

White Plains Council of Neighborhood Associations  
November Meeting

Tuesday, 11/12/2024

Location: ZOOM meeting

Time: 7pm

CNA Attendees: Michael Sanchez, Michael Dalton, Veretta Bass, Renee Cohen, Anthony Fiorenza, Bob Friscia, Frances Jones, Michael Matarese, Alan Maude, Tom Osbeck, Zack Salino, Roni Sarig, Howard Waldman, Debra Zipf, Michael Zygmunt

Guest Speakers: Nadine Hunt Robinson – Democratic candidate for Mayor, former member of the WP Common Council.

1. The Meeting was called to order by President Sanchez. President Sanchez introduced the meeting's guest & topic: Ms. Hunt-Robinson's "platform" as a Democratic candidate for Mayor in 2025
2. President Sanchez introduced former Common Council member Hunt-Robinson. Ms. Hunt-Robinson is practicing corporate lawyer. She began her remarks by describing her involvement in winning a "condo fight" for the residents where she was living at the time...stating that "she was willing to ask the tough questions and fight for what is right". 2 years later she ran for and won a seat on the WP Common Council. Ms. Hunt-Robinson "sees herself as a check to power...approaching issues from a sound rational basis and is not afraid to ask the tough questions." She sees herself as "an advocate for the people". "I am going to listen, ruminate and then make decisions in the best interests of our community." Ms. Hunt-Robinson described her approach to any development projects that would come before as Mayor as follows: "I will apply the proper CHECKS, CONTROLS, CONTAINMENT & a COMMUNITY CENTRIC focus for any proposed development projects in the City. Regarding the proposed Galleria re-development and the developer's proposal.... she asked, "is the proposed re-development scheme COMMUNITY CENTRIC? How much real open space does the project propose? How are the residents of White Plains going to afford to eat in expensive restaurants proposed in the design?" Ms. Hunt-Robinson closed her remarks by saying, "I am an advocate for the people. I have been a resident of White Plains for 25 years. White Plains is at a crossroads regarding the Galleria re-development."
3. M. Fiorenza stated that Ms. Hunt-Robinson's remarks about standing up to developers resonated with him. He then asked, "How do you intend to differentiate yourself from your likely competitors in the Mayoral election next year". Ms. Hunt-Robinson responded by saying, "we do not have to bend over backwards to developer proposals. White Plains can ask developers tough questions like...is the proposed project community centric? We need to PROTECT the gem of our City. You have to ask the right questions. It is a priority that we protect our neighborhoods."
4. R. Friscia stated that he liked what he heard from Ms. Hunt-Robinson. He liked the fact the Ms. Hunt-Robinson is ready to stand up to developers. Mr. Friscia raised the issue of excavated construction sites that remain "holes in the ground" for years. Ms. Hunt-Robinson agreed that these "holes in the ground" are "eyesores" and she felt that it may be appropriate to require developers to have "performance bonds" tied to any approved projects. The "performance bonds" would financially penalize the developer for not moving forward with the building of their proposed project in a timely manner." Mr. Friscia asked what Ms. Hunt-Robinson thought of the new Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Hunt Robinson replied, "The new Comp Plan is not the issue. The execution of the Comp Plan will be the important issue."
5. M. Sanchez raised the issue of the "almost predatory nature" of parking enforcement in W.P. Could our parking regulations, etc. be "more friendly" and encourage more downtown shopping? Ms. Hunt-Robinson replied, "We do need the parking in downtown W.P. to be more

friendly. Mamaroneck Ave store operators want more parking “turnover” (shorter times for on street parking) .... but, “turnover” becomes a problem with folks visiting the downtown in the evening when they need longer parking times if they in town for dinner. The W.P. leadership needs to be more community friendly. It would be a priority in her administration to hold our Commissioners accountable by instituting “a year-end review” of their respective departments. She would be asking the question, “how has your department acted in a community centric manner this past year?”

6. M. Sanchez asked Ms. Hunt-Robinson, “what did she think of term limits?” Ms. Hunt-Robinson replied, “that she supported term limits...and that she would be proposing term limits when she is before the democratic nominating committee.” She went on to say, “that she believes employee turnover is healthy. New eyes can see things with a new perspective.”
  7. H. Waldman asked Ms. Hunt-Robinson, “where did she stand with repairing, restoring and lighting up the train station clock tower?” Ms. Hunt-Robinson replied, “I think W.P. needs to have iconic symbols...building on the character of W.P.” She said that she has seen preliminary concepts for the clock tower and was impressed by the use of color in the concepts.”
  8. M. Sanchez explained that the W.P.C.N.A. is trying to have more neighborhood engagement. Where do you stand with regard to the CNA’s effort to expand its membership?” Ms. Hunt-Robinson replied, “I support expanding the CNA membership. Raising questions does not make the CNA the enemy. As Mayor.... I would work with the CNA.”
  9. A. Fiorenza asked Ms. Hunt-Robinson, “Had she heard of “CROP BOXES” ...which are shipping containers that have been turned into greenhouses. Communities and neighborhoods are using the Crop Boxes to grow food locally. Could implementing a Crop Box program in W.P. help feed folks in W.P.?” Ms. Hunt-Robinson replied that she liked the idea.
  10. With no other questions being offered from the attendees...President Sanchez thanked Ms. Hunt-Robinson for attending the meeting and answering questions from the CNA members.
- 
11. President Sanchez asked T. Osbeck (Treasurer) to report current CNA bank balance. T. Osbeck stated that the current CAN bank balance stood at \$2016.50.
  12. M. Sanchez asked T. Osbeck to make a correction to the list of neighborhood associations who had “paid” their annual dues. The North Street Association was ‘mis-named” on the list provided by Mr. Osbeck. The correction was made...and the North Street Association was added to the list of paid Associations.
  13. M. Sanchez reminded the attendees that in order to vote on CNA matters...a neighborhood is required to have paid its \$25 annual dues. If you are a new member to the CNA.... please have your dues paid so that you are eligible to vote on CNA matters.
  14. M. Sanchez reported that he had reached out to the Battle Hill and Prospect Park associations...requesting that their associations send representatives to CNA meetings. He was pleased to report that going forward...both of these neighborhoods agreed to have representative attend CNA meetings.
  15. M. Sanchez reported that Justin Brasch (Common Council member) will also be before the Democratic Party nominating committee seeking to be the Democratic candidate for Mayor in 2025. Mr. Brasch will be attending the CNA meeting in either January or February. Mr. Brasch will be afforded the same opportunity Ms. Hunt-Robinson had to speak to and take questions from the CNA members.

16. M. Sanchez opened the discussion on the proposed CNA “workshop” that would assist neighborhoods looking to form a neighborhood association. Z. Salino asked the question, “should HOA’s (homeowner associations) be admitted as “neighborhoods”? He went on to say that it is important that if a HOA desires to join the CNA...that we make it clear that the CNA will not take up issues which are specific to the HOA. M. Sanchez emphasized this point by explaining that the Rosedale Association is against the expansion of the Buddhist Temple...but, since it only effects the Rosedale neighborhood...Rosedale will not make it a “CNA issue”.
17. M. Dalton stated that the CNA should have an “open posture” to anyone interested in joining the CNA or attending our meetings...including an HOA. We should welcome anyone who is interested in the CNA. We have 7 or 8 paid members in an organization that claims to have about 15 active neighborhood associations. Let’s not make it difficult for any neighborhood to join the CNA. M. Matarese agreed....and said, “we need to be more inclusive.”
18. Z. Salino added....”2 years ago I reached out to the Ridgeway neighborhood asking them to please send representatives to the CNA meeting...but, in the 2 years since that time...I believe they have only attended 1 meeting.”
19. M. Sanchez read a letter crafted by B. Kahn to the attendees. Mr. Kahn’s letter described the CNA ....”as the City’s “watchdog” ...the CNA is beneficial to both the City’s residents and the City administration.
20. M. Sanchez asked the attendees for suggestions as to when we should conduct the “Neighborhood Association Workshop”. M. Dalton suggested conducting the workshop “sooner rather than later”. He suggested a March date for the Workshop.
21. M. Sanchez explained that we will need create a “workshop binder” which would outline the requirements and guidelines for creating a new neighborhood association. M. Dalton stated that there is no single path to forming an Association. He suggested that current member Associations could submit any of their existing organizational documents as “samples” of how an association can be organized and administrated.
22. M. Sanchez said he would create a folder on the CNA website that current Associations could email their Association’s organizational documents.
23. M. Sanchez then thanked the attendees and closed the meeting.