

White Plains Council of Neighborhood Associations
December Meeting

Tuesday, 12/10/2024

Location: White Plains Board of Education – Education House

Time: 7pm

Attendees: Michael Sanchez, Michael Dalton, Tom Osbeck, Veretta Addison, Ellen Berger, Anthony Fiorenza, Bob Friscia, Ken Krystal, Michael Matarese, Howard & Lea Waldman, Shawn Woodford, Mike Zygmunt

Guest Speaker: Mayor Thomas Roach

1. The Meeting was called to order by President Sanchez. President Sanchez introduced the meeting's guest: Mayor Thomas Roach
2. Mayor Roach began his remarks by stating that he was a New York Mets fan....and was delighted with the news that the Mets had signed Juan Soto to a multi-year contract. All the Met fans in attendance clapped with approval. Yankee fans were silent.
3. Mayor Roach then updated the attending CNA members on a number of programs and initiatives that the City has put into motion:
 - The Developer/Owners of the Galleria property have submitted the draft "Environmental Impact Statement" (DEIS) for the proposed redevelopment of the Galleria property to the City. The preliminary review of the DEIS by City Commissioners determined that the DEIS was "complete" and was "accepted". The DEIS will now be reviewed in detail by all relevant City Departments and the public comment stage will now be "opened".
 - The City has received a \$40K grant to implement a "Vision Zero" program to improve pedestrian and traffic safety in White Plains.
 - State legislators approved the ability for municipalities to lower the local speed limit from 30 mph. White Plains now has a city-wide speed limit of 25 mph. There are several streets in White Plains that will have higher speed limits posted. The City does not control the speed limit on streets administrated by the County...like Post Rd.
 - White Plains will be installing "speed cameras" in School Zones and "school bus arm cameras" on School Buses. These cameras will be used to issue tickets the drivers exceeding a school zone speed limit or not stopping when a school bus has stopped and is letting children out of the bus.
 - NYSEDA has funded a feasibility study of implementing a "ride sharing system" in White Plains. The ride sharing system would be "app" based.
 - The City has submitted to New York State its roster of proposed projects for the NYS Downtown Renewal Initiative (DRI) grant. The City expects to learn which DRI projects have been approved by NYS sometime in 2025.
 - The City has formed a Committee to develop playgrounds for children with disabilities.
 - The City implemented a \$50K program of awarding micro-grants to children who proposed

projects that will help children. The program was successful, and the City has increased the funding of this program to \$100K.

- The W.P. Christmas Village will be opening on Court St. on 12/12/24
 - The former Berkley College Dormitory is to be converted to affordable condominiums. 20% of the units will be for W.P. workforce and Westchester county employees.
 - A parcel of land on Post Road...opposite from W.P. Hospital has been acquired by the City. The City plans to build a new municipal parking garage on the property.
 - W.P. plans to install approximately 100 new electric car charging stations and has received grant money to work on getting more chargers into apartment building garages.
 - The annual W.P. New Year's Eve celebration will take place at the intersection of Mamaroneck Ave and Main St.... festivities will begin at 9pm.
 - W.P. has now begun a Food Composting Program. Food scraps can be brought to the Gedney Farm waste recycling center for composting.
 - The Mayor was pleased to report that for 13 years in a row.... White Plains budget increase was under the state mandated 4% "Tax Cap".
4. R. Friscia supported the program of School Buses being fitted with cameras to record vehicles not stopping..."quite often, drivers in the opposite lane of traffic do not stop for school buses dropping off children."
 5. K. Krystal asked the Mayor if there was more that the City could do to create "a path to ownership" in affordable housing? The Mayor responded, "there are 40 communities in Westchester.... White Plains is one of the few communities in Westchester that has any sort of affordable housing program. More communities in Westchester need to do more in creating affordable housing in their communities".
 6. Comments were made to the Mayor regarding the "aggressive" parking enforcement posture of White Plains...and that this "aggressive posture" has made the downtown unwelcoming. The Mayor responded that all metered parking now has a 6-minute grace period following the paid for meter time. The City has stepped up writing tickets for "double parked trucks and food delivery cars" in the downtown. These double-parked vehicles tie up traffic and prevent downtown visitors access to on-street parking. Regarding the alleged aggressive parking enforcement...the Mayor stated that the City writes fewer tickets today than were written before he took office."
 7. R. Friscia recently walked down Mamaroneck Ave and noted the vast number of Nail Salons and Bars on Mamaroneck...isn't there something the City can do to better have a more balanced group of retailers on Mamaroneck Ave? The Mayor replied, "the entire retail sector is evolving and undergoing huge changes as a result of "on-line" shopping. For any brick & mortar retailer to survive.... shopping in-store has to become "experiential". The City does not decide what retailers can open stores on our downtown streets.... the Market will decide."
 8. The Mayor was asked "why the City does not have affordable "drive-thru" restaurants in W.P. The Mayor replied that the City is looking at ways to bring more fast-food restaurants into W.P.
 9. E. Berger stated that a group of City residents is working on creating a "world class" Museum in the City of White Plains.

10. H. Waldman asked the Mayor if the "clocktower renovation project" was included in the submittal to NYS for DRI grant funding. The Mayor said replied, "Yes...the clocktower renovation project was included in the set of proposed projects for the DRI grant."
 11. The Mayor announced that the City will be continuing its "Rock A Night" concerts on Mamaroneck Ave this summer. These events on Mamaroneck Ave have proven to be very popular.
 12. The Mayor was asked, "is there any plan to redevelop the County Center arena?" The Mayor responded, "the County Center is not run by the City of White Plains....it is a Westchester County facility. Currently, he is unaware of any new plans for the County Center."
 13. M. Sanchez returned to the issue of "aggressive parking enforcement". He explained that it is not possible to run into the City Center for less than a \$1 parking fee. The Mayor explained that although the revenue from the parking does go to the City.... the City Center parking facility is not controlled by the City. The revenue that does flow to the City from the City Center is primarily used to maintain the parking facility.
 14. The Mayor was asked his opinion of NYC's congestion pricing plan. The Mayor stated that he supports the NYC congestion pricing plan.
 15. M. Sanchez asked the Mayor if he would be running for re-election as Mayor of W.P. The Mayor responded by saying, "as this time...he had not made a decision about running for Mayor again."
 16. President Sanchez thanked the Mayor for updating the CNA on a wide array of White Plains-centric topics and for answering questions from its members.
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17. Tom Osbeck (CNA treasurer) reported that he had received annual dues checks from 2 more neighborhoods.
 18. M. Sanchez requested that each member neighborhood upload copies of their neighborhood's organizational documents (by-laws, etc.) to the folder on CNA website in preparation of the March CNA workshop for "how to form a neighborhood association."
 19. M. Dalton noted that it appeared that the CNA would not be holding an election for officers this year. M. Dalton asked President Sanchez is this was the case? President Sanchez explained that he had sent out an email to all active members associations of the CNA requesting nominations. He did not receive any replies. So...yes...there would not be an election for officers this year...and the current officers will serve for another year. M. Dalton replied, "the CNA should still conduct an election.... even if it is by voice vote at our January meeting. Even if it is a formality...the current slate of officers: Pres. Sanchez, V.P. Dalton and Treasurer Osbeck should be nominated and voted at the January meeting.
 20. There was a great deal of discussion regarding the 1-year term of office for the President of the CNA. Many members felt the term of office was too short. M. Sanchez suggested that the group of members which updated the CNA by-laws have another look at lengthening the term of office for the President.
 21. M. Sanchez announced that Justin Brasch, a candidate for Mayor, will join the February CNA meeting. The CNA Workshop for new neighborhoods will be held in March. U.S. Representative George Latimer has agreed to attend either the April or May CNA meeting. School Superintendent Ricca has also agreed to attend either the April or May CNA meeting.

22. E. Berger suggested that the CNA invite new County Executive Ken Jenkins to a CNA meeting.
23. H. Waldman suggested that the City's Fire and Police Chiefs be invited to speak at a CNA meeting. H. Waldman also suggested that County Legislator Ben Boykin be invited to speak at a CNA meeting.
24. M. Sanchez then thanked the attendees and closed the meeting.