

Hillcrest Residents Association Board Meeting
December 10, 2018

Minutes

Board members present: President Eric McDaniel, Marian Boyd, Jim Hathaway, Antoinette Johnson, Barbara Justus, Laurel Lawrence, Barbara Miles, Beth Phelps.

Board members absent: Cliff Anderson, Nathalie Coulter, Corey Huffty, Karalyn Kerby, Karen Konarski-Hart.

Call to Order

President McDaniel called the meeting to order at 6:00pm and noted the presence of a quorum. The November minutes had not yet been distributed and consideration of the November minutes was postponed until the next meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Beth Phelps gave a report. The November financials showed income of \$6,323 and income of \$200, with an ending checking balance of \$14,334.35. Phelps noted that the numbers did not reflect the payment of \$2,967.76 to Magna IV, the publishers of the newsletter, which was made in December.

Reports of Elected Officials

President McDaniel called on elected officials to give any reports they had.

City Director Kathy Webb gave her report first, and noted the following:

-- Parking in neighborhoods near UAMS has been an issue, and Director Webb noted that some residents had been given tickets as a result of increased enforcement or parking regulations. At least one resident had asked her to see if the Hillcrest Residents Association would consider supporting the issuance of "resident parking stickers." Board members noted that for this to be effective, there would need to be some sort of ordinance at the City level and rules would need to be developed for how the police would treat "residents." It was also noted that even with a sticker, residents would still need to park legally. In general there was little enthusiasm for pursuing the idea without more support from residents.

-- Director Webb gave a report on the Sustainability Commission and noted it had recently been brought directly under the supervision of the City Board. She also noted that there were opening coming up for spots on the Commission, as well as other city boards and commissions and urged interested parties to apply. She noted that the city has adopted a "no Styrofoam" policy in its offices and at its events, and she urged people to ask restaurants to not automatically give out plastic straws. She also said the city was looking at whether it would be feasible to outlaw plastic bags.

-- Director Webb discussed efforts to end homelessness, and noted that Little Rock was one of 13 cities selected worldwide to participate in an effort to end homelessness by 2030. The first

benchmarks would be in 2020, and the city plans to conduct a census of homeless persons in 2019.

-- Director Webb reported on public safety issues and noted that November had been a terrible month for homicides. She urged a multi-faceted approach to the problem, noting that the city has approximately 5,000 15- to 24-year-olds who do not have jobs, and are not in school or job training. She noted that more police is not necessarily an answer, and that the level of vacancies at LRPD has dropped to 16, one of the lowest numbers in years.

-- Director Webb noted that there would be a swearing in ceremony for the newly elected directors and the new mayor, Frank Scott, Jr., at noon on January 1 at City Hall. All are invited.

State Representative Tippi McCullough, who represents House District 33, then gave a report. She noted that 35 bills had already been filed. She recommended an app, Lobby Up, for those interested in tracking bills. She is still determining which legislation and issues will be her primary focus. Rep. McCullough did report that in the lottery drawing for seniority, she drew number 100, placing her dead last in seniority. She stated that seniority is considerably less important than it used to be. The swearing in for state legislators will be January 14 at the State Capitol.

President's Comments

President McDaniel noted that he still was in need of a Vice President to preside in his absence, and reiterated it was not a commitment to subsequently serve as Board President.

Committee Reports

Marian Boyd presented a report from the Membership Committee. The Committee is asking each board member to commit to contacting at least 15 neighbors or acquaintances to ask them to join or renew their membership in HRA. The Membership Committee will be sending an e-mail to Board members with the request, as well as a script for soliciting memberships. President McDaniel estimated that we have somewhere between 150 and 200 members. The Board noted that it distributed the newsletter to every household in the boundaries of the HRA, and that 3,800 copies were required to meet that mailing target. It was noted that there was a lot of room for membership growth.

This led to discussion of the HRA website, which Board members recognize is badly in need of updating, and a discussion of how memberships would work. The new idea on memberships is that the target is to get people to pay by March 31 of each year, so that they can be listed as members in the spring newsletter. If people pay after that date they will be members in good standing, but the membership will only be valid through the end of the calendar year.

Boyd said that the Membership Committee was suggesting that we have a Board "retreat" to spend half a day or so discussing the Board's goals and how best to attain them. There was general assent to find a date, probably in January or February, to have the retreat.

President McDaniel also said he would like to form a committee and proceed with the development of a Neighborhood Action Plan. It was suggested that this would be an excellent topic for the retreat.

Boyd also said that the membership committee thought it would be a good idea to do an informal happy hour so the Board could get to know each other better. The happy hour was set for Thursday, January 3, after working hours, at Proof Bar.

New Business

President McDaniel said that Bruce McMath had agreed to come before the HRA and present his findings on the District Overlay District. The plan is to do this in lieu of a normal meeting in January, and so the presentation would be Monday, January 14, at 6:00pm, at Hillcrest Hall. Eric asked for help in wording an announcement designed to get full participation, and Barb Justus and Jim Hathaway agreed to assist him.

Jim Hathaway made a report on the newsletter. He said that the HRA basically broke even financially, with ad revenues of \$4,875, expenses of \$4,947.56, giving a net loss of \$72.56. He noted that might still be some ad income to come in. It was suggested that for the next newsletter we print more than the mailing required, perhaps 200 to 300 extra copies that could be distributed to advertisers.

President McDaniel noted that we do not currently pay to use the space at Hillcrest Hall. He had recently received a personal solicitation to donate to the CALS Foundation. He suggested that the HRA might consider giving a donation.

MOTION:

Barbara Miles moved that the HRA donate \$250 to the CALS Foundation as a thank you for using the space. Antoinette Johnson seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Laurel Lawrence is monitoring zoning and development filings with the City and she and McDaniel are working on a system for getting information about such filings in front of the Board and residents in a timely manner.

Old Business

President McDaniel reported he and Karen Konarski-Hart had located a projector within the approved budget and it was being purchased.

President McDaniel gave a report on the bike and pedestrian trail that is being built by the City behind the Promenade. The trail is being built with grant money, but McDaniel has been pushing the City to do needed repairs to the Promenade retaining wall at the same time as the construction of the trail. At least initially, the City has been receptive to this idea.

Special Item

President McDaniel recognized Kathy Wells, who is the president of the Coalition of Little Rock Neighborhoods. She noted that the HRA is a member of the Coalition, and said that the Coalition has regular meetings on the second Saturday of each month, from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon, at the Willie Hinton Neighborhood Resource Center at 12th and Pine Streets. She invited the HRA to designate a representative and begin attending the meetings.

Wells said that her primary purpose in attending the HRA meeting was to seek support for the lawsuit opposing the “30 Crossing” project recently approved by ARDOT. The lawsuit, among other things, challenges the sufficiency of the environmental impact statement done by ARDOT. She said that the Coalition had voted to support the opposition to 30 Crossing Project, and said some of the members had signed on to be plaintiffs in the lawsuit.

President McDaniel said he would certainly offer a forum for the opponents of 30 Crossing Project to inform the residents about the lawsuit. Wells offered that Richard Mays, the attorney who was representing the opponents, would be happy to come and talk to the HRA. McDaniel said that he would also inform ARDOT of the event, and offer to let them speak. There was considerable further discussion about the possible “downstream” impacts of the 30 Crossing Project on other neighborhoods, and when any expression of support would be needed. Wells confirmed that there was no rush, and Jim Hathaway suggested that the timing of the presentation be discussed at the Board retreat.

There being no further business, President McDaniel adjourned the meeting at 7:31pm.