

Charles B. Aycock Neighborhood Association
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
For February 23, 2009

Present: Christina Cantrell, Charlie Conner, Maliq Culbreath, Linda Fusco, Jennifer Lanza, Shawn Patch, Justin Smith, Bert VanderVeen, Laura Wall, Shawn Wriede

Absent: Julie Welch

Guests: Officer Melanie Daniels, Officer Doug Campbell, John Mandrano, Samuel Johnson

Business meeting called to order at 6:31 PM

Agenda Items:

1.) Greensboro Police Department – community resource Officer Daniels reported there was low activity in the neighborhood in the past month. However, there appears to be increased activity in areas surrounding the neighborhood, such as the apartments that flank NC A&T University. Although these structures are not technically dorms, they rent by the bedroom, and therefore, attract mostly students. NC A&T campus police have traditionally operated only on the campus grounds; **Greensboro police are attempting to partner with campus police** to encourage them to patrol outside the university boundaries, but Officer Daniels did not have official word on when this partnership may begin. The apartments have security patrols, but they are not 24-7, so there are time periods when no security is available. The question was raised about security cameras adjoining the campus, and Officer Daniels reported that there are some installed.

The question was raised about the legality of **installing security cameras**, especially around the Max Bridge leading from E Hendrix St across the railroad tracks to Fisher Park and in front of the apartments at 753 Chestnut St (Chestnut Court Apartments). Both locations are suspected by residents to have potential criminal activity. Officer Daniels responded that, on private property, there is no issue. However, the city does not maintain any funds to help with installation of security cameras. The cost to purchase a camera is approximately \$6,000 and additional funds are required to install and maintain it. In addition, a person is required to monitor live action or view the tapes. It was suggested that a Community Watch program may be a less expensive alternative and that presently, there is **no captain for Chestnut St. Charlie Connor volunteered for the position.**

The question was raised whether **criminals establish an area** and then inhabit that perimeter because they feel comfortable with the environs. Neither Officer Daniel nor Officer Campbell has statistics to support that theory.

Officer Daniel had **no update on either the Summit Ave homicide or the Red Mike homicide.**

2.) **740 Chestnut St property.** John Mandrano presented his concern to the board that if Children's Home Society of North Carolina (CHSNC) changes the zoning of the property at 740 Chestnut St from its current general office with restrictions to just general office, and then decides not to pursue its plan and sell the property, the zoning is in place for office use. The neighborhood has advocated against office space for years. Mr. Mandrano also will have to change the zoning since the restrictions are 1.) Congregate care (a plan for which Mr. Mandrano was unable to get funding), and 2.) Single-family (the structure is not situated for single family since it is a very large space with no full bathrooms). Mr. Mandrano stated that a retrofit of the

property might include 3-4 townhouses, with the front of the structure resembling a single-family structure. Mr. Mandrano does not have the funding to proceed with this plan at this time. It was suggested to Mr. Mandrano that he request a zoning change now to include multi-family. The board decided to table any discussion since a large number of agenda items still remained.

3.) Housing and Community Development – Shawn Patch reported that the **property at 111 Cypress St received a demolition order from the city in December**. Apparently, the property owner failed to bring the structure to compliance and the city was left with no option except to issue a demolition order. A motion was made to oppose the city's decision and it was approved unanimously. Mr. Patch conveyed that the property owner is very unhappy with his neighbors and the board's actions that led to this situation.

Action Item for Bert VanderVeen – write a letter to the property owner at 111 Cypress St informing him of the board's decision to oppose the demolition order and to offer any support in bringing the house to compliance.

Action Item for Shawn Patch – seek assistance from Samuel Johnson about board insurance.

Winter Potluck – the dinner was delayed because Mr. Patch was unable to secure approval from the Principal at Aycock Middle School to use the facility in time for the original planned date. The new date for the **Winter Potluck is Sunday, March 1, 2009 from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm**.

Action Item for Shawn Patch - send an email inviting all neighbors to the Winter Potluck and dividing up Main Dishes, Side Dishes, and Desserts by first letter of last name.

4.) Community Garden – **Maliq Culbreath reported on potential sites for a community garden**. One site is next to the Farmer's Market; the area is a floodplain and cannot support any structures. The other potential site is on the Aycock Middle School grounds. Donna Newton sent material to apply for grants to offset the cost of setting up a community garden.

Mr. Culbreath also reminded board members to **be mindful when sending emails generating ideas**, so that non-board listserv addresses are not inadvertently on communication that is meant to be internal to the board.

5.) Vice-President's Report - Laura Wall reported that **new Community Watch signs** are being installed on or around March 6, 2009. Ms. Wall also had door stickers to pass out to meeting attendees. During the earlier discussion of potential criminal activity around the Max Bridge, Ms. Wall decided that a sign is required at the entrance of the bridge.

Action Item for Laura Wall - request an additional Community Watch sign for the entrance of the Max Bridge at E Hendrix St.

Ms. Wall also reported that **Fabio Camara has agreed to volunteer as Chair of the Community Watch Program and will join the board in this capacity**. He was unable to attend this board meeting as he was out of the country.

Ms. Wall procured **three bids to maintain the plantings at the Max Bridge and on the 4 medians on Yanceyville St** to include two maintenance visits per month and annual color in the medians. Bids were received from New Garden Nursery (who previously had the maintenance contract), Dunlap Lawn Service (who dug the holes for the NeighborWoods tree planting), and

Robert Bowman (a resident of Aycock who owns a landscaping service). After discussion, a motion was made and approved unanimously to accept Robert Bowman's bid. The annual cost is \$4275, which includes approximately \$1,000 of new plantings.

The Great America Cleanup is planned for April 4, 2009. Bert VanderVeen volunteered to head up the effort for the neighborhood.

The **Yard of the Month** award is being reinstated in April. There are \$20 gift certificates for the winner. The board voted to suspend the program last year due to extreme drought. In addition, Ms. Wall recommended that the board reinstate the **Property Improvement Award**, which honors property owners who have made extensive upgrades to their property. This honor is not awarded on a periodic basis. The last award was given to a property on Park Ave, but the sign announcing the honor cannot be located. A new sign costs approximately \$70. A motion was made and unanimously approved to reinstate the program and to authorize Ms. Wall to purchase a new sign. Ms. Wall had some suggestions, but the board wanted to view the properties prior to voting. A vote was deferred to next meeting.

Action Item for Laura Wall – send the suggested properties for Property Improvement Award to board members for a decision at next meeting.

Ms. Wall also relayed two items of interest – 1.) The **Murrow Blvd property that was planned as Murrow Station is for sale by Brown and Investments.** Although this property is not in the Aycock Historic district, it is very close to the neighborhood. 2.) **Neighborhood Empowerment Zones might be a way to revitalize selected streets.** It is currently being used successfully in other locations, but Greensboro currently does not have any. It is not clear how a historic overlay and a NEZ might work together.

6.) Shawn Wriede reported **continued progress on the website.** Photos have been uploaded to the site and some design changed implemented.

7.) Linda Fusco reported slow progress on the **New Neighbor Kits.** Response from the city regarding free materials to include in the kits is pending.

The **next newsletter is scheduled for April 1, 2009.** Ms. Fusco solicited ideas for articles. It was decided that the lead article should be the Great American Cleanup. Ms. Fusco mentioned that advertising revenue is down. This revenue is required for the newsletter to pay for itself.

8.) **Treasurer's report** – Justin Smith reported a balance of \$8681.95 in the Aycock account, of which \$4,590.63 is available for general use.

Mr. Smith solicited assistance in filling out a **grant for Building Stronger Neighborhoods** for the Neighborhood Night Out. Linda Fusco volunteered to help submit the grant. David Hoggard can assist in providing costs. Mr. VanderVeen remembers a general cost of about \$700.

Action Item for Linda Fusco – assist Justin Smith in preparing a grant for Building Stronger Neighborhoods.

9.) Secretary's report – **minutes from last meeting** were reviewed and corrections offered. A motion was made and approved to accept the minutes with the suggested revisions.

Christina Cantrell attended the last **Greensboro Neighborhood Congress (GNC)** on Thursday, February 12, 2009 and reported from the meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, March 14, 2009 from 9:00 am to 11:00 at the Central Library. Bert VanderVeen volunteered to attend the meeting as Aycock's representative with Charlie Conner as a backup.

A **followup meeting regarding the Dunleath Charrette** is scheduled for Tuesday, February 24, 2009 at 4:00 pm in the third floor conference room at the Melvin Municipal building. Ms. Cantrell is planning to attend, but everyone is invited.

10.) President's report – Bert VanderVeen reported a successful meeting with Stefan-leih Geary of City of Greensboro HCD regarding **MSD money**. The meeting was held on February 20, 2009 with Mr. VanderVeen, Laura Wall, Justin Smith and Christina Cantrell in attendance. Aycock currently has \$291,000 in MSD funds. Each item that is eligible to be paid from MSD funds was discussed. It was generally agreed that regular meetings such this are very helpful to both the board and to the city.

Action Item for Christina Cantrell – find out from Mike Cowhig the number of properties that supply MSD funds.

Mr. VanderVeen and Ms. Wall are tentatively scheduled for a **meeting with City Council member Goldie Wells** (District 2) on February 26, 2009 to discuss Empowerment Zones, partnering with NC A&T University on safety issues, and followup issues from the Leadership Conference last fall.

Mr. VanderVeen raised a suggestion offered by Stefan-leih Geary of City of Greensboro HCD to build a focal point, such as a **Bird and Butterfly Garden, to improve Sternberger Park**. The goal is to bring more families to the park in the hopes that the improved environment is less hospitable to people with nefarious notions. Ms. Wall is researching the idea. Ms. Geary got the idea from a public park in Bowling Green, Ohio when visiting family.

The meeting adjourned at 9:26 PM.