

Combined Board/General Meeting Minutes

Ponce de Leon Library

Monday, November 5, 2007, 7:00 PM

Board Members in Attendance

Doris Betz
Hannah Coker
Rob Glancy
Joe Krebs
Charlie LeFort
Karen Page
Pamela Papner
John Peak
Betsy Nicholas
Robbie Russell
John Wolfinger

Board Members Not in Attendance

Allie Coker

I. Welcome

Pamela Papner

The meeting started promptly at 7pm

II. City/State/Police Officials

Police Update

Officer Schierbaum

- Lt. Williams promoted to Major Williams last week. Filling in for Major Propes through December.
- He handed out applications for Citizens Police Academy. Schedule of classes is on the website. This program is an opportunity to see police operations firsthand, and is a rewarding program.
- Crime statistics
 - 2 daylight burglaries last week. One in 800 block of Adair and one in 700 block of Cumberland Circle.
 - 800 Adair – dark colored 4-door car, African American in 30s, 5'7" or 5'8". Neighbor saw the burglary happen. Be alert in daytime hours for burglaries
 - Highest crime category in this neighborhood is theft from automobiles. Items taken recently are: paintings, handbag, iPods, handgun, binoculars, laptops, digital cameras, purse, cell phone. If can take these items out of site, can reduce break-ins
 - Milton Bowers, 55, handgun in waistband. Car on St. Charles Avenue. Was arrested by morning watch officers this past Wed.
 - Melvin Gene Reeves was arrested a week ago, prowling around Greenwood Ave. Acting strange, dark building, stopped by police. Registered sex offender in Ga, out on parole. Was put in photo lineup and victim from previous crime identified him. Sexual battery and child molestation. Clayton County and Douglas County are looking at him for attacks in their areas. Lives in Henry County.
 - Crime spike recently in south end of the Zone. Had 23 car break-ins last week and 3 residential burglaries.

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- John and Pamela mentioned that it would be helpful if we can get an update prior to the next meeting if security trends appear, so we can send out a community e-blast.
- VHCA Security Concerns
 - Rob brought up an attempted house invasion last weekend, and thought there was some confusion between 911 and the police.
 - J. Peak had an incident last week where he called 911 for a medical emergency and the 911 people didn't know which county he was in.
 - Officer will follow up on both of these items and contact John and Rob directly with an update.

III. General Updates

Pamela Papner

Library Lots

- VHCA looking at feasibility of turning the old library lots into green space. Wanted to get some feedback from the members in attendance. Benches, walkways, landscaping. Two lots, zoned residential. Georgia Land Conservation Program has loans that we might be able to take advantage of this opportunity. VHCA would pay for the loan until we can raise the money through the neighborhood. Neighbors think it is a good idea as long as it isn't a playground.
- Lots are too small to donate to the city for them to take over maintenance of it. Liz Coyle said they may consider it in the future. Would need to determine if it is kept in the name of VHCA or deed it over to the city and continue to pay for the maintenance.

Streetscape update

- We are currently awaiting revised plans from the city. Three weeks ago the VHCA sponsored a discussion between the city and the neighborhood to obtain additional input from the neighborhood on the previous plan. The city has gone back with the feedback and will come back with a revised proposal.
- The board will make an effort to take our time to make sure the plans are in keeping with the wishes of the neighborhood. We should not start the construction during the holidays, as it could have a negative on our merchants. Immediately after Summerfest or Christmas would be ideal timing for merchants.

Georgia Power Substation Update

- Stephen Rosenwasser took the denial of jurisdiction to Superior Court. He asked us for a letter/affirmation regarding the jurisdiction oversight issue. We gave him a letter supporting this type of oversight. The motion was filed, and oral arguments were heard in Superior Court today. As of the time of this meeting, the Court has not yet ruled. The Judge asked if there was any oversight in making these decisions, and Georgia Power said "no". Then the Judge asked if there were any other organizations who didn't have any oversight of this kind, and Georgia Power again responded with an answer of "no".
- Jack White's update: All of these facts were previously in evidence. Now the Court needs to determine if there is any legal impact. It likely will not have impact on our neighborhood, but it would be good for other citizens of Georgia going forward. The landscaping component of the project is moving along, and will be a huge improvement over original landscaping plans.

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- **Action Item:** Spencer Tonell could present the landscaping plans at the December VHCA Board Meeting.

VHCA Signs

- **Action Item:** For future meetings, the VHCA will put up signs around the neighborhood, similar to Morningside, to remind the neighborhood about the meetings.

IV. Committee Reports

Home Tour Committee

Rob Glancy

The VHCA Tour of Homes will be held this year on Dec 8th and 9th. We have eight homes and nine restaurants participating in this year's event. Tickets are currently on sale on the TOH website: www.vahihometour.org. Sponsorships are up this year, and we have a net proceeds goal of \$20k.

Parks Committee

Rob Glancy

Orme Park Workday happened this past weekend. A great amount of work was accomplished, and our friends from Hill Crest came to help.

Orme Park Master Plan – **Action Item:** Will come to VHCA Board Meeting next month for a presentation. A picnic was held on the closed bridge by Orme Park, and we obtained input on the Master Plan. The next step is to incorporate the feedback and will ask the VHCA board to approve the Master Plan next month. Then will go to the NPU for approval. Once these approvals are obtained, we will then start fundraising.

John Howell Park – We are holding off planting annuals at JH Park due to complete water ban in place. If use shower water, can fill up buckets and keep plants alive. Can put bucket under spicket while waiting for hot water to heat up in the shower.

Phamplet on Lullwater Park on Briarcliff was left for those interested. This development is not in VAHI, but is right across the street.

Safety Committee

John Wolfinger

John spoke about the pictures he sent last week of what is underneath the three local bridges. Kwanza Hall had been working on cleanup with Beltline and City Hall. Public Works may also be able to help clean up those areas because they will now be controlled through the city, either through the beltline or streets department.

V. Zoning and Planning

Joe Krebs & John Peak

- Variance Requests
 - **V- 07- 258: 694 Cresthill Ave** – Review revised plans and amended letters of support
 - Update on V-07-258. Reduced garage footprint to 22x22 and removal of covered walk, which was upsetting to one neighbor. All neighbors now support this variance. Replacement with arbor not to exceed 10 feet in height. All else is the same as last month. Plans dated 10/29/07.
 - Motion to approve variance. Motion was seconded. 5 for in straw-vote, 0 deny, 3 abstentions. Board approved unanimously.

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- No new variances this month.

VI. Other/Announcements

Mercy Community Church and Intown Community Assistance

- Representatives attended the meeting from Mercy Community Church and Intown Community Assistance. These organizations serve some people from VAHI. They help homeless or people at risk of being homeless – connecting them to housing, food, utilities, counseling, etc. The homeless population is of concern with other neighborhood associations.
- Intown Community has been in existence for 30 years, and are located at 670 Seminole Ave in parking lot of Druid Hills Baptist church between Ponce and Blueridge. The representatives from these organizations wanted to introduce themselves and see how they can be of assistance to the neighborhood.
 - They always encourage the neighborhood or individuals to get involved by volunteering or with donations of clothing, food, furniture, small appliances, blankets and warm clothes.
 - This organization has a relationship with Gateway Center, as they are one of many referral agencies that send people to Gateway. The problem encountered with Gateway is they run out of beds quickly.
 - This organization does not have a strong relationship with Open Door, beyond the fact that both organizations typically see the same people.
- The Associate Pastor at Mercy Community Church then introduced herself. They communicate with ICA. They are a growing church, but small right now. They meet in Druid Hills Presbyterian Church in the Men's shelter at 11am on Sunday morning, and hold bible study on Wed nights. They have been under the radar as a small church, but their mission is to build community across gender and racial lines. They have both homeless and housed members of the church. They are here in the community and would like to work to address these issues. A major need is housing, and there are less and less options on where to send people.

Volunteer Police Report

John Wolfinger

- We will provide an update at the next VHCA Board meeting on the volunteer police report because we cannot currently access them. John and Betsy will follow up with them and will provide an update at the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 7:51pm