exact location is to be determined. Ms. Akins proposed a meeting with Mr. Culbreath, the Aycock science coordinator, and a person who owns property south of Greensboro who has already offered his land for a community garden to discuss details.

After written approval is received, some work is required to grade the land and till it to prepare the beds. Equipment is required for this effort. In addition to the beds, accommodation is necessary for a locked tool shed, a compost pile, an animal-proof fence and/or surveillance camera for security (generally the most costly expense in other community gardens) and access to

water. At this late date, it is too late to plant summer crops this year, but there is time to plant cool weather vegetables.

ACTION ITEM for Laura Wall – contact Guilford County on availability of grading and tilling equipment.

Mr. VanderVeen remarked that Zora Medor has \$900.00 left from her grant (initially for the Good, Green, Fun Fair and Earth Day) with which she is planning an education component of the community garden.

5.) Web communications: Shawn Wriede reported that **historically accurate colors** are now used in the website and the colors will rotate on a seasonal basis. Mr. Wriede plans to upload the by-laws as the next project. (See **credit** in the President's report for discussion on recognizing the professionals who contribute to the website or the community.)

6.) Aycock newsletter: Linda Fusco reported that the next newsletter is scheduled for July 1, 2009. The last newsletter garnered many compliments from Aycock residents.

7.) Treasury Czar's report: Justin Smith reported **no change in account balance from last month**, however, as of today, there are some checks to deposit and some expenses pending

8.) Secretary's report: A motion was made and approved to **accept the minutes from the last meeting.**

The next **Greensboro Neighborhood Meeting** is scheduled for Saturday, May 9, 2009 from 9:00 am to 11:00 am at the Central Library on 219 North Church St. Ann Stringfield (Fisher Park) prepares minutes from each meeting. In the future, Christina Cantrell will forward those meeting minutes to the board members.

9.) Community Watch: Watch Commander Fabio Camera initiated a discussion on the balance the neighborhood must take to **present a united message to discourage people without a valid reason to be in Aycock** while at the same time allowing small businesses and non-profits who rely on door-to-door sales. The discussion referenced an incident of a man selling meat from an unmarked van that looked suspicious to some residents, but apparently is a reliable vendor to others. The episode sparked a high number of emails with strong opinions. One suggestion all board members felt may be effective is to request strangers knocking door-to-door for their registration, which is required by Greensboro police for all who solicit door-to-door. This may deter people without a legitimate business reason.

Mr. Camera has been delayed on updating the **Aycock Neighborhood Resident List** due to illness, but plans to resume the effort.

ACTION ITEM for all board members – validate that the new Community Watch signs are in place.

10.) President's report: Bert VanderVeen provided an update on the **property slated for demolition at 111 Cypress St.** The city issued a demolition order in December after the property owner failed to bring the structure to compliance. At the time, the property owner was dealing with a death in the family and was very unhappy with the city's action, the Aycock board, and the entire neighborhood, and threatened legal action. The Aycock Board voted unanimously on

February 23, 2009 to oppose the demolition order. Evidently, the property owner was able to work a compromise and resume renovating the structure using licensed contractors.

During several agenda discussions, the notion of formally recognizing a contributing professional was raised. Dialogue regarding the photos for the Yard of the Month, the landscaper recently hired, and Aycock's web guru prompted the board to endorse methods to **credit** a person or small business who contributes to the website or the community by mentioning the company name and/or providing a link to the company website from the Aycock website and the newsletters. The board feels this silent advertising is a mutually beneficial arrangement for both the community and the local businesses which help maintain it.

The meeting adjourned at 8:29 PM.