

Charles B. Aycock Neighborhood Association
Minutes of Board of Directors Meeting
Date: January 28, 2013

Present: Linda Fusco, Mindy Zachary, Shawn Wriede, Christina Cantrell, Betsey Baun, Joe Kilpatrick (alternate)

Absent: David Wharton, Sara Farnsworth, Khalil Perilstein, Bert VanderVeen, Jon Mitchell

Guests: Officer Douglas E. Campbell of GPD, Stefan-leih Geary of City of Greensboro

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors was held on Monday, January 28, 2013 at 721 5th Avenue (relocated from St. Leo's Place Community Room). Meeting was called to order at 6:48 pm by President Linda Fusco. Secretary Sara Farnsworth transcribed the minutes from a recording.

1. Community Resource Officer Report: Officer Doug Campbell confirmed that **Sternberger Park** had a **flash cam** installed about a week ago. After dark, its motion detector triggers flashing strobe lights with a recorded message warning individuals to leave the park. Board members agreed that it has been installed in a good location and is working well. Officer Campbell told the board that the flash cam almost certainly will not remain there permanently, as the Parks & Recreation Department tends to move them around as other parks/areas request them. He was not sure about the exact policies for moving them, but said they most likely factor in the amount of activity that is actually captured on the camera. Board members indicated a preference for the flash cam to remain at least until the warmer months this year if possible, as after-dark activity tends to increase as the weather warms. Officer Campbell inquired with Parks & Rec about the alternative of installing regular motion-sensitive lighting after the flash cam moves on. Their response was that there are no such motion-sensitive lights currently installed in any city parks, but that they could be installed if the neighborhood wanted to pay for them. A survey of neighborhood residents may be required, especially those in close proximity to the park who might potentially be disturbed by the lights coming on.

Officer Campbell reported that "No Loitering" text has now been paint-stenciled onto both entrances to the **Leftwich-Summit pedestrian tunnel** after previously-installed metal signs were stolen. Although there is currently some spray-painted graffiti inside the tunnel, the "No Loitering" signage has thus far not been disturbed. Officer Campbell discussed the difficulty of keeping the tunnel safe and clear of graffiti due to its isolation, without residents in view of the tunnel to report violations as they are in progress. Board members identified one house on Leftwich near the tunnel that is occupied by a tenant. Officer Campbell intends to visit the resident to encourage them to report any tunnel activity they might notice.

The following **police incidents were reported between December 3, 2012 and January 28, 2013:** Dec. 22 – 30 catalytic converters were reportedly removed from autos and stolen from Moussa Auto Sales at 351 Summit Ave., the second time this has been reported. Residents expressed skepticism and concern about potentially illegal/unsavory activities regularly occurring on the premises. Dec. 8 – Water heater stolen from front porch of 305 Bessemer. Dec. 15 – Stove stolen from 305 Bessemer by former tenant; landlord declined to prosecute. Dec. 6 – Hit and run of white Volvo at 1001 Yanceyville. Dec. 7 – Hit and run of gray Versa at 899 Summit. Dec. 15 – Hit and run (ran over landscaping) at 1031 Summit. Jan. 5 – DWI as result of crash at Summit & Bessemer. Dec. 21 - forcible rape reported in the vicinity of Summit & Bessemer, but victim declined to identify exact location or perpetrator, who was known to the victim.

Dec. 17 – **Package** was **stolen from front porch** of 715 Chestnut, during time of year when package theft was occurring frequently. **Thanks to a neighbor calling in immediately to report, three individuals were detained and charged:** Donte Hughes, age 24, Steve Barnett Jr., 21, and Jarrod Watson, 22, who was also charged with carrying a concealed handgun.

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Eight separate incidents were reported from Aycock Middle School at 811 Cypress, reflecting the new principal's zero-tolerance policy for handling any reportable offenses.

The board expressed their appreciation and congratulations to Officer Campbell, who will be reassigned from his Community Resource Officer role for six months, shifting to a new position as Crime Prevention Officer.

2. Special Speaker: Stefan-leih Geary from City of Greensboro on Municipal Service District Funds and How They Can Be Used for Neighborhood Projects

Background: Aycock and College Hill are Greensboro's two MSDs. Greensboro had special legislation passed in 1989 at the state level to allow for the MSD program to be used for historic districts. In the mid-1980s, bonds were passed for some Aycock and College Hill improvements, but afterwards city council wanted to put a stop to future bond issues for the historic districts. MSD concept came about as means to continue to be able to improve the right-of-ways in historic districts and maintain their historic character.

Availability of Funds: The accounting is complicated, according to Stefan-leih, but the most accurate figure she could arrive at for the **current total funds for Aycock's MSD is \$409,626**. (She offered a disclaimer that it could be more or less.) For each fiscal year, Stefan-leih makes request to City Council during their budgeting process for a portion of the MSD funds to be appropriated, which renders that amount immediately ready to spend without further approval needed from city council. She bases the amount of the appropriation request on the projects she knows we have planned, plus extra as a buffer, this year more than double what she foresaw we would normally need. For the **July 1 2012-June 30 2013 fiscal year**, we have **\$75,000** that is **appropriated**. If we needed to spend more than is appropriated, we would need to go to City Council and request that we be able to use those funds.

Past year's estimated expenditures using MSD funds include:

- Monthly bill to Great Atlantic/Patrick Bertrand for Summit & Murrow **landscaping** upkeep, for about **\$143 per month**.
- Monthly bill to Dunlap for **landscaping** around Yanceyville sign and Max Thompson Bridge (Hendrix St. pedestrian bridge), **\$249 per month**. (We have used different vendors in the past; previously we were paying New Garden nursery more than \$400 per month.)
- 20 **sign toppers** for street signs installed: **\$3,200**
- Summit/Murrow **landscaping** project initial cleanup/**installation**: Estimated **\$10,000-\$12,000**
- **Little Free Library**: Estimated **\$1,000**

The city handles the official budgeting/accounting of MSD funds. Board members expressed their desire to better track these expenditures on our own.

Planning: Stefan-leih offered a rough estimate of our expenditures this year of about \$30,000. The \$75,000 that was appropriated for the year included funding for potential projects that did not materialize, such as Park Ave. stone wall repairs. She estimated that our MSD has been accumulating about \$30,000 per year. She advised that there is no problem with not spending funds and saving for major projects such as Summit Avenue corridor improvements. Regardless, it is necessary to keep in mind ongoing expenses/obligations such as landscaping and ensure there is always enough to cover those.

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Guidelines: Stefan-leih passed out the city's approved Municipal Service District Expenditure Guidelines and explained their background. (Guidelines are attached to Minutes.) She and board members discussed the need for these guidelines to be followed and communication between the neighborhood and the city officials to be maintained in order to ensure that MSD funds are able to be used for a potential project before we financially commit to the project.

Underground Utilities: Stefan-leih reported that she talked to Kim Smith at GDOT about the possibility of burying utility lines, and this was discussed as part of a special Historic Preservation Commission meeting. Neighbors' interest in this possibility was sparked by a recent News & Record article that mentioned a Duke Power pilot program that would supposedly share the cost of putting utilities underground with neighborhoods. She said this was a misrepresentation by the newspaper and/or Duke and there is no such program that would be applicable to our neighborhood. Because of the interest expressed in this, the city is planning to do a study as an estimate or model for educational purposes looking at Cypress Street from Yanceyville to Bessemer to get an idea of what the real costs and actual benefits would be. In another area of the city (High Point Road), the costs were found to be astronomical and prohibitive. Utility lines cannot be put under roadways; they must be put past the curb but also share space with gas lines. Mindy Zachary pointed out that a previous design charette had prioritized underground utilities for Summit Avenue, and board members agreed that Summit Avenue would present fewer obstacles for burying power lines than Cypress Street. Stefan-leih agreed to change the study zone to Summit. Stefan-leih said that she or Kim would plan to make a presentation at a future board meeting after the study is complete when they know more. She plans to put together a document to address make sure that everyone interested understands the issues involved in burying utility lines. Alternate approaches suggested included waiting to see what measures may be adopted by the city that would offer some level of protection of our trees against aggressive trimming, perhaps moving poles off of main streets into alleys, or cleaning up the poles and lines so that they are more visually attractive and less cluttered.

Possible MSD Projects for 2013-14 Fiscal Year were discussed:

- More **street sign toppers** – possibly 10 or less needed. Betsey Baun has information about how many are still needed. Cost for 10 would be \$1600.
- Ideas for decorative **street light improvements**:
 - Possible idea from College Hill – all decorative street light poles repainted at the same time.
 - New type of light is available for the light pole globes. Board members expressed dissatisfaction with the current state of the globes, which are showing age.
 - Board members want assurance that MSD funds are not being used for light pole maintenance that Duke Power should be doing.
- Decorative **trash cans**
 - One trash container option is \$1700 per unit vs. another option for \$2300 per unit.
 - Christina Cantrell clarified that the board has expressed interest in four trash cans: two at the Max Thompson Bridge (one on either side of the bridge), one at the Leftwich Tunnel, and one in Sternberger Park.
 - Will look into whether there are options for having the city empty the trash cans (especially at the bridge) rather than having to pay landscaping company to do so.
- **Tree inventory/replanting**
 - Our Strategic Plan calls for reforestation

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- Possible education project to ensure that trees are not planted in location that will interfere with power lines.
- College Hill is having a tree inventory done; we can get information about their project's costs, etc.
- Our tree inventory with Davey Tree representative is scheduled for February 6.
- **Alleyway restoration research project**
 - Study by city is needed to determine whether MSD funds could be used for any purposes to be applied toward alleys - even for research of the issue. Stefan-leih made the statement that the alleys are not city-owned or in the city right-of-way, and that the city's legal team is looking into it.
 - Stefan-leih presented possible alternative options for funding/completing alleyway study – Covington Foundation, UNCG student researchers, archaeological excavation.
 - Stefan-leih stated that many of the neighborhood's original alleys have been “absorbed” into people's property (unofficially). Those property owners could agree to make them usable again if they all wanted to do so, but some may not. Different property owners/blocks may have different desires, and those should be taken into account. The Summit Avenue alleyway is probably the only alley still in full use (with no other access available, no on-street parking permitted).
 - Mindy Zachary shared some of her research and experience with the alleyways, including the fact that the city did work in one of them a few years ago (patching a pothole and installing storm drains) in the 700-block section (odd-numbered side) of Summit's alleyways. Board members expressed their opinions that this is our strongest argument for being able to use MSD funds for alleyway improvements.
 - Stefan-leih stated that she is waiting for the city legal department's decision on using MSD funds for alleyways before she would consider meeting about/engaging with the issue of alleyways. She is wary of acting outside of her jurisdiction; this may be a storm water department issue that should not be handled via the MSD program.
 - Mindy has already done extensive research on this issue, including Sanborn maps, etc. Board members asked Mindy to prepare a presentation of her research on alleyway issues, whether just for our own benefit or to present to city officials if we have that opportunity. **ACTION ITEM for Mindy Zachary: Prepare a presentation of research on alleyway issues.**
- **Continuing landscaping**
 - Through Dunlap (Max Thompson Bridge/Yanceyville areas) and Great Atlantic (Summit/Murrow area).

Stefan-leih will get cost estimates and work on budgeting for the planned projects.

Note on COAs: Stefan-leih asked that we spread the word about COAs: Stick to the exact plans as approved in the COA. If there is any minor change, such as different materials being used, call Mike Cowhig or Stefan-leih and tell them about the change before materials are bought or installed to ensure that they are appropriate.

Board members inquired about the status of the after-the-fact COA application filed last fall from 602 5th Ave. for windows that had been replaced. Stefan-leih and others were unsure of its status.

Betsey Baun asked about how to report a utility pole that has been replaced, but the old empty pole has been left beside it. Stefan-leih said she would email Betsey the name of the proper person to contact. **ACTION**

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ITEM for Betsey Baun: Pursue removal of old unused utility pole near Yanceyville/Bessemer intersection.

3. **Secretary's Report: Minutes from the December 3, 2012** board meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved. **ACTION ITEM** for Shawn Wriede: Post approved December minutes to website.
4. **Treasurer's Report:** Christina Cantrell distributed the Monthly Treasury Report, which shows a balance of \$7,426.34 with \$4,215.19 in the General Fund and the rest in escrow accounts. The Luminaria fundraiser was very successful, with a total of \$1,015.29 in sales, with \$418.19 reported spent on Luminaria supplies. Refund for unused paper products for the Chili Fest was \$29.78, so the chili event did earn a bit more money than we thought.

Christina has opened a new bank account at Wells Fargo and has transferred all funds to the new account. She plans to close the old account at First Citizens as soon as possible.

ACTION ITEM for Christina Cantrell: Close old bank account.

5. **Community Development:** Betsey Baun reported on plans for the neighborhood sign (funded by a Neighborhood Small Project Program grant). Engineering has to bring in another engineer. Working with the city on this project has proven to be extremely slow. Aycock Middle School is very positive about the project and will not hold it back.
6. **Community Watch:** Joe Kilpatrick has taken charge of Community Watch.
7. **Historic Preservation (COA):** Linda Fusco reported that there is one new COA this month.

COA applications #1603 and #1604 for 518 Fifth Avenue, for the addition of a sun porch to the back of the house and a brick wall on the Charter Place side of the property. Some board members were concerned that the window material was not specified, but felt confident that the HPC would guide the applicant to make any corrections needed. Board members expressed appreciation for the historic preservation work already done on the property. The board approved the applications unanimously, with current HPC members abstaining or absent.
8. **Newsletter:** Linda Fusco reported that she will cease pursuing collection for an unpaid large newsletter ad after many attempts to collect have failed. Fortunately the printing of the newsletter has been donated, so the newsletter printing expense has been mitigated.
9. **Technology:** Nothing to report.
10. **Welcoming Committee:** No actions to report. **ACTION ITEM** for Mindy Zachary: Email Linda Fusco with information about new residents residing in the home owned by her brother.
11. **Alleyway Issues:** Discussed during Stefan-leih Geary's presentation
12. **Special Projects:**

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- a) **War Memorial Stadium:** Mindy Zachary has been communicating with Nasha McCray and seems to have been excluded from a meeting for some reason. She plans to pursue the person a level above to make sure that she is included.

- b) **Greensboro Neighborhood Congress – East Greensboro:** Shawn Wriede reported on a presentation on the Downtown Greenway project, scheduled to be completed by 2018, for a total cost of about \$26 million. He also reported on a presentation by a representative of North Carolina Letter Carrier’s Association, asking for return of extended/late hours for the Four Seasons branch of the Post Office. A petition was shared for those who desired to sign it.

13. Old Business

A. Pending Action Items from last meeting

- i. **Granite Curb survey project:** **ACTION ITEM** for Mindy Zachary: **Report granite curb repair/replacement requests to the city.** Still pending.

- ii. Letter to Mr. Daskalakis about homeless encampment on Dunleith property has been sent by Linda Fusco and Christina Cantrell, and it is in the hands of the property owner now.

- iii. **Performing Arts Center** – Mindy reported that PAC task force has completed its work, and it will go to City Council for a decision on Tuesday night. City would need to come up with \$20 million, with \$20 million having been raised privately and \$20 million for user fees.

- iv. **Street cleaning** – Mindy found that street cleaning happens only four times a year now. City official said the best he could do was to call a week ahead of time and give a range of dates when they might come. Best shot would be for the neighborhood to come up with their own plan and request that they come on a weekday during certain hours.

14. New Business:

- **Grants for 2013** – Christina Cantrell does not think we would be eligible for another Neighborwoods grant since we recently received one. Betsey Baun volunteered to pursue other possible grant opportunities.

- Jamie Barnett formally resigned from the Board as of November 1, 2012. **Jon Mitchell**, who has been serving as an Alternate board member since August 2012, was unanimously **approved by the board to fill the vacancy as a regular board member**, serving the remainder of Jamie Barnett’s term (expiring in 2014).

- Betsey Baun inquired about the zoning status of the **zoning enforcement** request for the house at 720 Percy St. Linda Fusco stated that it is up to the city now to enforce and said that she would follow up to inquire about its status. **ACTION ITEM** for Linda Fusco: **Inquire with city about status of zoning enforcement for 720 Percy St.**

Meeting Adjourned: 8:30 pm

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Addendum
MUNICIPAL SERVICE DISTRICT EXPENDITURE GUIDELINES
(Distributed by Stefan-leih Geary)

Special taxation districts or "municipal service districts (MSD)" have been used as a financing tool for neighborhood improvement projects in Greensboro since 1987. Municipal Service District designation provides a method for funding special improvements to public right-of-way areas in Greensboro's locally zoned historic districts which share the same boundaries as the MSD. Currently, property owners in the College Hill and Charles B. Aycock Historic Districts pay \$.05 more per \$100 of property valuation. Property owners, through the neighborhood association, choose how the funds are spent as the neighborhood collectively shares in the cost of special projects and improvements outside of normal city services.

Funds are for use by and within the designated district only and are municipal tax dollars that must adhere to strict procedures for auditing purposes.

Below is a list of guidelines for how requests to use these funds should be administered:

- 1) Expenditures of Municipal Service District funds must be voted on by the Neighborhood Association with a majority vote.
- 2) Expenditures may not be made for work that has already been completed and has not gone through the City approval process.
- 3) Funds may be used for projects that benefit the entire neighborhood and are typically in the public right-of-way.

Examples of approved projects:

- i. Construction of the Max Thompson Pedestrian Bridge
- ii. Streetscape improvements at intersection of Walker Avenue and Mendenhall Street
- iii. Neighborhood Plans: *TND Plan for Charles B. Aycock Neighborhood*
- iv. Contribution toward the construction of medians on Spring Garden Street

- 4) Neighborhood residents are encouraged to involve City Staff as early on in the process as possible to ensure that the project falls within the framework of the MSD ordinance and the appropriate process can be followed for expenditure of funds.
- 5) For projects where the neighborhood is soliciting vendors, the following is required to be submitted by the neighborhood to City staff contact:
 - A letter to city staff contact with the following information:
 - i. Description of project
 - ii. Results of neighborhood vote with date
 - iii. Amount approved and requested by Neighborhood Board for use
 - iv. Signatures of two(2) executive board members
 - A copy of the scope of work and three(3) bids obtained for the project

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- 6) For projects where the City of Greensboro is soliciting vendors, the following is required to be submitted by the neighborhood to City staff contact:
- A letter to city staff contact with the following information:
 - i. Description of project
 - ii. Results of neighborhood vote with date
 - iii. Amount approved and requested by Neighborhood Board for use
 - iv. Signatures of two(2) executive board members

Note:

- When working with outside vendors, the Vendor (if new to working with the city) must fill out documentation to be placed in the city's system for reimbursement. When planning a project, this additional time should be incorporated into scheduling work and payments.
- In some cases where work is taking place off city property or outside the public right-of-way, the City of Greensboro, for liability purposes, may choose to pay the neighborhood directly, rather than the vendor. The neighborhood is still required to go through a bid process and review of the project by the City.
- The City of Greensboro requires a minimum of 30 days from date of receipt to process a request for payment.

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