

Charles B. Aycock Neighborhood Association
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
For April 28, 2008

Present: Christina Cantrell, Charlie Conner, Maliq Culbreath, Mebane Ham, Tracy Lamothe, Bert VanderVeen, Laura Wall. **Absent:** Betsey Baun, Paula Patch, Shawn Patch, Julie Welch

Guests: Jim Cayton, Tony Cuda, Terry Edwards, Jennie Hunt, Brenda Lloyd, Thomas Lloyd, Carol Velez

Business meeting called to order at 6:31 PM by Bert VanderVeen, who presided over the meeting due to Betsey's unavoidable absence.

Jim Cayton, our new **liaison police officer** replacing Melanie McDaniel who is on maternity leave, introduced himself to the board. Officer Cayton gave his telephone number (373-3677) and email address (jim.cayton@greensboro-nc.gov) and encouraged the board (and all Aycock residents) to call or email him after every 911 call so that he can research the incident and report back to the board. Officer Cayton has worked in Greensboro for over 20 years and with that experience, he presented a number of crime prevention tips, especially with the summer months looming. He stressed that every homeowner should have an inventory of valuables, preferably with model and serial number when applicable, stored somewhere other than a computer hard drive. He also encouraged the engraving of an owner identifier (but not Social Security Number - North Carolina Driver's License is a safer alternate) onto items. He suggested that the board use some funds to purchase an engraver for the entire neighborhood to use (note: this option was not discussed by the board after Officer Cayton left). The question was asked what items are most likely to be stolen and Officer Cayton replied, "Anything that can be carried." Even large items can be placed on bicycle handlebars and carried without suspicion in the middle of the night. He specifically mentioned cash, guns, entertainment equipment, and electronic equipment as items often reported stolen. He also said one of the most effective crime prevention methods is for residents to be aware of any activity in the neighborhood and to watch any person or activity that may be suspicious. He is often questioned about what activity is considered suspicious and his recommendation is to follow one's instinct. A person walking down the street is not suspicious, but one looking into a backyard or testing a locked gate may be.

Another problem issue raised to Officer Cayton by Tracy Lamothe is the number of cars on Summit Ave **driving in excess of the speed limit**. He remarked that the City Transportation Department of Greensboro has equipment that is able to count the number of cars, the average rate of speed, the highest speed, and other statistics. He called this maneuver a "stealth stat". The equipment is housed in a large container, so it is not possible to place in all locations, but the data can be used to determine appropriate solutions for a problem traffic area. He suggested that the board contact the Transportation Department. Laura Wall suggested a "Your speed is currently XX miles

per hour” traffic sign to make drivers aware of their speed. This maneuver has been used successfully on Yanceyville St in the past.

Terry Edwards, manager of the Summit Ave branch of the **SECU**, attended the board meeting because he wanted to present his version of the events surrounding the SECU branch expansion. Mr. Edwards is new to Greensboro (moved to the Triad last June) and currently resides in Winston-Salem. He was alarmed at Ms. Fagg’s letter (signed by a number of SECU members) because he felt a phone call would have been sufficient to straighten out the matter. He felt he and the SECU received negative press in 99 Blocks in an article written by Bill Hancock from notes taken during the last board meeting. After receiving the Aycock board’s letter, he followed up with a phone call to Betsey Baun, which he stated was productive. He wanted to make a number of points to the board, including 1.) Selling of Park Ave property was initiated by a property owner and not by Mr. Edwards, 2.) He did not feel that he was soliciting property door-to-door, 3.) There is no hidden agenda, 4.) The SECU is not in the business of any strong-armed tactics, 4.) Discussions with property owners to expand the SECU branch took place in 2000 and 2002, with some offers for property evidently made. Ms. Velez strongly disagreed with Mr. Edwards’ version. In response to a question by the board about expansion intentions, Mr. Edwards stated that SECU is definitely looking at alternate options and locations because the current Summit Ave branch no longer can accommodate its business. He also stated that SECU is not a bank, but a credit union owned by its members and therefore does not behave in the same manner as a bank.. He stressed that the Bessemer and Summit Business Association has merged with the Pyramid Village Business Association. The combined group of merchants is committed to making East Greensboro a viable place to do business. Mr. Edwards and the board agreed that more communication and partnership would benefit both residents and merchants.

Jennie Hunt gave the board an update on the **Living History Project**. There are 6 houses from each decade from 1904 to the 1940’s. Ms. Hunt is working on scripts and costumes and actors to play the characters for those home owners who chose that option. Mebane Ham is working on signs to place in front of each house (and perhaps balloons to identify each house from afar) and Ms. Hunt plans to have maps with the houses marked to be distributed at the Sternberger dig (10:00 am – 2:00 pm), at the parade (11:00 am – 1:00 pm) and at the birthday party. Although Shawn Patch was not present to give an update, Bert VanderVeen stated that discussions continue on port-o-johns and the role that Sternberger Arts Center might play. He also mentioned that he is working with Ms. Valez on complimentary items such as water for the volunteers. Donna Newton requested permission to sell Bicentennial items at the dig (such as T-shirts, cups, messenger bags, etc.). The board agreed and also determined that no Aycock “It’s a Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood” T-shirts would be sold during the event to prevent any competition. Ned Billington (geologist and Aycock resident) is interested in working in conjunction with Mr. Patch in the dig. His email was forwarded from Ms. Baun to Mr. Patch.

The **minutes from March 24, 2008** were accepted with two amendments: Mebane Ham and Jennie Hunt were present at the meeting.

The **COA** for the sign at Aycock Middle School was presented by Laura Wall in Shawn Patch's absence. The board discussed the application. The final price has not yet been determined, but Ms. Wall is expecting that Aycock's portion will be in the \$2000.00 range. The contractor is expected to be (Lafayette) Brown Construction, who repaired the brick sign at Summit and Yanceyville after it was damaged in a traffic mishap last year. The board voted to approve the COA.

Tracy Lamothe presented the **Treasurer's report** which was accepted with minor discussion.

Laura Wall, **Community Development Chair**, communicated that the grants she applied for as part of the neighborhood small projects for may be in jeopardy. Another neighborhood submitted a proposal (albeit, past the stated deadline) for a foot bridge and that appears to have priority over Aycock's proposal. The final decision has not yet been made, but Ms. Wall did not feel confident that any grant money would be available.

Bert VanderVeen presented the **President's report** and the **Vice-President's report**.

- Mr. VanderVeen would like to restart the **Community Watch**. Anyone who previously held the position of block captain should contact Mr. VanderVeen by email.
- Mr. VanderVeen and Ms. Baun attended the **Sternberger Arts Center Commission**. According to Mr. VanderVeen, it was a good meeting and there is interest on the commission's part to become active in the neighborhood. More discussion is required to determine an appropriate role in the upcoming archeological dig. Mr. VanderVeen and Ms. Baun will be rotating attendance at the quarterly meetings.
- Mr. VanderVeen presented the idea of one board member attending each of the upcoming **Neighborhood Congress** meetings. The meetings are scheduled on alternate months on Saturday morning from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM and on Thursday evenings from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM and held at the Central Library or the Community Center. The next meeting is scheduled on May 10. The board agreed that each member should rotate attendance at the meetings. The suggestion was presented to circulate a schedule of the next several months meeting dates/times so that board members can select convenient dates.
- There is minimal progress on meeting with City Council members on the **Summit Ave Corridor Plan**. Charlie Conner and David Wharton had a good meeting with Robbie Perkins, but no other meetings have been scheduled, although phone conversations have been held. Ms. Wall is finalizing the brochure. One of the themes for the brochure is that Summit Ave is the Gateway to the Arts and

Cultural Center of Greensboro. The cost to print 50 copies of the brochure by Clinton Press is approx \$250.00. After discussion, it was decided that the price is worthwhile if it convinces council members of the benefits of the plan. The board agreed that persistence in contacting council members is warranted.

- Discussions were held on the recent arrest for **barking dogs** on the corner of Fifth Ave and Percy St. There is a flurry of email messages regarding the subject. The general consensus is that directly asking a magistrate to sign an arrest warrant and bypassing the police is not in the best interest of the neighborhood. The board discussed, but did not vote to, write a letter to the landlord of the renter who imitated the arrest.
- Discussions were also held regarding the **vandalism** on Fifth Ave, reported in another set of email messages. According to Mr. VanderVeen, this incident involves juveniles and a divorce situation, so the police were not called. It appears to be a self-contacted situation.
- Finally, discussions were held on activity, especially on Summit Ave, that appear to be domestic violence and do not involve Aycock residents, but still affect the **quality of life** in the neighborhood.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 PM.